

SACRAL CHAKRA

CELEBRATING SPIRIT, CELEBRATING SELF

'Ma Ferefún Ọṣun'

I give praise to the spirit of love, sexuality, fertility and abundance.

Prayer to the Yorùbá Goddess Ọṣun

THE SACRAL CHAKRA: CORRESPONDENCES

Sanskrit Name	Swadistana: Home of the Self
Meaning	Swa = one's own adisthana = dwelling place
Main Function	Provides a sense of Self. This is the sacred home of 'I'.
Quality	Centring
Location	Sacrum/lower abdomen

Spiritual Correspondences

Colour	Orange
Element	Water

Symbol	Crescent moon
Seed Sound	Vam
Petals	Six
Planet	Moon ☾
Esoteric Anatomy	Level of the gross physical body, which is at least 70 per cent water
Yoga Path	Tantra
Guna Quality	Tamas

Deities

Africa	Hathor, Yemoja, Ọṣun, Nun
Akkadia/Sumeria	Tiamat/Ishtar
India	Rakini, Saraswati, Chandra Devi
Europe	Mary, ¹ Demeter, Aphrodite
Mythology	Creation myths where all life is born from the fertile watery womb

Physical Correspondences

Gland	Gonads: ovaries, testes
Nerve Plexus	Hypogastric plexus
Body Parts	Womb, genitals, kidney, bladder, muscles
Water Energy Triad	Breasts, genitals, feet
Expression	Love and trust in Self. Responsibility to Self
Disturbance	Low Self-worth

Psychological Correspondences

Statement	'I can'
EMOTIONS	
BALANCED	UNBALANCED
All emotion is allowed	Afraid of emotion
Ebb and flow of water energy	Hold on to water/tears
Creates mood changes	Damn up feelings and prevent sacral energy flow
Chronology	1 – 7 years

Rite of Passage

Developing a sense of Self. Leaving the mother to begin school. Blessed by water

Developmental Stage

Developing independence; strong physical presence and body awareness

*Ways of Working***Foods**

Leafy vegetables, salad leaves, cucumber, melon, mushrooms

Herbs

Damanian, Dong Quai, Black haw, Black willow bark

Oils

Clary sage, jasmine, rose, ylang ylang, sandalwood

Gems

Carnelian, amber, orange calcite, coral

Precious Metal

Gold

Main Function: To Know One's Self

When energy is free to move through the root chakra, it automatically flows up into the sacral chakra. The sacral chakra is responsible for emotions, sensation, sexuality, reproduction and creativity. From this centre we connect with our innermost selves. We are sensual, Divine creators, capable of Self-knowledge and wisdom. One function of this chakra is to introduce us to and let us come to know the inner beauty, strength and potential we harbour deep inside. The sacral chakra also governs sexuality and throws forth desire – the desire to share in one of the most beautiful gifts bestowed on us, sexual union. We learn that we can create love, ecstasy and life. The sacral centre offers the opportunity for us to fuse disparate parts of our being: self as individual human and self as Divine Spirit can be joined together in synergy. We thus create Self with a capital S. The more we are able to connect and resonate with the sacral chakra, the stronger is our sense of Self-worth and Self-love. This is not about overdeveloping 'I' at the expense of other people, or becoming egocentric, it is about recognizing Self as a blessed part of the Divine. When we see ourselves as Divine then we are truly ready to see God and the Goddess in everyone.

The sacral chakra is 'the sacred home of I'. We have all at some time asked the questions, 'who am I?' and 'what is my purpose in this life?' Answers to these mysteries can be found deep in the sacral centre. It is through working with this chakra that we come to know our individual beauty, creativity and wisdom. We learn that we belong in this world and that we are welcome here. Each one of us is here for a sacred purpose. According to the Ancients, we each made a pact in the spirit world before entering this incarnation. We agreed to learn certain lessons and carry particular

gifts. Once in the physical realm, we seem to forget the agreements we made. The question of purpose arises because we long to remember. We long to find meaning in our lives. To help us remember, we are constantly guided by the soul. The soul knows the exact path we are to take, the lessons we are to learn and the innate gifts we have to offer. Fear, illness, pain, relationship troubles and all manner of issues are experienced, just so we will learn to question our existence and purpose in this life. Each question directs us towards the very core of our being, where the soul resides. In this core we find the chakras, and in the sacral chakra we find a sense of meaning and inner knowing.

Sacred Sex

The sacral chakra takes its name from the word *sacred*. In medical language this part of the body still maintains its sacredness; the spine in this area is called the sacrum, which literally come from the word sacred. The sacrum and pelvis protect the sexual and reproductive organs.

Sexuality and the ability to reproduce ourselves has been revered since the beginning of time. Women were held in the highest esteem by the Ancients because of our unique ability to give birth. Reverence for women gave rise to many early matriarchal societies. Early spirituality revolved around the Goddess, women's fertility and the fertility of the land. Sexuality was acknowledged as sacred and also respected for its role in reproduction. The life-force and sexual energy were known to be one and the same. Sex is not merely a physical act, but can also become a Divine ritual. In line with the laws of nature, sex can draw energy from the centre of our being out into the universal force-field. Our energy is replenished and returns to the core centre.

Today, sexual energy is misunderstood and abused. Many people no longer enjoy its spiritual significance. Sexual union is a sacred act. When we recognize ourselves as sacred, born from the sacred sexuality of our parents, we realize that sex is a beautiful way of connecting with and raising soul consciousness.

Sexual arousal requires the stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS). The PSNS has a relaxing and cleansing effect on the body, it reduces anxiety and gives way to a sense of calm. Sharing loving touch heightens sensation and nourishes the entire being. Pleasure and sensation are amplified through the sacral chakra. Orgasm is the experience of completely letting go and allowing the body/mind to surrender to the spirit and be flooded with ecstatic energy. All the cells in the body open to receive the Divine elixir and are realigned at the point of ecstasy. Climax is followed by spontaneous relaxation.

Sex can be a great healer. Pioneer of Western body psychotherapy, William Reich, found in his research on bioenergy that sex, and particularly orgasms, were crucial

for the bioelectric current of energy to complete its circuit through the body.² This flow of energy he saw as essential for a healthy body/mind. He was not spiritually oriented, yet his theories relate closely to tantric yoga.

The sacral chakra is the centre of sexuality, responsible for the impulse of pleasure, sensation and sharing. For many people orgasm is the closest they will come to true spiritual bliss.

Celibacy is advocated in some spiritual traditions; this allows the life-force to accumulate in the body. Energy can then be directed up through the chakras, enhancing spiritual experience. Male ejaculation is thought to dissipate the life-force, while for women the life-force can be contained during sex.

Creativity

Like sexuality, creativity springs from the sacral chakra. The impulse to be creative causes us to develop innate personal abilities. Children, given paper and crayons, will have no difficulty drawing. On hearing music they sing and dance. When asked to tell a story their imaginations soar. We were all children once and we still maintain the same creative potential. The creative process is the act of 'bringing something new into being'. It is about communicating with Self and others. If you think back to your childhood you may remember enjoying one or more arts. I loved to dance and to play the piano. Movement and dance have remained priorities for me throughout my life. Learning to play piano is a gift I still intend to give myself. My latest excuse is that I need a good teacher. Writing this is helping me see how I hold back my own creativity. As a child I was not searching for a piano teacher, I just started to play. There is nothing really stopping me. I simply need to allow myself the time and patience to receive this creative gift. What holds you back and stops you singing, dancing, painting, acting, cooking, climbing, and enjoying your unique creativity? Commitment to ourselves is what really stops us. Tuning to the sacral chakra puts us in contact again with Self. That Self is creative. Be a child again, allow yourself time to take paints and enjoy, make music and dance. Like a child, do not look for perfection but take pleasure from the process, enjoy the mess, have fun, and as you do this rekindle your hidden talents and innate creativity.

Creativity can also gratify our desire to be of service to others. We all seek to belong and want to help others. To satisfy this desire, we must identify the gifts bestowed on us by the universe. You have been individually chosen to carry out a particular task for yourself, humanity and the planet. This could be raising the next generation, communicating, healing, making music, dancing, healing the planet, offering love and hope to people – there are so many ways you can be of service. The first step, however, is to observe what really heals you, what really lifts your

spirit and keeps you up when the going gets rough. I sing and I laugh, this keeps me afloat – as long as I stay on the water and not under it I can continue my spiritual practice. Opening to Spirit really keeps me alive and allows me to share the blessings of spirit with others. As we discover our innate gifts and spiritual beauty, we suffer less in life. Suffering will always be present because pain keeps us searching for truth, and truth is found in the centre of our being where the soul resides. Once we recognize the leadership of the soul, we can relax and ask our spirit companions, Ancestors and guides for help. They will help us realign with spirit and identify our soul purpose.

If you are looking to create change in your life you can start right now by simply lighting a candle and saying a prayer. Ask for guidance, to be shown a sign, ask for light to shine from your soul and illuminate your purpose in life. Know your prayers will be answered. Wherever you are right now your soul is moving you towards its purpose. You are protected and ever surrounded by love and golden light.

The watery sacral chakra functions as a place of changing tides, mood swings and rocky emotions. In contrast, the waters of this centre can be still, offering a peaceful and harmonious place of rest. It is said that 'still waters run deep.' This is a very complex centre, connecting us on a personal level to the collective unconscious. Our guides, Ancestors and helpers from the spirit world can meet us here and help us on our journey through the chakras. It is not to be forgotten that this centre is one of the three personal chakras, resonating on a lower frequency than the upper four, universal chakras. It is, however, an extremely powerful chakra; strengthening this centre is essential before we continue our ascent. It is through this chakra that we learn to bring spirit down to earth. It is a centre of union; we learn to express our sexuality, develop creativity and bond the secular Self with the sacred Self, thus raising Self-esteem. We learn through silence to calm the waters and listen to the still small voice within, telling us we are beautiful, Divine beings worthy of love and light.

QUALITY: CENTRING

Centred, between the earth below and the sun above, lies the sacral chakra. The root chakra represents limitation, while the solar plexus chakra represents power and conflict. The sacral centre, amidst the two, can be a place of harmony and stillness. The body's centre of gravity is in the sacral area. It is from this point that we maintain physical balance. Not only is the physical body balanced here, but so are our e-motions. E-motions are movements of energy that we interpret as sad, happy, etc. These movements can be created from external and internal forces. Many hormones are housed in the pelvic region; they flood our system and can cause us to feel

out of balance. We may experience a sense of being overpowered by our e-motions, out of control, constantly tearful or raging for no apparent reason.

Although many fragmented energies can meet at the sacral centre, its matrilineal power has the ability to nurture and heal the disparate parts of Self, making us whole again. The sacral chakra is therefore also an e-motional centre of gravity, a space where we can find balance and come into our centre. It is a place where we can be nourished and experience wholeness. From this sense of wholeness we are in a position to move forward. Being centred is the ability to stay in, or move from, a place of quiet wisdom.

The sacral chakra provides balance and equilibrium in relationships. When we are centred we act with response-ability. The root chakra is concerned with survival, and therefore acts mostly on impulse. The primary motivation for the solar plexus is maintaining power and can cause aggressive responses. Amid the two, the sacral chakra processes information which balances survival with the fiery will. A harmonious response is then delivered which takes into account variables, such as Self, others and the universe. Becoming centred requires an inner stillness which allows the body/mind to tap its potential for self-regulation. We cannot force the moon to be full, but if we wait patiently, sure enough the fullness of the moon will eventually be seen. The cosmic programme is already set in process. The same can be said of us (as above so below); there is a larger harmonious plan, already set in motion. It is when we stop and yield to this plan, even for a few moments, that the moon becomes full for us, and in its shining light we begin to see that which was previously masked.

We cannot force clarity; instead, by being centred and patient, we can tune to the universe and what it has in store for us. We can make suggestions in our prayers; it is good to let it be known what you want from this life, but essentially when this is done we need only be centred and let the will of the Goddess be achieved.

GODDESS OF THE LUNAR CHAKRA

The feminine sacral centre with its sensuality, beauty and flowing waters can be likened to the Goddess, the female Supreme Being, the all-powerful one with a thousand names. Patriarchy is responsible for alienating the Goddess, who was originally one with God. There are numerous Goddess archetypes, which relate to many different feminine qualities. These qualities are found in women and gentle-men. It is as important for men to resonate with the feminine lunar chakra as with the masculine solar (crown) chakra.

The Goddess of the moon is closely associated with the sacral chakra, which I also call the lunar chakra or, in Sanskrit, chandra chakra. The moon has been

worshipped since the beginning of time. Numerous myths view the moon as the original creatress, the bright shining lady of the sky who existed alone in primordial time, until she eventually grew lonely and created the world and all life existing on it.³ The moon is also accredited with the power to destroy and has been named 'the home of the dead' by the Greeks.⁴ The same people believed the female Yoni (vagina and womb) was not only a gateway through which life begins, but also a passageway through which the soul returns to the stars. The moon was believed to have the ability to devour people, particularly men. Thus what began as pagan worship of the moon Goddess and sacred yoni turned to fear of both the moon and women's sexuality. This same fear penetrates Western society today, and all women exposed to patriarchy suffer its consequences.

Feeling our Goddess nature and really delighting in the lunar chakra can be difficult for women. Western society does not readily permit us to enjoy self-esteem, self-love, sexuality and women power. Powerful women, particularly those who remain aware of their sexuality, threaten the patriarchy we now live under. To rise above these difficulties we need to become familiar with 'the Goddess' who is all-embracing. All women and gentle-men can identify with and honour at least one Goddess. As familiarity with your choice of Goddess increases, let those of her qualities that are innate in you grow. Afford yourself the same love, respect and honour, for the Goddess is within you. All the Goddesses are within you. You are the Goddess. Again, this is not the ego speaking and must not be confused with ego. This is acknowledging your Divinity and empowering the spirit within. You may be residing in a physical body, but you are more than flesh and blood, you are more than thoughts and actions. You need not be afraid to accept that you are in essence Divine Spirit, ever part of and ever connected to the creatress.

The Goddess of the lunar chakra represents matter and spirit combined, thus creating balance. She is round and voluptuous, embodying a beautiful, gentle fullness. Grace and fluidity sway in her movements. Her beauty is not merely physical but encompasses a mind of wisdom, intuition and truth. She inspires moral justice and is the maker of love, which she gladly encourages. She is obedient to natural law, holding life, her creation, in the highest esteem. Creative energy springs from her waters, giving you the potential to express yourself through art, laughing and loving. When energy flows freely through your sacral chakra, you can access the Goddess nature which resides within.

Are you ready to realize your beauty? Ready to feel the Goddess flowing inside you, ready to rejoice in her wonders? Are you ready to see your reflection in the waters of your soul? You are beautiful, we are all beautiful beings. Can you take and give compliments? If someone says 'you look great', do you say 'thank you' and

know they are right, or do you say 'Oh! This dress is only cheap,' reducing your Self to a cheap dress? The sacral chakra asks that you recognize your beauty in all its wondrous forms. When you feel low and unworthy, with other people's needs seeming to take priority over your own; when self-love and respect are lacking in your life, it is time to stop for a moment and resonate through the sacral chakra with the lunar Goddess.

The all-knowing, all-powerful Goddess of the lunar chakra has been with you since the beginning, she knows your strengths and weakness. She has answers for all your questions and surrounds you with light to help you see. She knows you are a Divine Spirit and returns you to that knowledge.

Element: Water

The sacred qualities of water are very apparent to us. People travel great distances to be close to the sea, or to visit hot springs and holy wells. Sunday afternoon strolls often take place by streams and rivers. Being close to water creates a gentle, calm feeling which most of us are familiar with. Water flows and soothes, nourishes and cleanses. The healing quality of water is as obvious to us now as it was to the Ancients. Water is a friend to all. She is held sacred and equated with peace in African traditional religions, because she maintains all life and therefore has no enemies.

Water promotes fertility and life. Creation myths abound, telling us how life springs forth from the watery abyss. We are each nourished and birthed from a watery womb. Fertility, reproductive organs, blood, semen, sexuality, emotion and self-image are all under the control of the water element. Rivers need to maintain their flow; likewise, water energy needs to move unrestricted through the body. Blood carries nutrients to cells and organs; it also removes waste products. Without enough circulation of blood and body fluids, stagnation and disease soon set in. If the emotions become dammed up, anxiety and tension greatly increase; this leads to stress, which we know can cause all manner of ailments, from backache to cancer. As we accept feelings of pleasure and pain, we allow the sacred waters to cascade deep inside. This movement of water stimulates spirituality and sexuality – both have the power to lift our spirits, refreshing and rebalancing the entire system.

As water flows through the body she awakens the senses and e-motions. Once awake, our senses seek gratification. The out-going motion of water provides the impetus that helps us become creative. We desire to please the senses, searching for food, beauty, sweet smells, lovers and pleasing sounds – all of which we can create and enjoy. The return movement to the core of our being carries pleasure as the senses are satiated.

Aside from motion, water energy is also responsible for stillness. As the waters within us still, the potential arises for reflection. We see our true spiritual nature in the depth of still waters.

The waters within can become turbulent when our desires are not met. Self-image suffers and we can sink in an emotional sea of our own making. Too much water energy, and quickly our emotions begin gushing out all over, creating changeable moods and depression. Other people's problems can overwhelm the watery person, who absorbs the troubles of the world. The addition of fire or earth energy will spur the individual into action, while water alone only causes saturation. Sensitivity to others, and poor personal boundaries, often allow watery people to be taken advantage of. On the other hand, the watery person also uses emotion to manipulate others.

Too little water energy can reduce the desire for sensual stimulation and creativity. A person lacking water energy may lead a rigid and overly analytic lifestyle, operating from the head, with little awareness of the body. For many people, Descartes was right when he said, 'I think, therefore I am.' The thinking mind takes precedence over intuition and the watery feeling sense.

Water is the greatest of healers: it purifies the body, clarifies feelings and enriches the spirit. When used well, water energy is truly a friend.

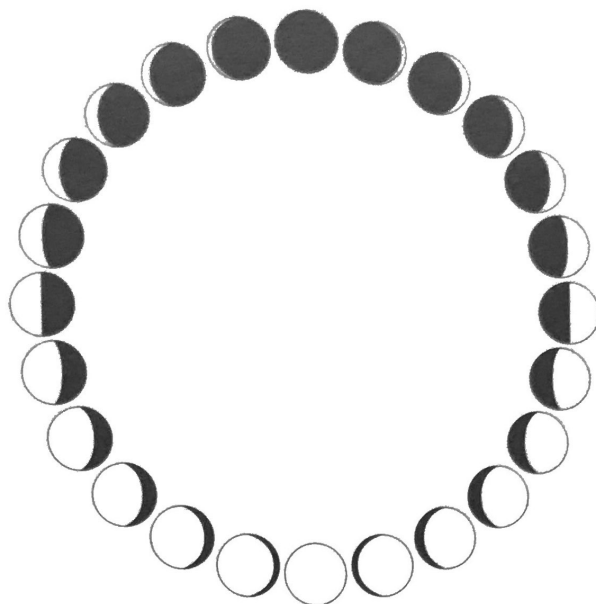
The globe consists of about 70 per cent water, as does the human body. These waters respond to the magnetic pull of the moon. It is well known that the moon's gravitational force creates motion on the seas, in the form of waves and tides. It is also known that our feelings and emotions respond to the moon's pull; hence the word 'lunatic'. Research shows that more accidents take place at the time of the full moon. Perhaps this is because we have stopped honouring the moon and recognizing her movement in the waters of our being.

Planet: Moon ☾

She maketh all Beautiful on which she smiles...

When looking into the moon's face, we see our own beauty reflected back. We see the creatress in whose image we are made. The moon is the great mother Goddess of the night sky. Her triune nature is to create, destroy and recreate. We see this in her dance, as she waxes and wanes, brightening the sky at full moon and leaving us in darkness before the new moon. The moon changes; as we follow her cycle, our moods change in rhythm with hers. For women, this is most evident in the menstrual cycle, where hormone levels wax and wane. Ovulation is akin to the fertile full

moon,' whilst the progesterone-rich waning period brings darkness, out of which a new moon is born, carrying the potential of new life.



For 14 days the waxing moon swells towards her fullness, on the 15th day. These days are akin to the first half of the menstrual cycle, when the female egg ripens and prepares for ovulation. The 14 days of the waning moon represent the second half of the menstrual cycle, which carries the potential for new life.

When a new life incarnates, the sun keeps this life connected to spirit; earth supplies a physical body; the moon is responsible for providing it with a personality and a soul. 'Receptacle of souls' is a name of the moon, because she is seen to rule over reincarnation, creating a continuum between death and rebirth. When a soul leaves the earth, it goes out with the sea's tide and returns to the moon. The moon absorbs that soul in her brightness. In conjunction with the soul she chooses who or what it will be in the next life. Lessons to be learned are also agreed at this stage. She then provides the soul with the personality it needs for its journey and rebirths it, sending it back to earth with the incoming tide. She holds the power to create individuals, allowing each one to express uniqueness. When she returns us to earth, she imbues us with the potential to know everything that was, is, and ever shall be. This is the great power the moon has and shares with us.

Many people are afraid of this lunar knowledge, preferring to close down their intuition and stay with the scientific and rational. We should listen at all times and respect this intuitive wisdom, because it is the collective knowledge of all the ages. The moon's receptive, female energy relates to the individual soul; whereas the

masculine sun relates to universal spirit. The moon herself is the soul of humanity; she holds within her secrets the collective unconscious and the entire ancestral records. The sacral chakra houses the soul and resonates with the moon's force. The sacral centre, therefore, also provides access to the collective unconscious and ancestral records. We can readily tune to this part of our unconscious and feel a strong sense of connection to those who went before us. This happens sometimes - we seem to just know something, and credit it to 'women's intuition'.

The moon gives us our personality, supplying the energy with which we relate to others. When we resonate strongly with the moon's force, we are receptive to others and have many friends and easily create prosperous opportunities. If we do not have the moon on our side, we may have identity problems and low self-esteem; we may merge with others, going with the flow to such an extent that we drown in a sea of other people's desires and expectations.

It is useful to know where the moon is situated in your astrological birth chart. This is as important to know as your sun sign. It will tell you whether or not your moon is situated in a place of exaltation, which is a strong position, or a place of challenge. Wherever she rests, we can all learn to harness the moon's energy, strengthen the sacral chakra and enhance our connection to the universe.

MOON MEDITATIONS

Meditation is an excellent way of attuning yourself to the cycles of the moon. Try to get yourself a lunar calendar and follow the dance of the moon in the night skies. Watch the new moon as she emerges from the darkness and waxes towards her fullness before waning again into darkness. The three main phases of the moon provide inspiration for meditation.

Dark Moon Meditation

This is a time of replenishment, cleansing and healing. The moon is taking her rest and preparing for creation. In the darkness the seed of potential is planted. Take time to focus on what is changing your life. What do you need to put to rest? What do you have no further use of? As you look into the darkness of the sky, know that whatever you want to create is already taking root.

New Moon Meditation

The new moon brings creation and rebirth. Light is seen again in the dark night sky. This is the time to focus on what is emerging in your life. What secrets does the new moon hold for you? Listen to the energy in your sacral centre, awaken the lunar Goddess and ask for her blessing as you begin new projects and honour your own unique creativity.

Full Moon Meditation

The radiant full moon resonates with ovulation and fertility. This is a reaping phase, when the mature egg in its fullness is released, ready to become. You can take this time to celebrate your achievements throughout the past month. List them one by one, giving thanks to the lunar Goddess for each. Under the moon's light be still, absorb her powerful energy and feel her glorious beauty. Know that you and the moon are one.

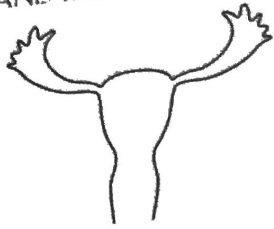
Deities

Goddesses of water, sensuality and love rule the sacral chakra. They guard earth's watery realms and women's fertile wombs, creating tides and mood swings. Water Goddesses are found in all traditions, presiding over love, beauty, creativity and prosperity. In the depths of your waters lies a beautiful, intelligent, sensuous, Goddess. She awaits your call, ready and eager to amplify grace, love and riches in your life.

HATHOR (HET HERU)

Hathor is one of the most ancient deities of Egypt. A Goddess of fertility, who is mother to all Gods and Goddesses and queen of heaven. Hathor is depicted as the cow Goddess, and in human form she is seen wearing cow horns on her head. The shape of these horns resembles the shape of both the moon and the female reproductive organs. Hathor is also the Goddess of knowledge and wisdom. She is the female counterpart of the great God Thoth. Her patronage of the arts, dancing and merry-making are well documented. This beautiful and sensuous Goddess, whose own rhythm resembled that of the rising and falling of the Nile river, can be invoked regarding all issues of the sacral chakra.

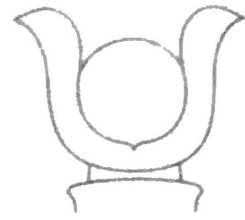
THE CREATIVE WOMB AND FALLOPIAN TUBES



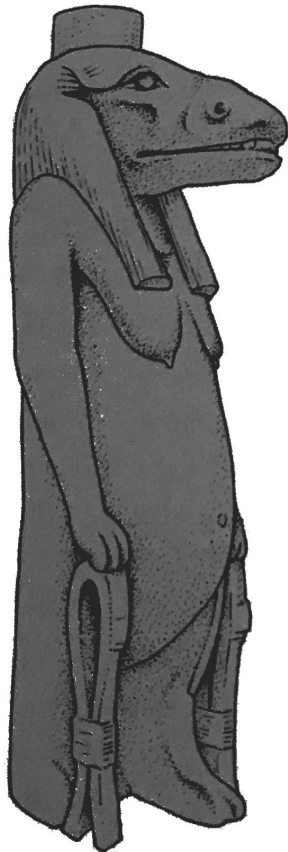
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BIRD GODDESS



SYMBOL OF HATHOR



The regenerative quality of the sacral chakra is seen in each of these three related images. The ancient Egyptians' skill in embalming meant they had a very detailed knowledge of anatomy. Hence the creative womb and Fallopian tubes may have inspired these early images of the bird Goddess. Hathor wears two crescent moons embracing the sun on her head-dress. These moons resemble the horn-like arms of the ancient bird Goddess. Her arms open out and assume a position that looks very much like the female reproductive organs. In ancient Egypt the Ba (Soul) was depicted as a bird (the stork) – hence the popular myth that new babies – returning souls – are carried to earth by a stork. Again we see a relationship between a bird, the creative womb, and the regenerative quality of the sacral chakra.

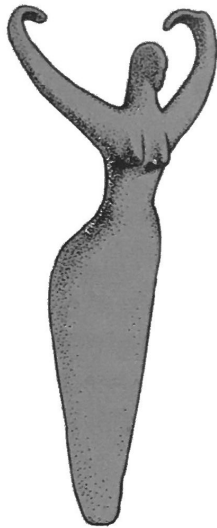


Taueret

TAUERET

Taueret is the ancient Egyptian Goddess of maternity and childbirth. She takes the form of a female hippopotamus, with large breasts. As a protectress of pregnant and feeding women, Taueret was sometimes depicted with the head of a roaring lion. Her energy can be called on to guard all pregnant women, especially those experiencing difficulty, from negative forces.

ỌṢUN
 Ọṣun, the glamorous river Goddess of the Yorùbá people, is one of Africa's most powerful and loved deities. Sweet, flirtatious and erotic, Ọṣun is seducing the world and gaining an international reputation. No party or festival is complete without the energy of Ọṣun. She is the force behind the arts, music, dancing and all forms of creativity. Ọṣun is in charge of conception and birth; once her children are born, she allows her sister, the Goddess Yemoja (*see page 157*) to mother them, freeing her to create wealth, which she is very good at. She also holds the power to see the future by reading the oracle with 16 cowrie shells. If elegance, prosperity, power and femininity are what you seek, then Ọṣun is the Goddess to ask.



One of the earliest known forms of Goddess. This ancient Egyptian bird Goddess is also known as Nator.⁶

TIAMAT (NUN IN EGYPT, THE PRIMORDIAL OCEAN)

Tiamat is the Babylonian Sea Goddess from whose formless body the universe was created. Tiamat's first creation was a pair of serpents, called Lakhmu and Lakhmu. Tension between the serpents created the celestial realms above and the terrestrial realm below. This separation caused a loss of harmony which upset Tiamat and caused her wrath. Soon all her creation was in chaos. Marduk, son of Tiamat, turned on his mother and divided her body into many pieces. Having slain his mother he then took credit for her creation.

ISHTAR

Ishtar is the great Goddess of the heavens. She is the bright, shining star of morning and night. In her dual aspect, Ishtar is both a Goddess of love and a mighty warrior. She has the power to conquer over death. Ishtar enters the underworld and descends

the seven steps to face Erishnigal, the Goddess of death. In her absence, plant, animal and human fertility ceases. Eventually the all-powerful Ishtar is released and rises again to restore fertility. If you deny your Self, and seem afraid of your own power and beauty, then tune to the healing energy of the Goddess Ishtar. She will bring strength and Self-knowledge.



Ishtar, the Great Mother Goddess, was worshipped in relation to the morning and evening stars, hence her name. This ancient Babylonian Goddess was known as Astar to the Ethiopians, Astarte to the Phoenicians, Ashtart to the Caananites, and Esther to the Israelites.

RAKINI

Rakini is the emergence of Shakti in the sacral chakra, known as Rakini Shakti to the Dravidians. Rakini rocks the emotions, bringing both pleasure and pain. She bears in her four hands the arrow of erotic love, the skull – symbolizing romance and the emotions ruling the head – an axe, showing her warrior nature and ability to cut through all obstacles, and a drum that beats the rhythm of time. Rakini is also honoured for her music and art.

SARASWATI

Saraswati is the ancient river Goddess of India. She sits on a lotus flower (symbol of the chakras) and plays the vina (classical Indian stringed instrument). Goddess of knowledge, wisdom and the arts, Saraswati is attributed with creating the Sanskrit alphabet and language. This suggests she is older than her husband, the God Brahma. Saraswati has a fine intellect aided by intuition and a love of the arts. For help with exams and academic work, Saraswati can provide the balance that is needed for success.

CHANDRA DEVI

Chandra is Sanskrit for moon, and Devi for Goddess. Chandra Devi, then, is Goddess of the moon, the beautiful Divine mother. 'Devi' is often added to the name of women in India as a form of respect and recognition of the Goddess within.

MARY

Mary is the biblical universal mother, modelled on Isis, Ishtar, Aphrodite and other ancient Goddesses. Patriarchy stripped Mary of her Goddess nature and she became 'just a mother'. Do you recognize this expression? Yes, Mary was the first. Her fate has had a detrimental effect on women. Her status as an all-powerful Supreme Being needs to be restored. If you identify with Mary, then raise her and yourself up. See her embodied with the essence of the other sacral Goddesses, like Yemoja, who have never lost their power.

DEMETER

Demeter is the ancient Greek Goddess of fertility and motherhood. She symbolizes the creative energy of nature, which bears fruit and corn in spring. It is her joy at being reunited with her daughter Persephone that brings abundance to the earth. When Persephone returns to the underworld in autumn, Demeter's grief leaves the earth bare. Demeter knows the pain of a mother's loss and can be called on in times of despair.

APHRODITE

The Greek Goddess Aphrodite is associated with Hathor and Ọṣun. She personifies love, wisdom and sexuality. Her name means 'foam risen', one who comes from the sea. She delights in sexual activity and creates a bond between lovers. In her time sex was considered sacred. The power of Aphrodite was much sought after by the Gods.

Mythology

THE GODDESS YEMOJA

Yemoja is Goddess of the seven seas, and she has as many aspects to her character. Affectionately called 'mami tutu', mother of the water, from her womb-like waters the earth is born, as we are born from the watery womb of our beloved mothers. Yemoja is mother to all that exists, and guardian of all seven chakras.

She is mother to Olókun, with whom she shares ownership of water. When upset by the Ọrìshà or by people, Yemoja rages and begins taking over land. She can

be placated with prayer and offerings of watermelon, her favourite fruit. Once appeased she quickly retreats. Although capable of destruction, Yemoja is happier giving life.

She is the beautiful, fertile, loving, maternal Goddess of the ocean. As she dances the lacy white ruffles of her turquoise skirt are seen as waves on the silver sea. Her curly black hair, which shines on the seabed, is the nutritious food, seaweed. Yemoja's treasure consists of many shells which reflect her beauty. The most precious is the cowrie shell, used to carry messages from the Òrìshà to beings on earth. When Yemoja walks on earth fountains and springs are born from her breasts. Rivers emerge that flow back to the sea, guided by Yemoja's sister, Òṣun.

Yemoja birthed the sun, moon and stars after a passionate affair with Olódùmarè. In thanks for the priceless children Yemoja produced, Olódùmarè gave her Ochumare, the seven-coloured rainbow, to wear on her head.

All women and gentle-men embody seven aspects of the Goddess Yemoja's character – the ability to express:

- ☉ beauty
- ☉ sensuality
- ☉ fertility and creativity
- ☉ motherhood/parenting
- ☉ turbulent emotions
- ☉ dance, allowing energy to flow through the sacrum
- ☉ treasures, including the seven-coloured rainbow of the chakras.

Expression

When energy is permitted to flow freely, through the sacral chakra, the essence of the Goddess will be present. If energy moves easily in your sacral centre you will know and experience:

- a connection with the Goddess
- Self-knowledge
- how to be centred
- a sense of peacefulness and harmony
- love and trust in your Self
- beauty within and around you
- empathy and concern for others
- a positive Self-image
- confidence
- inner security
- independence
- a balanced ego

your emotions easily roused
being able to cry easily
positive feelings about your body
sensuality
regular, pain-free menstruation
sexuality as sacred
the bliss of orgasm
well-functioning reproductive organs
creativity
the pleasure of the senses.

Disturbance

When energy is restricted in the sacral chakra you will feel:

a need for constant reassurance
extremely shy and lacking in self-confidence
that other people's opinions are more valuable than your own
insecure and jealous of others
manipulative
very emotional and over-sensitive
indecisive
a need for constant entertainment and sensual pleasures, possibly overindulging
in food, sweets, chocolate, drink and unsatisfying sexual activity.

You may also:

find it hard to be alone
harbour a sense of inadequacy.

Physically, insufficient energy in the sacral centre can cause:

cystitis
kidney problems
low libido and lack of interest in sex
cancer
prostate trouble
lower back pain
gynaecological problems
fertility problems
period pains and irregularities
problems during pregnancy and childbirth.

The sacral chakra, as the name suggests, is the sacred home of the Self. Energy emanating from this centre connects you to the Goddess within, enabling you to resonate with her creative power and exquisite beauty. To realize your own beauty, in the broadest sense of the word, is the lesson of this chakra. Once you truly recognize beauty in yourself, you see it all around: in nature, in others, even in those who wrong you. You enjoy the company of others, expressing love and knowing friendship.

As you increase the energy that flows through your pelvis, the mystery of sacred sexuality will be revealed to you. Your fertility and creativity will be enhanced. In Western countries many people, women especially, tend to restrict movement through the pelvis. This is a direct result of the many distorted views about sex and the prevalence of abusive behaviour. As you walk, the spine should be upright and the hips should swing. On the African continent and in many countries, women walk tall, balancing heavy items on their heads perfectly, with the weight evenly distributed through the spine and into the hips, which sway easily as they walk. A rigid pelvis is not a healthy one. Self-esteem, creativity, your emotional Self and all the pelvic organs suffer when you limit energy in the sacral centre. If your sacral energy is limited, the work below will be of great benefit. If your energy flows well, your connection to the Goddess within will be enhanced and maintained.

SEVEN WAYS OF OPENING TO SPIRIT AT THE SACRAL CHAKRA

Altar Work

Your altar for the sacral chakra needs to resonate with feminine watery energy. As you prepare to change your altar from earth (root chakra) to water (sacral chakra), remember to give thanks. Take time to acknowledge all you received from the earth. Be aware of the healing and growth you achieved during your earth energy work, and feel the enhanced flow of energy through your root chakra.

Sense the energy of water as you begin to prepare your new altar. Drink some water and feel it as it moves slowly around your mouth, into your throat, through your oesophagus into your stomach. Taste is the sense associated with the sacral chakra, so really be aware of how water itself tastes.

The colour of the sacral centre is orange, so use an orange-coloured natural cloth (cotton or silk) on your altar. Greeny-blue shades of water are alternative colours for your altar base. Reserve this cloth for use on your altar only.

Place four orange candles in the cardinal directions. Use sweet-smelling incense or essential oils such as ylang ylang, jasmine and rose. Fill your space with the soft smell of the Goddess. Put fresh spring water in a central position.

Orange-coloured gems are used to raise the sacral chakra vibration. Carnelian, amber and orange calcite can all be used; you may know of others. Add shells; they are gems of the sea which carry the voice of water energy. Take a walk along a beach and see which shells speak to you. Take them home for your altar; remember to thank Yemoja, otherwise you are stealing her jewels.

The sacral chakra is about coming home and meeting your higher Self. It is about generating self-esteem and inner beauty, and learning to express yourself sexually and creatively. Let your altar emanate beauty. Buy flowers, special candles, beautiful vessels for water. Splash out, you deserve the best. Know that what you give to the Goddess with love and trust in the universe, will return to you tenfold.

Journal-keeping

BODY MAP

This is a useful technique for increasing body awareness. Read the text through once first, and then practise with your eyes closed.

Begin by sitting comfortably, or lie down if you prefer. Be aware of your breath, its depth, which body parts move? Where does each breath reach? As you breathe, what happens to your feet, head, hands, etc.? Scan your body inside and out.

Now move your attention into your body and feel each part from inside. Start at your feet and work upwards. Be aware of any tightness, tension or pain. Feel the temperature of different parts. You may sense tingling or pins and needles. Are there any areas with little or no sensation? Stay still for a while and develop a visual map of your body.

When you feel ready, get up and take some time to draw a map of your body. It can be realistic or abstract. One way is to draw an outline first and then fill in the different parts as you see and feel them. This is not art in the classic sense of the word, so feel free to explore without judging yourself. When you have finished drawing, reflect on your body map and write a few key words – words that come to you quickly will be the most useful. Take as much time as you need. Remember to date your work – this is how you feel today.

Which parts of your body do you like and dislike? What do you love about your

body? Where do you see your beauty manifested physically? How does your drawing reflect how you feel about yourself? There is of course no separation between body image and Self-image. Whatever you create on paper is an unfolding of your beautiful and unique Self.

Yoga Path

TANTRA YOGA

The ancient science and art of tantra,⁷ created by the original people of India, is the mother of yoga. She birthed many paths of yoga, including hatha, bhakti (devotion to deities), Kundalini and nada (yoga of sound). She also created many vehicles for spiritual development, such as mandalas, mudras (hand gestures)⁸ and rituals. Ayurvedic medicine – herbs, massage, breathing practices and elaborate methods of non-invasive diagnosis – is the child of tantra. Indian astrology – understanding the influence of the celestial realms – also claims tantra as a parent. The chakra system, with which we are now working, evolves directly from tantra.



Limestone carving of the Indian Serpent Goddess Kundalini

The Sanskrit word *tantra* means to expand and liberate. Shiva and Shakti are the male and female polarities of being. Shiva is the inanimate primordial source of pure undifferentiated energy. Shakti is the potent life-giving force which animates all energy. We embrace within ourselves Shiva and Shakti, the source and the force. Tantra aims to expand and liberate these energies, in order to create spiritual union. We each hold the potential to know and fully express both our male and female energies.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who is a leading exponent on all aspects of yoga and tantra, says:

Tantra aims to transform every action of life into a ritual, so that the individual performs every action and thought with a feeling of worship and awareness.⁹

For the tantra yogi, everything is a manifestation of the almighty Goddess Shakti. When Shakti moves she awakens the God Shiva; they are one. There is no separation between the worldly and the spiritual, because Shakti is everywhere and everything. Tantra is a system of pleasure, excitement and joy. It challenges us to raise our awareness within the world to such a degree that we are able, through the manifest, to recognize the un-manifest, through the worldly to see the spiritual. We are invited to journey through the chakras, developing our unique Selves towards universal Beings.

Tantra seeks to expand and liberate all aspects of life, including the powerful sexual energy. Sexuality and the sexual act are not dismissed in tantra. They are, however, only one aspect of tantra. We live in a time and a society that has lost respect for the sacredness of sexuality. Sex has become abused, misrepresented, repressed and distorted. Tantra takes us back to a time when sexuality was not separated from other aspects of life, a time when both women and sexuality were revered. Tantra is not limited to sex, it is a **science and art for living**.

Tantra contains numerous practices and rituals for developing ourselves holistically. It has many levels through which it can be understood. This interpretation is brief and seemingly basic, but if you can incorporate this understanding of tantra into your life and truly transform each thought and action into ritual, then you will achieve the highest heights and greatest rewards right here, now, on earth.

Every day when you wake, give thanks for the gift of another new day, another opportunity to shine. As you meet the elements, say a prayer. They are with you all day – water as you bathe, fire as you cook and keep warm, the earth that always supports your movements, the air that allows you to breathe. We are truly blessed. To practise tantra yoga is to cease taking life for granted and begin to glory in the simple pleasures and joys of life. How much happier you will be when to breathe is recognized as a gift. How rich you become when food is a blessing from the Gods.

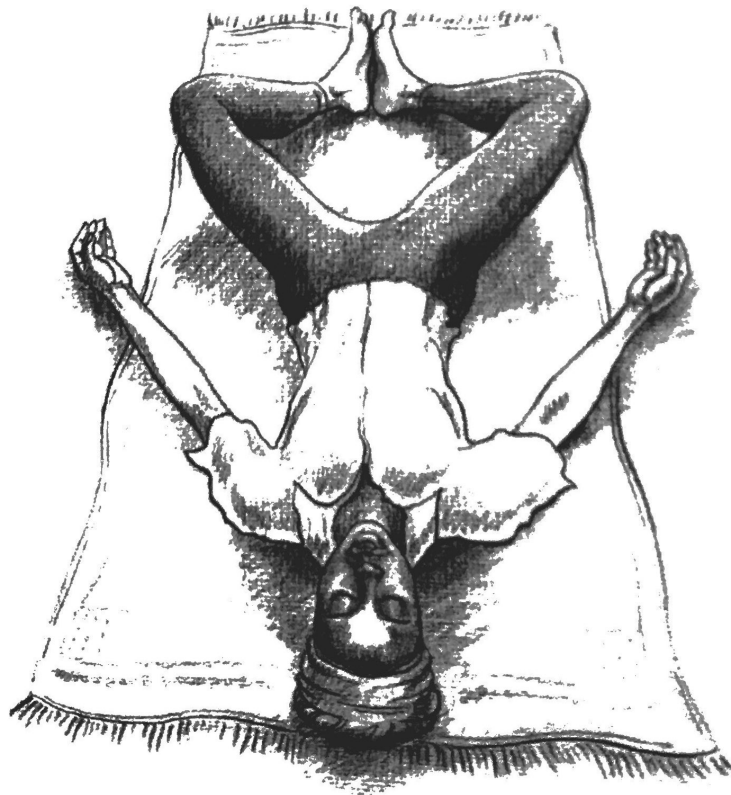
How full of love and grace you will feel when sexual union regains its sacredness. As all aspects of your life take on a spiritual significance, you will begin to slow down, stress will not hold you so tightly in its grip and Divine consciousness will grow inside you.

The lesson to be learned from tantra yoga is expanded awareness. We can embrace the very essence of tantra through honouring and celebrating ourselves, those around us and the world we live in every moment of the day. Through tantra you can grow to celebrate the unique unfolding of your life.

Mindful Exercise

DEVIASANA (GODDESS POSE)

Lie on your back with your legs stretched out. Then, bring your heels towards your pelvis, put the soles of your feet together and let your knees fall out to the sides. Relax in this pose, allowing energy to flow freely through your pelvis into your legs, and from your legs into your pelvis. Enjoy the sensation as energy floods your pelvis. Breathe deeply into your pelvis and hold the posture for 5 minutes or as long as is comfortable for you. Relax, with legs outstretched, then return to the pose. Repeat three times.



Deviasana (Goddess Pose)

EXERCISE TO CENTRE ENERGY

Sunrise

This can be done kneeling or standing.

Kneeling position – sit on your heels, your legs tucked under you, your spine erect. Rest your palms on your knees.

Standing position – feet hip-width apart; your body is upright, hips and shoulders are open, creating space across your chest and pelvis. Relax your arms at your sides.

From the position of your choice, take a deep breath. Feel contact with the earth on which you rest. Let go of any tightness, focusing your mind on the rhythm of your breath. Bring your focus to the centre of your body – 2 inches (5 cm) below the navel. This is where the sacral chakra, or Hara in martial arts, resides.

From this point of focus, visualize energy moving up through your belly, your chest, around your shoulders and along your arms to your hands. Feel the sensation in your hands.

Maintaining the focus and sensation of energy, inhale and begin slowly to raise your arms up in front of you. Lift them above your head, and turn your palms away from your ears. As you exhale, slowly lower your arms, taking them out to your sides as if drawing an arc. Remain sitting on your knees and rest for a moment.

Repeat three to seven times. Pay attention to your breath, open your body and feel the movement of energy inside. Imagine you are on a mountaintop and the air around you is fresh and full of life-giving prana. Take that prana into your centre and let it radiate through every part of your being.

This simple movement brings you in touch with the power of your own centre. It allows you to change consciousness at will. Extremely useful in stressful situations, it is calming, balancing and centring.

Butterfly Walk

Sit on the floor with your soles together, knees falling out to the sides. Hold your ankles. Your back and head are relaxed and falling forward. Keep holding your ankles as you move your feet away from you, as far as you can. Sit comfortably without straining. Now rock your pelvis and, still holding your ankles, 'walk' towards your feet. Once you arrive at your feet, begin walking the pelvis back again. Repeat three to seven times. Finish with the feet away from you, head down and back relaxed. Rest for a few moments, completely still. Feel the energy flowing through your pelvis and legs.

In this exercise energy is directed into the pelvis and legs. Energy can accumulate in the pelvis and restrict a regular flow between the upper and lower parts of the body. This limits development at all levels of our being. This walking unblocks energy in the pelvis and sacral chakra, which can then be distributed through the whole body.



Butterfly Walk

Meditation

Developing your meditation practice is a very important aspect of chakra work. It requires the discipline of the root chakra and a longing for Self-knowledge. When we direct our attention inwards, searching for the higher Self, like the Ancients before us we discover the secrets of the universe.

At the centre of the sacral chakra lies a crescent moon. The moon is a mirror, offering us the opportunity to see our true reflection. She is a symbol of our potential for growth. We can rely on the crescent moon to dance across the sky, changing her shape as she moves. She is wise and not afraid to reach her full potential. She is also prepared to fall and is willing to start the dance over and over again.

DHARANA

Prepare for your meditation as suggested in Chapter 5. We will practise dharana using the crescent moon. The colour of this symbol is orange. Lying within the crescent moon is the Black Dot. Close your eyes and see in front of you the dark screen, known as the *chidakash*. As you breathe deeply and evenly, allow the crescent moon, symbol of the sacral chakra, to appear on the screen. In your mind's eye see the soft lines of the crescent moon, the lower and longer line that holds the upper, shorter line in its embrace. Like a mother holds her child, the higher Self holds the developing individual soul. Keep the clearly defined image on your inner screen.

See the all-powerful Black Dot in the centre. Focus on the Black Dot. Maintain your practice for the desired length of time. Lengthening your practice will be a natural progression.

DYNAMIC

Visualize the crescent moon. Let yourself relax into the practice as you clearly define the symbol in your mind's eye. Now take your awareness to the sacral centre and feel the moon deep within. Slowly watch the waxing and waning of the moon, feel her as she changes shape. See her reflection in the ocean, feel the water inside you. Tune to the rhythm of moon and water. Be creative and let sensations flood through your system. Let the moon and her waters lift you; feel yourself supported, held in the sacred embrace of your higher Self. Let the waters of your soul overflow and unite with the ocean. She is your mother the Goddess, you are one. Stay with the experience and be present with whatever surfaces for you ... Gently return your awareness to the sacral centre, feel its gentle pulse. This is your unique dwelling place, the sacred home of I. In this place you can meet the inner Goddess and see yourself reflected in her beauty.

These meditations can be used to connect with your higher Self. As energy flows with ease through the sacral chakra you will experience a sense of who you are and what your real purpose is in this incarnation. You will begin to see beauty in your Self and beauty all around you. A sacred gateway will open inside, leaving you feeling at home in your Self. You will know through this sacred centre that whatever you can perceive you can achieve. There will be no stopping you in your newfound sense of Self and creativity.

Vibrational Work

COLOUR

Orange is the dominant colour of the sacral chakra. Its varies from soothing peach to a deep rusty orange, depending on the quality of your energy. It is a colour of inner strength and confidence. Its warm vibration can stimulate or calm. Harmonically, orange resonates with the earth and the moon; it also vibrates within one octave of our own DNA molecules¹⁰ – this sonic relationship enhances self-regulation.¹¹ For thousands of years initiates in Asia have worn orange after taking renunciation vows. It is used because it can balance and charge the auric vibration. It is also a colour of sexual energy and is used to decorate the beds of newly married couples in Malaysia.

Take a moment to reflect on your feelings about this colour. Do you have it around you in your home, wardrobe, food? Could you use more of it? Orange can

be used as a healing remedy; it will raise the vibration of a sluggish sacral centre. It is excellent for fatigue and exhaustion. The complementary colour of orange is blue, which can be used if you feel your sacral chakra is overcharged.

ESSENTIAL OILS

Orange and a range of other citrus essential oils are very good for reducing anxiety and stress because of their refreshing quality. Orange blossom is a luxurious oil that lifts the spirits and raises self-esteem. Mandarin is the main essential oil that can be used safely during pregnancy when the sacral chakra and water energies are extremely activated. Grapefruit, one of my favourites, has a soothing and balancing effect on the sacral chakra.

GEMS

Gems for the sacral chakra are carnelian, amber, orange calcite and coral. These all help balance sacral energies (for how to use, *see Chapter 6*). Amber is a resin that has been used as vibrational medicine since the time of the ancient Egyptians. One of its main uses is as protection: it can be worn as jewellery to purify negative energy.

The stimulating effects of gold have been known for a very long time. Traditionally in Africa gold was plentiful and worn in abundance. Gold is still used for wedding rings, which are worn on the water finger, in order to stimulate the sacral chakra and fertility.

Ritual

The root chakra ritual connected you to the earth and created an ancestral link with your foremothers. Once you are connected to the earth and your roots, you have a foundation to build on. You are ever free to receive gifts and guidance from your Ancestors. You can draw their powerful energy into your sacral centre and use it for self-healing and empowerment.

Ancestral energy focused in the sacral chakra strengthens Self. A strong sense of Self acknowledges inner beauty, wisdom, intuition and the ability to heal emotional wounds and grow in spiritual wealth. In this ritual I invite you to return to Yemoja and bathe in her beauty.

SEA BATHING

Plan a sacred visit to the ocean Goddess Yemoja. Take gifts of flowers, watermelon and light. Write a prayer for her and be ready to dance and play in her arms.

Most people appreciate the ocean. We love her beauty, her depth, her vastness and fluctuating rhythms. We close our eyes and soak up her loudness. We appreciate her calm and wonder at her wildness. The sea is without fear. She can hold us high on a wave, rock us gently in her arms and reassure us with whispers of wisdom.

Approach Yemoja with a prayer. Offer your gifts, and sail night-lights (without the aluminium) afloat on a large leaf. As they flow ask 'Mami water' for her blessing. Be specific – ask for the healing you need. Listen to her voice, dance with her waves and let her calming waters cleanse you. Absorb her powerful energy, drawing it deep into your sacral chakra. Feel your waters commune with hers as you return to the mother for nourishment. Know that she is always there for you, thank her for her welcome, her love and beauty ... Part when you are cleansed and full of her essence.

Let the waters of your soul be free, allow your energy to flow and let your inner light shine as you welcome the blessing of the sacred lunar chakra into your life.

May you dwell ever with the Goddess
May the Goddess dwell ever with you
May all the dream seeds you planted
Take root and flower and come true.

Shekkinah Mountain Water