

Zsuzsanna Budapest is a Revolutionary and recognized as being the Founding Mother of the Women's Spirituality Movement. She is a hereditary witch, psychic and author of several acclaimed books including the classic *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries (The Feminist Book of Light and Shadows)*. I think she can also be credited with inspiring a Revolution in the Goddess Movement, waking many women up to their own divine spark of divinity within, which can lead to making a positive difference in our world, and thus changing the course of history (Herstory).

What does the Goddess mean to you, and what is your definition of a Goddess?

The Goddess is like a beautiful Tree of Life. If you envision our blue planet in space, the only one where there is beauty suitable for organic life, this freak accident of life is the Goddess. The planet herself is aware and can be talked to, sent love to, served, and she will embrace you. This is why witch's spells work, because we address this life force, this Tree of Life.

Is it true that you are a Hereditary Witch or a Genetic Witch, and is there a difference between the two?

Yes I am a Genetic Witch, and my mother was also a witch. I use to watch her do different kinds of spells and pray on the winds. I often do my own rituals that just come out of me. I don't see much difference between hereditary or genetic witch. This means usually that there is a bloodline of practicing witches, sensitives going back for many, many generations. My folks were herbalists.

How did you come to know the Craft?

A woman hexed me in the seventies, and I had to return the hex. This was a time in my life that I learned a lot. This woman and I were in love with the same man, my boyfriend at the time. She cast a stone spell in my path, which was throwing obstacles in my path, my boyfriend walked right over it, getting the full brunt of it. I had noticed the spell and stopped. I studied it, and decided to spit on them (eight stones in formation) and cast them behind me. But I did not use a cloth to pick them up, but used my bare hands. Never touch a hex! I broke out in nasty bites all over my right side. They looked like flea bites, but there were no fleas, and no kind of lotions made it better. I had it for six weeks before I had finally got to the point of returning the hex.

So you basically learned the Craft in self defense, or could it be said this event woke up something natural from within?

You can imagine a hex that placed flea bites on my right side, nothing on the left side, looked and felt suspicious. I worked the reversal spell for nine nights in a row, it was very hard work. But each time I did it, I dreamt of this woman yelling at me in my sleep, "Stop!" I knew then it is working. It was real fun at that time to discover my own powers, while turning this hex around.

In Dianic Wicca you all believe in the Wiccan Rede, yet on the same token you believe it is okay to hex someone or something? Can you give us an example of when you would use a hex with just cause?

I hex mass murderers, rapist, woman beaters and child abusers. We have nothing in the Dianic tradition that says we have to turn the other cheek. Certain Feminist didn't respect us until they discovered that our hex's work. That while taking the matter to the police is a good back up, often times the rapists went free. None of those we had hexed went free. There is a very well documented hex that was done on the local Hillside killer in the Bay Area, this called attention to us witches at the time.

There are many schools of thought regarding the origins of Witchcraft, how do you think Witchcraft first started?

All religion originated from ancestor reverence in one form or another. Later on it became Fay, or Faery beliefs, then out of that came Witchcraft. I think when a beloved one dies, we want to know how they are doing, and we keep thinking of them and remembering them. I still pray to my mother and my granny who have passed over. You know the entire universe is, and can be aware of us at times.

Could you please share with us or give us an example how the Fay or Faery beliefs influenced Witchcraft? Is this from an oral tradition or where may we find evidence of this in writings?

Folklore has the memories of the Fay. For example look at embroideries, there you'll find folk customs and traditional folk dances. I have found a lot of very good ideas by studying them. The calling of the four corners of the universe and at the center is pure Fay in certain traditions. You watch these folk dances, they all do this, four corners special dances and at the center everybody gets together. All of the Hungarian embroideries (traditional folk stories) speak of the Tree of Life, which came from the Faery traditions, like worshipping trees. I still do this ... I have special trees I visit when in trouble. Witchcraft may be brought to this organization, with a little more formality. But the old shamans improvised, traveled to other worlds with their souls, and no two rituals were the same.

Is it possible that some Witches may be actual descendents of Fay?

Totally. I think the Fay is the ancestral religion. If you look at Asian traditions like Shinto, it's all about energy and raising it, improvisational dances. But of course the Drums are everything to the Shinto. In my own improvisational rituals and dances, I am more human or a down to earth kind of Priestess with the voice, bells and chanting.

How would you define what a Modern Witch is?

One who is alive now and happily practicing the Craft. Modern witches tend to be eclectic, which is the result of global studies. We can pick up on the best things that work for us now, and use what works for us from the past.

What is Dianic Wicca and how was it first started or practiced in history/ herstory?

Up until the fourth century Women's Mysteries was practiced as a state religion. Firsts started? Well, way, way back in prehistory. Women's mysteries were alive in every tradition then, and in every ethnic group. Some business is just women's business, and women took care of it. It's a question of researching, you go back a few hundred years, and you'll find it. But if you have eyes for this kind of stuff you can recognize it in everything, like some objects for sale in tourists and thrift shops. I am always delighted when I realize some symbols survived so well into these modern times. The pentagram for example, the sign of our planet, it's on police caps, decorating houses, and gargoyles they are still used in architecture.

Can you share a little about what happened to you many years ago when you were arrested for Tarot readings? Do you think it may have had to do more with the fact you are a Witch who read Tarot, then actually just reading Tarot cards?

It had to do with the fact that I was a feminist witch, this the most potent of mixes. Feminism was really hated back then, it has changed a little today. But police just liked to hurt us. I am still puzzled why heterosexual men don't flock into the feminist fold, maybe nobody wants to be on the women's side. Why Woman hating is still done without thinking? The L.A.P.D. busted psychics back then, they paid a fine of \$100 dollars and went back to work. It was the anti-bunko laws that gave them this power. Bunko was a bad thing at the time. Some card readers took advantage of people, and lied to them saying they have a hex on them or something, and they needed money to take it off. The money demand just grew in time. They also had tricks, with eggs and other stuff, taking away bad things, I have never seen this, but had heard about it. So the bunko laws were established against cheaters like this. But then used against all psychics.

Is it true you had sensed something funny was going on before the arrest for the Tarot reading?

Oh Goddess I did! I wrote about it in my book *Grandmother of Time*. When the police woman came for her reading I met her at the door. I opened the Feminist Wicca, (my witch supply shop) and instead of the lovely oil smells the place was reeking of fresh cat shit. The problem was I had no cat. I had a dog at this time Ilona, the legendary German shepherd, yet no cat. So I refused the reading, telling her this is not the right time, I cannot work in bad smells. Then the Police woman offered to help me clean it up. She didn't realize my bigger problem was that this was a warning, and I had a decision to make. We cleaned it up, with Van Van oil, a powerful citrusy oil, and once again I had refused the reading. This isn't the right time I told her, you don't understand, I don't have a cat! The place was closed, and we found the cat shit right underneath my reading chair. I had to ponder this. The police woman then began to guilt trip me in a sense. "I thought you feminists were different. You were dependable, I made this appointment, I am missing work, I really wanted a reading." This went on for a while. She called me on my politics, finally I did her reading just to shut her up. As I see this, we always have a choice even when it's fated. I could have not caved to her guilt tripping me, and tossed her out on her ass. Then we probably still had no right to read the tarot cards without being criminalized.

What was your initial inspiration to start your first all female coven, the Susan B. Anthony Coven Number One?

My inspiration was Feminism and the lack of female centered spirituality at the time. Becoming a feminist was like you had to rebuild an entire culture and finally give women a place in it. A Spiritual Religion is important to women. This had to be done first. We had started all kinds of new things then, like communal living, sharing food expenses, self-defense, car repairs, women's health care, anti-rape squads, *Take Back the Night* marches. Religion was just one of the many. I belong to this seeding generation.

At the time you started the Susan B. Anthony Coven Number One, did you have any idea that the Feminist Spirituality movement would grow as much as it did?

You know I had consulted an oracle about this. After our first Sabbath there was this owl in the palm trees near my house, I had asked it if this was just for us, to hoot five times, and if it was going to be global hoot seven times. My owl hooted seven times. Athena is the owl, I felt pretty confident it was going to encircle the Earth, and rekindle the still alive embers of goddess worship.

You are known for inspiring/starting the Feminist Spirituality movement, was this a goal of yours at the time you started the Susan B. Anthony Coven Number One to start a Goddess Movement? And do you consider yourself a Spiritual Revolutionary in a manner of speaking?

I am a revolutionary who has reclaimed an old tradition for modern women. This revolution "bug" was in me already as far as I can tell, and after I had escaped the Russians and their revolution. Me being a strong Aquarian with four planets in Aries shows I enjoy doing things for the first time, or being the first to do them.

There has been tremendous growth in the Feminist Spirituality Movement, Wicca and Paganism in recent years, what do you feel may be some of the contributing factors to this growth?

Women are waking up to their role as participants of civilization. Not just being servants to the servants. I have opened the door into the Goddess sanctuary, and hundreds of books followed teaching every angle there was. I am very proud of that.

Why do you feel it is important to have women only (Dianic Wicca) Circles and gatherings, when nowadays many men in Paganism and Wicca love and believe in the Goddess just as women do, and sometimes maybe even more so?

It's the natural law, as women fare so fares the world, their children, and that's everybody. If you lift up the women you have lifted up humanity. Men have to learn to develop their own mysteries. Where is the order of Attis? Pan? Zagreus? Not only research it, but then popularize it as well as I have done. Where are the Dionysian rites? I think men are lazy in this aspect by not working this up for themselves. It's their own task, not ours.

What may be some important lessons that men can learn from women and the Goddess to help better understand each other?

My insight here is, men have to come realize that they are acting out sperm wars on each other. Sperm attacks each other, and kill each other, only one percent will make the journey to the egg. The rest is wasted. This is acted out by men in other areas of life as well, this cellular destiny doesn't always work well for civilization building. Where does all the aggression come from? Cellular politics. Men have to learn from women cooperation with each other, and support women and our values, or there is no future for anybody. More women must be in leadership positions. Men are not created to run the Earth, or they ruin it, as they have already done. Leadership is a womanly art, women do much better than men in knitting together working human units. Foresight is a female power. Leadership must rest in foresight.

Now are these sperm wars between men just the way you see it or have there been scientific studies on this, or is this just part of nature?

There is a book called *Sperm Wars* by Robin Baker. This study of sperm once ejaculated is very enlightening. There have been studies done in Europe about this.

And you had mentioned men are not created to run the Earth, or they ruin it, do you ever see the day that men and women can share equal power in leadership and make the world a better place to live in together?

I think both sexes must learn to practice common sense in a manner of speaking and soft power.

In your Video Documentary *Gathering the Goddesses* you mention something about responsibilities and the new male or new Lunar Male, or Lunar Male, who or what is this new Lunar Male you are talking about?

It was a while ago, I had worked on this in my book *Grandmother Moon*. I think it's the soft power male, Moon oriented male. He is emotionally available and emotionally matured. This doesn't usually happen to men until they are about 45 years old.

What type of leadership positions for women would you say, could help the Women's Movement, and help inspire them to their full potential?

Leadership that makes good decisions for the Earth. Stop bullies in schools, stop hazing in colleges, educate fiercely and channel competitions into peaceful goals. Sports are a good example, and make Art a language for men too.

I know a few of your books are considered classics in their field by many, when did you start writing about Witchcraft, Dianic Wicca and Feminist Spirituality, and what inspired you to start writing about these subjects?

At this time the Seeding generation of which I am part of was inventing the future, this was the only department nobody thought about, Women's Spirituality. It's was a natural extension from the other goals we had set for ourselves like communal living, organic gardening, natural childbirth, women's bookstores, women's banks, music and books, etc.

How did it feel to be recognized by The California Institute of Integral Studies for your contributions to the Women's Spirituality Movement?

It was a lovely ceremony; we all loved it when I got my certificate from them. But if you really think about it, I had invented their entire department of Women's Spirituality, so just maybe I should have gotten a PHD for it.

Have you achieved everything you have set out to do with your various works to date?

There is one big goal I have, that I will keep under wraps for now. And I also want to put a show on TV that I am working on at the moment.

What are some of your most recent projects you have been working on?

My Autobiography a big project of mine is due to be finished sometime in 2008, I think many will find it to be quite interesting.

Anything you would care to leave us with in parting? Maybe what would you like to see happen in the Worldwide Pagan/Magical community in the future perhaps?

I think a cohesiveness of the pagan community is missing; maybe this is something we all can work on. We all have little fiefdoms, traditions, as you know I pretty much do my own thing, to many of my own projects I have going on at this time that keep me real busy and it's hard to keep up with everything that's going on in the larger pagan community.