

MAGDALENE CHRISTIANITY

Mary's Gospel

Inner Themes #1

HELEN MARTINEAU

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For centuries attempts have been made take events in the gospels literally or as aids to reconstructing the life and times of Jesus and his disciples, Mary Magdalene included. But Mary's gospel, as with all true gospels, has a life beyond ordinary time and place. It is attuned to the profoundly significant allegorical and metaphysical levels beneath the outer that we will explore in 'Mary's Gospel - Inner Themes'.

ON THE I AM SAYINGS

The pairing of Mary and John

Mary the Magdalene and Lazarus or the beloved disciple who was given the initiation name John, are paired souls. They were paired in earlier incarnations and we may look at this in future posts. Right now, the focus is on their initiation into the Christ mystery.

The Gospel of John and Mary's Wisdom gospel work in harmony. So when John writes about the Word, *Logos*, then Wisdom, *Sophia* is involved. If one was written or spoken of the other was assumed to be in play. They must because this high power is a unity. The gods and goddesses of ancient times despite their countless names and genders were outpourings of this ultimate unity. Although in the days of Mary and John a patriarchal approach to the divine had already undermined that ancient knowing, in esoteric circles it was still assumed.

John's gospel is about the Word who is also the Christ. It records the incarnation of the cosmic Word in the chosen human being Jesus, a singular event that had been in preparation over the ages and brought a new impulse to humanity and into the world. In the words of Rudolf Steiner, Christ 'wished to cause the life, which flowed within the mysteries, to flow through the further historical evolution of humanity, and thus to raise mankind to a higher stage of existence.'

The gospel of the cosmic Word on a human level is also about the beloved disciple's initiation through which he comes to know the Word and discovers this as his true self, the inner spirit known as Christ. (Mary's initiation is implicit in this gospel and I explore this through her symbols in Portal 3).

The first-person account in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene enables a soul focus. When through Wisdom Mary experiences her soul's transformation then the Word, the Christ, awakens within her being as her spiritual self. And the mighty spirit of the cosmos becomes known to her through Wisdom.

For every seeker these are complementary, two sides of a whole, from the point of view of the spirit and of the soul, which unite when an individual is harmonized and completed, or 'Christed'.

Who is I AM?

When we say 'I am' we are making an existential statement about who and what we are. In spiritual writings we often find I AM in capitals to portray the existential nature of divinity.

This goes back to the Book of Exodus. As a sign of something beyond ordinary experience, the divine voice speaks to Moses from a bush that burns but is not consumed. Moses asks, 'What shall I say when people ask your name?' And the response comes, 'I am who I am' – *'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh*. Connected with the verb 'to be', this doubling reveals a high being who is the essence and source of Beingness. 'Tell them I AM (*'ehyeh*) sent you,' the voice adds.

In the Greek the phrase is *ego eimi*. It means 'I exist' or 'I have being'. In the thought of the time it could also invoke the divine name. That is why Jesus offended some men in Jerusalem when he declared, 'Before Abraham was, I am.' (John 8:58)

There are seven key I AM, *ego eimi* sayings in John's gospel. Through them Jesus Christ is in a process of revealing who he is through special metaphysical attributes of divine beingness.

On another level they are about the qualities of our 'I am', our spiritual 'I' as powerful images of our human potential. Each of the seven *ego eimi* sayings in the Gospel of John are followed by a teaching that reveals the I AM working in us and how it can manifest.

I am the bread of life (Jn 6:35)

I am the light of the world (Jn 8:12)

I am the door of the sheep (Jn 10:7)

I am the good shepherd (Jn 10:11)

I am the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25)

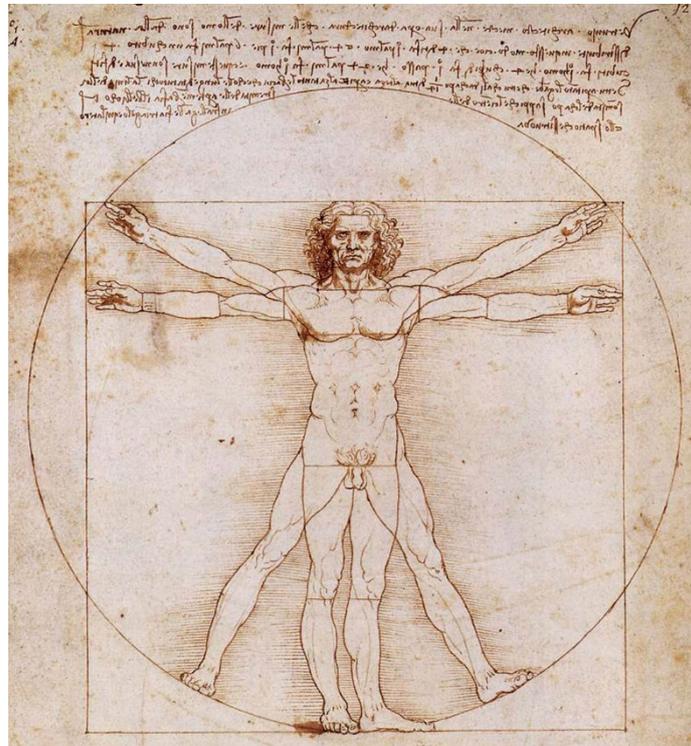
I am the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6)

I am the true vine (Jn 15:1)

They also found their way into Mary's gospel and this was not really under the control of my intellect. Many authors recognize that at times pictures and themes simply arrive and in a real sense they are written through you. Much of Mary's gospel is like this. And Jesus's words concerning I AM thread into her story through events she witnesses and accounts she hears, as her wisdom unfolds and the spiritual 'I' gradually becomes part of her.

Images of our human potential

Evolution moves slowly on a physical and spiritual level, and the *ego eimi* statements remain relevant. The divine I AM is mirrored within the human being. Greek philosophers saw divine geometry revealed in the ideal human proportions – Leonardo da Vinci referenced this in his famous *L'Uomo*, 'The Man'.



But the essence of I AM is spirit. The I AM, *ego eimi* is our higher self. This mostly sleeps within the soul and hopefully will awaken as we move gradually towards that higher existence.

Mostly we live according to our ego. It is our survival power base and works in the astral, a characteristic of all sentient (sense-based) creatures. Astral is the home of instinct, which is neutral, part of 'nature'. In humans the individualistic ego that emerges from the astral gives us our self-consciousness and ability to know that we are individuals. Through a well-developed ego we get what we need or want in the world. But our destiny, our purpose involves more than this. When we undertake the initiatory journey, we are undergoing transformation, and we assist evolution.

The spiritual quality of I AM exists in eternity. It overshadows all that lives. But at this point in evolution the I AM can enter the physical realm only through human consciousness where we can gain gnosis of this spiritual self. And we have the potential to bring the wisdom of I AM to life in our soul. When the higher self unites with the lower self we will be completed and harmonized.

But it doesn't happen automatically. The sad reality is that the individualistic ego has grown crookedly and continues to do so. So within humans there's an impulse to grab greedily for self, to envy, denigrate and blame, and even claim power over others, which only fuels the ego wants in those who feel powerless. The I AM shrinks back under the negativity rife in the world.

Yet there is much goodness in human souls shining forth in our finest, kindest, consciously offered thoughts and deeds. I AM is expressed in us when we think and act in ways that build, uplift and add to the world.

For us to live according to 'our' I AM we must become empty of self, which may seem like a contradiction. Yet to give the cosmic I AM room, I, my self-focused part must diminish that life eternal can be born in me.

Having a mystical conversation

To express the I AM is to allow the cosmos to speak through you. Each of the seven sayings give a different emphasis to this wonderful process. All are about discovering the freedom to be who you really are. In the next series of posts, we will look at these sayings in more depth – and include one more that is drawn from Mary Magdalene's gospel.

Approach these sayings as a mystical conversation with your indwelling I AM. I suggest that you meditate on each of the I AM sayings as part of your personal soul work. It is helpful to include an affirmation that connects with the inner meaning of *ego eimi* in its context. I have included affirmations I have worked with for many years. You may wish to choose your own.

As well there is an inner rhythm to the I AM sequence, and another way of attuning to the sayings is to meditatively speak or chant all seven – which becomes eight in relation to Mary – with their affirmations.