

The Myth of 'The One'

By Dr David Pullinger

Those seeking for a life partner often talk of 'finding the One'. Or more frequently, perhaps, of reporting 'No he/she wasn't the One'. The idea of the One does not come from any Christian belief system but from a public Greek discussion about the nature of love.

In response to another philosopher's assertions about the nature of love, Aristophanes created a myth of how human beings were originally created by the Greek gods as having one body with four arms, four legs and two heads. The gods deemed that people like this were becoming too powerful and so cut them in half. The rest of life is then spent seeking the 'other half' and true love of finding this 'one other half'. And it is just a myth.

This is in marked contrast to the Judaeo-Christian narrative. Far from man and woman together being 'too powerful', God saw that Adam needed Eve to be a helpmate to survive. There is no account of finding the One to marry in the Bible. It would have been normal in 1st Century Palestine to marry someone suitable as a teenager from quite a small group of people available and known primarily through family connection and then get on with it.

The myth of the One dominates our culture in terms of human love. It emphasises the length, hardship and difficulty of search until the object of one's love is found, with the presumption of a 'happily ever after'. It then comes as a shock to many that the perceived right person a) may not reciprocate in their feelings and b) is not perfect.

In reality, rather than there being a pre-existing single person for us to find and marry, human relationships are formed by choice and then developed and grown by love and commitment.

Mutual choice, commitment to each other, and then working to create a great relationship are what we see modelled by Christ, instructed upon in the Bible, and which social psychologists agree are the best way for good marriages.

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