

## **Are crystals ungodly?**

The title of this talk came about because a couple of years ago I gave a talk to raise money for a Christian charity, a school for mentally challenged young adults. The founder, an ex monk, was happy with the topic of crystals and birthstones. A local bookshop was not and refused to display the flyer for the talk. The owner said: “Crystals are ungodly. They belong to the devil”. When the organiser of the event told the local vicar, who had called on her for the first time that day despite her having lived in the house for twenty years - a wonderful piece of serendipitous synchronicity, his suggestion was that I should include biblical references such as the Breastplate of the High Priest and Revelations, which builds the New Jerusalem on a crystal foundation – something I had already intended to do.

I knew from previous reading that the connection between crystals and the gods went a long way back in many different cultures and that the use of crystals for magic and consciousness transformation wasn't just a new age fad. However, I remained puzzled over how crystals became transformed from something created by God, an adornment and, it would appear, essential tool for the high priest, to the ‘crystals are ungodly’ view until I began to put together a presentation as part of my research into the history of birthstones for a Masters Degree in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology – and incidentally, the earliest documented use of crystals that I found during that research was a 4300 BCE

recipe for a jasper and carnelian necklace to ward off illness from a newborn baby in Mesopotamia, which was dedicated to the god Mars so that confirmed a longstanding link between gods and crystals – indeed, in Mesopotamia the gods and planets were believed to cause illness. The fact that crystals have been buried in graves about forty thousand years earlier suggested an even longer association but of course the reasons for such burials are not recorded.

However, to return to the breastplate of the High Priest, when we look at the artefact described in Exodus it probably didn't look anything like the representations we find in books today such as this handsome fellow. As with so much in the modern Bible, 'breastplate' is a mistranslation. The Hebrew word means 'pouch' so Aaron could have been wearing a woven linen bag around his neck and chest, with 12 engraved crystals attached – which suggests to me a link with the Egyptian use of precious stones. According to Exodus, the Jews had recently been in Egypt and the Egyptians used engraved gems as amulets and as representations of the gods. The pouch also contained the Urim and Thummin – no one is certain precisely what these were but amongst the suggestions are that they were meteorites or precious stones but we do know that these stones were used for ascertaining God's will. The instructions for fabricating the Breastplate of the High Priest can be found in Exodus 28, 15-30:

And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgement with cunning work; after the work of the ephod thou shalt make it; of gold, of

blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen shalt thou make it...

And thou shalt set in it settings of stones, even four rows of stones: the first row shall be a sardius [sardonyx], a topaz, and a carbuncle [garnet/carnelian]: this shall be the first row.

And the second row shall be an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond. And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst. And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jasper; they shall be set in gold in their enclosings.

And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings on a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes....

And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgement upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.

And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgement the U-rim and the Thum-mim

Again, translation problems that make it difficult to know exactly which stones were used as each biblical translation specifies a different list, although that doesn't stop people making assertions. The purpose of the breastplate is set out in Exodus as:

a continual remembrance before the Lord. In the breastpiece of judgement you shall put the Urim and the Thummim and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before the Lord, thus Aaron shall bear the judgement of the Israelites on his heart before the Lord continually. (v.29)

The breastplate also had onyx mounted on the shoulders engraved with the names of the tribes *in the order of their birth* (Exodus 28:10), which suggests to me a potential link to birthstones. Both onyx and gold seem to have been important to the Jews as in the second chapter of Genesis we are told that:

The gold of that land is good, bdellium and onyx stone are there. (Gen 2:12)

Onyx often has markings that look rather like writing or even in the case of one particularly beautiful piece I have, the heavenly spheres. There's a lovely bit of hearsay evidence about the use of the breastplate as an oracle in Josephus, the Roman historian writing 1500 years later than Exodus:

From the stones which the High Priest wore (these were sardonyxes and I hold it superfluous to describe their nature, since it is known to all), there emanated a light, as often as God was present at the sacrifices that which was worn on the right shoulder instead of a clasp emitting a radiance sufficient to give light even to those far away, although the stone previously lacked this splendour. And certainly, this in itself merits the wonder of all those who do not, out of contempt for religion,

allow themselves to be led away by a pretence of wisdom.  
However, I am about to relate something still more wonderful,  
namely that God announced victory by means of the twelve  
stones worn by the High Priest on his breast..

But, as Josephus was suggesting that the oracle had been in use up to 200 years previously when it was lost in Babylon some 500 years earlier, he may not be the most reliable source! However, he is highlighting a very important point, during biblical times stones were used to ascertain the will of god – in other words they were used for divination and they were very much associated with the higher realms.

Ezekiel's call to prophesy interested me because of the celestial signs and the zodiacal and crystal imagery that accompanied it:

As I looked a stormy wind came out of the north, a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle of the fire, .. gleaming amber [also translated as 'awesome crystal']. In the middle of it .. four living creatures... As for the appearance of their faces: the four had the face of a human being, the face of a lion on the right side, the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle... - Aquarius, Leo, Taurus and Scorpio - the fixed cross of astrology  
... I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction, their appearance was

like the gleaming of beryl... over the heads of the living creatures there was... a dome, shining like crystal... When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, like the thunder of the Almighty... Above the dome [was] a throne, in appearance like sapphire... Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendour all around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. [Ezekiel 1]

This is Ezekiel's 'chariot of fire'. And he goes into what sounds like shamanic trance:

And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet and I heard him speaking to me. {2} I looked and a hand was stretched out to me, and a written scroll was in it. ... He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll and go, speak to the house of Israel. [3]

This eating of the scroll reminds me of the placing of a piece of magical papyrus in the mouth of Egyptian mummies and the small pieces of papyri that were rolled up and worn as a protective amulet. But here Ezekiel seems to be literally ingesting the word of God so that he may pass it on.

And later he had several visionary out of body experiences including:

[the form] stretched out the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of my head, and the spirit lifted me up between

earth and heaven, and brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the entry of the gateway of the inner court that faces north...[8]

But it still didn't explain how crystals came to be ungoldly. Looking for further inspiration, I practised the ancient art of Sortes – opening a book at random - while asking for insight. The Bible opened to a chapter in Ezekiel that proclaimed:

Moreover, the word of the Lord came to me: Mortal, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him. Thus says the Lord God:

You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God,

Every precious stone was your covering,

Carnelian, Chrysolite, and moonstone, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire [or lapis lazuli], turquoise, and emerald;

And worked in gold were your settings and your engravings.

On the day that you were created they were prepared.

With an anointed cherub as guardian, I placed you

you were on the holy mountain of God;

you walked among the stones of fire.

Ezekiel 28:13-14 (NRSV)

As this is God talking, it seemed to suggest that crystals had been specially created for man to wear in the Garden of Eden. When I looked at web commentaries on this particular chapter

of Ezekiel, I was surprised to find it interpreted as being addressed to Satan and his fall from grace rather than an admonition to local kings so I now know why the woman in the bookshop was so against crystals.

If we want to continue to explore the use of crystals in the ancient world and their connection with the spiritual world we can look at Egypt – which goes back to 4500 bce - and wonder if the Israelites, who by the time of Exodus had not long left Egypt to go wandering in the desert at the command of their god, learned this use of precious stones from their hosts – they were never slaves as such, more like economic migrants by the way.

The Egyptians believed that the bodies of the gods were comprised of precious metals and gems, and that the precious metals and gems were themselves efflux from the gods. In the Primaeval Ocean text, stones and mineral belong to a pair of divine serpents, whose bodies are living stone, and gems and minerals are said to be the perspiration of their flesh.

Very little has been written on the use of stones in ancient Egypt but from my studies I think it was much more than symbolic. The stones were used to transport people – alive and dead – into altered states and other realms. This is Tutankhamun's funerary mask for instance. Around his eyes, which are made from milk quartz and obsidian, is a lapis lazuli band. In the ancient world, Lapis was one of the most sacred and spiritual stones. It was the gods solidified into manifest form. An ancient Egyptian text says that lapis is the Amun and the god is lapis. Its function is to open spiritual sight, a useful attribute on the journey to the other world - which obsidian

would also facilitate. In the headdress are set turquoise – which is Venus’s stone and carnelian – which belongs to Mars. Tut’s breastplate has Libyan tektite on it – which the ancient Egyptians called the Rock of God and believed promised long life and happiness. In the conventional view, for the ancient Egyptians the life they were interested in was the life after death: continuation in the spirit world. But archaeologists are now beginning to realise that the Egyptian religion was a powerfully shamanic one in which the king was the god and travelled in altered states of consciousness to the celestial and other world whilst still alive – a journey facilitated by crystals.

Magic was extremely important in Egypt. Lapis, Turquoise and Carnelian were extremely popular stones for protective amulets. Tut’s mask was more than just decoration, it had a protective, magical function to guide and guard the young Pharaoh on his way home to the stars and to ensure a good rebirth in the spirit world.

Stones were also important in ancient medicine. Although translation of the names of crystals varies widely in both Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts and some of them are impossible to identify properly, I have tracked a number of correspondences between ailments and the crystals used to treat them – either because the crystal was connected to a god or was used under the ‘like cures like’ principle. Bloodstone, for instances, was used in Mesopotamia for diseases of the blood, as was hematite, and both stones were under the influence of the god Nergal (Mars). Both may well have been

seen to connect to the blood because of the red colouring of the stone and the red appearance of the planet when viewed in the night sky, but also because Mars even then was the malefic and dangerous God of War – an honour he shared with Saturn who was associated with hematite when polished to its silvery shine. In Egypt Malachite was powdered and applied to the eyes to prevent eye diseases and to wounds to act as an antibiotic.

In an early Mesopotamian herbal, kidney complaints are attributed to Mars, an association the Greek writer Ptolemy carries forward in his book of stones, and which still abides. Gypsum is listed in a ritual for curing a sick man: ‘the gypsum is Ninurta (Saturn)’, a correspondence that does not stand nowadays as gypsum is associated with Aries, although gypsum is said to encourage strong bones and elasticity of skin and tissue, qualities associated with Saturn.

Fragments of Sumerian myth survive telling how the stones of the earth – who were very much alive and could move around - were hostile to Ninurta (Saturn), who was forced to battle with them. After their defeat, he doled out their fates. Chalcedony was forever to be carved and split by chisels. Marble had the privilege of use for building temples. Flint was fated eternally to be flaked. Twenty minerals were listed under control of Ninurta including magnetite, today a stone belonging to Capricorn (ruled by Saturn). In Mesopotamia magnetite was a ‘stone of truthfulness’, the man who wore it had to be pious and speak truth, qualities still associated with Capricorn.

### **Mesopotamian correspondences**

<i>Sun (Samas)</i>	<i>Saturn (Ninutra)</i>	<i>Venus (Inanna)</i>	<i>Jupiter (Marduk)</i>
Bright day	Long day	<b>Lapis lazuli</b>	Magic wand
Myrrh	15th day	War	Storms
Tamarisk	Slippery reed (finger)	<b>Alabaster</b>	Bow
Partridge	Bronze pegs and bindings	Rain	Net
Cedar	<b>Gypsum</b>	The storehouse	Lordship
Cat	Rites and rituals	Harlots	Dark-haired
Juniper	North wind	Lighting fires	people
Lion	50 (or 40)	Extinguishing fires	Large food
Fruit tree	Spring thunderstorms	Tears	portions
Poplar	Chalcedony	Enmity	Incense
Figs	Marble	Fair dealing	Sanctuaries
Gold	<b>Lead</b>	Heartache	Mercy
Bulrush	Mines	Beauty	50
Boxthorn	<b>Magnetite</b>	Calamity	Magnanimity
Oak	Agriculture	Joy	Royalty
Lettuce	Flint	Grief	
Applied	Victory	Evening star	
Pomegranate	Vulture	Morning star	
Fig	Eagle	Wantonness	
Grape		15	
Justice		<b>Carnelian</b>	
Boundaries			
Heliotrope			
20			
Judgement			

<i>Mars (Nergal)</i>	<i>Mercury (Nabu)</i>	<i>Moon (Sin)</i>
Plague	Writing	30
Famine	Wisdom	Understanding
War		
Aggression		
Hostility		
Red		
Restlessness		
Blacksmithing		
Plough		
<b>Hematite</b>		
<b>Bloodstone</b>		

I've saved one of my favourite stories of correspondence between gods and stones until last because this is the basis for a meditation I take people through in my workshops that brings about a profound change of consciousness. It is the ancient story of the Descent of Inanna. Inanna is the planet Venus who, for a short time each year, disappears from sight and moves from being the Evening to the Morning Star. This story was first written down over five thousand years ago but may be much older, and it proves that the Mesopotamians knew that Venus was the same planet – something more recent civilisations have now always realised. It is a powerful story of death and transformation and it contains the most abiding crystal and planet correspondence of all time: that of lapis lazuli.

Inanna's sister, Ereskigal, who is the dark goddess of the Underworld has become a widow and Inanna decides to leave the upper world and journey to commiserate with her sister but first she had to prepare herself for the journey:

You'll notice that the jewellery she wears is lapis as is the measuring rod she carries. You might not realise from this description that the rod measures out time and the cycles of the natural world, and that the small lapis beads were cajoled by her from her father as a symbol of eternal life. Which is fortunate because when she reaches the underworld, her grumpy and grieving sister has her stripped naked and hung on a peg to die.

You can interpret this myth in many ways, pragmatically as the seasonal changes or the disappearance of a planet, psychologically as the death of the ego; spiritually as the journey of the soul down to earth, or an initiation ritual, or a chakra cleanse – she is stripped of 7 items - but above all it signifies the abiding belief that rebirth follows death and that the spirit can be transformed and set free, a process facilitated and accompanied by the heavenly blue and gold corruscations of lapis lazuli.

## Descent Of Inanna Wolkstein - Kramer

From the Great Above she opened her ear to the Great Below.  
From the Great Above the goddess opened her ear to the Great Below.  
From the Great Above Inanna opened her ear to the Great Below.  
My Lady abandoned heaven and earth to descend to the underworld.  
Inanna abandoned heaven and earth to descend to the underworld.

In **Uruk** she abandoned her **temple** to descend to the underworld.  
In **Badtibira** she abandoned her **temple** to descend to the underworld.  
In **Zabalam** she abandoned her temple to descend to the underworld.  
In **Adab** she abandoned her temple to descend to the underworld.  
In **Nippur** she abandoned her temple to descend to the underworld.  
In **Kish** she abandoned her temple to descend to the underworld.  
In **Akkad** she abandoned her temple to descend to the underworld.  
She gathered together the **seven me**.  
She took them into her hands.

With the **me** in her possession, she prepared herself:  
She placed the **shugurra**, the **crowns** of the steppe, on her head.  
She arranged the dark locks of hair across her forehead.  
She tied the small lapis **beads** around her neck.

Let the double strand of beads fall to her breast,  
And wrapped the **royal robe** around her body.  
She daubed her eyes with ointment called 'let him come, let him come.'

Bound the breast plate called 'Come, man, come!' around her chest,  
Slipped the gold ring over her wrist,  
And took the lapis measuring rod and line in her hand.  
Inanna set out for the underworld.

Ninshubur, her faithful servant, went with her.  
Inanna spoke to her, saying:  
'Ninshubur, my constant support,  
My sukkal who gives me wise advice,  
My warrior who fights by my side,  
I am descending to the **kur**, to the **underworld**.

If I do not return,  
Set up a **lament** for me by the ruins.  
**Beat the drum** for me in the assembly places.  
**Circle** the houses of the gods.  
**Tear** at your eyes, at your mouth, at your thighs.  
**Dress** yourself in a single garment like a beggar.

Go to **Nippur**, to the temple of **Enlil**.  
When you enter his holy shrine, cry out:  
"Oh, father Enlil, do not let your daughter  
    Be put to death in the underworld.  
Do not let your bright silver  
    Be covered with dust in the underworld.  
Do not let your precious lapis  
    Be broken into stone for the stoneworker.  
Do not let your fragrant boxwood

Be cut into wood for the woodworker.  
Do not let the holy priestess of heaven  
Be put to death in the underworld."

If Enlil will not help you,  
Go to **Ur**, to the temple of **Nanna**.  
Weep before Father Nanna.  
If Nanna will not help you,  
Go to **Eridu**, to the temple of **Enki**.  
Weep before Father Enki.

Father **Enki**, the God Of **Wisdom**, knows the food of life,  
He knows the water of life;  
**Knows the secret of life.**  
**Surely he will not let me die.'**

Inanna continued on her way to the underworld.  
Then she stopped and said:  
'Go now Ninshubur-  
Do not forget the words I have commanded you.'

When Inanna arrived at the outer gates of the underworld,  
She knocked loudly.  
She cried out in a fierce voice:  
'Open the door, gatekeeper!  
Open the door, Neti!  
I alone would enter!'

Neti, the chief gatekeeper of the kur, asked:  
'Who are you?'

She answered:  
'I am Inanna, Queen of Heaven,  
On my way to the East.'

Neti said:  
'If you are truly Inanna, Queen of Heaven,  
On your way to the East,  
Why has your heart led you on the road  
From which no traveller returns?'

Inanna answered:  
'Because... of **my** older sister **Erishkigal**,  
Her husband, Gugalanna, the **Bull of Heaven**, has died.  
I have come to witness the funeral rites.  
Let the beer of his funeral rites be poured into the cup.  
Let it be done.'

Neti spoke:  
'Stay here Inanna, I will speak to my queen.  
I will give her your message.'  
Neti, the chief gatekeeper of the kur,  
Entered the palace of Erishkigal, the Queen of the Underworld, and said:  
'My Queen, a maid  
As tall as heaven,  
As wide as the earth,  
As strong as the foundations of the city wall,  
Waits outside the palace gates.  
She has gathered together the seven *me*.

She has taken them in her hands.  
With the *me* in her possession, she has prepared herself:  
On her head she wears the shurgarra, the crown of the steppe.  
Across her forehead her dark locks of hair are carefully arranged.  
Around her neck she wears the small lapis beads.  
At her breast she wears the double strand of beads.  
Her body is wrapped in the royal robe.  
Her eyes are daubed with the ointment "let him come, let him come."  
Around her chest she wears the breast plate called "come, man, come!"  
On her wrist she wears the gold ring.  
In her hand she carries the lapis measuring rod and line.'  
When Erishkigal heard this,  
She slapped her thigh and bit her lip.  
She took the matter into her heart and dwelt on it.  
Then she spoke:  
'Come, Neti, my chief gatekeeper of the kur,  
Heed my words:  
Bolt the seven gates of the underworld.  
Then, **one by one**, open each gate a crack.  
Let Inanna enter.  
As she enters, remove her royal garments.  
Let the holy priestess of heaven enter bowed low.'  
Neti heeded the words of his queen.  
He bolted the seven gates of the underworld.  
Then he opened the outer gate.  
He said to the maid:  
'Come, Inanna, enter.'

- When she entered the **first gate**,  
From her head, the **shugurra**, the crown of the steppe, was removed.  
Inanna asked:  
    'What is this?'  
She was told:  
    'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect.  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **second gate**,  
From her neck the small **lapis beads** were removed.  
Inanna asked:  
    'What is this?'  
She was told:  
    'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **third gate**,  
From her breast the double strand of beads was removed.  
Inanna asked:  
    'What is this?'  
She was told:  
    'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect,  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **fourth gate**,  
From her chest the breast plate called 'Let him come, let him come!' was removed.

Inanna asked:

'What is this?'

She was told,

'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect.  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **fifth gate**,

From her wrist the gold ring was removed.

Inanna asked:

'What is this?'

She was told:

'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect.  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **sixth gate**,

From her hand the lapis measuring rod and line was removed.

Inanna asked:

'What is this?'

She was told:

'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect.  
They may not be questioned.'

- When she entered the **seventh gate**,

From her body the royal robe was removed.

Inanna asked:

'What is this?'

She was told:

'Quiet, Inanna, the ways of the underworld are perfect.  
They may not be questioned.'

- Naked and bowed low, Inanna entered the **throne room**.

Erishkigal rose from her throne.

Inanna started toward the throne.

The Annuna, the **judges** of the underworld, surrounded her.  
They passed judgement against her.

- Then **Erishkigal** fastened on Inanna the **eye of death**.

She spoke against her the word of wrath.

She uttered against her the cry of guilt.

She struck her.

Inanna was turned into a **corpse**,

A piece of **rotting meat**,

And was hung from a **hook** on the wall.

- When, **after three days and three nights**, Inanna had not returned,

Ninshubur set up a **lament** for her by the ruins.

She **beat the drum** for her in the assembled places.

She **circled** the houses of the gods.

She tore at her eyes; she tore at her mouth; she tore at her thighs.

She dressed herself in a single garment like a beggar.

Alone, she set out for **Nippur** and the temple of **Enlil**.

When she entered the holy shrine,

She cried out:

'O Father Enlil, do not let your daughter

Be put to death in the underworld.  
Do not let your bright silver  
Be covered with dust of the underworld.  
Do not let your precious lapis  
Be broken into stone for the stoneworker.  
Do not let your fragrant boxwood  
Be cut into wood fro the woodworker.  
Do not let the holy priestess of heaven  
Be put to death in the underworld.'

Father Enlil answered angrily: 'My daughter **craved the Great Above**.  
Inanna craved the Great Below.  
She **who receives the me** of the underworld does not return.  
She who goes to the **Dark City** stays there.'  
Father Enlil would not help.

**Ninshubur** went to **Ur** and the temple of Nanna.  
When she entered the holy shrine,  
She cried out:  
'Oh Father **Nanna**, do not let your daughter  
Be put to death in the underworld.  
Do not let your bright silver  
Be covered with dust of the underworld.  
Do not let your precious lapis  
Be broken into stone for the stoneworker.  
Do not let your fragrant boxwood  
Be cut into wood fro the woodworker.  
Do not let the holy priestess of heaven  
Be put to death inthe underworld.'

**Father Nanna** answered angrily:  
'My daughter craved the **Great Above**.  
Inanna craved the Great Below.  
She who receives the **me** of the underworld does not return.  
She who goes to the Dark City stays there.'  
**Father Nanna** would not help.

**Ninshubur** went to **Eridu** and the temple of **Enki**.  
When she entered the holy shrine,  
She cried out, :  
'O Father Enki, do not let your daughter  
Be put to death in the underworld.  
Do not let your bright silver  
Be covered with dust of the underworld.  
Do not let your precious lapis  
Be broken into stone for the stoneworker.  
Do not let your fragrant boxwood  
Be cut into wood fro the woodworker.  
Do not let the holy priestess of heaven  
Be put to death in the underworld.'

Father **Enki** said;  
'What has happened?  
What has my daughter done?  
Inanna, Queen of All the Lands! Holy Priestess of Heaven!

What has happened?  
I am troubled, I am grieved.'

From under his **finger nail** Father Enki brought **forth dirt**.  
He fashioned the dirt into a **kurgarra**, a creature **neither** male nor female.  
From under the finger nail of his other hand he brought forth dirt.  
He fashione the dirt into a **galatur**, a creature neither male nor female.  
He gave the food of life to the kurgarra.  
He gave the water of life to the galatur,  
saying:

'Go to the underworld,  
Enter the doors like flies,  
**Erishkigal**, the Queen of the Underworld, is moaning  
With the cries of a woman about to give birth.  
No linen is spread on her body.  
Her breasts are uncovered.  
Her hair swirls about her head like leeks.

When she cries, 'Oh! Oh! My **Inside!**  
Cry also, 'Oh! Oh! Your **inside!**  
When she cries: 'Oh! Oh! My **outside!**  
Cry also 'Oh! Oh! our outside!  
The queen will be pleased.

She will ofer you a gift.  
Ask her only for the **corpse** that hangs from the hook on the wall.  
One of you will sprinkle the **food of life** on it  
The other will sprinkle the **water of life**.  
Inanna will arise.'

The kurgarra and the galatur heeded Enki's words.  
They set out for the underworld.  
Like flies, they slipped through the **cracks** of the gates.  
They entered the throne room of the Queen of the Underworld.  
No linen was spread on her body.  
Her breasts were uncovered.  
Her hair swirld around her head like leeks.

Erishkigal was moaning:  
'Oh! Oh! My inside!  
They moaned.  
'Oh! Oh! Your inside!  
She moaned:  
'Ohhhh! Oh! My outside!  
They moaned;  
'Ohhhh! Oh! our outside!  
She groaned:  
'Oh! Oh! My belly!  
They groaned:  
'Oh! Oh! Your belly!  
She groaned:  
'Oh! Oh! My back!  
They groaned:  
'Oh! Oh! Your back!  
She sighed:

'Ah! Ah! My heart!'  
They sighed:  
'Ah! Ah! Your heart!'  
She sighed:  
'Ah! Ahhhh! My liver!'  
They sighed:  
'Ah! Ahhhh! Your liver!'

Erishkigal stopped.  
She looked at them.  
She asked:  
'Who are you,  
Moaning - groaning - sighing with me?'

If you are gods, I will bless you.  
If you are mortals, I will give you a gift.  
I will give you the **water-gift**, the **river** in its fullness.'

The kurgarra and galatur answered:  
'We do not wish it.'

Erishkigal said:  
'I will give you the grain gift, the fields in harvest.'

The kurgarra and galatur said:  
'We do not wish it.'

Erishkigal said:  
'Speak then! What do you wish?'  
They answered:  
'We wish only for the **corpse** that hangs from the hook on the wall.'

Erishkigal said:  
'The corpse belongs to Inanna.'  
They said:  
'Whether it belongs to our queen,  
Whether it belongs to our king,  
That is what we wish.'

The corpse was given to them.  
The **kurgarra** sprinkled the food of life on the corpse.  
The galatur sprinkled the water of life on the corpse.  
Inanna rose.....

Inanna was about to **ascend** from the underworld  
When the **Annuna**, the **judges** of the underworld, seized her.

They said:  
'No one ascends from the underworld unmarked.  
If Inanna wishes to return from the underworld,  
She must **provide someone in her place.**'

As Inanna ascended from the underworld,  
The **galla**, the demons of the underworld, clung to her side.  
The galla were **demons**

who know no food,  
who know no drink,  
Who eat no offerings, who drink no libations,  
Who accept no gifts.  
They enjoy no lovemaking.  
They have no sweet children to kiss.

They tear the wife from the husband's arms,  
They tear the child from the father's knees,  
They steal the bride from her marriage home.  
The demons clung to Inanna.

The small **galla** who accompanied Inanna  
Were like reeds the size of low picket fences.  
The large **galla** who accompanied Inanna  
Were like reeds the size of large picket fences.

The one who walked in front of Inanna was **not** a minister,  
Yet he carried a **sceptre**.  
The one who walked behind her was not a warrior,  
Yet he carried a **mace**.

**Ninshubur**, dressed in a soiled sackcloth,  
Waited outside the palace gates.  
When she saw Inanna  
Surrounded by the **galla**  
She threw herself in the dust at Inanna's feet.

The **galla** said:  
'Walk on Inanna,  
We shall take Ninshubur in your place.'  
Inanna cried:  
'No! Ninshubur is my constant support.  
She is my **sukkal** who gives me wise advice.  
She is my **warrior** who fights by my side.  
She did not **forget** my words.  
She **set up a lament** for me by the ruins.  
She **beat the drum** for me at the assembly places.  
She **circled the houses of the gods**.  
she tore at her eyes, at her mouth, at her thighs.

She dressed herself in a single garment like a beggar.  
Alone she set out for **Nippur** and the temple of Enlil.  
She went to **Ur** and the temple of Nanna.  
She went to **Eridu** and the temple of Enki.  
Because of her, my life was saved.

I will never give **Ninshubur** to you.'  
The **galla** said:  
'Walk on, Inanna,  
We will accompany you to Umma.'  
In Umma, at the holy shrine,  
**Shara** the **son** of Inanna, was dressed in a soiled sackcloth.  
When he saw Inanna  
Surrounded by the **galla**,

He threw himself in the dust at her feet.

The galla said:

'Walk on to your city, Inanna,  
We will **take Shara in your place.**'

Inanna cried:

'No! Not Shara!

He is my **son** who **sings hymns** to me.

He is my son who cuts my nails and smooths my hair.

I will never give Shara to you.'

The galla said:

'Walk on, Inanna,

We will accompany you to Badtibira.'

In Badtibira, at the holy shrine,

**Lulal**, the son of Inanna, was dressed in a soiled sackcloth.

When he saw Inanna

Surrounded by the galla,

He threw himself in the dust at her feet.

The galla said:

'Walk on, Inanna,

We will **take Lulal** in your place.'

Inanna cried:

'No, not Lulal. he is my son.

He is a leader among men.

He is my right arm. He is my left arm.

I will never give Lulal to you.'

The **galla** said:

'Walk on to your city, Inanna.

We will go with you to the **big apple** tree in **uruk.**'

In Uruk, by the big apple tree,

**Dumuzi**, the **husband of Inanna**, was dressed in his shining **me garments**.

He sat on his magnificent throne; (he did not move).

The galla **seized** him by the thighs.

They poured milk out of his seven churns.

They broke the **reed pipe** which the shepherd was **playing**.

Inanna **fastened on Dumuzi the eye of death**.

She spoke against him the word of wrath.

She uttered against him the cry of guilt.

'Take him away! Take Dumuzi away!'

The **galla**, who know no food, who know no drink,

Who eat no offerings, who drink no libations,

Who accept no gifts, seized Dumuzi.

They made him stand up; they made him sit down.

They **beat** the husband of Inanna.

They gashed him with axes.

Dumuzi let out a wail.

He raised his hands to heaven to utu, the God of Justice, and beseeched him:

'O Utu, you are my brother in law,

I am the husband of your sister.

I brought cream to your mother's house,  
I brought milk to Ningal's house.  
I am the one who carried food to the holy shrine.  
I am the one who brought wedding gifts to Uruk  
I am the one who **danced** on the **holy knees**, the knees of **Inanna**.  
Utu, you who are a just god, a merciful god,  
Change my hands into the **hands of a snake**.  
Change my feet into the feet of a **snake**.  
Let me escape from my demons;  
Do not let them hold me  
The merciful Utu accepted Dumuzi's tears.  
He changed the hands of Dumuzi into **snake** hands.  
He changed the feet of Dumuzi into **snake** feet.  
Dumuzi escaped from his **demons**.  
They could not hold him.....