

MAGDALENE CHRISTIANITY



Mary's Gospel
Inner Themes
6

HELEN MARTINEAU

Mary's Gospel – Inner Themes # 6

I AM THE WATER THAT BRINGS LIFE

The transforming potential of Water

Water is amazing. It provides so much that is essential for existence and it is one of the most potent subjects for meditation. Take your pick; its multitude of energies and moods reveal the whole human condition.



Water imagery permeates John's gospel, and indeed 'I am the water that brings life' could be his eighth I AM saying. But I think it belongs uniquely to Mary.

Displaying the ability to metamorphose – water can be solid, liquid and mist, it is essentially yin, including in its most powerful expressions. Always in motion and with the ability to make things clean, water quite naturally became a major theme in Mary's gospel, which is about her soul.

Transformation in Mary's soul happens through what is known as 'the cleansing of the astral'. The astral, seat of sense-based desire must be purified. It is a process we all need to undergo if we are to attain and express our true self. Let's look at the ways water symbolizes this inner purpose.

The Greek god Dionysus is said to have turned water into wine in his temple at Teos. That legend is invoked in John chapter 2 which depicts the mystery-filled first sign

during the marriage at Cana. Here through Jesus, the power of living, flowing water from the spring is transformed into 'wine', the wine of life, making a bridge to 'I am the true vine', the last of the I AM sayings.

In her gospel Mary Magdalene perceives Wisdom alive in Jesus's mother. She recognizes how the ever-flowing wisdom of the feminine, via the soul forces of Mother Mary, pass from mother to her son and are at work in this transforming deed that raises the mood among the guests.¹ Mary dwells 'within the echoes of that wedding when commonplace things were transfigured' and she experiences the events there as a sign for her soul. She is ready for new life.

The wisdom in our soul may speak in an unexpected way. We must always be available, which is challenging amidst the noises of the world. And when it comes, we need to recognize the 'sign', which is also challenging.



Water quenches thirst. Without water the body dies. Water is life's essential wisdom. 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' emerged early in Mary's gospel when she first speaks with Jesus at the well. I leave to your imagination to choose whether this meeting really took place on a visionary rather than physical level.

The well where Mary encounters Jesus relates to the hidden mysteries of Wisdom. And like most old wells, this one would have its source in an underground stream within Mother Earth. I once lived in a house in the north of England with an ancient well in the cellar served by a confluence of underground streams. The big stone house had been built over the well and for us living there and for visitors, a golden mood permeated the place and still enlivens our memories.

Water has long been known as a symbolic conduit to eternal life. The snaking waters of the Nile in ancient Egypt were an image of the birth canal and the dead pharaoh's soul would be borne along its hidden waters to the celestial Nile and new life in the spiritual realms. Ma'at who ordered this process was Wisdom's name there.

Mary Magdalene will draw living water from Wisdom's well deep in the soul. And as she does then the Christ can blend it with the waters of eternity. Her experience is potentially ours.



The pearl beyond earthly price is not drawn up. It searched for in the oceans, beneath the endlessly stirring waves of Mother Sea.

The soul must be strong. This strength is not ego, which needs to be noticed and seen. Soul strength in Mary, and all of us, is enabling the waves of the sea to roll over the ego self, while also not letting our soul be buffeted this way and that.

The pearl, the watery prize must be strived for, dived deep for, sought long for while always honouring the feminine source and the feminine way. This way is less about intention to seize the prize and more about determination and persistence. Mary's gospel does not dwell on struggle, difficulty or the pain of the search to find the pearl. It is about learning to use its beauty for good.



The story of Nessa the woman Jesus healed of an excessive flow of blood speaks of her determination to seek healing. The life force in menstrual blood, mostly water, symbolizes woman's etheric procreative power. Perhaps Nessa has wasted this wisdom, which depletes the etheric. All of us, female or male can find our etheric depleted if we misdirect our life energies. Alternately its flow can be blocked through overemphasis on materialism. When harmony is restored through the will to change, and by embracing the healing Spirit of Love, transformation can take place.

To this end we must work on our soul so that union with the divine spirit can take place. Water shows us how. It takes the path of least resistance around an obstacle. It does not expend energy fighting but continues to flow onward. Yet by enduring it gradually wears down even the rock that appears invincible.



The pool of Siloam was fed by the Gihon spring outside Jerusalem's walls. It was the source of healing for Jews and of living water for the Temple rites. Water engineered and directed along Rome's brick and cement aqueducts would take the life from it. But freely running water clears away dross. And through this water Jesus

opens the eyes of a blind man to the sunlight. As a mystical parallel Mary begins to truly see the light of the spiritual sun, the I AM.

In her matured wisdom and gnosis Mary anoints and washes the feet of Jesus with tears welling up from the pure love in her soul. It is a prescient act. And from that point she will follow her teacher to his sacrificial destiny.

Fully permeated with the divine I AM, water and blood flow from Jesus who surrenders his body. By his death the Christ, the *elohim* from on high, is born into the world. These things Mary Magdalene perceives through Wisdom, for now wisdom is who her soul has become.

The garden where she encounters the risen Christ on the first dawn of the new day is watered by the rains that nourish and bring forth flowers and fruits. Water represents Wisdom in so many ways. And in this garden, Mary knows who he is when he speaks her by name; she knows the I AM. And as a first fruit, I AM unites with her soul.

I AM the water that brings life

Mary would have meditated often on the different ways water encapsulated aspects of her initiatory journey. Likewise, for us in our contemplations. My suggestion for this saying is that you choose a quality of water to attune to, one that feels right for the inner work your soul is asking for at any given time.

You may do this as you enter your meditation, by allowing a watery scene to emerge. Imaginatively contemplate the details of your picture. And through your insights, allow your unique affirmation to arise from the attributes of that healing, transforming, life-giving water.

¹ *In John 2 verse 4 Jesus responds to his mother who has told him that the hosts have run out of wine. Literally his words in the Greek are, 'What to me and to you woman'. In this unusual phrase the 'what' also has the sense of 'that/this'. It is usually translated as the rather dismissive, 'Oh woman, what has this to do with me?' A closer translation would be, 'That is to (between) me and you' and would not eliminate the real implication, as Mary Magdalene perceived, that feminine wisdom plays a role in this first sign. It also makes sense of Mother Mary immediately telling the servants to 'Do whatever he asks you'.*