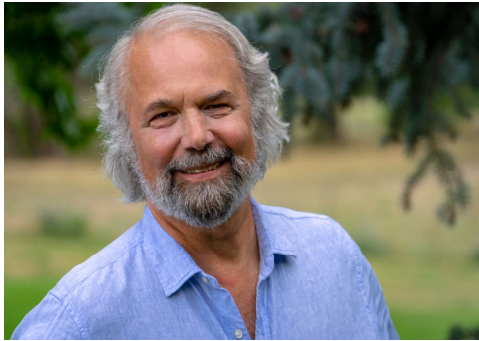


THE PRESENCE OF THE SOUL FAMILY

PULSE OF SPIRIT
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We are all part of a Soul Family.

The word *soul* carries many meanings. At the heart of the word is an understanding of *self*. A soul is a self.

Biblically, the word *soul* refers to a human being, a *human soul*. Here is how it is put in the Creation story:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Sometimes, the word *soul* refers to the self that incarnates in the world as a human being. The Bhagavad Gita puts it this way:

For the soul, there is never birth nor death. Nor, having once been, does he ever cease to be. He is unborn, eternal, ever-existing, undying, and primeval. He is not slain when the body is slain.

In the recent movie *Past Lives*, a lead character speaks about *inyeon*, a Korean concept born from Buddhism. The word describes how the life paths of two souls

intertwine through many lifetimes. The lead character describes it this way:

It's an inyeon if two strangers even walk past each other in the street and their clothes accidentally brush because it means there must have been something between them in their past lives. If two people get married, they say it's because there have been 8,000 layers of inyeon over 8,000 lifetimes.

Inyeon is an awareness of Soul Family.

Anam cara is a word from the Celtic tradition that means *soul friend*. Author John O'Donohue says this about it:

*The heart learns a new art of feeling. Such friendship is neither cerebral nor abstract. In Celtic tradition, the *anam cara* was not merely a metaphor or ideal. It was a soul-bond that existed as a recognized and admired social construct. It altered the meaning of identity and perception. When your affection is kindled, the world of your intellect takes on a new tenderness and compassion... You look*

and see and understand differently. Initially, this can be disruptive and awkward, but it gradually refines your sensibility and transforms your way of being in the world. Most fundamentalism, greed, violence, and oppression can be traced back to the separation of idea and affection.

The anam cara perspective is sublime because it permits us to enter this unity of ancient belonging.

That's an awareness of Soul Family, an experience that pervades human culture in subtle, often unseen ways.

The Zulu word *ubuntu* addresses our part in a Soul Family. One author defines it this way:

An authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental, and spiritual world.

Versions of the same word appear throughout most of Africa. A common interpretation of its meaning is *I am because we are* or *I am because you are*. Like many spiritual truths, it doesn't seem to make sense outside of the experience of it. My own experience is that my Being is intrinsically tied to the Being of all. I don't exist as an island all on my own.

Sawubona is another Zulu word that expresses a truth known by a Soul Family.

I see you. We see you.

One commentator explained that *we* who see are both human beings in the flesh and the ancestors who are in the Invisible.

The experience of Soul Family has been disrupted for us as members of the body of humanity, even though it is how we are made and what we are doing as

humanity. We are participating in Soul Family, but unconsciously. We all incarnated here on Planet Earth. Collectively, we have lost an awareness of our Soul Family. And so, clear messages come from the Soul Family to humankind, bringing an opportunity for remembrance and healing.

Ho'oponopono is a traditional Hawaiian forgiveness practice. Practitioner Ihaleakala Hew Len popularized these words known as the ho'oponopono prayer:

I love you. I'm sorry. Please forgive me. Thank you.

Upon initially hearing the prayer, perhaps it strikes us as an unrealistic, irrational assumption of responsibility for someone else's experience. The words don't make sense if you think of them as the message of the human persona. *Please forgive me. What? But I didn't do anything.*

It is not my place to speak for Hawaiian culture. But what if these words were the words of our Soul Family, to heal the experience of separateness? If spoken for our Soul Family, they could be voiced using plural pronouns.

We love you. We're sorry. Please forgive us. Thank you.

When you think of the words of the prayer as coming from me, as a member of my Soul Family, to a member of my Soul Family, it is no longer irrational. It makes perfect sense. We are here to take care of the Soul Family—to awaken it, nourish it spiritually, and make it whole.

There are more personal levels of Soul Family—those who come close to us. That has to do with the proximity of people to us in this lifetime. Some cross paths with us. We might share a similar orbit. Perhaps we become more vividly aware that those people are our Soul Family. And yet, all humankind is our Soul Family, even though it often doesn't

feel that way. The way people sometimes act, you might even feel ashamed to have any association with them.

It is strange to incarnate as a Soul Family when many of us have lost track of who we are or why we are here. Many have lost their awareness of being a member of our Soul Family.

Some people say they remember past life experiences. And if you don't remember yours, there are people you can go to who will tell you what they were. Or try to help you remember what they were. Sometimes, they call it *past-life regression* or *akashic readings*. I'm not here to either promote or deny any of that. But regardless of that kind of memory, we can have a transcendent experience of our Soul Family. We can experience *inyeon* and *anam cara*. We can bring the spirit of *sawubona* and *ubuntu* to the people in our life.

Our Soul Family didn't originate from human culture. While we all participate in humanity as it is, we know that human culture can cause conflict and separation. Even the human family itself can get that way. So, the human family is not necessarily a place where people heal, thrive, and know something transcendent together. It does not necessarily lead to an experience of Soul Family.

But it can work the other way around. We can be part of our blood family, remembering our Soul Family, remembering that we came here together for a reason as a human family. Then the human family takes on all those wonderful characteristics of a real family—Love, transparency, seeing each other for who we are, profound respect and honor for other people, and a knowing of ourselves.

So it is in all human relationships. We can be the one who goes to depth, who remembers and calls the people in our life to know Soul Family with us.

In the physical world, every system has a center. The Milky Way Galaxy revolves around what we call a black hole, Sagittarius A*. The solar system is held together by the sun, and electrons spin around the nucleus of an atom.

Human social systems have a center, too. Families have parents. Nations have presidents, prime ministers, kings, and queens. Corporations have chief executives.

What is the center of our Soul Family? Who brought us together? Who does it revolve around? We can't airbrush the center of our Soul Family out of the picture if we want to know the essence of this family.

Religious traditions sometimes attempt to name the divine center for humankind—perhaps Jesus, Allah, Guanyin, Mother Mary, or someone else. All too often, those names become a cultural icon that divides people more than unites them. Adherents can settle for their own beliefs about the icon without any deep experience of who is at the center of our Soul Family.

Others, perceiving a shallowness in their own religious experience, or the religious experience of others, reject any notion of a divine center for humankind. And in the process, they can lose an experience of the central essence of our Soul Family.

The truth is that Love flows through the Soul Family just as surely as gravity is at work in the solar system. The truth is that the Soul Family is held together by those at its center just as surely as the Milky Way revolves around Sagittarius A*.

For our own immediate human experience, the truth of who we are is the Supreme Soul for that experience. And there is a Supreme Soul for the Soul Family of Planet Earth.

Without worshipping any name for that Supreme Soul and without allowing your imagination to fixate on any picture in your mind, I invite you to feel your Attunement with that Supreme Soul. Are they male? Are they female? Singular or plural? For now, just feel the Love of our Soul Family that flows from them. Feel your own Love that flows to that Supreme Soul.

In that act, you have just experienced yourself as the Supreme Soul for the world you inhabit.

We are the Soul Family for this sphere, and if you are reading this, you are part of the *Earth Squad* of that Family. You are in the flesh. The immediate job of the Soul Family related to Project Earth is to reawaken the memory of the Soul Family for the human family.

This might seem implausible, or even impossible. If you went to the military leaders in Israel and Gaza and started to talk to them about Soul Family, it might not seem like a practical solution to them. They're so taken up with the disaster of the immediate that they might not be able to contemplate the only real and lasting answer to the problem at hand. So it is with people around the

globe and the problems they are facing. And yet, some of us remember that we are a part of the Soul Family. We say:

Sawubona.

We love you. We're sorry. Please forgive us.

Thank you.

We speak for the Soul Family to heal the spiritual amnesia of the human family. There is no other way to sort out the human world. Can we forget that we are part of the Soul Family and make a lasting peace?

The war in Gaza didn't stop just because you read this article. Nor did any of the other issues facing humankind. But there is something different in the air now. And so it is with all human distress. We don't have the illusion that it has magically disappeared. But the presence of the Soul Family is in the air now. And that changes everything.

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