

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE50: Linking the Moon & Igniting the Power of Your Womb with Zahra Haji

Aubree: Hi, love. This is episode 50 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo. On the show today I chatted with Zahra Haji otherwise known as the Yoga Goddess.

Zahra is a registered psychotherapist and women's reproductive health and fertility coach. She helps women address the psychological and emotional aspects of fertility and her online Moon Goddess, cycle-harmonizing, fertility-enhancing practice helps women conceive.

In our conversation today we chatted about the phases of the menstrual cycle and how they relate to the seasons of the year; The link between the moon and your menstrual cycle and what it means if you get your period during the new moon, the full moon or the transitional periods in-between; Addressing the psychological and emotional aspects of fertility with endometriosis and unraveling the layers of physical, emotional, and spiritual healing that are needed before bringing new life into this world.

I hope you enjoy our conversation, now on to the show.

Hi Zahra. Thanks so much for being on the show today.

Zahra: Thank you Aubree so much for inviting me.

Aubree: So will you share a bit of your story and how it led you to what you're up to now?

Zahra: Sure. So story actually starts quite a number of years ago when I was in yoga school. I had actually gone back to do some extra like extra studies in women's studies and that's where I first learned about this connection between women's cycles and the moon and I was truly fascinated because I'd never heard of anything like it before that basically our menstrual cycles follow a rhythm similar to the

phases of the moon and just like the moon there is part of the month where we're in a state of expansion and growth and outwardness and social and feeling energized and kind of like excited to be alive and then similar to the moon that starts to darken and turn inward, there's a shift in our energies too that brings us into a more quiet, reflective like darker state and I was really shocked that I'd never heard about this idea of there's a part of the cycle where we're in the light and a part of the cycle when we're in the darkness and that really kind of... it was a really accurate reflection for what it felt like for me from a month-to-month journey with my hormones and instead of feeling like I'm psycho, I was like oh I'm not psycho, I'm cyclical, period.

And it just sort of was a funny way for me to realize yeah there's actually nothing wrong with me. This is a hormonal shift that happens in all women and it... wouldn't it be amazing if we all knew about it and felt like oh like actually this is... this is normal and this is something that I should be able to flow with, rather than resist.

Aubree: I love that, and that's how I first came across you was one of your articles online refereeing the menstrual cycle and the moon cycle, so can you share a little bit more about that connection and how it influences how we're feeling during the month?

Zahra: Yeah. Sure. So, you know, going back to when I first discovered this information I honestly thought to myself like as women we have a right to... like this is our birthright. This is knowledge that is actually, you know, has been passed down through the generations and somehow in the last, you know, I don't know, hundred years or so, it's really been lost in our culture and so for me part of like normalizing mood swings, and normalizing hormonal fluctuations was really my focus back then was like eleven years ago actually more than eleven years ago. It was more like 13 years ago and...

And when I started to, when I actually developed Moon Goddess, which is my... not my signature fertility, yoga and meditation program, which incorporates very much this idea that as women we cycle with the phases of the moon and you know the idea that, as women, especially women that are trying to conceive there's this idea that there's only one important time of the month and that's ovulation and otherwise if we're... if we're menstruating then we've basically failed and so when I started teaching Moon Goddess originally my intention was to help women understand this connection between their menstrual cycles and the moon and what I found like happening organically was women who were trying to conceive were the ones that were predominantly or more and more showing up to my classes.

So eventually this, you know, this body of work turns more towards fertility but really it's for all women who have a... whether you're cycle or not, you know, what it once upon a time you did cycle, and it's really validating to know that there are periods of darkness that you're meant to go through and there are periods of light that you're meant to go through just like the seasons so... you know, when spring

time comes, like if you live in a place with four seasons, the spring time is that feeling of the earth reawakening the sense of like the promise of spring, the... the know we're looking for those first shoots of green and feeling that excitement and that's really the energy of pre-ovulation, that sense of like renewal and coming back into the... that new birth, the re-birthing of the new cycle, and then summer time is you know when all of like the flowers and the trees are at full bloom. There's a sense of like sunshine, really a lot more sun than you know the rest of the year and there's this full blossom, full... full sunshine feeling just like at ovulation time, which is where we're at our most fertile. It's when we're at our most social and outward, when we're feeling generally our most abundant. We're often in that state of wanting to be with others, feeling loving, like that sense of caring and connection is really at its height.

And then like when fall comes around and the trees start losing their leaves, autumn is really similar to the pre-menstrual time where there's like the darkening. The days get like shorter and there's a feeling of kind of like going back to business, that school year I think all of us in North America. I don't know about for you, but for me it's like every... every September for me feels like the beginning of the new year and it's like a new beginning. There's that sense of like there's a... that the fun of summer is over and we're like going back to business and so pre-menstrually it's a very similar time where we're often looking at our lives from a much more kind of like rational perspective. We're looking at what's not working, what's working and really we're focused more on what's not working and we're getting ready to go into that place of like that transition of between death and re-birth. So the pre-menstrual time is really that transitory time, just like fall is a transitory time and it's an opportunity to look at what you're ready to let go of, you know, letting go is a big theme of autumn, like I mentioned, the letting go of the leaves from the trees and that getting ready for that hibernation of winter.

And similarly our menstrual period is like that... that time of the month where things really slow down. There's a pause. There's a, you know, real desire to get cuddled under the blankets and you know curl up in a fire with your pj's and your furry... fuzzy slippers and be kind of like in alone, hibernating state, so when we realize that just like the seasons of the earth and the phases of the moon a women's body follows very much that same cycle and instead of trying to force yourself into a linear... linear pattern where every, all the time you're the same, you realize actually it's... you're not supposed to be the same all the **time you're supposed to be cycling in this way and in fact you are a living, breathing reflection of nature itself.**

So for me I feel like that's really... that's really like honoring and also validating of the female experience.

Aubree: Absolutely, and I know from experience as well getting in tune and realizing that there are those cycles because I think we tend to, you know, be in a

society where it's always summer (laughs) you know, like we're always expected to like go, go, go.

Zahra: Exactly. Yeah. There's that sense of you know all of our to-do lists and checking off and you know being productive and getting things done and it's very much... that's actually much more of the pre-ovulatory type of energy and we're... you know we expect ourselves because it's that part of our cycle, pre-ovulation, is very much the most masculine time of because it's where the estrogen and progesterone are at their lowest and so we are actually physiologically in our most rational, linear, productive time of our cycle, which is most like that productive, masculine, yang energy and because that's really the dominant, part of the dominant culture it's the time where we often feel I'm like at my best and I'm... this is like the most normal that you feel.

A lot of women will say oh I feel normal again now that my period is over and I have this energy back and I'm in that go, go, rev, rev place of drinking coffee and you know doing all the things, everything I can think of under the sun and we think that that's normal when it's actually meant to only be a part of our cycle and like a season in the month that we cycle through, but it's hard often to realize, you know, there's other aspects of our energies that we may really be, maybe unfamiliar with and maybe even disconnected from and... and moving towards embracing the three other energies, which are, you know, I call the first energy the go-getter, the one that we just talked about, pre-ovulation. Ovulation I call her the nurturer, or the mother archetype and the enchantress energy is the pre-menstrual time and the wise woman or visionary dreamer energy is our period, our menstruation time. So, often we... we know one of those really well and are kind of unfamiliar or disconnected from the other three.

Aubree: Absolutely. And so this all ties into then to the moon and the moon cycles and once I started paying attention to that I did notice that I feel different during different phases of the moon.

Zahra: Right.

Aubree: Especially you know when there's a full moon and it's really more of that stronger pull.

Zahra: Mhmm.

Aubree: So what does it mean then, you know, as you start to get aware of these things: when you are in your cycle, where the moon is, like what's the connection there between like if you get your period with the new moon, or with full moon, or if it's happening in those transitional periods?

Zahra: Right. Yes. So, this is a big topic of conversation right now in... in my community, in the Yoga Goddess community. So we recently released like a series of

posts about, just about this specifically so when you menstruate with the full moon, it's called the red moon cycle and traditionally the red moon cycle is a cycle that belonged to like the midwives and the medicine women and the women whose lives and bodies were more dedicated to... in service of the community rather than to a husband and a family and that traditional, home kind of idea, and the white moon cycle, which is a woman who's menstruating on the new moon was traditionally considered to be the cycle of the good woman, the woman who was you know a home-maker and cared for her family and birthed babies and took care of her, you know, home and her husband and all of that.

So, more and more women who find... who start to realize there's a connection between their menstrual cycle and the moon are often... they find me because they're Googling full moon and period, so there's a lot of red moon cyclers out there who are kind of wondering what is this connection for me and what does it mean if I'm trying to conceive because in Ayurveda or Chinese Medicine the... the preferred cycle is the white moon cycle where you're ovulating with the full moon and menstruating with the new moon, and the red moon cycle is considered to be a flip of that.

So in our exploration of like what does it mean when you're menstruating with different phases of the moon we found that it often is connected symbolically to where you are in your life and also like what kind of what your trajectory, what your path is, so if you're someone who is kind of called to healing work who is maybe working as a healer or on a journey of self discovery or self healing, you may very well be menstruating with the full moon and that... and you might be resonating with this healer archetype that doesn't preclude you from also being able to conceive. Many of my clients have conceived on a red moon cycle and they're still on this personal journey of like growth and development and healing and strangely they also all conceived girls.

So there was actually a study done in India where they looked at like conception and, and sex related to, like gender related to conception and relationship with the moon and they also found that women who conceive on a red moon cycle tend to have girls, so (laughs) I find that's consistent with what I've seen with my clients.

And then the purple moon cycle is when you're menstruating with the waning moon and the pink moon cycle is when you're menstruating with the waxing moon. So, again if you want to read more about it you can feel free to go to my blog, but just like in summary of what I find is women who are on the pink moon cycle are often in a phase of their life where they're... they're kind of being called to something bigger, but they're not sure what that something bigger might be and they're being maybe asked to take a bold step into a new phase of their life.

So, we've done like, you know, some like, I kind of tapped into asking for that information and that's what I received and then we validated it within our own community through like polls in our support circle on Facebook and a lot of women

have been resonating so, we're going with that and then the purple moon cycle is often women who are kind of transitioning to a new phase of their life where it feels more of like a completion, so it's a... it's a cycle that resonates... so the other one, the pink moon cycle I feel like is more connected to the maiden archetype and the purple moon cycle is more connected to the enchantress archetype and so the enchantress time of your life is really a transition often from a motherhood to like finishing that part of life and moving into more of like the peri-menopause time, which is again doesn't preclude you from being able to conceive at your phase of your life but often when who are cycling with the purple moon are finishing that... that transitioning out of that phase of life and moving into more of like reclaiming themselves as an... as an individual being and what that means for them along their journey. So, it's often like a quieting, becoming independent kind of like stepping away from the mundane world and stepping into more of a spiritual journey.

So, that's what I've found in terms of the pink and purple moon from my own like meditation and guidance and researching amongst the community of women in my world and then the red moon and the white moon are more traditionally understood and known as... as the cycles that we... we know about and again it doesn't matter which one you're on, whether or not, you know, you can be fertile or not is not dependant on where your cycle with the moon.

Aubree: I find that all so interesting. I tend to be more of the red moon, so do you then. If someone is trying to conceive is there a way to shift to the white moon? Or do you see that? Or what is... like what are some of your strategies if someone is trying to conceive?

Zahra: Yeah. So a lot of women's cycles will naturally shift when they start doing work with me, so whether it's the Moon Goddess program, which is my fertility, yoga and meditation program, or you know, other working where they're syncing their cycle with the... with the moon. A lot of times women's cycles will naturally shift to a white moon cycle when they're trying to conceive and literally, immediately after the baby's born they go right back and they see after they're breast feeding and their period comes back it goes right back to a red moon cycle. So it often happens naturally.

There are women who don't shift and still get pregnant, so I don't believe that it's necessary. I believe that your body's going to do what's right for you and when you... when you work with the moon and your cycle and you basically start to tune... like tune into your womb wisdom and your... you become more in sync with your menstrual cycle and instead of feeling like your womb is either something that's broken and not working properly or like a stranger that you haven't talked to in twenty years. When you start to re-establish that connection and relationship with your body and that most intimate part of your body, where in fact you're going to bring this baby into the world from a find that whatever cycle is most, you know, natural and... and the best for you to conceive will be the one that happens, so...

There are women who do want to intentionally shift their cycle to a white moon and yeah there are strategies that I have provided, also something you can look up on my blog, but basically there are like techniques that you can use.

I have a program called Lunar Conception and it teaches how to like use light exposure to shift ovulation dates there's also something called your natal, fertile... natal lunar fertile phase, which is the phase (laughs) the phase of the moon that you were born under so lunar conception also helps women synch their ovulation cycle with their natal lunar fertile phase. It's a mouthful to say (laughs) and it's considered to be like your optimal, optimal fertile time, so that's something else we teach in lunar circle conception, for those who want to explore that idea. So yeah those are two strategies that kind of come together that come to mind.

And then the other thing is just meditating with the different phases of the moon, depending on like where you are in your cycle so I've created something called moon meditations and if you listen to the meditation that synchs up with where you are in your personal cycle so for example when you're in your premenstrual phase and you listen to the enchantress meditation you're kind of again establishing this potentially lost link with your own womb and your menstrual cycle and just through that little bit of focus and working with the meditation to connect you in that way.

A lot of times women's cycles will shift, again to the most optimal cycle for them. So I don't believe that any one cycle is more optimal than another. I believe that your body knows best and once you... when you synch up with the moon it's going to do what's right for you.

Aubree: I love that. So what results then have you seen working with ladies, I know that you also work with some of the emotional aspects of fertility and perhaps infertility.

Zahra: Yeah.

Aubree: So how does that come into play with your work and what results have you seen addressing more of the emotional, psychological type pieces of this?

Zahra: Right. So, you know, one client actually really comes to mind, because I know your audience is very much endo focused, so I have a client in Australia who I worked with over, you know, several months actually because she had a very complicated case where she, you know, really develop a period at the time where you know most girls did and then when she finally you know medically was brought on to having a period it was extremely painful and excruciating and crazy heavy and so she never really had a good time with her cycles and was basically on birth control then for most of her life, most of her menstruating years and knew that when she was trying to conceive that you know there were a lot of hormonal, underlying hormonal issues that had yet to be dealt with.

So part of the reason she came to work with me is because most of her life she didn't feel, she actually felt awful about her body even though she's, you know, one of the... a very extremely beautiful woman. She didn't feel feminine. She didn't feel like she had any positive connection to her menstrual cycle. In fact it was a source of like pain and disappointment and dysfunction and so she really felt like... she didn't even really know what it was like to feel good about being in a women's body, you know, she had even gone to the extent of having breast implants because her body never developed in the way that she expected to feel like feminine.

And so when it came to trying to have a baby it was so emotionally rot for her with all these unresolved feelings of not feeling feminine, not having you know a good experience to the introduction of menstruation, you know, having had a sister who... who also really struggled with... her eldest sister struggled with infertility, so all these aspects... and then her relationship with her mom and you know her mom's insecurities, so there were many, many layers to our work together, which is why, you know, we worked together for several months because there were so many layers to work with. It wasn't simply about getting her period back, which of course was also any issue. She didn't have a period for a long, long time.

So part of our work was addressing her relationship with the feminine with not feeling good about being a woman in general, about healing her relationship with herself as a female being, with her menstrual cycle, with her, you know, connection that's the set up between her and her eldest sister. The set up between her and her mom. There was like I said many, many layers of healing work to do and eventually she did get her period back so she also, you know, in tandem of doing our coaching, she was doing her... the Moon Goddess Yoga and Meditation program, which is very much about harmonizing hormones and getting your body ready for pregnancy, primarily by getting your menstrual cycle at its optimal.

And so, you know, her period came back, which was for her like a huge success all on its own, because this is someone who for years did not have a proper period and medically, you know, was medically managed for so long so that was a really big, a really big success and you because of all of her challenges we knew that natural conception was you know very unlikely given her circumstances and the history that she had so her next step, like she had already done an IVF in the past, which had failed and so our next sort of... once we had dealt with all of that, was to prepare her for the IVF cycle and for it to be a successful IVF cycle.

So part of the challenge was again to find a doctor who really knew how to work well with endometriosis and that there were, you know, several hormonal, underlying hormonal issues happening, because of her history and somebody who would be able to look at that big picture, so you know, that was another part of our work together for her to trust her intuition that the doctor that she had previously worked, been working with was not the right one, so eventually, you know, she found a female doctor that really resonated for her and, you know, they did testing that really gave... gave insight into what... what she required in terms of making that

cycle more effective and now you know she is in fact pregnant and she's probably now towards the tail end of her pregnancy. We haven't, you know, we haven't been in touch for... for the summer I think now, but the last I heard, you know, she had a successful ultrasound. She's pregnant with her first child ever and this is woman who you know she's actually quite young, she's in her early 30's and still she had so many hormonal challenges and her period was such a source of, you know, pain and dysfunction for her and so even though supposedly, you know, she should at her age have healthy, abundant eggs, even that was quite a difficult experience to eggs that were, you know, ready to be extracted, like mature enough, that would turn into embryos.

So, you know, another element of the work that we did together was making sure that, you know, she did all the dietary changes and she... she was taking care of herself holistically and that really is I think the primary thing that I would say about... about infertility and healing in that journey of infertility and sort of graduating into being... becoming pregnant and having your child, is it very much is a mind, body and soul healing journey. It's not just one thing. It's very much a holistic experience and that we want to tackle it at all levels and... and that's why the yoga and meditation is very specifically designed to not only work at the physical level but to really also tap into the spiritual level of healing and it's self directed, so I find that that's so healing for so many women, especially if coaching is not in your budget.

There is real power when you feel like you're doing something that's in your hands to heal yourself. That it's not somebody else that's doing it for you, or doing it to you or that you're relying on. It's actually you and your body and you re-discovering the power of your womb, the connection of your womb, realizing that there's healing to do between you and your womb and that all of that is possible between just you and you and that's why I really love to... I always start off all of my clients with that program first before we do anything, because it's sort of like turning on an engine and like revving like a vehicle where we get it started. We get that engine going where it's that... it's the spark of energy that we need for you to have kind of like re-ignited inside of your womb and inside of yourself, because that's where the baby's going to be conceived inside of you.

So we want that connection, that initial kind of like spark, that engine like turning on to be inside of you and so I find that working with Kundalini yoga is the most powerful way that I know that sort of ignites that... that spark of the life force inside a woman's woman and it's called Mata Shakti, so you might of heard the word Shakti before and Mata means mother, so it's like the mother energy of creation being ignited inside of you.

And yeah sometimes a woman has had a more complex journey like my client that I just talked about in Australia that requires healing at a more global and holistic level that includes the psychological and emotional because maybe there's been trauma, because there's been like these kinds of medical issues that require more healing

and that requires, you know more... more help, but for some women you know I have a client who is from Canada. She... she's from a small town in Ontario and when she wrote to me, you know, she had spent \$50,000 on treatments. She'd done IVF. She'd done IUI. She'd done several rounds of both, and when she used the Moon Goddess program for three months that was enough for her to understand oh there's a different way for me to relate to my cycle and my womb and she conceived naturally on her, you know, on her own without additional support besides the Moon Goddess program and went on to have a, you know, healthy baby boy that she delivered Christmas day, which was a beautiful story.

So, you know, depending on your particular circumstances, where you are on your fertility journey, how much... how much emotional toll it's taken on you... depends, like how much support you'd need so there's a... you know there's a spectrum of what women need and so I like to be able to meet a woman wherever she is on that spectrum and some people can... can work with a self guided program like the Moon Goddess Fertility Yoga and Meditation and conceive and go on, you know, to have a child. Some women need more support and so that's where I offer the coaching element as well.

Aubree: Nice. Just listening to that story of the first client you mentioned, I can relate to a lot of that stuff as well, and I think the womb space is (laughs) it's a deep space.

Zahra: Yeah.

Aubree: I think there definitely is a lot of unraveling that can happen there if you're willing to explore that and it sounds like for some, I think especially with endo there may need to be some more exploration...

Zahra: Right.

Aubree: Going on and just the whole point of, you know, she didn't love her body and she didn't... that whole embodiment of what it means to be a woman like there's so much stuff that can come up (laughs) when you start digging deeper into that space.

Zahra: Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. And you know now she has a completely, you know, different relationship with her body and that was before she got pregnant, so that I think is a really important distinction that the healing will proceed getting pregnant, and that that's a really... and I always hear that from my clients is like first I got myself back and then I was able to move forward and get my baby, so that that's a really important piece. The healing has to happen with you first and that reclaiming of whatever lost, you know, whether it's relationship with the feminine or like a really damaged relationship with the menstrual cycle, like whatever it is that you need to reclaim and heal for you that that happens first and then it's like Ok the next phase is moving into becoming a mother to somebody else. Right?

Aubree: Exactly. And that makes sense. I mean you need that healing space before you're trying to bring a new life into the world.

Zahra: Yeah.

Aubree: I think a lot of times you get in that like forced... like... you know I need this. I want this to happen (laughs) and you need a nice healthy place for that new life to come into I think.

Zahra: Exactly. Exactly.

Aubree: Awesome. Well thanks Zahra so much for coming on today and sharing some of your wisdom and insights with us. Do you have any final words of inspiration today for our listeners?

Zahra: I just feel like something you said felt really important, which is, you know, you need to have that healthy space inside of you, and you know, I kind of use an analogy like when you invite people over to your home, for example, for like dinner, you really... you want to be in the best place, like space to do that, right? You clean your house. You make it really welcoming and inviting. You... you create a warm and beautiful and welcoming space to bring them into your home and so when you're in that desperate place like I need this to happen now, time is running out. This is going to make my life so much better.

Oh, I'm like out of synch with my friends and where they are in their lives and, you know, my... my parents and my in-laws are... you know, not going to become grandparents, like all of that sense of like I need that to happen to fix all of that stuff is not... it's very different from I'm inviting, welcoming, creating this space to bring people over or... or in the instance of trying to have a baby like welcoming this baby into this... this, like womb space of mine, so that's I think a really important, again when we come back to the emotional and psychological aspects, whether you do that kind of that part of the work consciously or through more spirit, through meditation and yoga it can happen without you having to, you know, talk it out, sometimes it works that way, is to know that we really want to come from that mind space and that... that energetic space of...

We want to welcome the soul and this being into ourselves when we feel really good, you know, when our... when our home is really in a beautiful place to welcome... welcome the soul and this being in. So when the womb space, being the home is in that most beautiful, welcoming space. So just to leave, you know, the listeners with that idea of ideally that's your priority, to create that most welcoming, beautiful, warm, loving space and it starts with you feeling that way, you know, inside and then opening the invitation outwardly to this... to this new baby.

Aubree: That's beautiful.

Zahra: Thanks Aubree. It's been really a pleasure.

Aubree: So how can our listeners connect with you further if they want to work with you or find out more about what you're up to?

Zahra: Sure. Yeah. So, the best way is through my website. I'm in Canada so it's yogagoddess.ca and that's where you know we have lots of resources that you can download. I have an eBook called *Fertility Secrets of the Female Body*, which lots of women have said it's been really helpful for them when they're on the fertility journey and they're trying to heal from infertility, and in fact I just got an email this week from a woman saying that she just by downloading the eBook and following that wisdom it helped her conceive and she wrote me to say, you know, she has a three month old baby and you know she thanked me for the fertility secrets eBook, so you know you're welcome to download that directly from my website: yogagoddess.ca and as I mentioned there's also a support circle on Facebook that you can... you can request to join just look for Yoga Goddess Support Circle.

Aubree: Excellent. Thanks again for coming on today and sharing with us. I appreciate it.

Zahra: Thank you so much Aubree for having me.

Aubree: If you enjoyed this episode I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. Leave us a positive review or share with your friends so more endo sisters can find the show and get on track to finding peace with endo. If you want to connect with me further you can find me over at peacewithendo.com or on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo.

I love digging more into the emotional and spiritual components behind endometriosis and infertility and that's a big part of what I explore in my newest book, *Energetics of Endo*. I invite you to pick up an autographed copy over at peacewithendo.com or on Amazon.com.

Thanks so much tuning in. I hope you find some peace in your day today. Sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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