

Following the steps of the dark Goddess:

A journey of cleaning bones, initiation and putting the dead to sleep



*In this fascinating account, Fotoula Adrimi, shamanic teacher and practitioner, narrates her experiences with the dark Goddess in three of her manifestations across the ancient world: from the Greek tradition, Hekate teaches Fotoula about ancestral healing in the dark moon, then Isis takes her on a pilgrimage of initiation to the Great Pyramid of Egypt and finally, Celtic Caillieach Bhearra merges with her to remove curses and liberate the souls of the dead. From childhood, Fotoula has been able to see, hear and feel spiritual beings. Within her she carries a shamanic lineage from ancient Greece, and in 2005 Fotoula answered a calling by training in the healing arts. Following a meandering path towards wholeness, she has studied with western and indigenous teachers as well as connecting with her own roots. In 2013 she founded The ISIS School of Holistic Health in Glasgow, Scotland and has just published her first book: *The Golden Book of Wisdom: ancient spirituality and shamanism for modern times.**

It is 2005 and I sit cross-legged in my back room to start my Reiki self-healing practice. Before I can stop myself, an invocation comes out of my mouth in ancient Greek: “Hekate, Goddess of the Underworld.” In a vision, I see myself sitting at twilight on soft grass, in front of an altar laid on the ground. A terracotta vessel, filled with dark liquid, invites me to look into its depths. The full moon rises in the sky and I become aware of a light breeze flowing through the dark veils that cover my body. Young as I may be, I am dressed as the chirai, the widows.



Hekate, Goddess of the Underworld.

The vision disappears as quickly as it arrives, leaving me with more questions than answers. I have no knowledge of Hekate. I have just completed a Reiki 1 training. What has just happened? I try to remember some details but they are fleeting, like water running through my fingers. The vision is gone and I cannot get it back. I feel a sense of loss. Somehow I know this vision was important.

Life takes over and the vision of Hekate settles into one of the cupboards of my mind, gathering dust. Unbeknownst to me the winds of change have been gathering pace. Transformation into a healer and shamanic teacher is the result; a process that continues to unfold. I travel the globe guided by my inner voice and a thirst for spiritual wisdom. Then back in Scotland, circumstances

contrive for me to participate in a Celtic workshop. During the course we work with Cailleach Bhearra, otherwise known as the auld crone.

Meeting Hekate: ancestral healing

It is now early morning and I am still asleep. The crone appears in my dreams, an old lady dressed in black. She thanks me for remembering her after such a long time, but I say to her we had just met the day before, on the workshop. She ignores me and says, "I am known in many lands with many names. In the land you were born, my name is Ekati (Hekate). Call me with this name." I wake up with her invocation on my lips: "Hekate, Goddess of the Underworld."

Hekate talks to me of the old women, the chirai, the Priestesses of the Moon, who gathered the bones of those who had passed. In a shamanic journey, she takes me to the Cauldron of Rebirth and I see my own skeleton boiling in the water. The skeleton is fairly clean, the bones sparkling white. Then she adds the bones of my ancestors, many of them, women, men and children, born and unborn, whose bones I was, unknowingly, carrying. "In the dark moon," says the crone, "clean the bones of your ancestors."

The crone puts the bones on my back and I feel the weight of them. I meet with her again on many dark moons and we spend months cleaning the bones, forgiving, apologising and letting go, boiling them in ritual, to remove the heavy karma. Slowly the bones become cleaner and, surprisingly, my family and I feel lighter. With the timely arrival of my nephew, joy and harmony enter our lives. The lineage continues, the ancestors live again and walk the Earth through us. The crone and I sit back like two old ladies who have finished their housework for the day.

Flying on the wings of Isis: A pilgrimage of initiation

Hekate reminds me of a time in my childhood when I was fascinated by a black statue of Isis. Ancient Egypt had captivated my imagination. Isis herself had appeared through Mother Mary, in her form as the black Madonna, holding the Divine child.

Isis enters my dream and calls me to Egypt, known in the ancient world as the land of Khem; the black land. Yet financial circumstances are not favourable. I cannot contemplate a trip abroad at this time and I tell her so. The same day I receive an offer of a contract from my previous boss that pays exactly what I need. I book my flights.

In Egypt I find myself in Sakkara, the ancient cemetery, the land of the dead. It is hot and everyone is looking for shade. We gather around the egyptologist who is describing a ceremony of royal initiation, where the Pharaoh proves his right to rule by killing a bull. A jackal from the desert

approaches and sits quietly by my feet. A woman from the group asks me if I am an animal healer. I say 'no', but I can feel psychically the presence of Isis and Anubis, the jackal-headed god, known as the keeper of the hidden realms.

Inside the Great Pyramid I walk up the great gallery, the stairway to the gods, to the Kings Chamber. I am alone and I cannot feel the presence of the spirit world. Fear knots my stomach, as I continue to climb the steps, each step more uncertain than the one before. Finally, I reach the Kings Chamber and gaze at the empty sarcophagus, the place of initiation. I stay there for a while and then leave. As I walk back down the stairs, psychically I hear sounds being chanted. I chant them out loud and the ancient walls radiate with energy. Fear transforms into ecstasy. A rush of energy flows into my body, opening me up and raising my vibration. My initiation in Egypt is complete. A gift follows that shapes my spiritual life to come; Isis implants in my body a system of spiritual awakening called The Path of ISIS: The Seven Gates of Awareness.



Temple Wood stone circle, Kilmartin Glen, Scotland.

Merging with Cailleach Bhearra and guiding home the souls of the dead

Back in Greece I follow the steps of Hekate in the ancient oracle centres, the places where the dead speak. The Sibyl is no more and the voices of the dead cannot be heard. The living shy away from their presence. The spirits wander the land with no solace. In Scotland I travel to Kilmartin and connect with the

standing stones and the ancestors. Did they have oracles too? Did the souls die peacefully, or do they still walk amongst us? Cailleach Bhearra lifts the veil for me to see battlefields filled with the souls of warriors, long dead. My friend takes me to a 13th century templar chapel. Nothing much remains of the chapel, but the place is heavy with the presence of trapped souls and dark curses.

A local man confirms the site is well known for being haunted. Teenagers dare each other to spend the night in the grounds, but no-one can stay all night and some are plagued by nightmares afterwards.

I gather around me women like me, who have been called to the spiritual work of the ancient ones. We come together to heal the dead, to help them move on and remove the curses from the land. We visit the site but cannot enter. In the dark moon we begin our ceremony. The crone comes and we merge with her spirit in a shamanic trance. We gather the souls who wish to heal and guide them to the other side. We tip the cauldron with its healing waters onto the land. The site is restored, filled with peaceful, harmonious energy. When we visit next day the land welcomes us.

The journey with the dark Goddess continues in my healing and shamanic work. Hekate, Isis and Cailleach Bhearra influence my decision to write about ancient spirituality and shamanism. At the end of 2015 I start work on a book of spiritual learning and inner transformation. Other enlightened spirits join the team: Thoth, and a Christian saint called Dionysius Haeropagitis, amongst others. Through 24 carefully crafted spiritual teachings I capture the essence of the soul's journey, from the human experience into the Divine self. The book, *The Golden Book of Wisdom – ancient spirituality and shamanism for modern times*, is published in April 2018.

For more information about Fotoula Adrimi, her teaching work and book visit:
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