

# THE EPICENTER OF A NEW WORLD

**PULSE OF SPIRIT**

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**DAVID KARCHERE** is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.

How does a new world start? How is the world reborn? It begins because there is someone—and then *someones*—who are having a profound experience. And the resonance of that experience begins to change the world.

I would like to look at the global picture and then move back in to reflect on the individual experience that we are having and the experience we are sharing together.

There is a war in the Middle East. No doubt we are aware there is a history of war in that part of the world, to the point where we probably say *Again?! If you look at one of those moving history maps on YouTube and watch kingdoms rising and falling in the Middle East, and conquering and being conquered, it has gone on for millennia. There is that kind of legacy in that part of the world—and in other places too.*

But there is another legacy in the Middle East, and it is largely forgotten. It is sad that in this current conflict I do not hear anybody talking

about it or remembering it. Persia had a history of inclusiveness—a history of being tolerant of people of other faiths, unlike many kingdoms of ancient times. They practiced their own faith, but that faith did not require everybody else to stop practicing theirs.

Six hundred years before the birth of Jesus, the Babylonians deported Jewish people from Jerusalem and exiled them to Babylon, which is present-day Iraq. The temple that Solomon had built was ransacked and destroyed. About 60 years later, the Persians conquered the Babylonians. Only a year after that, the Persians released the Jewish people from exile and financially supported the rebuilding of their temple.

That is a different history. But who remembers that in the midst of the current conflict? What is remembered is the story that says, *We have been enemies for a very long time.* And yet the deeper truth is that they had been even longer-time friends and allies.

Daniel—famous for the story of the lion’s den—was very much a part of that era. Exactly what role he played is not spelled out explicitly in the story, but he functioned at the highest level of the Babylonian government and functioned at the level of a prime minister in Persia. I have no doubt that he worked his influence with the Persian rulers and that they were enlightened enough to listen. Together they made a plan that allowed this restoration to happen.

But who remembers that? Do the people of Israel today remember the generosity of the Persians, realizing that Persia became known in the West as *Iran*? Do the Iranians remember this act of support that occurred thousands of years ago?

America and Persia, too, have a history of positive relations. In the nineteenth century, Americans were welcomed in Persia as teachers and physicians, and an American doctor, Joseph Cochran, even founded the country’s first modern medical school in Urmia.

In the early twentieth century, the Persian government invited an American, Morgan Shuster, to help reform its finances, welcoming him as a trusted advisor from a country widely regarded in Persia as free of colonial ambitions. Those positive relations were undone through the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century so that the governments of America and Iran now see each other as enemies.

That is the world scene. But how about us? Is it possible that what we see in the Middle East illustrates something about humanity in general? We as human beings carry two legacies. There is a legacy of war, conflict, degradation, and immorality. There is that history for humanity, and there are many examples of it across time.

But there is another legacy as well, and it belongs to humanity just as surely.

This came home to me very strongly when I was researching my own ancestry. You can go back and look at records, even census records from a hundred years ago, and see who was living in the house of your ancestors. Part of my ancestry comes from Kentucky, and before that, other parts of the South. As I was digging through old records, there was a list of the family members living in the household. And then there was another list. A list of the slaves they held.

I was shocked to see that my ancestors held slaves. That is part of my family legacy and part of the legacy of America. There is a legacy that all of us carry that, if we were fully conscious of it, we would not want to embrace. But there is another legacy for all of us as well. It is a one that reminds us that the negative story is not who we truly are. The deeper reality is that other legacy—the legacy of nobility, truth, beauty, and love.

That legacy is not just something from the past. The presence of love is real now. The nobility of the human spirit is present now. That is our reality now, if we will open ourselves to it and embrace it.

You might say that when we do that, we are bringing an alternative to the world. From a worldly perspective, perhaps we are. But I suggest a different way of seeing it. We are not bringing an alternative. We are bringing the original.

This is the original pattern of humanity. This is how we were made. Ancient stories speak of this origin. Theologians can debate the details endlessly, arguing about what this phrase means or that phrase means—sometimes with

debates that amount to arguing about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. But when the ancient story says that humanity is made in the image and likeness of God, that is straightforward and plainly said.

It is saying that humanity has a divine origin—that we were created by the Living God. How much clearer could our origin be portrayed than by saying that the breath of life was breathed into us by the Creator? And of course, that is happening even now.

These are definitive statements of who we are as human beings. This is our lineage, and it is the truth of us today. It is not an aspirational truth as if we are hoping someday to become children of God. We already are. The life of the Creator is already present within humanity.

The alternative story is the one human culture has invented. That invented story is all around us. It is painfully visible in the conflicts of the world and in the wars that break out across nations. It is the strange world that human beings have created by forgetting their true legacy and forgetting their present Reality. But we are here to know Reality and to bring Reality back into the world, saying to humanity: *Come back. Come back from this long walk into unreality.*

In the agrarian societies of ancient times, spiritual truths were often expressed through agricultural metaphors. Today our metaphors might come from technology. But agriculture has not disappeared, and so those old metaphors still work today.

One of those metaphors involves sheep. There are not so many sheep in America, but if you go to New Zealand, Australia, or the United Kingdom you still see sheep everywhere. There are sheep and there are shepherds. Sometimes

people say that human beings are like sheep, and when humanity is following out its legacy of conflict, that description seems accurate. People follow what someone else says or what is dominant in the culture. They subscribe to self-sabotaging tendencies unthinkingly.

Sheep are always looking for something to follow. They are looking for the shepherd. People can be like that, and as the poem says, sometimes they follow the wrong star home. They follow the wrong leader or the wrong story. They enlist in wars or support destructive movements or simply drift along with whatever seems fashionable in the culture.

But if we, as human beings, are going to follow something, we should look in the right direction. We should look toward Reality. We should look toward the deeper truth of ourselves and the deeper truth of other people.

That is what this *Pulse of Spirit* series of articles is about. We are pointing to the Reality that we as human beings rightly look toward and follow. We are deepening our experience of what is real. We are reminding ourselves of it and letting it go deep.

So if we are going to follow something, let us follow the true Shepherd. The true Shepherd is life itself—Reality itself, love itself—the living presence of the Creator in whom we live and move and have our being.

As I tune in to that, I find the highest reality of my own Being. That is an individual matter. But it is more than that. When you attune to the higher dimension of who you are, are you all alone? Or is there a family of Being you are a part of? That is how it is for me.

Reality is in a process of gathering. All the parts of ourselves are gathered together under the 3

influence of Being. Human beings gather together with one another. Hearts gather. Friends gather. Cooperation emerges. Harmony appears. There is a gathering together.

It is a joy to be gathered. It is a joy to discover that your humanity is meeting the humanity of other people. And somewhere in that experience another possibility appears—not only to be gathered but to become a gatherer. In the language of the metaphor, not only to be a sheep but to become a shepherd.

Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd, the one who gathers the flock and leads them into life. This is a calling placed before us all—to be that for each other and for the world.

The message of the Good Shepherd is the reminder of what humanity truly is. Jesus offered that reminder in a profound way. Human beings are not meant to remain sheep forever. The call is for human beings to become shepherds—those who awaken others to the truth of who they are.

We are here to light it up. We are here to proclaim that truth in every possible way. When the light of truth shines clearly, people can see it and recognize it if they will.

And we are here to fire it up. The light of truth and the fire of love belong together. When the fire of love is present, people can feel its warmth. They can feel the atmosphere change.

We are here to raise the temperature of love in the world. That is what the Good Shepherd does. And I believe that each of us is called to be the Good Shepherd—and that we are called to be that together. When we act collectively in that way, the power multiplies. The light grows brighter, and the warmth spreads further.

*Feel this. You may be distracted by a war somewhere in the world. But feel this. See this. Know this. Remember this.*

This is our original legacy. We are at the epicenter of a new world, if we choose to be that epicenter—if we choose to be the Good Shepherd.

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