

PARAGRAPH TO BE WORKED OUT LATER

My dad was controlled by his mum and, as a result, didn't want to leave any control to my mum, so he controlled everything, but dysfunctionally, as represented in my star chart by my sun (in the IV House), representing the father, square Jupiter in Cancer, the sign of the Mother, and opposite Mars in the X House. My being born with a challengingly aspected sun says that my dad was having difficulties in his life, but my Moon being relatively well aspected says that my mum was more functional. Where do I get my dysfunctional judgmental attitudes and my partial misogyny? From the judgmental attitude of my dad that was imprinted in my childhood psyche. By working to be non-judgmental, by claiming my own power and healing the hurt part of myself, perhaps I can heal the father within and contribute to heal my father. Doing so, I have more chance not to repeat the dramas that afflicted my dad's life and doing so, I should evolve as a more integrated being, less controlled by fear and less prone to control. Thank you o silver girl.

O silver girl, tonight the moon is full. You come down to earth with the silver beams of the moonlight. Around you the fairies are dancing, singing, playing and making love. In this full moon of Early April 2004, may I remind myself of being a child of the Mother. May I listen to her silver wisdom and may I attune to her rhythms. O silver girl, you are the emissary of the first heaven that rules Cancer and is exalted in Taurus. Silver Moon, let me sing a song to you.

Silver Moon

Shining your magic

Upon Us

Be our Mother.

Silver Moon

Subtle spirit
Cosmic soul
Be our Mother

Silver Moon
In beautiful motion
Mistress of the owl
Be our Mother

Silver Moon
The silver girl
carries your message
Be our Mother.

Silver girl, the winds are becoming gentle as your presence radiates in my heart, filling it with the silver wisdom of lady Luna. I love you silver girl.

KALI: GODDESS FOR FEMINISM OR MOTHER OF FEMINISM?

Kali is one of the main goddesses in Hinduism. She has often been misunderstood in the Christian West, partly because of the strangling Thugs who allegedly worshipped Her. Her main depiction is usually that of a fierce goddess wearing a garland of skulls. In a continent raised with the image of the Virgin Mary, the iconography of Kali may lead to an incomprehension of her metaphysical functions. In spite of that, Kali's influence is visible in some sections of Western feminism. We are going to explore some of the manifestations of the Mother in some (groups of) individuals as well as touching the spiritual and psychological message of the Mother. We will see that people from different backgrounds do, in their different ways, respond to Kali's call to spiritual empowerment and liberation.

The 'Judeo-Christian' figures closest to Kali could be the Black Virgin of Catholic Europe and the controversial figure of Lilith. In the Kabbalistic account of her, Lilith was the first wife of Adam and she left him as she did not want to go through the 'missionary position'. She was said to give birth to demons and steal children. '[S]he also had the power to prevent birth by barrenness, miscarriages and complications during childbirth.' (1) The stealing of children could be a reference to a tantric form of sexuality, whereby the sperm is not ejaculated and/or Lilith symbolises a feminine and non-procreative form of sexuality. So procreative Hebraism could only curse a feminine figure that refuses the more passive role of Eve and the production of offspring, so vital to Judaic spirituality.

Lilith, according to Ean Begg, has also a more positive function. 'The twelfth-century Spanish Cabbalist, R. Isaac Hacoen, writes that "Lilith is a ladder on which one can ascend to the rungs of prophecy", and also connects her to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. According to a later cabbalist, Havyyim Vital (1543–1620), the angel called the flame of the revolving sword is, by night, Lilith. Similarly in Zoharic Literature the Shekinah is at times called the mother and at times the Slave-Woman or Lilith. In another formulation, Lilith appears as the nakedness of the Shekinah during the time of Israel's exile. Lilith's greatest triumph is recorded in a sixteenth-century Cabbalistic writing where, as a result of a piece of divine wife-swapping, following the destruction of the Temple, God relinquishes his consort, the Matronit (identical with the Shekinah) to Samael/Satan and takes his queen, Lilith, to be his bride.' (2)

Lilith then appears as a more complex figure than a simple Cabbalistic she-demon. However, her 'demonic' reputation has been taken—so it seems—literally by some. Thus, in his book *Les Sectes Luciferiennes Aujourd'hui* (Editions Belfond, France), journalist of the occult Jean-Paul Bourre presents a Lilith worshipped as the bride of Lucifer by some syncretic Luciferian sects of the seventies, some of them with a fascistic agenda. So the demonic aspects of Lilith seem to have spilled over, in spite of her being the ladder ascending to the rungs of prophecy. Lilith's advantage

over Kali here in the West is that on some level the bride of Samael is more rooted in the collective psyche, although this claim may be debatable. The advantage of Kali over Lilith is that She is a proper divine figure rooted within a particular tradition and one can find proper literature about her, i.e., there are rituals, hymns, poems and treatises written about Kali, such as the Kalika Purana.

Another advantage, in the light of Tradition as expounded by Rene Guenon, of Kali over Lilith is her worship by Sri Ramakrishna, the nineteenth-century Hindu holy man who was the master of Vivekananda who helped popularise Hinduism in the West in its Vedantic form. Vivekananda seemed to have been a devotee of Mother Kali and appeared to have held what could be termed proto-feminist positions about women, a point to which we will return later. To our knowledge, there has not been a historical saintly figure of Sri Ramakrishna's status who was a worshipper of Lilith. An aspect of the philosophy of and as expressed by the Master himself is as follows: 'Once a man realizes God through intense dispassion, he is no longer attached to woman. Even if he must lead the life of a householder, he is free of an attachment to woman. Suppose there are two big magnets, one big and the other small. Which one will attract the iron? The big one, of course. God is the big magnet. Compared to Him, woman is a small one. He who has realized God does not look upon a woman with the eye of lust; so he is no longer afraid of her. He perceives clearly that women are but so many aspects of the Divine Mother. He worships them all as the Mother Herself.' (3) The holy sage suggests that lust and attachment prevents a man from seeing the essence of women, that is to say, Mother Kali[a]li Herself. Attachment turns the woman into an object and the man can only establish a one way relationship with the lady, remaining stuck in binary mode. Freedom from lust takes the fear of woman away from the man who can then establish a friendship with her, adoring the Goddess-essence within her, in a similar form to the Christian 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' that is really loving God within both the other and oneself. Whether this would satisfy feminists is another question. The Master's partner, Sri Sarada Devi, led the life of a traditional Hindu woman, in the shadow of Sri Ramakrishna so to

speak. However, later on, we will approach what seems to be the suggestion that via the influence of the Master, a form of Hindu proto-feminism was born. Further on, we will see a U.S. group seemingly taking the adoration of women by men in a more master/mistress-slave dialectic.

Kali's non-demonic aspects are clear as She emerged from Durga's forehead to destroy an army of demons. 'The mighty demon Raktabija remained. From the blood shed from his wounds sprang thousands of fresh combatants, representing the destructive masculine principle. To annihilate this archetypal power, Kali again and again drank the rakta-bija (the 'seed-blood'). This symbolic devouring represents the 'taking-possession-of' or rendering harmless of an overpowering destructive element, a phallic power.' (4) Here we have what seems to be a feminist interpretation of Kali as destroying patriarchal demons, 'the asuras whose exaggerated ego-sense is destroying the balance of the universe, and whose sole purpose is to dominate and control. (5) Mookerjee mentioned 'Vivekananda [who] predicted "the resurgence of the Mother into the consciousness of the world's population, after patriarchal religions had forced her into concealment in the unconscious."' (6)

Feminism, in that worldview, could be seen as Kali the Mother resurfacing in the collective conscious polluted by patriarchal secular demons, that is to say all the dualistic errors resulting from patriarchal separatism such as capitalism, individualism, fascism, fundamentalism, communism, individualism, materialism, spiritualism and so forth. Those 'evil' entities are faulty because they operate from a dualistic, and therefore partial vision: the subject opposed to the object, the half against the other half; against this partial view, one could propose an image based on the premise of the two sides of the same coin: the half cannot be without the other half and, thus, dualism exists on the surface of things and more deeply one can perceive the unity. So one can perceive day and night as being two sides of one process and there is no real separation between day and night: during sunrise and sunset, there is neither day or night but a gradual passing from one to the other. The ego survives on the belief in separation, a mistaken view that can be personified as a demon. The fall of Adam and

Eve certainly symbolises the evolution of our humanity from a non-dual and direct perception of things as they are to a distorted vision of things as they appear but really are not, that is to say, separate entities. Adrienne Rich writes: 'The rejection of the dualism, of the positive-negative polarities between which most of our intellectual training has taken place, has been an undercurrent of feminist thought.' (7)

Monica Sjoo is a pagan and a feminist established in Britain. She writes against the 'New Agers [who] do not want to know about the ancient tantric beliefs of India that characterise death as Mother Kali[a]Kali/Shakti's time-space consciousness.

Tantrikas believe that Kali[a]li, the Black Mother, manifests the worlds and dissolves them back again into Her great cosmic womb of self-luminous light and consciousness.'

(8) Monica Sjoo seems to be inspired by the Dark Mother, as suggested by the reading of her book from which we take this quotation. She has militanted at Greenham Common, painted several paintings representing various images of the Goddess and written books and articles. Her life, partly described in 'New Age and Armageddon', is one of fighting for the Goddess in the 'real world' so to speak. Subjectively, one could see Kali as being the inspiration behind Monica Sjoo.

Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove also mention Kali as the "'red substance of female source" [that] is "the prime menstrum of magical energy", and the destructive aspect of lunar or black magic. This is of the Scarlet Woman, who is also the Goddess Kali[a]li. C.D. Daly wrote a fascinating paper on the black goddess Kali[a]Kali's cults as a menstrual cult. He says that the destructive aspect comes from the great evolutionary energy, but even more from men's fear of it. In due time, the hideous Kali[a]li, when she is loved as she deserves, will reveal her beauties hidden patiently for centuries, he says. (9) Here, we may see another side of Kali's relevance to feminism: the reclaiming by women of menstruation, the celebration of it as opposed to the patriarchal curse on the menstrual cycle. From that reclaiming may come an empowerment of 'everywoman'. It referred to 'men's fear of it'. The fear, possibly, is coming from men's ego and when this ego is transcended, made transparent, patriarchal fear perhaps evaporates and men's soul can then get in touch

with Kali's Soul and 'she is loved as she deserves,' as put by Shuttle and Redgrove themselves.

Kali is equally referred to in a book by Marion Woodman, a Jungian analyst and Elinor Dickson, a clinical psychologist. 'Kali's dual role as devouring mother and enlightened goddess is highlighted in a poem written by Vivekananda, a Hindu sage of the twentieth century.

"I am not one of those," he chanted
"Who put the garland of skulls round
Thy neck,
"And then look back in terror
"And call thee 'The Merciful.'"
"The heart must become
a burial ground,
"Pride, selfishness, and desire all
broken into dust,
"Then and then alone will the Mother
dance there."

[Vivekananda, cited in David Kingsley, *The Sword and the Flute* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), p. 145']

In this poem, Vivekananda dissociates himself from those who project their own fear onto Kali[a]li and then tremble before her, seeking to appease her wrath. In these few opening lines, the poet captures the essence of genuine Great goddess worship: there must be a death to the ego self; there must be a transformation in which there is a letting go [...] of all the things that the egotistical nature mistakenly clings to. The mystery of Kali[a]li is that she is perpetually destroying and, at the same time, creating [...]. [...] For Kali[a]li, all experience are one—life as well as death. [...] Those

who can accept her cycle—life and death—are no longer vulnerable. They are fearless.' (10) Here the reference to life and death may be applied to the menstrual cycle, potentially making the womb a signifier rather than the phallus. Kali appears as devourer to the ego stuck in dualistic perception but is transformation for the soul that has relinquished the ego, i.e., that soul has seen the ego for what it is, a transient process as opposed to a fixed entity. The transformation is that reaching of/to the higher self. Life is not opposed to death. The opposition is only a mask. There is no life without death and vice-versa. In the poem by Vivekananda, 'pride, selfishness and desire' are those demons or distortions resulting from the belief of the ego that it is an separate entity existing independently from/of anything else. On a materialistic level, it is easy to see that dualism is a fallacy as one is made up of atoms and molecules and we need to eat other living creatures in order to survive. So how can one say one is 'free' and 'independent'? On a psychological level, the personality is partly made up of the input we get from others: parents and siblings, family and society and one's direct and indirect interaction with the other(s).

Lex Hixon, a writer, says that 'everywhere we look in ancient or modern life, the nurturing, maturing, educating, and liberating power of the Divine Feminine can be seen in operation at the deepest levels of cultural wisdom. She operates directly through humanity, primarily through women, but also through men; Neopagan, feminist, wise woman, traditional native, tantric, ecological, green, and creation-centred movements in contemporary society are reestablishing conscious communion with the Goddess on an increasingly wide scale'. (11) All those movements—or many of them—are characterised by the notion of interdependency as opposed to the unity-denying 'each to its own' set of ethics that pollutes distorted patriarchy in whatever form: capitalism, nationalism, fundamentalism, consumerism, and so forth. The notion of interdependency arises as a result of seeing larger than one's ego. Further on, Hixon writes that 'Mother Kali[a]Kali's field of battle is the complex network of mental suffering. Her enemy is the aggressive and even demonic force of self-inflation.' (12) The ego trying to maintain its sense of separation is fighting a lost

battle. What it believes to possess slides away with the passing of time and/or other factors, and the frustration resulting from it stresses the ego out, which constructs more layers of shell around itself, increasing its sense of separation and (false) importance.

Now, we briefly return to the matter of Sri Ramakrishna, the Kali-devoted saint and his disciple Vivekananda. 'Sri Ramakrishna was the real Advaitin who saw Brahman in the entire creation and went to the extent of cleaning the premises of a so-called untouchable [who] to him was as much a manifestation of spirit as a so-called [...] rahmin. His Vedanta, accepted [...] by Vivekananda [...] preached equality of men of different castes and creeds and sex but practised what it visualised with perfection. It was, therefore, [...] natural for Sri Ramakrishna [...] to treat women on a par with men. [...] He worshipped his own wife [the Holy mother] as the Divine Mother [that is, Kali]. [...] Sri Sarada Devi was more modern than most social reformers and encouraged people to send their girls to school. She understood the problems of women thoroughly and in her own silent and spiritual way exhorted men to treat their women with respect. [...] Swami Vivekananda [...] threw his lot with [...] educationists who advocated education for women. [...] had unbounded admiration for the American women. [...] On a poem to [Sister Nivedita] Swamiji has spelled out his ideas of ideal womanhood [...]:

The Mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell
on aryan altars, flaming free:
all these be yours and many more
No ancient soul could dream before—
Be thou to India's future son,
The mistress, servant friend—all in one

[reference not given]

Sister Nivedita [...] has described on her own what [Vivekananda] wanted the future woman of his country to be made of: "He saw plainly enough that what was wanted was a race of women-educators, and this was how he contemplated making them. Strength, strength, strength was the one quality he called for in woman as in man. [...]" (13) It is interesting to find a form of Kali-inspired proto-feminism within the living tradition of Hinduism, starting with the holy man Sri Ramakrishna and continued with the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda. This would suggest that the inferior place of women in sections of Hinduism may not be necessarily due to its essence but perhaps to a slow corruption of the Sanatana Dharma with the passing of time. Ramakrishna was born of Bengali soil and Kali, through him, could be seen to have brought forth a form of spiritual feminism that was born within Hinduism. Lex Hixon, in the book from which we take a quotation, dedicated it to Sri Ramakrishna and the Holy Mother.

If one is open to the totality that is Kali, then one can argue that Her manifestations are manifold. In Her highest aspects, She is simply behind both the birth and the destruction of the Universe, the alpha and omega so to speak. She is the Mystery that will always confound logic and reason, both belonging to the mental plane, pertaining to the soul. To appreciate Kali, one has to rely on the Intellect in its medieval understanding as opposed to the modern misconception that hijacks the Intellect for the petty needs of reason.

Kali may also appear in different ways to the less Intellectually inclined. In a curious document taken from the Internet, there is a mention of Kali as follows: 'Mother Kali[a]li - Matriarch and Director - Service of Mankind Church - Esseman Sanctuary of Mother Kali[a]li - MotherKali@hotmail.com - Goddess Kali, and all other aspects of the Divine Feminine, gives each of us guidance in honoring our Goddess Within. Welcome, all Sister Dommies, and submissives too! Females are

welcomed to complimentary Goddess Membership at the Essemian Sanctuary. Join with Me in living the Femdom Life You love! Only submissive males who are collares and sponsored by Goddess Members or fully trained at the Sanctuary will be considered for Commitment Membership. I am a Superior lifestyle Domme, maintaining formal D/s and Ritual BDSM practices. I honor the Feminine Intelligence of the Universe with My Life, and provide opportunities for other women to pursue Goddess Studies, Kali[a]li Ritual Femdom, and Manifesting the Goddess Within. [...] Celebrate the Living Matriarchy with Me at Essemian Sanctuary of Mother Kali in Michigan.' (14) The point one might make is whether or not Mother Kali is being hijacked to the benefits of sado-masochistic practices. One could also argue this particular form of hobby is an, if somewhat, eccentric manifestation of Kali as She is a totality. One might object that all the matriarcho-feminist talk quoted above is just a smoke screen to justify sado-masochistic 'vices', but the latter could also be a genuine form of living Kali, and it may be this dominatrix is sincere about what she says. One might also reply David Koresh was sincere. The point would be to assess if this (self-styled?) priestess of Kali is leading a fulfilling life. On one hand, women's liberation means that they have the potential to fulfill whatever form of sexuality they feel right about, provided human rights are not transgressed; on the other hand, can sado-masochistic practices help realise the state of non-duality which Kali is?

There are also other documents emanating from the same sect: 'As a priestess, Sarakira has done many religious rituals where, as she incarnates the terrible Goddess Kali[a]li, she has brought men before her naked in chains. She commands them to crawl in their chains to lay their head beneath her naked feet where she has them whipped as they must beg and pray for mercy and forgiveness for the sins of all mankind. Priestess Srakira is also a very spiritual person. (15) The 'spiritual person' has written a book titled "'Seize the Power,'" especially written for women who [...] want to develop an interest in dominating their men. (15) Are we dealing here with a parody in the Guenonian/Traditional sense of the word or are we dealing with a genuine quest or something partaking of both the caricatural and the authentic? It is

claimed Priestess Sarakira 'combines a strict form of female domination with a sincere religious belief.' (16) One would have to pursue the matter further, either by reading the book—which I have not done—or getting in touch with her—which I also have not attempted to do. The point is to see how far Kali can be an inspiration even though the quality may be missing. It may be that what Priestess Sarakira is doing is perfectly legitimate from the Guenonian/Traditional point of view, but that legitimacy could also be situated on a lower scale in the cosmic hierarchy.

The sect to which priestess Sarakira belongs has written or is still publishing an 'Esseman Manifesto [and it] is a small press, private publication printing that describes some of the philosophy and rituals of a real, California incorporated (Kali) Goddess-oriented church. The Esseman Manifesto's premise is that Kali is returning to us through the collective unconscious by channeling through women who feel spiritually inclined to dominate men. If you feel that you do not have a spiritual affinity with the premise, you should leave this page immediately because the Goddess Kali does not take kindly to lurkers or the insincere.' (17) At least one is warned. It is true that traditional icons represent a standing Kali dominating a sleepy Shiva who is lying down. It may be that forms of Kali-inspired sado-masochistic rituals may have a psychic effectiveness, but to have any value, they would have to be integrated within a larger picture involving the study of metaphysics and devotional practices, among other things. To be truly relevant to feminism, the Esseman people would have to be truly in charge and not just satisfying some men's sexual fantasies, if that is the case, or their own fantasies for that matter.

Another group of female supremacists based in the USA appears to refer to Kali[a]li as/for an inspiration. In their *Matriarch's Way—the Journal of Female Supremacy* (Premier issue—Spring 1996), there is an article 'In Defense of the Goddess Kali[a]li' written by Richard Chambers Prescott. On page 83, there is this statement: 'Therefore, the Goddess Kali[a]Kali's visual image functions to make known what is unknown, cannot be known, in her dual role as both the creatrix and

destructrix of the universe. She is both Beginning and End and all that falls between.' This is again a reference to the unity-(with)in-duality/duality-(with)in-unity mystery that is and which is represented by the Divine Mother. This would suggest a female-supremacy would only be legitimate if it was possessing the technics to allow its people to reach non-duality. If, on the contrary, it was maintaining its folks in dualistic captivity, then it would be as worthless as the binary patriarchal society the female supremacists seek to overthrow. The article's writer also mentions Sri Ramakrishna who is seen as expressing the authentic Tantra, as suggested by Barlow himself. In the same issue of *Matriarch's Way*, on page 102, there is an article—titled 'Shakti Manifestation' and written by Sri Shivayananda—which is really an 'Excerpt from The Essemian Way,' suggesting therefore that this group of female supremacists is linked with the above-mentioned Essemian Sanctuary as the *Essemian Way* is their journal. It would appear that there may be substance behind the latter sect as *Matriarch's Way*—whether one agrees or not with the philosophy behind it—itself is made up of fairly researched articles, and one would be inclined to believe they communicate with seriously engaged people, such as, perhaps, the Essemian Sanctuary.

Another document 'fished' from the Internet, titled 'Kali[a]li Prophecies', stresses the link between the 'Kali archetype' and the coming future of a female-supremacist-governed humanity. There is no declared author, nor is there any mention of the name of the organisation the person may be affiliated with. It may be that this work is the product of a sole individual, the latter stating: 'We are now on more uncertain ground as this [Kali prophecy] seems to be talking about something that will happen in the future. But there are signs that Kali[a]li is appearing in our society. The Dominatrix was mostly created by men's sexual fantasies, but today in the 1990's there are now many women who are also being turned by the Kali[a]li archetype. These women call themselves Female Supremacists. They are not content with the idea of equality with men and want to dominate them. Since the nineteen eighties there has been a backlash against the Women's Movement by religious

fundamentalists and right-wing politicians [and as] the fundamentalist movement gains in strength, women will be forced to abandon their "we only want equality" stance, and possibly realize that they are caught in a power-game where "the winner takes it all". Equality is not yet possible. This will allow the women's movement to be Led [sic] by the Female Supremacists, who will inflict a defeat on the two demons of fundamentalism and right-wing politics. They will be helped by many men, symbolised by the pet lion Devi rides, who are greatly attracted to Female Supremacists, and more willing to worship them and be their servants.' (18) The tune of the music here leaves us puzzled. It is as if the patriarchal form of speech was used here to promote female supremacy. The language used here appears to us fairly forceful. Of course the feminine can be forceful but, here, it seems that the game consists of a simple replacement of male supremacy by female supremacy, without initiating changes in the much deeper layer of the human psyche that would manifest, for instance, in the form of speech being used. As such, we do not know whether the author(s) of this document is (are) male or female. The document itself is a list of solemn prophetic statements. One would like to sense more substance behind the Kali prophecies.

In Bengal itself, there appears to be a local tradition of Kali[a]li-inspired 'feminist' art: the Kalighat paintings. About them, Ajit Mookerjee writes: 'One of the series of pictures ridicule men's foolish nature and bad habits, a popular theme in Bengali folk-literature, while another notable group expresses women's assertiveness. A man is depicted as a lamb whom a woman leads on a string, or the woman's dominant position is indicated by her trampling of the male, recalling Kali[a]Kali's trampling on Shiva. The sense of woman's freedom and power is strong. W.G. Archer [...] observes that 'such pictures may well have been influenced by dim associations with the goddess Kali[a]li and may even, in some oblique way, have glorified the "female principle".' (19) One would not dream of such in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan or Saudi Arabia where the interpretation of Islam is fundamentalist and women-oppressing. It may imply that certain representations of the Goddess, such

as Mother Kali, may well also translate in certain social realities in which the woman appears freer than in other cultural contexts. Then, Kali could well be a principle with the potential to empower women and her relevance to Western feminism is therefore justified.

With Kali, the potential for psychic expansion seems guaranteed, as (indirectly) shown by Monica Sjöo in a chapter—titled 'Reclaiming the Dark Mother'—of her already-quoted book: 'The mind/matter dualism has limited western thought for nearly four centuries. The brain might be a receiver of, a sensitive filter for, as yet unknown physical/psychic processes. Holograms have shown us that there is no 'here' and 'there', that the part also contains the whole. There is no distance in super-space, we exist in multiple universes and realities simultaneously.' (20) That mind expansion was certainly embodied in the life of Sri Ramakrishna, certainly sustainable in the person open to the possibility of psychic and spiritual realities. That 'faith' in the Master's realisation might be an impossibility in an atheistic mind.

One important aspect is that daily life must not be forgotten in the search for Kali but impregnated by the Mother so to speak. As if to illustrate our point, Lex Hixon quotes Ramprasad: 'You will receive Mother's breath of wisdom while sitting at home in quiet, disciplined by the responsibilities of daily life.' (21) The point with Kali is not to escape the 'real world' but to transmute it so to speak so that the magic of the Mother penetrates every aspects of daily life, especially as perceived by and lived within the human psyche.

To conclude the matter, we have seen that Kali has been and continues to be an inspiration for certain forms of feminism, from Vivekananda's Vedantic proto-feminism to the U.S. female supremacists, with in between people like Monica Sjöo. Kali seems to inspire different types of behaviours from the saintly to the sado-masochistic-within-an-alleged-spiritual-framework. The realisation of the non-dual seems to be the message of Kali to us. On a creative level, Kali has inspired many artists and writers, from Ramprasad to Monica Sjöo, from the poems of Vivekananda to the Kalighat paintings. The message of deliverance that Kali proposes is best said

by Sri Ramakrishna: 'In response to a question from Mahima about 'something holding us back' from spiritual progress Why? Cut the reins. Cut them with the sword of Kali's name. The shackles of Kaala, time, are cut by Kali's name.' (22)

Notes

(1) Begg, Ean, Myths And Today's Consciousness, London, Coventure Ltd, 1984, p. 85

(2) Begg, Myths And Today's Consciousness, p. 85

(3) 19 Ramakrishna Quotes on Kali[a]li, The Divine Mother—Mahashakti, <http://www.angelfire.com/ma/ramakrishna/kali.html>, 29/10/01, p. 1

(4) Mookerjee, Ajit, Kali The Feminine Force, London, Thames and Hudson, 1988, p. 55

(5) Mookerjee, Kali The Feminine Force, p. 49

(6) Mookerjee, Kali The Feminine Force, p. 79

(7) Rich, Adrienne, Of Women Born, Virago Press, UK, 1976, p. 39

(8) Sjo, Monica, New Age And Armageddon: The Goddess or the gurus? Towards a feminist vision of the future, London, The Women's Press, 1992, p. 12

(9) Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove, Peter, The Wise Wound: Menstruation and EveryWoman, London, Harper Collins, 1978/86/94, p. 194

- (10) Marion Woodman and Elinor Dickson, *Dancing In The Flames: The Dark Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness*, Dublin, Gill & MacMillan Ltd, 1996, pp. 14–16
- (11) Hixon, Lex, *Mother Of The Universe: Visions of the Goddess and Tantric Hymns of Enlightenment*, USA, Quest Books—the Theosophical Publishing House, 1994, p. 3
- (12) Hixon, *Mother Of The Universe*, p. 23
- (13) Krishna, Indira, *Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Tradition And The Problems of Women*, in *Perspectives On Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Vedanta Tradition*, India, Sterling publishers Private Limited, 1991, pp. 235–238
- (14) Mother Kali, <http://www.angelfire.com/mi2/MotherKali/Kali.html>, 12/11/01, pp. 1-2
- (15) Meet Priestess Sarakira, <http://members.aol.com/smcpage4/sarakira.htm>, 19/11/01, pp. 1–2
- (16) Meet Priestess Sarakira, p. 2
- (17) Excerpts From The Essemian Manifesto, <http://members.aol.com/smcpage1/excerpts.htm>, 15/11/01, p. 3
- (18) Kali prophecies, http://www.matriarch.com/kali_prophecies_page_3.htm, 05/03/02, p.1
- (19) Mookerjee, *Kali The Feminine Force*, p. 92

(20) Sjoo, *New Age and Armageddon*, p. 135

(21) Hixon, *Mother of The Universe*, p. 16

(22) 19 Ramakrishna Quotes on Kali[a]li, The Divine Mother—Mahashakti,
<http://www.angelfire.com/ma/ramakrishna/kali.html>, 29/10/01, p. 1

IS THEALOGY ANYTHING MORE INTELLECTUALLY, MORALLY AND SALVIFICALLY SUBSTANTIAL THAN JUST A CRITICISM OF THEOLOGY?

This essay is going to explore if the claims of thealogy have more intellectual, moral and salvific substance than a mere criticism of theology.

The difference between feminist theology and thealogy is expounded by Melissa Raphael in such a way:

'Feminist theology does not, by its nature, articulate a new religion, but proposes a Judaism, Christianity or Islam transformed by the full and equal inclusion of women in all dimensions of the religion. This can involve the reformation of the religion by a restoration of the original egalitarianism believed to have been instituted by its founder(s). Thealogy, however, conceives itself as having made a radical break from Western monotheism such as was symbolised by Mary Daly's dramatic exit or exodus from the Harvard Divinity School Chapel in 1971. Having been invited to be the first woman to preach there, her sermon was a courageous prophetic challenge to the religion and politics of her hosts: a religion that, she claimed in her sermon, has 'drained and co-opted' women's energies, and denies women's humanity. She refused the role of 'token' woman preacher [...]. Or again, Monica Sjoo and others declared 'the end of patriarchy' and patriarchal religion by dancing and drumming before the altar in Bristol Cathedral during a Sunday morning service in 1993 (1993: 22–23).'

(Raphael, Melissa, *Introducing Theology, Discourse on the Goddess*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, p. 36)

Feminist theologians want to reform the monotheistic traditions by emphasising the 'liberal' and equalitarian message of Christ and Mohammed for instance. If Mary Magdalene was the first to learn about Christ's resurrection, then why should women be kept like second-class citizens within the Church? Thus, feminist theologians seek to continue the Abrahamic religions by renovating them from inside, applying an anti-sexist and/or non-sexist agenda in the liturgy for instance. Theologians argue that the Abrahamic faiths hardly can do anything to redeem the situation of women as they were founded by men in patriarchal lands under the inspiration of a father deity, therefore, those religions are useless to women in that they speak a male/masculine language to a male/masculine audience reinforcing the patriarchal structure within society. Language, habits. Their patriarchalism resides in their essence, therefore how can one make the religion women-friendly and women-empowering if the core of it is constructed in male/masculinist patterns?

Theology, then, would be a sort of theology of the Goddess written by women from women's experience of the sacred for women.

'As Carol Christ remembers, after the religious feminist community had found its feet, most of her friends and academic colleagues began to express 'serious reservations' about Goddess religion: 'Male theologians sympathetic to feminism drew the line at the Goddess. I felt profoundly isolated. While I had expected criticism from male colleagues, I had not experienced it from other feminists . . .' (1987: 204)' (Raphael, *Introducing Theology*, p. 35)

Perhaps, one might assume there is substance behind theology from the 'serious reservations' that Carol Christ remembers. If there was no substance, then there would be no cause for 'serious reservations'.

As a specific form of religion, it seems theology has developed from the counter culture of the sixties, the emergence of the neo-paganism known as Wicca and the break from Christianity undertaken by people like Mary Daly (quoted by Raphael in her book) who also says: 'I propose that we face the possibility of a contradiction inherent in the idea "feminist Christian theologian." I suggest that the idea "feminist theologian" implies an evolutionary leap in consciousness beyond "Christian" and that the word "feminist" does something to the meaning content of the word "theologian."' (Raphael, *Introducing Theology*, p. 29)

So theology is not just a simple Goddess religion but is a post-Christian, post-patriarchal Goddess religion born after the felt-by-some failure of Christianity to provide women with a space in which they can experience the sacred in a women-articulated language. The failure partly consists of the perception of Abrahamic religions written by men that make those religions inappropriate to express a women-experienced view of the sacred.

In order to be more substantial than a mere criticism of theology, criticised because in a way it has been defined by men for men, intentionally or unintentionally, theology has to develop its own agenda independently from Abrahamic theologies. Criticism exists partly because of the object being criticised in the first place for, without it, criticism does not exist. One could take Christianity as an example as in the early centuries of the common era that religion was partly defined against the dying pagan faiths of the Roman Empire, but Christianity had also its own agenda beyond the criticism of the surrounding and competitive non-Christian religions. So the same applies to theology; it needs to have its own agenda regardless of Abrahamic faiths.

On a personal level, I have seen and taken part at the Goddess Conference in Glastonbury in July 2001. Melissa Raphael personally attended once or twice this event and seemed to have had a good appreciation of it. As far as I am concerned, the experience of the Goddess Conference was like a turning point in my life. One could see it as being theology in practice. I do not think it would have affected me on such a

fairly deep level if it had been substance-less, or no more than a mere criticism of theology. The people here—most of them women—definitely have their own agenda, which is the Goddess in her multidimensional and multicoloured manifestations. I felt the spiritual and psychological substance of the Goddess Conference. On the other hand, I have seen and read about people on the dark side of the Occult obsessed with Christianity, the same way Born-again-Christians are obsessed with the dark side of the Occult. One might say 'satanism' is no more substantial than a mere harsh criticism of Christianity. In my opinion, it hardly had any substance at all, but I would say the same of Christian fundamentalism, their only substance seeming to reside in the U.S. dollar. I have not experienced such shallowness at the Goddess Conference.

Due to the fact of having been moved by the Goddess Conference and sharing certain elements of the theological and goddess feminist movement, it is difficult not to have a preference for that agenda which influences my views. I have the conviction that what I have seen so far of theology has more substance than a mere criticism of theology. I held the books of Melissa Raphael or Monica Sjoo to be substantial, independently of theology. Monica Sjoo, in her book *New Age and Armageddon—The Goddess or the Gurus? Towards a Feminist Vision of the Future*, she criticises the New Age movement as a spiritual patriarchy in (feeble) disguise. The book is intellectually and morally potent, informed by the author's life experience and her encounters with the New Age movement. A substance-less movement would collapse in the face of adversity, but that does not seem to be the case with the international Goddess feminist movement, not taking into account the spread of a more apolitical Wicca.

Melissa Raphael writes:

'The nature of metaphor as that which 'carries beyond' (Greek, meta, after/beyond and therein, carry) suggests to Daly that, as a metaphor (among a number of other such metaphors) the Goddess, like a flying broomstick, propel women out of the

patriarchal state of being into a new time and space of feminist existential self-realization. Where the primordial event of patriarchal rule is 'the murder/dismemberment of the Goddess - that is, the Self-affirming being of women', the radical feminist 'sin' against patriarchy becomes 'refusal to collaborate in this killing and dismembering of our own Selves as the beginning of re-membering the Goddess - the deep Source of creative integrity in women' (Daly 1991: 111).! (Raphael, *Introducing Theology*, pp. 56–57)

From this extract, I have the impression that theology has moved the mere criticism of theology to the 'metaphysical' criticism of and debunking of patriarchy. If anything, there is in theology the most important physical and psychological substance, and that is women themselves and their experience of the sacred and re-caliming of it in the name of the Goddess. As to the theologian man, perhaps he would remind himself of one of nineteenth-century-Hindu-holy-man Sri Ramakrishna's quotes: '[The God-realized man] perceives clearly that women are but so many aspects of the Divine Mother. He worships them all as the Mother Herself.' (19 Ramakrishna Quotes on KALI, THE DIVINE MOTHER - MAHASHAKTI, <http://www.anglefire.com/ma/ramkrishna/kali.html>, 29/10/01, p. 4)