

MAGDALENE CHRISTIANITY

*Seven
Demons
and
the
Well of Life*

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SEVEN DEMONS AND THE WELL OF LIFE

Healing body, soul and spirit

Here's the situation: Mary Magdalene did have some in-body issues to resolve. When this happened, she was able to become the bread and wine of life.

But first there were her demons. What are they, these demons? They have been described and interpreted according to various moral standpoints as sins, misuse of sexuality especially, and sometimes psychologically as neurosis or mental illness, or less frequently simply as physical ailments. 'Demons' is also a general term for the disruptive lower nature we all possess that does indeed have a larger impact. In the gospels Jesus heals all these kinds of dis-ease.

The healings Jesus performed are often described as miracles. In the context of the first century this mostly isn't accurate. Miracles are spiritual events inexplicable by natural laws. Healing was understood as being about body, soul and spirit and in those days the etheric was more active than it is today. Through compassion-filled feeling a cure could flow via the etheric from a trained healer directly to the ill person, or people. The subjects took no active part. At times Jesus healed in this manner, including before the Christ spirit entered at his baptism.

Jesus the Christ also performed healings that point to a moral force of the future. A Roman centurion out of love for his son crosses the social divide to beg Jesus to heal the boy; a foreign woman braves the Jewish crowd to insist on her equal right to access healing for her demon-possessed daughter. Then there is the example of a woman ostracised by everyone for her frequent haemorrhaging, her twelve year 'flow of blood'. She dares to tug at the hem of Jesus's garment, rising above her fear of rejection. In these stories healing takes place because of faith. This is not 'blind faith' but a faith that stems from an inner surety – and from action. Healing like this involves active cooperation, between individuals, soul to soul through the power of the spirit. Such cooperation looks forward to the potential of holistic healing and even for mainstream medicine. The future must include the spiritual will that is a mark of the consciousness soul.

Mary Magdalene has some devilish issues

What is going on in Mary? Her release from her demons by Jesus is mentioned, in passing, in Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2. There is no description of how it happened. I'm suggesting that the freeing involved her conscious participation, her faith and will, and was a part of her initiatory *process*.

The number seven symbolises completion and unity and Mary's seven demons tell us that her 'illness' concerns her whole being. She may have manifested physical symptoms. But there is no suggestion that she was sinful and 'possessed'. Perhaps only Jesus perceived her demons behind her essentially loving nature.

He would have observed an imbalance in the flow through her seven spiritual centres or chakras, the etheric counterpart of the body's glandular system. In Hinduism they are called lotus flowers to indicate their etheric nature, or wheels to describe their action. Ideally, they should be open like flowers in full bloom and turn harmoniously together like wheels. This etheric activity impacts physically and influences soul development. In truth, the energy functions properly in very few individuals. Most of us are out of balance in some way.

The colour of chakras is well known. In meditation seven radiant colours are often revealed akin to the physical colours of the rainbow, which are the result of white light being refracted through moisture. But chakra colour is not physical. It belongs to the realm of the astral worlds. We can perceive the colours inwardly because they are reflected in the soul's astral levels. Medieval artists who retained a clear perception of their reality were to influence the development of glorious stained-glass windows. The technique for achieving some of those colours is lost to us. Modern computer art, like the picture combination below comes closer than pigment to capturing something of the rich hues.



Mary Magdalene was a seer, hence the symbolic meaning of her double name. In her case, then, she would have been blessed with the grace of flowers open to the beneficent dew of spirit. This she would have brought with her, a result of striving over many incarnations. But something was not right, and she would have perceived this in the way her colours vibrated. Her soul itself was pointing out the interfering 'demons', although at this stage she did not know the way forward.

Sometimes obstacles and difficulties we experience are needful as a preparation for an initiatory transformation. It's the meaning behind the puzzling statement Jesus made before healing the man born blind: his affliction was not about anyone's sin or guilt but 'that the works of God may be made manifest in him.' (John 9:3). This was the situation with Mary Magdalene who was on the cusp of a destiny that had long been in preparation.

The waters of the well

A key to the cause of Mary's demons can be found in John chapter 4, the story of the woman of Samaria, who I am sure is Mary Magdalene. The Gospel of John is about initiation – outer events convey different stages of an inner process. In the Samaritan woman we are looking at Mary Magdalene's soul at a potent turning point. This may be her first encounter with Jesus Christ.

In Samaria he comes across a woman by a well and speaks with her. The circumstances are unusual, a man conversing alone with a woman, and a Samaritan, anathema to good Law-abiding Jews. There is a long exchange during which Jesus expounds his mission to her. Alert readers and listeners would see in the exceptional circumstances the universality of Christ's mission.

Jesus also speaks personally to her and she recognises him as a prophet. The amazed woman realises that everything he has revealed to her is true. She will hurry off to tell everyone and they in turn trust her word. Mary who would be the Magdalene is already known as a woman of integrity.

On the wider human level, the exchange at the well is a parable and a teaching about the soul, which is that part of the astral connected with our spiritual self. Soul should be the mediator between our physical life and the eternal realms of spirit. Too often the soul becomes entangled with the lower astral and we lose touch with our spirit.



Christ and the Samaritan Woman - by Henryk Siemiradski (1843-1902)

A parable about attaining spiritual vision

The deep symbolism in the conversation between Mary and Jesus focuses our attention on her inner being. Let's explore this.

The initiatory meaning begins with the significance of the well. Wells belong to Wisdom; they once marked the entrance to knowledge of nature's rhythms and myriad forms, and of these seven etheric 'wells' within the human body that protect the glandular system as it pours forth life-enhancing fluids. Wisdom has always belonged to the soul and each person must cultivate wisdom within. But the cool waters are far below, hidden from sight. The water has to be drawn up through conscious effort.

Jesus says to Mary, 'I bring a spring of water that wells up within to eternal life.' And her longing surely feels like heartache. How may I find this water? her heart whispers. But she says, 'Give me this water. Then I will not thirst and need to draw up water anymore.'

Jesus says, 'Go, call your husband.' Convention requires this of course, although he is already engaged in conversation with her, so this is not about social correctness. I believe he is testing her ability to consciously engage with the depth of her longing.

Mary doesn't dissemble. 'I have no husband,' she states. She has called upon her soul's truth and inner courage and is ready for what Jesus can offer. And he reveals that he knows about her five husbands, and the man she is living with now who is not her husband.

Five husbands. Here is a sensual woman who has lived to the utmost the life of the five senses. Is she perhaps the 'woman of the city', the sinner who anoints Jesus described in Luke chapter 7, the one Jesus forgives because she has 'loved much'? Luke didn't know Jesus; he was not a disciple, yet his version of the story has been passed down – a bit like Chinese whispers – to turn the woman's social irregularity into Mary Magdalene the whore. The red of the lowest chakra became her clothing colour in countless artworks. We'll come back to the anointing when we look at the Magdalene attribute of the alabaster jar. But I am sure that Mary Magdalene was able to 'love much' and that her search was for genuine and fulfilling love.

Mary Magdalene is seen as representing the sentient soul, the soul linked to sense experience, and to bodily responses. Symbolically 'husband' represents the mind and five of them abandoned already suggest an inner struggle between mind and body.

She longs for depth and meaning, to draw water from the well of Wisdom. Yet when the mind is not actively involved, the soul cannot find the clarity it needs because sense experience is invariably subjective. At this stage Mary Magdalene has not fully become the woman of clear vision.

Then there is the sixth man, the one she lives with who is not her husband. Who is he? I think it is the sixth sense, a mind quality through which one can see the spirits. But Mary has not wanted to 'marry' him. In her wish for a higher form of perception is she is trying not to involve her thinking at all? This is the old clairvoyance. It means going into a trance like the oracle of Delphi, a mindless state where she is not in charge of herself and the sevenfold flow of energy within her being. And that's risky.

The eternal life Jesus speaks of is a state of living in the eternal. It is about a new path that involves becoming fully conscious, body, soul and spirit and accessing the higher realms in full consciousness. By remaining centred in one's 'I' even when aligning with the super-sensory realms, the ordinary senses can gradually be transformed into higher senses.

For the Magdalene there must be seven husbands as counterparts to the seven demons. The seventh husband is the Christ – but the indwelling Christ spirit.

Mary's healing is about grounding her experiences in the I AM. She will draw the living water from Wisdom's well. Her seven centres will be harmonised, her senses will operate on a higher level, and she will be protected from the forces called demons by the seven fine pillars of Wisdom. Because of this transformation she will be able to perceive and know the Christ Spirit – as her own spirit.