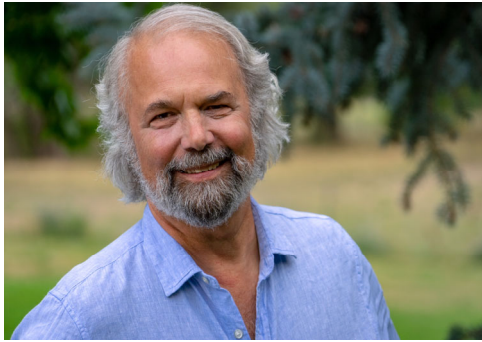


FACING THE SPIRITUAL CRISIS OF OUR DAY

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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I wouldn't advise anyone to become fixated on the crises we face as humanity. If a person obsesses over what is falling apart, they are likely to fall apart with it. But still... It is hard not to observe the crises of global culture.

A short list... Here in America, we just came within 45 minutes of failing to fund our federal government. And we are still wrestling with an attempt to undo representative democracy in this country.

Economic crises are hitting certain segments of the world population especially hard. Global warming is having an undeniable impact around the globe. And there are currently 32 armed conflicts worldwide, ranging from drug wars and insurgencies to ethnic strife, invasions, and civil wars.

There is no point in agonizing over these crises. But factually speaking, they exist. Behind them all, there is a spiritual crisis—a crisis of the

human spirit and a struggle to find a way to connect to the source of wisdom and power that is our birthright. That spiritual crisis is felt in the hearts of individuals around the globe.

Can you imagine humankind ignoring the spiritual crisis and then solving any of the other global problems we face? *Not going to happen.*

We can each chip away at our global problems in our individual lives. And ultimately, the most powerful move we can each make is to address what we experience and do ourselves. But wouldn't it be good to know what the problems are and how they got to be that way? Wouldn't it be good to have a global perspective on the issues we face as an individual?

We were each born with an innate, innocent connection to the source of life. Look at an infant; it is impossible to deny. That is our primal spirituality—the spirituality we were born with.

However it happened, world culture has strayed from that connection. And so, the Divine Source from which we came—call it what you will—found openings through enlightened individuals down through the ages. Through the consciousness of those awakened people, the gifts of spiritual reconnection were given.

Any global generalization has its exceptions. But that can't stop us from seeing the larger sweep of what transpires in human culture. The fact that there are exceptions can't stop us from asking, *What has caused the spiritual crisis we face?*

Almost universally, enlightened individuals gave the gifts of reconnection to followers, who attempted to pass them on to another generation. The gifts became institutionalized as religions and spiritual paths. Politics entered in, co-opting the gifts of reconnection, using them for political purposes. And so, the institutions became the accepted authorities on the spiritual dimension of human experience.

Throughout history, people have rebelled against the politicization of spirituality. Many have felt the impact of institutions claiming those gifts for themselves when they were meant for people. Their souls have cried out against the disempowerment. That has led to divisiveness and factionalization. New institutions broke off from older ones, and then more broke off from the ones that had broken off. But all too often, people did not authentically claim the original gifts as their own.

Finally, in our post-modern culture, large segments of the population have given up on religious and spiritual institutions. And could you blame them? It seems to them that the only choices are to accept an institution that has claimed the gifts of spiritual reconnection for

itself or to reject that institution and find another basis to live.

I am not rehearsing this history to villainize any institution. I am shining a light on our spiritual predicament so that we can set ourselves free. Because, perhaps unwittingly, many have rejected not only the institutions but the spiritual gifts that the institutions claimed for themselves, and even the spiritual dimension of their own life.

Today, many embrace the physical and social sciences as a map to guide their life. Or they adopt a code of humanistic values. Others simply muddle along as best they can. Some attempt to walk an individual path, learning from others as best they can and attempting to embrace the spiritual gifts they find.

The more ambitious peddle their own brand of spirituality in the new age market. But for the mass consciousness of humankind, the co-opting of spirituality by institutions has been so monumental, and the disempowerment of the spiritual life of the individual so massive, that it proves difficult for the individual to overcome. The rock they are pushing uphill is gigantic, and they can't get it over the top. So, the spiritual disempowerment of the mass of humanity remains.

And so, there is yet to be a spiritual answer to the crises of our day, or at least not one delivered with sufficient clarity, volume, and vibrational frequency to reconnect humanity with the reality that is its source and, therefore, its true potential.

Wherever we are in our individual path, we have a connection to this global spiritual crisis. We all participate in the body of humankind and the culture and consciousness of humankind. So

even if individually we are awake and reconnected spiritually, we feel what is happening to the soul of humanity.

What are the gifts of spiritual reconnection that the avatars of the ages have brought to humankind? We know them by names we associate with the institutions that co-opted them—*meditation, prayer, worship, chant, ritual, spiritual healing, and holy rites*. How do we meet the spiritual crisis of this day without each of us embracing these gifts from the cosmic source for ourselves? That's the only way we access the spiritual answer for all the other crises we face as humankind. But they must be the original gifts, known authentically by the individual. The co-opted gifts don't reconnect us to the wisdom, knowledge, and power deep within our souls. They don't meet the spiritual crisis of today. Interestingly enough, this is exactly what was foretold by the awakened ones who have gone before us.

Think of an indigenous culture colonized by a European power. The story has repeated itself over and over again. There is economic domination, and that is plain to see. But the deeper wound is caused by the substitution of the spirituality and culture of the conquered people by the spirituality and culture of the conquerors. In many cases, the indigenous spirituality and culture are co-opted and thus turned into icons of the new culture without power.

In Hawaii, *aloha* becomes a friendly greeting instead of a ritual of communion. Hula becomes an exotic dance. The Queen was housed in a palace that was more like a prison and stripped of the cultural and spiritual significance that leaders before her held.

Western culture places a high value on the individual, and that might seem self-empowering. But for the indigenous person in a land overtaken by Western culture, what they have lost is not just individual. It is collective. It is a society. And so, the attempt to succeed in Western culture as an individual doesn't recover the sense of who they are as a people.

I am not Hawaiian and would not typically be considered an indigenous person. While respecting the unique culture and experience of people who are, we are all indigenous people in some way. It's just a matter of how far back you have to go to find your indigenous culture.

For Hawaiian people of today, their indigenous culture was alive and thriving only several generations ago. For many people in the developed world, their indigenous culture hasn't been intact for millennia.

Yet, in this way, we are the same. All of us in post-modern culture are part of a paradigm that idolizes the individual and neglects who we are all together. This is reflected in the contemporary approach to spirituality, which revolves around the fulfillment, salvation, awakening, and development of the individual. And new-age spiritual savants are worshipped.

Of course, there has to be an individual component to spirituality, or it doesn't happen. Yet, ultimately, a spirituality that neglects the collective disempowers because the larger reconnection is not about me. It is about *us*, and not only the *us* who are alive as human beings today. It includes all living things. It includes what indigenous culture looks to as the ancestors. It includes the beingness of the cosmos.

I can imagine that for a Hawaiian person, the race memory of their people together as a society might haunt them. But the same is true for us all. We hold a memory, perhaps buried deep in the mass consciousness, of who we are together as a people, connected with the Being of all. That memory is mixed up with all the tribulations of our human history. But it is there.

Many people from an indigenous background find that it is impossible to live in their culture as it was, even though they can carry forward and celebrate elements of it. And so it is with us all. There is no going back. That is not how time works. But we can embrace our primal spirituality now. We can possess the gifts of reconnection as our own now and learn how to

use them. And we can open ourselves to new gifts that arrive through consciousness, given to us from the Unseen. As we do, we remember who we are together—the big *We*. We remember that we have a society of Being, a culture, a place in Creation, and a governance of our people that is given to us by the stars.

Let us remember. This answers the spiritual crisis of today. It addresses the sickness of the human spirit. And it sets us up to answer all the other crises we face.

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