

## Becoming Fully Human

From: *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene*

By Cynthia Bourgeault

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In fact, her actual words [in the Gospel of Mary Magdalene] are, “He has prepared us so that we might become fully human.” “To become fully human” is a modern translation of the words “to become an *anthropos*,” a completed human being. Both here and in the Gospel of Thomas this notion is at the very heart of Jesus’ vision of transformation.

In modern psychological parlance building on a Jungian foundation, the concept of *anthropos* is generally interpreted in terms of an integration of the opposites within oneself – specifically, a bringing together of the male and female principles within the individual human psyche. While partially true, this understanding is far too limited to contain the cosmic sweep of Jesus’ meaning. In logion 22 in the Gospel of Thomas, he lays out what he in fact has in mind for this integration of opposites:

When your are able  
To make two become one,  
The inside like the outside,  
And the outside like the inside,  
The higher like the lower,  
So that a man is no longer male,  
And a woman, female,  
But male and female  
Become a single whole;  
When you are able to fashion  
An eye to replace an eye,  
And form a hand in place of a hand,  
Or a foot for a foot,  
Making one image supersede another  
-- then you will enter in.

Obviously, there is far more at stake here than simply integrating masculine and feminine principles within one’s finite humanity. The integration takes place on a cosmic scale and is accomplished through learning how to anchor one’s being in that underlying unitive ground: that place of oneness before the opposites arise. Some traditions would call this the “causal level.” However one defines it, its origin is on the vertical axis, in a realm and mode of perception far more subtle than our own. It has less to do with what one sees than with *how* one sees; it amounts to a fundamental shift in perception.

When this level is attained, either by sudden spiritual insight or by a long, tough slog through the minefields of ego, a person becomes “a single one” (in Aramaic, *ihidaya*: one of the earliest titles applied to Jesus): an enlightened or “fully human” being. The union of opposites Jesus is speaking of really pertains to the union of the finite and infinite within oneself, or the bringing together of the

vertical axis with the horizontal so that there is “one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, all in all.” When this happens, the world does not pass away, but one is able to live in it as master, re-creating its external forms (“making one image supersede another”) out of the infinite generativity of the One.

It is important to keep this wider definition of the *anthropos* firmly in mind because it is the key to everything in this gospel [of Mary Magdalene]. Mary Magdalene moves among the other disciples as one who has “become fully human.” She does not merely parrot the Master’s teaching back to them, flaunting her specialness. Rather, she serves the situation. Flowing through the spiritual energy of her own alignment is a *baraka* – a grace that is able to actually shift the other disciples’ emotional state. She is able to “turn their hearts to the good.”

This short dialogue is the thematic epicenter of the Gospel of Mary Magdalene: the apostolic moment par excellence. “Apostle is as apostle does,” one might say, and it is clear that in both her words and her deeds – her ability to comprehend, to calm, to convey blessing – Mary Magdalene has just proven herself an apostle: not just “first among the apostles,” but in fact, the only one of them to authentically merit the title.