



## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN MENARCHE AND CHILDBIRTH

### From one rite to the next...

The connection between a woman's experience of menarche and therefore what she takes with her to her experience of childbirth, is not often taken into account.

Knowing of this inherent connection can enhance a woman's attention to her life journey, as a whole, rather than simply her experience of childbirth, and enable a significant opportunity for **healing and transformation**. This perspective also enables a deeper understanding for when a rite feels like a 'wrong'.

### Childbirth as a Culmination of One's Life to Date

Childbirth is not an isolated experience in a woman's life, it is the **expression of her life story** thus far, the culmination of her beliefs, attitudes and fears at that point in time on her life journey.

*We have the births we need to have to teach us what we need to know about ourselves, to take us to the next place on our life journey, our journey to wholeness.*

Home birth, and even simply vaginal birth, is in a **desperate situation**. We must all do whatever we can to preserve both. This requires short-term and long-term plans and implementation, and addressing the root cause of the situation.

To my mind, a major contributing factor to where we are at as a culture, in terms of home birth and vaginal birth being threatened, is that the majority of women come to the birth altar **unprepared**, unknowing and unconvinced of the power and point of natural birth.

*Why is this so?*

Because they have been led to believe through their experiences of being a woman so far –through their menarche and their menstruation – that the female body is **essentially flawed**, that medical science and technology will enable them to control the wayward unpredictable processes they must endure in the female body, and that the fertility cycle of a woman is fraught with danger, blood, mess, pain, mood swings and inconvenience, which interfere with a woman's productivity and contribution on a day-to-day basis.

### Barometer of our Wellbeing

Our menstrual cycle is the barometer of our wellbeing, giving us messages through our physical and emotional experiences of imbalances in our lifestyle, diet, mindscape, etc, in need of balancing through changes to what and how we do, eat and think etc.

Our menstrual cycle also serves as a way to heal ancestral wounds, those passed down to us by our mothers, their mothers and further back. PMS (pre-menstrual syndrome) has been called the **female pain-body**, the energetic pain of all women being expressed through the individual.

We 'practice', cycle after cycle, how to be with our bodies, or not. After years of medicating period pain, pretending nothing is going on, carrying on regardless, how are we prepared for birth?

Is it any wonder that women who have been swallowing pain killers for period pain for years and years have epidurals etc in labour?

## Rites of Passages as Cultural Events

What happens at a rite of passage – birth, menarche, childbirth, menopause and death – is the creation and re-creation of culture. Inner culture and outer culture.

Through the various things that happen around rites of passage, the transformative events in our lives, what ever happens at these times informs us on a **deep subliminal level** of how our culture values the new role we are being initiated into and therefore how we are expected to behave in that role.

When a woman's experience of birthing reinforces that birth is dangerous, that the best place to give birth is in hospital with all the high **technological tools** to save the mother and baby and plenty of drugs for pain relief, she believes that and returns for her subsequent births. And this is the experience of the majority of women in our culture.

Sometimes women have an awakening to the power of childbirth before, during or after their experience and this is usually connected to an awakening to the power of menstruation. Or it can be what's called a '**shadow awakening**' which happens when the woman goes on a deep searching inner journey to heal after a traumatic experience or healing crisis, either during menstruation or childbirth or perimenopause. She 'sees the light,' as it were, takes responsibility for her life and her choices, finds her power and reclaims it.

## Menarche > Menstruation > Childbirth

During my [Moonsong workshops](#) over the years we've looked deeply at our menarche experience and what that taught us about being a woman and how that then impacted on our experience of menstruation.

So taking that the next step, we ask **how did that impact on us giving birth?**

For we know that 'She who is initiated into Womanhood at the Altar of Menarche' is the same woman, after probably many years of menstrual experience, who shows up at the next altar of transformation, of womanhood: the Birth Altar.

In my work as a **shamanic craftswoman**, accompanying women into their depths, into their underworld, the pieces begin to come together. Our rites of passage can be seen as a map of our journey this lifetime. Witnessing the repeating patterns, the consistent theme that carries on through these rites of passage, these times of deep transformation, we begin to see the life lessons unfolding.

So when women experience giving birth in a traumatic way – if they have intervention when they planned so hard not to, if it didn't work out the way they'd planned it, when a rite feels like a 'wrong' – then it's an invitation for deep inner inquiry, asking '**how does this serve?**' What pattern or theme from my life is being repeated here?

## Our Womb Journey & Red Thread Healing

Look to the **herstory** of your menstruation experience and your menarche and what that taught you about being a woman. What inner culture did it create?

Look to your mother's story and your grandmother's story. What gets passed down the line is more than

chromosomes, it's stories that hold within them the beliefs, attitudes and fears that create our experiences.

From the shamanic perspective this is called the **Red Thread**. You can bring healing to your Red Thread, for all your relations, for your daughters and nieces and sons and community, so you don't unconsciously pass onto them your fears and back down the line as well.

So, when it comes to birth, we need to see women, ourselves, as more than the birth story. We need to **see the whole story**, the life story, the stories we were told that shaped us, the stories that remain unspoken but which shaped us nonetheless.

We are far more than just our birth stories; however they are the culmination of our beliefs, attitudes and fears, our internal culture.

## Inner Culture and Outer Culture

There are two main influences on the unfolding of our experiences in life, the outer culture and our inner culture. We can choose to update and change our inner culture and gather with like-minded folk to change the outer culture.

Updating our inner culture will alter our experience of menstruation, and I mean the whole cycle, not just the bleeding time.

So remember, our rites of passage are not a curse! Rather they are an opportunity to learn about ourselves. They hold invaluable **clues** to the unfolding of our life journey.

To reclaim birth, we need to reclaim **feminine power** and we can do this through practicing conscious menstruation, and going back to our menarche and healing that if necessary. Then we can reconnect with our bodies and then trust them to birth. We can do this after the fact, ie long since our menarche, in preparation for childbirth or menopause, and even better, we can create empowering menarches for our daughters.

## Creating the Conditions in which to Thrive

We need to observe and carry out one of the main principles of permaculture: we need to create the conditions in which what we want to see grow, will thrive. We need to **focus on our daughters**. You may have noticed that the teenage space is in great need of attention and honouring and healing. Our daughters need to thrive as empowered young women if they are going to have empowered experiences at the Birth Altar. And that will happen if we teach them, and more importantly, model to them, the ways of the healed, empowered feminine through the way we honour with our bodies and our menstrual cycle.

We need to be guardians of the gateways of menarche, birth, menopause and death to heal the wounded feminine. Being and doing this is the spiritual practice of being female, Goddess energy reclaimed.

*Blessed Be and Blessed Do!*

*(If you appreciated these thoughts, please [subscribe to my newsletter](#) - I'd love to stay in touch! xxx Jane)*