

## 1. ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION AND ITS RESOLUTION

### WTM FAQ 1.26 What is soul, have we all got one, has it been repressed, and if so, how do we rehabilitate it?

#### Jeremy Griffith's response (written in 2020)

The human race has been using the term 'soul' in many ways, but the common theme of the references are to a very sensitive, pure and true moral part of ourselves. To re-quote what's said about our all-sensitive and all-loving moral nature in paragraph 379 of *FREEDOM*, "The origin of the words associated with our moral nature reveals this underlying awareness of the extraordinarily loving, ideal-behaviour-expecting, 'good-and-evil'-differentiating, sound nature of our instinctive self or 'psyche' or 'soul', the 'voice' or expression of which is our 'conscience'. For instance, our 'conscience' is defined as our 'moral sense of right and wrong', and our 'soul' as the 'moral and emotional part of man', and as the 'animating or essential part' of us (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 5th edn, 1964), while, as mentioned in pars 258 and 260, the *Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*'s entry for 'psyche' reads: 'The oldest and most general use of this term is by the early Greeks, who envisioned the psyche as the soul or the very essence of life.' Indeed, as the 'early Greek' philosopher Plato wrote about our innate, ideal-or-Godly-behaviour-expecting moral nature, we humans have 'knowledge, both before and at the moment of birth...of all absolute standards...[of] beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness...our souls exist before our birth...[our] soul resembles the divine' (*Phaedo*, c.360 BC; tr. H. Tredennick, 1954, 65-80)." So yes, our 'soul resembles the divine', it resembles 'all [the] absolute standards...[of] beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness', which is the 'Godly', integrative cooperative and loving ideal state, which makes it the 'animating or essential part' of us, the part that is orientated to a 'moral' cooperative and loving way of living, a way of living which is 'the very essence of life'.

A wonderful description of the incredible sensitivity and togetherness that our bonobo-like ape ancestors lived in prior to us becoming conscious and the upset state of the human condition emerged was given by the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky (which I quoted in *THE Interview*) when he penned this intuitive remembrance of that wonderful existence, 'The grass glowed with bright and fragrant flowers. Birds were flying in flocks in the air, and perched fearlessly on my shoulders and arms and joyfully struck me with their darling, fluttering wings. And at last I saw and knew the people of this happy land. They came to me of themselves, surrounded me, kissed me. The children of the sun, the children of their sun—oh, how beautiful they were!...Their faces were radiant...in their words and voices there was a note of childlike joy...It was the earth untarnished by the Fall; on it lived people who had not sinned...They desired nothing and were at peace; they did not aspire to knowledge of life as we aspire to understand it, because their lives were full. But their knowledge was higher and deeper than ours...but I could not understand their knowledge. They showed me their trees, and I could not understand the intense love with which they looked at them; it was as though they were

talking with creatures like themselves...and I am convinced that the trees understood them. They looked at all nature like that—at the animals who lived in peace with them and did not attack them, but loved them, conquered by their love...There was no quarrelling, no jealousy among them...for they all made up one family' (*The Dream of a Ridiculous Man*, 1877).

The obvious problem with such a truthful description of our soul is that it has confronted us with the unbearable truth that we have become horrendously corrupted from that original 'divine' 'Godly' cooperative and loving state. And without the defence for that corrupted state, such a direct and truthful acknowledgement of what our soul is has been unbearable. So what has happened is that we have found ways to refer to and talk about our soul without actually acknowledging what it is, or that it has been horribly repressed; in fact so corrupted by the imposition of our angry, egocentric and alienated state that we are now mostly soul-dead. For example, we all intuitively know that 'soul music' refers to music that comes from and appeals to our 'divine', 'emotional', loving 'essence', which is our 'moral', 'beauty, goodness, uprightness, holiness'-expecting instinctive self or soul even though that clarification of what our soul actually is isn't being acknowledged when we talk of 'soul music'.

As mentioned in paragraph 382 of *FREEDOM*, "Paradoxically, until we could explain our present soul-devastated, innocence-destroyed, angry, egocentric and alienated condition we couldn't afford to face the truth that our 'awe'-inspiring moral soul is our instinctive memory of an unconditionally selfless, all-loving past. And so we undermined its very existence; yes, just as human-condition-avoiding, mechanistic scientists argued that 'unconditional love' was '**not appropriate for scientific study**', the psychologist Ronald Conway noted that '**Soul is customarily suspected in empirical psychology and analytical philosophy as a disreputable entity**' (Letter to the Editor, *The Australian*, 10 May 2000). But with the fully accountable, human psychosis-addressing-and-solving, truthful explanation of the human condition now found, we *can* finally acknowledge what our soul is, and, most significantly, heal our species' psychosis or 'soul-illness'; yes, since *psyche* means 'soul' and *osis*, according to *Dictionary.com*\*, means '**abnormal state or condition**', we can at last ameliorate or heal our species' *psychosis*—its alienated, psychologically 'ill', '**abnormal state or condition**'."

One way we've evaded what our soul really is is to say that it's from some divine, heavenly, ethereal realm, and not part of the natural world, but like many metaphysical religious interpretations and descriptions of human life, such an interpretation is profoundly unreal.

So, as I explain throughout *FREEDOM*, because our original cooperative, selfless and loving instinctive self or soul has been so condemning of our conscious mind's angry, egocentric and upset state, our conscious mind has had no choice but to block out that condemning and confronting soul, which is our alienation from it. In the Adam Stork picture, it's that hand that's cupped indicating that it's blocking out the criticising instincts (see, for example, in [Video/Freedom Essay 3\\*](#)). So the original innocent child within us, if we like to think of it like that, is now deeply denied and repressed inside of us. We are split from our soul because we couldn't bear its confronting and condemning expectation that we should behave cooperatively and lovingly.

So we all do have our species' collective, shared-by-all instinctive self or 'soul [which] resembles the divine', it resembles '**all [the] absolute standards...[of] beauty, goodness, uprightness,**

**holiness**, which is the ‘Godly’, integrative cooperative and loving ideal state, which makes it the **‘animating or essential part’** of us, the part that is orientated to a **‘moral’** cooperative and loving way of living, a way of living which is **‘the very essence of life’**. BUT, according to how much hurt we encountered from humanity’s heroic search for knowledge during our upbringing, we have variously had to split from it, block it out, become alienated from it, which is our psychosis; again, psyche meaning **‘soul’** and *osis* meaning **‘abnormal state or condition’**. So our soul can be corrupted, hurt, damaged, blocked out, hidden, repressed, denied, split from. And so psychiatry or ‘soul-healing’ (derived as it is from *psyche* meaning **‘soul’** and *iatreia*, which according to *The Encyclopedic World Dictionary* means **‘healing’**) depended on being able to end the criticism coming from our original instinctive self because then we would no longer have to deny and block it out to stop its criticism of our upset condition—which is what *FREEDOM* makes possible because it explains that even though we are angry and egocentric we are not bad. Of course, this healing or rehabilitation of our soul, which will allow us to re-access all its incredible sensitivity, will take time, generations in fact, but as I emphasise in chapter 9 of *FREEDOM*, we can immediately enjoy the benefits of being able to all live in support of this reconciling understanding and no longer need the artificial reinforcements of power, fame, fortune and glory. In effect we can all live free of the upset state of the human condition even though we still suffer from the upset angry, egocentric and alienated state of the human condition. This means that while that long process of ameliorating our upset is going on we will all be variously alienated from our soul and all its wonderful sensitivities and truth. Everyone’s coming home to an integrated self now, with some of us, such as Sir Laurens van der Post and myself, having less distance to travel to the all-sensitive soul within us.

So obviously our species’ original instinctive self or soul exists within all of us, but that doesn’t mean that it hasn’t been hurt, damaged, repressed, blocked-out and denied according to how much upset we encountered during our upbringing. The whole human race is basically 2 million years alienated from its original instinctive self or soul.

You can read more about what our soul is and its resurrection in us now in my essay ‘Soul’ (published in the 2011 online book *The Book of Real Answers*) at [www.humancondition.com/soul\\*](http://www.humancondition.com/soul*).

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