

Women in Myths



In myths we can find the archetypes that can guide our life and help us discover our soul. In the case of goddesses, these can reveal to women the primordial forces of the spiritual world and help us to understand the inner being that characterizes our female complexity.

Jorge Angel Livraga, founder of New Acropolis, once wrote: “myths have the property of awakening certain aspects within man that are beyond his strictly rational capacity. Myths can reach parts where reason cannot go; myths are closer to intuition than to reason. Myths speak about a truth by using a symbolical language, and that language offers remarkable advantages; it is rich, wide and adaptable enough to enable each individual to perceive what they can assimilate. No one remains untouched by a myth, whereas a rational explanation may leave them unmoved.” Myths are like a door that connects our mind, and our emotions with the spiritual world.

The great psychologist Carl Jung regarded myths as great tools for understanding the way our psyche works. They are part of the collective heritage of humanity, and through the collective unconscious they speak to the deepest part of our being. “A myth is like a dream we are able to remember”, and to explain it allows us to know ourselves better. In the unconscious of all men and women there are seeds that contain a model of the form of the spiritual world, and the strength of that seed makes each person want to replicate it as a way of life. Those primordial forces or archetypes from the spiritual world would be the gods and goddesses that myths refer to. Here we will be referring to the goddesses of ancient Greece, due to the fact that they are most widely known.

Goddesses represent a certain type of woman and a shadow aspect; it is a shadow within us because the light of spirit is missing, the light that is needed in order to become aware of this weakness in order to overcome it and become better, more confident and happier.

Aphrodite

Woman: sees herself as a princess, and loves to seduce and to shine. Embodies the joy of living and associates love with sensuality. Always seeks beauty and harmony in her surroundings.

Shadow: emotional immaturity; by remaining stuck in sensuality and in the desire to catch what is beautiful, she can fall into narcissism and infidelity.

Athena

Woman: is totally in control of her emotions, and will rarely allow herself to be driven by them. Stimulated by difficulties, she excels in teaching, artistic creativity or research. She has a great practical sense and gives priority to being successful professionally. She is faithful to her chosen partner and expects the same from him.

Shadow: when she feels attacked, she turns cold, relentlessly critical, aggressive and authoritarian. If she is not channeling the energy properly, she can fall into depression.

Demeter

Woman: the role of the mother continues to be one of the most sacred archetypes for the human being. As a mother, she discovers the protective instinct, and rediscovers inexhaustible springs of attentiveness, patience and tenderness. She is warm, affectionate, and her attentiveness towards 'others' gives her a sort of sixth sense that makes her very intuitive. There is another side to this archetype, which is the spiritual mother, the one who loves all human beings such as Mother Theresa.

Shadow: the devouring mother. She doesn't know how to say no. She doesn't know how to express her anger or explain her feelings clearly, and that causes her to feel a victim of existence. When she projects all her energy onto her child, she becomes possessive and infantilizes him. Her need to give life, to do everything and control everything turns her into an oppressive mother.

Hera

Woman: the real feminine power is usually manifested in a subtle way. Hera is, on the one hand, the humble one, the one who guards the fire of home, and on the other hand, the proud queen. She seeks authenticity and her joy of living is profound. She is attentive and receptive towards others. For her, human relationships are more important than seeking independence. She also needs the prestige, respect and honour that marriage brings. Her happiness depends on how much love and respect her husband gives her.

Shadow: jealousy and wounded pride. Jealousy is born from an unhealthy need to possess the other, a sort of illusory power that creates more fears, bitterness and sufferings than joy. When her soul falls into this fearsome trap, she no longer distinguishes the true from the false.

Unfortunately, in our civilization there is little room for the spiritual because the keys of the symbols contained in myths have been lost, and as a result we only see in them promiscuity, revenge and jealousy... But all philosophies speak about a very important aspect of our psyche, the soul, that voice, that feeling we notice sometimes when admiring a beautiful landscape, or a harmonious piece of music, that which we cannot explain but transports us upwards, towards what is eternal and makes us feel part of Nature; for a moment, a special warmth visits our hearts and we stop being ourselves in order to become one with what is around us. In those moments we are in touch with our deepest ideals and dreams about goodness, beauty and justice.

The real achievement of the human being is to discover his inner being, his soul, that energy that can be supported by matter, but has at the same time the ability to elevate itself towards the great ideals and dreams. To do this, women need to accept themselves as they are and not lose their multiple identity. We are not only mothers or wives, we are also lovers, heroines, educators, doctors, housewives, artists...

We need to begin by developing an altruistic morality that gives without expecting anything in return. We need to accept that we are all different, and consequently we perceive things in different ways. To learn to listen, to show real interest in others, looking for what brings us closer rather than what separates us: this is what will help us make progress in the art of communication.

According to the mythologist Joseph Campbell, what is essential is that women give birth to something, whether it be a body, a soul, a society or a civilization; and if woman is not given the opportunity to give life, she will lose the reason for her existence.