

Spirituality & Community

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**Jarvis the Duck
Kurt Venables**



**The Gospel of Mary
Gnosticism**

**From Childhood to Christhood
Jocelyne Ranucci**

**Poetry
William Blake**

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Who We Are

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Welcome! Seeking spiritual fulfillment? True happiness and mental wellness? Well, that's what we're all about. Spirituality & Community is a magazine, web site, and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. ***We are dedicated to promoting spirituality, true happiness, mental wellness, and appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.***

A New Age of Light

Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment. We are concerned with what lies within the heart. ***We believe that within everyone lies a pure love that we call the Light or the Lord within. We believe that one must open one's heart to the Light to attain spiritual fulfillment and that only this brings true happiness and mental wellness.*** The Light is the essence of humanity. ***Ultimately, we find our way by casting our gaze inward.*** We will search this inner world over until we find our home:

***We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding***

We believe that mankind is entering a new age, an Age of Light. We see a growing spiritual crisis in the world today. Our culture has brought us unprecedented material well being, but we seem further away than ever from true spiritual wholeness. We also perceive an increase in mental health issues in our society and believe this to be linked to spiritual detachment. Many wander endlessly in search of the material gratification that will bring them happiness. Many have lost faith in religions and traditions. Others sincerely believe in traditional religions but remain unfulfilled spiritually and unhappy. Unfortunately, too many are so close-minded they refuse to ask what is missing from their lives. Yet, many hunger for spiritual wholeness and are searching for answers. ***We believe that we are entering a new age of enlightenment in which genuine spiritual progress will be made and that spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.*** An appreciation for diversity of belief provides us with a fresh view of the beliefs of others, allows us to take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and enables us to synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. When we view the beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. We look with the highest regard to traditional beliefs and religions for guidance, and we also look forward. ***We believe that the past is not the end but the beginning.***



What We Do

Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas. We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- Spirituality & Community magazine*
- Features on the site*
- Online chats* (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features are also posted on the site. When interest is sufficiently high, we will hold chats online. *We sincerely hope that you will find truth within, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!*

The Gospel of Mary

Gnosticism

The Gospel of Mary is a Gnostic text. Gnosticism was an early form of Christianity. The Gnostics placed a heavy emphasis on the idea that one could find God within the heart. They believed that we could come to know God by profoundly knowing ourselves. The Gnostics conceived of humanity as a divine soul wrapped in a physical body, living in an imperfect physical world. The Gospel of Mary displays an almost Buddhist element, surmising that the transcendence of physical desire leads to spiritual attainment. The text seems to imply that the physical body leads the divine spirit to covet physical desires that distract the spirit from knowledge of its true nature and its home in the kingdom of the heavens. Also evident in the work, the Gnostics seemed more willing than other early Christian groups to see women in positions of spiritual leadership. Though a subject of debate, the Mary referred to in the text is generally thought to be Mary Magdalene.



Mary Magdalene with Jesus

The papyrus containing this text, known as the Berlin Codex, was obtained by Dr. Karl Reinhardt, a German, in Cairo in 1896. It contained two other Gnostic texts, versions of which were also among the texts found in the Nag Hammadi library. The Gospel of Mary, however, was not in the Nag Hammadi library, and the version contained in the Berlin Codex is the most complete copy of the work, though still only a partial rendering. Fragments from the find at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt also contain parts of the Gospel of Mary. For more, see: <http://www.gnosis.org/library/marygosp.htm>.

(Pages 1 to 6 of the manuscript, containing Chapters 1 - 3, are lost. The extant text starts on page 7...)

... Will matter then be destroyed or not?

22) The Savior said, All nature, all formations, all creatures exist in and with one another, and they will be resolved again into their own roots.

23) For the nature of matter is resolved into the roots of its own nature alone.

24) He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

25) Peter said to him, Since you have explained everything to us, tell us this also: What is the sin of the world?

26) The Savior said There is no sin, but it is you who make sin when you do the things that are like the nature of adultery, which is called sin.

27) That is why the Good came into your midst, to the essence of every nature in order to restore it to its root.

28) Then He continued and said, That is why you become sick and die, for you are deprived of the one who can heal you.

- 29) He who has a mind to understand, let him understand.
- 30) Matter gave birth to a passion that has no equal, which proceeded from something contrary to nature. Then there arises a disturbance in its whole body.
- 31) That is why I said to you, Be of good courage, and if you are discouraged be encouraged in the presence of the different forms of nature.
- 32) He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
- 33) When the Blessed One had said this, He greeted them all, saying, Peace be with you. Receive my peace unto yourselves.
- 34) Beware that no one lead you astray saying Lo here or lo there! For the Son of Man is within you.
- 35) Follow after Him!
- 36) Those who seek Him will find Him.
- 37) Go then and preach the gospel of the Kingdom.
- 38) Do not lay down any rules beyond what I appointed you, and do not give a law like the lawgiver lest you be constrained by it.
- 39) When He said this He departed.

Chapter 5

- 1) But they were grieved. They wept greatly, saying, How shall we go to the Gentiles and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of the Son of Man? If they did not spare Him, how will they spare us?
 - 2) Then Mary stood up, greeted them all, and said to her brethren, Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for His grace will be entirely with you and will protect you.
 - 3) But rather, let us praise His greatness, for He has prepared us and made us into Men.
 - 4) When Mary said this, she turned their hearts to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the Savior.
 - 5) Peter said to Mary, Sister we know that the Savior loved you more than the rest of woman.
 - 6) Tell us the words of the Savior which you remember which you know, but we do not, nor have we heard them.
 - 7) Mary answered and said, What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you.
 - 8) And she began to speak to them these words: I, she said, I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to Him, Lord I saw you today in a vision. He answered and said to me,
 - 9) Blessed are you that you did not waver at the sight of Me. For where the mind is there is the treasure.
 - 10) I said to Him, Lord, how does he who sees the vision see it, through the soul or through the spirit?
 - 11) The Savior answered and said, He does not see through the soul nor through the spirit, but the mind that is between the two that is what sees the vision and it is [...]
- (pages 11 - 14 are missing from the manuscript)*

Chapter 8

- ... it.
- 10) And desire said, I did not see you descending, but now I see you ascending. Why do you lie since you belong to me?
 - 11) The soul answered and said, I saw you. You did not see me nor recognize me. I served you as a garment and you did not know me.
 - 12) When it said this, it (the soul) went away rejoicing greatly.

- 13) Again it came to the third power, which is called ignorance.
- 14) The power questioned the soul, saying, Where are you going? In wickedness are you bound. But you are bound; do not judge!
- 15) And the soul said, Why do you judge me, although I have not judged?
- 16) I was bound, though I have not bound.
- 17) I was not recognized. But I have recognized that the All is being dissolved, both the earthly things and the heavenly.
- 18) When the soul had overcome the third power, it went upwards and saw the fourth power, which took seven forms.
- 19) The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth is the excitement of death, the fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the foolish wisdom of flesh, the seventh is the wrathful wisdom. These are the seven powers of wrath.
- 20) They asked the soul, Whence do you come slayer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?
- 21) The soul answered and said, What binds me has been slain, and what turns me about has been overcome,
- 22) and my desire has been ended, and ignorance has died.
- 23) In a aeon I was released from a world, and in a Type from a type, and from the fetter of oblivion which is transient.
- 24) From this time on will I attain to the rest of the time, of the season, of the aeon, in silence.

Chapter 9

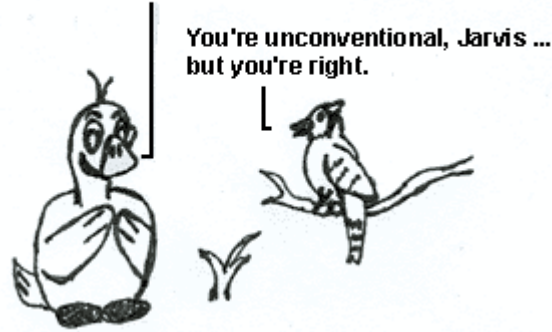
- 1) When Mary had said this, she fell silent, since it was to this point that the Savior had spoken with her.
- 2) But Andrew answered and said to the brethren, Say what you wish to say about what she has said. I at least do not believe that the Savior said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas.
- 3) Peter answered and spoke concerning these same things.
- 4) He questioned them about the Savior: Did He really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did He prefer her to us?
- 5) Then Mary wept and said to Peter, My brother Peter, what do you think? Do you think that I have thought this up myself in my heart, or that I am lying about the Savior?
- 6) Levi answered and said to Peter, Peter you have always been hot tempered.
- 7) Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries.
- 8) But if the Savior made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Savior knows her very well.
- 9) That is why He loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect Man, and separate as He commanded us and preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the Savior said.
- 10) And when they heard this they began to go forth to proclaim and to preach.

The Gospel According to Mary

Jarvis the Duck

Kurt Venables

Birds don't realize that selfishness
shutters the heart against the Light.



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From Childhood to Christhood

(excerpts)

Jocelyne Ranucci

To travel from Childhood to Christhood is the spiritual journey of mankind. It is the path that takes us into Christ consciousness. Christ consciousness is not about Christianity, but rather a natural spiritual evolvement of human consciousness, the awakening of a sense of unity with life, in its many forms, and oneness between the human and the divine. Christ consciousness is the acknowledgement that life is love. Not the egocentric love born of our human nature, but the all-loving, all-knowing and all-powerful love of our divine nature. Once we reach this understanding and exemplify it in our daily life, we live in Christ consciousness. You may choose to call it by a different name as for example Buddha consciousness, Atman or The Great I Am.

Humankind is reaching a level in its evolution when people throughout the world must unify in order to bring the planet to higher grounds. This unification can only take place through forgiveness. We need to bless all life with forgiveness, and we need to do so not only as individuals but also as entire races. There is a metaphysical belief that if we persist in not respecting each other by honoring our differences, we may build up such negativity in the mass consciousness of the human race, that we might bring about the fall of civilization as we know it. According to this system of belief, the earth was created to reflect universal beauty, harmony and peace, and she is shifting and rising, slowly reclaiming her original perfection. As the planet rises and shifts, she enters different energy fields with levels of vibration that become more elevated with time. It is as if the earth were going through her own evolution, independently of ours. According to this theory, in order to sustain the higher energetic vibrations and continue living on earth, humankind must evolve at a similar rate as the earth, and the consciousness of the human race needs to shift and rise. It is supposed that those unable to evolve together with the planet would eventually not be able to live on it. They might find a home in a new planet similar to earth but matching their lower consciousness, therefore they would set themselves back in the process of evolution. Some foresee this shift taking place through catastrophic events such as natural disasters, wars and diseases that kill millions of people at a time. The people continuing their evolution on earth would then enjoy a rebirth, an age of freedom from suffering. Others choose to look at the process differently, and believe that life on earth implies suffering because it is a rite of passage in the process of evolution. They believe that after we claim mastery over our emotions and victory over suffering, we need not be born again on earth. We move on to other planes of existence to experience new consciousness.

We can continue to theorize on the fate of the human race and its planet, but the bottom line remains the same. Somehow we found our way into suffering and we must find our way out of it. As we grow and evolve, our consciousness shifts and rises and consequently so does our planet, or vice-versa, it cannot be separated. Do we want to continue to live in a land (consciousness) of suffering (mental, emotional and physical) or not? I made the choice to free myself from suffering, and in the process I learned that forgiveness is the first step. We can choose individually and together to annihilate suffering, it is up to us. Whether or not we subscribe to the idea that the human race has reached a level of urgency, as perhaps did past-lost civilizations before their collapse, we can contemplate that there is logic and balance in the universe. This can lead us to admit that the time has come when we must consciously make a shift, stop existing

selfishly and commence to act in accordance with universal balance. We can choose to continue to be an ignorant and destructive race or we can choose to change, to acknowledge that if we are part of the problem, we are also part of the solution. The time has come to question, to reflect on the direction we are giving our life. We must find the courage to open the door of our soul, courageously descend into the depth of our being and let the truth reveal itself to us. Some of the truths about ourselves are most likely to be unpleasant, even hurtful, but we must remember that underneath the rubble of our past stands a perfect being, and that we are this perfect being.

We like to say that history repeats itself and speak of “up” cycles and “down” cycles, expecting one to follow the other throughout eternity. People and entire nations endlessly fight each other’s ghosts. They are unable to stop the vicious cycles created through centuries of misunderstandings and misdeeds, centuries of separation from the divine source of love As long as we do not know the reality of our divine heart and do not practice harmony, there cannot be peace on earth. If we do not know oneness, and do not practice brother and sister-hood, there cannot be unity on earth. If we do not trust opulence, and do not practice generosity, there cannot be an end to misery on earth. Breaking the cycles of imperfection starts with each one of us. If we want peace, we need to fight our personal battles and bring peace to our own hearts and minds Peace is in the palm of our hand, if we want it. If the people of earth would unify into one true and sincere desire for peace, peace would be established in one instant throughout the entire world. This is the power of divine universal love.

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Born in Paris, Ranucci set out on her own while still in her teens. Her work and travels took her to New York City and Mexico, and finally, to Sag Harbor, NY where she found her “home,” and herself. A successful business woman, she is presently at work on her second book, which will show her readers how she has put the lessons she has learned into practical use in everyday life—and how they can too. She is the author of *From Childhood to Christhood*, available at Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com.



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William Blake

(1757-1827)

To Spring

O thou with dewy locks, who lookest down
Thro' the clear windows of the morning, turn
Thine angel eyes upon our western isle,
Which in full choir hails thy approach, O Spring!

The hills tell each other, and the listening
Valleys hear; all our longing eyes are turned
Up to thy bright pavilions: issue forth,
And let thy holy feet visit our clime.

Come o'er the eastern hills, and let our winds
Kiss thy perfumed garments; let us taste
Thy morn and evening breath; scatter thy pearls
Upon our love-sick land that mourns for thee.

O deck her forth with thy fair fingers; pour
Thy soft kisses on her bosom; and put
Thy golden crown upon her languished head,
Whose modest tresses were bound up for thee.

The Divine Image

To Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
All pray in their distress;
And to these virtues of of delight
Return their thankfulness.

For Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is God, our father dear,
And Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love
Is Man, his child and care.

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity a human face,
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

Then every man, of every clime,
That prays in his distress,
Prays to the human form divine,
Love, Mercy, Pity, Peace.

And all must love the human form,
In heathen, turk, or jew;
Where Mercy, Love, & Pity dwell
There God is dwelling too.