

MAGDALENE CHRISTIANITY

*Spiritual  
Beings  
at Work  
in the  
World*

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## **SPIRITUAL BEINGS AT WORK IN THE WORLD**

### **The Magdalene soul and ours**

There are rare individuals, high initiates who when they incarnate come to earth with a particular purpose that assists evolution, soul evolution. You could say these are leading souls advanced enough to fast track their own development. And at a certain point the greater destiny opens up. Mary Magdalene is a soul like this.

Mary incarnated in first-century Palestine, imbued with ancient feminine wisdom gained in former lives. She awakened to a new dawn when she received the world-changing Christ impulse. And her beautiful soul continues to have a significant influence in the world.

Her story sits within a larger world framework. She is an important character in a grand ongoing drama concerning the evolution of human consciousness – which is history that looks inward to the soul and the spirit. This is why I begin the story of Magdalene Christianity with the big picture concerning reincarnation of human souls in company with spiritual beings.

Our souls continue from lifetime to lifetime in different bodies, evolving and passing through many stages in our lives on earth. The environmental movement acknowledges how precious is our earthly home for survival physically. In terms of spirit-soul evolution human souls can only progress when in a physical body. More, all beings on earth are also evolving and need Mother Earth. This journey includes the roles being played by invisible forces active in existence. The continuing destiny of the whole *cosmos* ('place of order') is involved. It's a vast epic still with far to go and it's extraordinary to think about this in relation to far-away futures.

### **About spirit**

'Spirit' is in a bit of trouble today. There are those who believe there is nothing beyond the physically observable, measurable world of matter, and that the so-called spiritual beings, the gods and goddesses of myth, are fantasies that have no bearing upon reality. At the other end of the belief spectrum, the spiritual is real, but separate from this world – an omnipotent divinity that judges you and decides what realm you will inhabit after death.

Between these poles there are nuances of understanding. In commonplace utterances like the 'spirit of a place' or the departed loved one who is 'still here with us in spirit' we find a recognition that there is

something to life beyond the physical, and something within us that is more than physical.

It's rare in our age, but some people can perceive spiritual activity in the world. Children often do before the outer world pushes in. The poet Wordsworth wrote:

There was a time when meadow, grove and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,  
To me did seem  
Apparelled in celestial light ...

*Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.*  
As an adult Wordsworth mourned what he had lost.

Vincent Van Gogh was one individual who had the powerful imagination and the ability to depict in paint his experience of spiritual forces in nature. Twenty years ago I visited the museum in Amsterdam dedicated to his art, and the impact remains with me of the awesome non-physical power alive in his radiant blossom tree, the snowy landscape and wheat fields, a night street in Arles.

His 1889 *Starry Night* in MOMA, New York, vibrantly swirling with the spiritual activity of the cosmos is rightly one of the world's most famous artworks.



The Oxford dictionary defines spirit as the animating principle governing all vital phenomena. The word is derived from the Latin *spirare*, to breathe. Spirit is related to life itself. It's a general definition that will be enriched by an understanding of the how the metaphysical cosmos operates.

With the emergence of philosophical thinking, conceptual frameworks for the many gods, goddesses and spirits arose – as we will see, quite late in the evolution of consciousness. I'll be drawing on this approach in what follows.

The transcendent aspect of spirit was given many names – Atum, the Immoveable Mover, the Godhead, the Unknowable, Ein Sof, the Father, Logos, or simply the Divine. This eternal beingness, exists complete and unified within itself. Yet paradoxically it is also always becoming, as the prime and continuing mover through which all existence comes into being and continues to come into being. Everything evolves. Nothing is static in the cosmos.

The first emanations or manifestations were the divine beings that played different roles in Creation and continue to work into the physical. They have been variously explained. In the late fifth century Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about a nine-fold spiritual hierarchy descending from the Godhead; Kabbalists place levels of the divine realms on a diagrammatic Tree of Life; Theosophy and Anthroposophy speak of planes or worlds where different beings are active. All these layers interconnect and function in relationship and rather than our time-space notion of 'up' and 'down', rising and descending it's helpful to think of these realms of spirit as folding into one another like Russian babushka dolls.

The time spirits or time lords make up one level of spirit. Science fiction has taken up these beings, for example in the long running TV series *Doctor Who* about a time lord from another realm who travels through time and fights evil. Our epic will involve spiritual time lords whose role is to actually shape time into ages and influence the path of evolution in a specific age. They are also known as Archai.

Our place within physical existence is as mediators between the spiritual and physical worlds. And surely this is a purpose of our existence.

It helps in this context to address the biblical injunction for humanity to 'have dominion' over other living things on earth. 'Dominion' from the Latin *dominatus*, is in turn a translation of the Greek *kyriarchia* and the original Hebrew *radah*. The Hebrew has connotations of treading the wine press, and so associates with control, shaping and rulership. We need to recognize, however, that in the fifth century BCE when the final form of Genesis was written, a ruler whether priest or king was still seen as offering self on behalf of the gods as a divinely appointed servant in

the world – and so primarily a mediator. It's a tragedy that many interpretations of the word have seen only permission to dominate or destroy. That totally abrogates human responsibility.

### **How spirit lives and works in earth existence**

The material world is aptly described as spirit made visible – all physical forms are like containers in which spiritual forces play. The earth broadly consists of four major kingdoms – mineral, plant, animal and human. Many people do not see animal and human as separate categories. I will describe how humans are distinct from a spiritual point of view despite our connection through the animal body and senses.

To start let's look at the components of our earth existence. They are sometimes known as four 'bodies'.

#### *The physical*

The processes that make up the physical belong to the mineral kingdom. Physically the human body – its skeleton, skin, sinews and muscles, its glandular, respiratory, circulatory and metabolic systems, the nerves and sense organs connected with our marvellous brain – is united with the whole material cosmos by the dynamic chemical and molecular interactions taking place on every level and every form of physical existence.

In relation to the spiritual archetypes the purest expression of the physical lies in the mineral kingdom, for example in the beautiful geometric structures of crystals.

#### *The etheric*

Spiritual teachings speak of a counterpart to the physical, an invisible life force, the animating principle through which all biological life on earth is connected, sometimes called the etheric. Aristotle named it 'the fifth element'. All living things have an etheric aspect, which is why it is also called the 'life body' although it does not take on form. The etheric flows through the physical, aligning with but not limited by its form, hence it is often called the etheric double.

Something without the etheric is not alive, thus minerals and the fundamental forces of nature – gravity, electromagnetism, strong and weak nuclear – don't have life. They are matter only.

The etheric follows different laws than our geometry of the physical. Existing in a subtle counter-space (an Anthroposophical term) it is what weaves the physical into the metaphysical worlds. This non-material force can't be measured with instruments, so its existence is often rejected. Nevertheless, associated healing arts deal with malfunction on this level

as well as on the physical. In movement disciplines like tai chi and yoga, this 'chi' or 'prana' is an important focus.

The etheric finds its purest archetype in the free flow of sap through plants, their characteristic of being moved by external influences and in their exquisite diversity.

### *The astral*

The concept of an astral plane stems from Plato and is found in many esoteric philosophies. Astral means 'of the stars' from a time when our relationship with the non-physical cosmos was depicted in images. The vault of the heavens had its human equivalent in the dome of the head, while the motion of planets and the heavenly constellations gave rise to responses and thoughts.

We know so much now about our brain with its firing of neurons and the patterns they form, which drive the nerve-sense system. A material view sees the mind as an offshoot of brain activity. Spiritually this needs to be reversed – brain activity as the outcome of mind, which is not physical. Esoteric teachers down the ages have portrayed a valid macrocosmic-microcosmic picture of consciousness that plays out in our souls as follows.

Because sense stimuli cause an immediate reaction via the nervous system, the thoughts and actions that result are instinctive and/or emotional. This kind of consciousness is called 'astral'. As the bearer of instincts and emotions, in the East the astral is known as the desire body. Instinctively and emotionally we move towards pleasure and away from pain.

The astral belongs to kingdom Animalia (from the Latin *animalis*, 'having breath'), living creatures that are sentient. And in the animal kingdom the astral finds its purest expression. Reactions through the senses mean independent movement, a characteristic of the animal world. Plants and single-celled organisms do not have sense-astral consciousness.

Animals have evolved varying degrees of consciousness. The astral with its complex reactions to life's experiences is a source of different personalities, especially in the higher families and species. Current research has moved us far from the idea that animals are 'dumb beasts' with limited language of communication, or that they do not feel, and cannot empathise. Members of the animal kingdom act 'according to their nature', through instinct, desire, care for members of the group and distrust of outsiders. Humans are animals in that sense.

## Human individuality

An individual moral imperative is unique to humans. Human beings have evolved a complex level of consciousness involving ideas and concepts about self, with the ability to look inward. Through our consciousness we can 'imagine if' and reason why, form concepts from these mental processes and live in the world accordingly – which can be a blessing or a curse. Only humans can deliberately be cruel and act 'against nature'.

It has been an evolutionary development that we can verbalise and refer to ourselves as 'I'. This self-referral has entered human languages because we've become conscious of ourselves as a separate identity. The ability to think and say 'I' is an existential statement – 'I exist; I have independent being'.

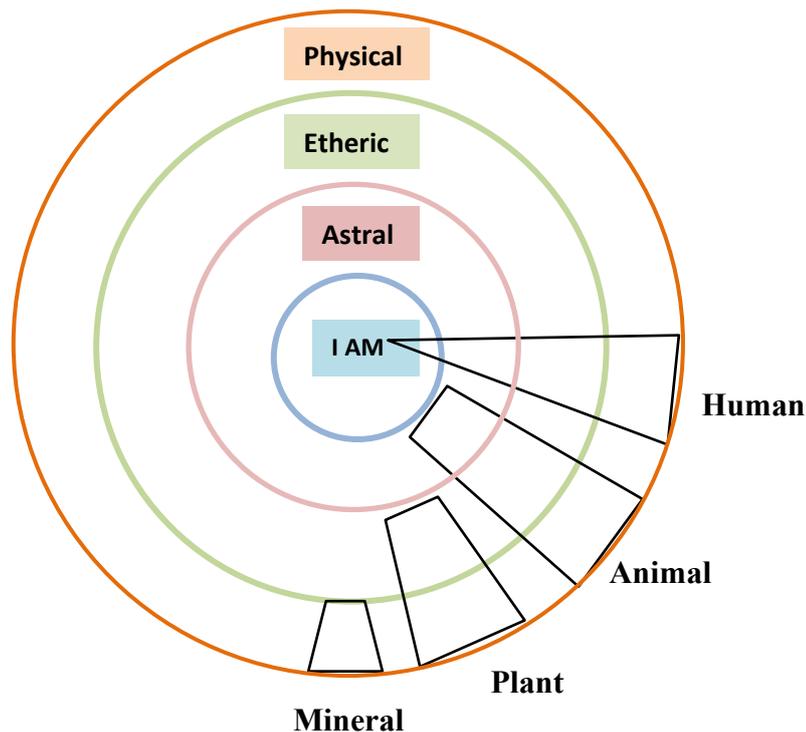
The soul lives within astral consciousness and in humans the soul is uniquely individualised. Each of us is custodian and protector of our personal soul, which is a gift. We need to start living for our soul and in return our soul returns a gift to us and this is the fourth aspect of self, the spiritual 'I'.

### *The spiritual 'I'*

In esoteric Christianity, the highest 'body' is often called 'I am', an expression going back to the identity of the biblical god revealed to Moses on the mountain as 'I am who I am' (Exodus 3:14). From a root word denoting *being*, this god is essentially being itself, the Ultimate Beingness. Yet it isn't static but moving; the name has inherent meanings of both 'I am being' and 'I am becoming'.

How does this relate to us? In any lifetime, even when we aren't conscious of the fact, our soul is linked to the cosmic 'I am' existing beyond space and time through its mirror within us.

We are referring to the human spirit, although the phrase 'I am' has the advantage of setting it firmly in each individual. I like to call this aspect of the inner self 'I AM' with capital letters because it's a strong reminder of our potential as human beings and a function of the spiritual path, which is about becoming who we really are, to discover and manifest this spiritual self, this 'I', as the core and essence of our being. We are not there yet, so the diagram below only has the human pointing into I AM.



### **Mending the broken link in the chain of being**

In each of the earth kingdoms the four levels of physical, etheric, astral and spiritual 'I' are involved. But they are organized differently. The mineral kingdom manifests as physical only, while the other non-physical levels exist outside the material object. Hence surrounding every rock and crystal is a spiritual aura consisting of etheric, astral and I. Plants manifest through physical and etheric, and animals through the physical, etheric and astral.

Humans also function through these three levels, but it's only in individualistic humanity that the I AM has entered the soul. This cosmic Beingness, the 'I' of every personal 'I' can be known and revealed spatially in time in each one of us – potentially. At this stage of our evolution on earth spiritual individuality is still embryonic. Meanwhile the attitudes and ideas we form frequently limit us, and consequently we act for ego and against the spiritual self. That means it remains inactive.

Yet our finest aspirations and deeds mark spirit as our essential being. That's why we can discover the expression of the divine within self and consciously become the mediators we are meant to be between heaven and earth. We are still on this journey.

And now, as we follow the inner human story through the ages, Mary Magdalene will be our companion. Her feminine wisdom was alive when the incarnation of Christ opened the way for the spiritual worlds to penetrate the human I. Thus, through her initiation into what would be

known as *the Christ Mystery* she became in the words of the mystic Meister Eckhart, 'a lamp of living light', a pioneer who for too long has been unsung.

Significantly for our journey across the ages, her soul can lead us back to the central activity of the divine feminine in human souls, and behind external events and forward to the possibility of returning the whole of existence to harmony. This can take place only when this feminine aspect of spirit is fully acknowledged.