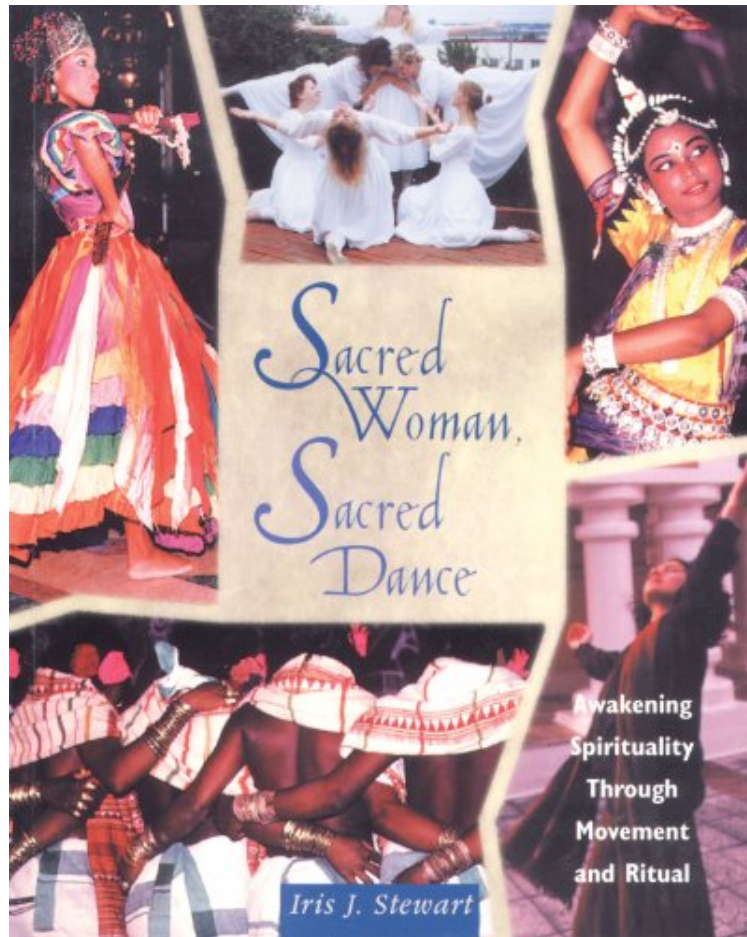


# Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance: Awakening Spirituality Through Movement and Ritual

*Iris J. Stewart*

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Shows how dance, the highest expression of spirituality in cultures and traditions all over the world, is being integrated into the lives of women today The first book to explore women's spiritual expression--women's ways--through a study

of dance Investigates how dance came to be excluded from worship, and reveals how dance is once again being brought into spiritual practices Includes resources for further instruction in sacred dance Today we primarily think of dance as a form of entertainment or as a way to exercise or socialize. There was a time, however, when dance was considered the way to commune with the divine, a part of life's journey, celebrating the seasons and rhythms of the year and the rhythms of our lives. Dance is a language that reunites the body, mind, and soul. While the role of women's sacred dance was most valued in goddess-worshipping cultures where women served as priestesses and healers, dance was once an integral part of religious ritual and ceremonial expression in cultures all over the world, including Judaism and Christianity. In this book the author investigates how dance came to be excluded from worship and reveals how dance is once again being integrated into spiritual practices. Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance is the first book to explore women's spiritual expression--women's ways--through a study of dance. It describes sacred circles, birth rituals, ecstatic dances, and dances of loss and grief (in groups and individually) that allow women to integrate the movements of faith, healing, and power into their daily life.

"If we seek the real source of the dance, if we go to nature, we find that the dance of the future is the dance of the past, the dance of eternity, and has been and will always be the same." (Isadora Duncan)"This is a marvelous and unique exploration of women's spirituality through a study of dance. It is beautifully illustrated with inspirational photos of sacred dancers. This is an excellent addition to the study of the many forms and expressions of Women's Spirituality." (Circle Magazine, Winter 2000/2001)"Her bibliography and notes are extensive. She doesn't leave hanging the reader who wants to learn more about or participate in sacred dance, but offers several pages of resources. The book is not only a history of women and dance, but a textbook for performing sacred dances." (Katie Watts, Argus-Courier Online)"This book is the first to explore women's spiritual expression in the study of dance. In reclaiming our connection to sacred dance, we regain a valuable spiritual expression. A wonderful book!" (Catholic Women's NETWORK, January/February 2001)"Although a wealth of research is behind the text it is conveyed in a very digestible form. Myths, history, symbolism together with ancient and modern forms of dance from all cultures are drawn together to uncover the meaning behind the dance." (Frances Fawkes, The Grapevine Magazine)"Stewart has provided a multitude of lovely pictures and illustrations to underscore her discovery of the existence of earlier sacred dance and her aspiration to encourage its growth. Although all of what she describes is available elsewhere, she has performed a valuable service by bringing it together under a single cover." (Anne Apynys., Ph.D., Habibi, A Journal for Lovers of Middle Eastern Dance Arts, Vol. 18, No. 3, 20)"Richly illustrated with graphics and photographs from around the world (some taken at the sites by the author), this book is a record of Iris Stewart's search for evidence of the sacred-logically, historically and experientially." (Dance Magazine, March 2001, Vol. 75, No. 3)"I don't know of another book like this one--don't miss it." (Mary K. Greer, Tarot Newsletter, Summer 2001)". . . includes extensive source notes, bibliography and other resources, such that it could be considered a bible of sacred dance!" (The Midwest Book , May 2002)"Dancers will find it of special interest, but it's delightful for everyone else as well. Highly recommended." (Elizabeth Barrette, SageWoman, Summer 2002)"Exceptional." (Today's Books, August 2000)From the Back CoverWOMEN'S SPIRITUALITY / DANCE If we seek the real source of the dance, if we go to nature, we find that the dance of the future is the dance of the past, the dance of eternity, and has been and will always be the same. --Isadora Duncan Today we primarily think of dance as a form of entertainment or as a way to exercise or socialize. There was a time, however, when dance was considered the highest expression of our spirituality in our search for the communion with the divine, a part of lifes journey, celebrating the seasons and rhythms of the year and the rhythms of our lives. Dance is a language that reunites the body, mind, and soul. Through dance we experience a different dimension. Sacred Woman, Sacred Dance is the first book to explore womens spiritual expression--womens ways--through a study of dance. While the role of womens sacred dance was most valued in goddess-worshipping cultures where women served as priestesses and healers, dance was once an integral part of religious ritual and ceremonial expression in cultures all over the world, including Judaism and Christianity. In this book the author investigates how dance came to be excluded from worship and reveals how dance is once again being integrated into spiritual practices, both in public forums and on a deeply personal and private level. There are sacred dances for all occasions in lifes passages. Stewart describes sacred circles, birth rituals, ecstatic dances, and dances of loss and grief (in groups and individually) that allow us to integrate the movements of faith, healing, and power into our daily life. IRIS J. STEWART has taught dance and lectured on womens subjects for over twenty years. She is the founder of WomanDance, a troupe which performs interpretive dances that explore womens spirituality. To research this book, Stewart visited archaeological sites throughout Europe, the Middle East, and South America. She lives in northern California.About the AuthorIris J. Stewart has taught dance and lectured on womens subjects for over twenty years. She is the founder of WomanDance, a troupe which performs interpretive dances that explore womens spirituality. To research this book, Stewart visited archaeological sites throughout Europe, the Middle East, and South America. She lives in northern California.