



The Hope: A Conversation with Andrew Harvey

by Sharon Hall

“The day will come when, after harnessing space, the winds, the tides, gravitation, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And on that day, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

- Teilhard de Chardin

Years ago, Andrew Harvey — mystic, poet, translator, scholar, spiritual teacher, founder of the Institute of Sacred Activism, and passionate environmental activist — helped me get through a spiritual crisis. I had not met him yet, but finding his books was like finding a friend. Andrew’s passionate, poetic writing helped me realize that I was not alone.

I met Mr. Harvey this year at an Expo in Los Angeles. He was there to talk about his book, *The Hope: a Guide to Sacred Activism*. After a day surrounded by psychics, mediums, and crystals, hearing him speak was like stepping from shade into brilliant sunlight. He offered hard truths: the world is crying out — do we have the guts to listen and respond? The audience that day was asked to consider an important question: “What, of all the causes in this burning world, breaks my heart the most?” Answering that with our whole being would reveal our own path of sacred activism.

I spoke with Mr. Harvey over the phone — about *The Hope* and sacred activism, about the coming global shakedown and shadow, and about his relationship to the Divine Mother, who continues to inspire and energize his life and work.

SH: *I’ve been thinking about sacred activism in light of Japan and the Middle East. You wrote and talked about the precipitating event of a global crisis before these recent events took place. Is this the beginning?*

AH: We are going to be shaken awake. There will be a “perfect storm” of events designed to wake us up to the truth; all our current agendas are illusions and we are living unsustainable lives. It is showing up in environmental disasters, financial

disaster, in millions living on less than a dollar a day, in the burning down of the forests, in the pollution of our oceans. There is more to come.

SH: *Is it too late for us?*

AH: In a terrifying sense, it’s going exactly as it has to go. We have to be shattered in order to be healed. The old ways, the old agendas have to be deconstructed so the new that is already here has room to emerge in greater strength. The truth is, there’s a great birth taking place in the middle of, and partly as a result of, a great death — this is a divine mystery. What the human race is going through on a global scale is what the mystic goes through in the dark night of the soul.

SH: *You have said we won’t survive this deconstruction without the grace of the Divine, our spiritual practices, and our work with our own shadow-material. You’ve described it as one of the key practices of a sacred activist. Many spiritual people either demonize this shadow aspect, or seem to ignore it completely.*

AH: Without confronting our personal

shadow that colludes with the collective shadow, we won’t get through the crisis. And, we can’t do this kind of work without first being grounded in the Divine.

SH: *I love the story in The Hope about the agribusiness CEO who gave you the serpent’s wisdom. You stated that you had been naive about evil; you believed people who’d do such things to others and to the environment were just ignorant and unaware of the consequences or the harm they caused, but this encounter ended your innocence.*

AH: Yes. I discovered he was not ignorant; he just didn’t care. He’d knowingly enriched himself at the expense of his own future, the future of the planet, and the future of the human race. People in power, wedded to the destructive forces, will use them consciously. And that’s very scary. But, just as Hitler was defeated by the madness of his own overreaching arrogance in invading Russia, so will the overreaching and unsustainable nature of the current system destroy itself.

SH: *Should we have compassion even for those who are bringing about such destruction?*

AH: Of course; because they are doing the most appalling things to themselves first in order to do these dreadful things. But, that should not stop us from opposing their actions with real vigor — while still holding them in our hearts.

SH: *That’s a beautiful vision, and a hard place for many activists to hold.*

AH: It’s a hard place for anyone to hold. Gandhi brilliantly opposed the whole edifice of the British Empire, and at the same time, honored every English person. Martin Luther King deeply opposed the injustice and horrific cruelty that had manifested in the system against African Americans, but managed to hold the white people involved in the core of his heart. The Dalai Lama has devoted His entire life to undoing the horror of what the Chinese did to the Tibetans; He continues to treat the Chinese with respect and compassion, and to pray for their spiritual liberation.

SH: *Not an easy thing to do.*

AH: It’s an impossible thing to do in the frightened, scared, endlessly compromised and endlessly corrupt ego. It’s only possible by going into our enlightened self, where all sacred activists are being required to go, and to put in place structures that can survive.

SH: *You have talked and written about such structures or cells — Networks of Grace you are creating — that will hold their integrity in the midst of rapid change. Aren’t people in many traditions doing this, through spiritual practices, prayer, and community?*

AH: Grace and practice and prayer are essential, but they have to be backed up by actions in the real world. The new human being created by the Divine is a person rooted in the deepest spiritual practices, but who uses the fuel of love and wisdom that comes from these practices in order to be strong enough to act for justice in the world — with compassion, love, and wisdom.

The Divine is not static, it’s evolving. Constantly.

SH: *Jesus tossing the moneylenders from the temple.*

AH: Yes. He’s doing that as much for the moneylenders as for those who are being victimized by and colluding with them. He is exercising divine ferocity at that moment; as an act of compassion for those still trapped in the ego.

SH: *This term — divine ferocity — reminds me of the wrathful deities in Tibetan Buddhism. Utterly fierce, full of terrifying and fearsome power, but still Buddhas!*

AH: Yes! You can only obtain such divine ferocity when you can love those who oppose you as much as you love those who

are with you. When you can achieve that, divinely ferocious action comes straight from the heart of Divine Love.

SH: *Andrew, you have spoken and written about your struggles, your own dark night of the soul.*

AH: I think we all have to go through a dark night in order to be broken down; in order to become truly empty. Then, the divine fire can awaken in us and possess us.

SH: *You have said this came about, in your own case, from loss and betrayal by a beloved teacher. How did you survive, emotionally and spiritually?*

AH: I think one person dies and another is born. Betrayal that deep, that cruel and ferocious, can drive a person to a place where they are the strongest — it forces one into the Divine. All the mystical traditions have talked about the necessity to die in this life before the death of the body. That is the dark night — and it’s the ultimate mercy because it saves us from being trapped in the false self. And, it’s very dangerous. That’s why I’m trying to bring through this vision of sacred activism so people can be ready for what’s coming.

It’s a question of being able to respond — creatively, joyfully, and passionately — with one’s whole being to something that feels to the ego like total disaster. That paralysis is already here. Most Americans seemed incapable of protesting against anything that is done to them, don’t they?

SH: *It sure seems that way. Things flash by for a moment then we’re on to the next. Do you think recent events are forcing people to wake up?*

AH: Look. America had 9/11 and was told to shop. You had Katrina, and that’s already a distant memory. Then there was the oil spill in the Gulf. That was bad news for awhile, but now it’s almost forgotten. You had the 2008 financial collapse. All people can think about now are the very small signs of financial recovery. But the entire system is built on sand and it will crumble soon. It will take multiple disasters to penetrate the absolute paralysis of the human mind and heart.

We are now in the position of an addict. When you love an addict, you discover they can fall down stairs, be convicted of stealing — hurt themselves and those around them and do the most appalling things — but keep the addiction; until a devastating moment arrives. Then the addict has to face the fact he or she may

(continued on page)



(Harvey continued from page 7)

die; then he's given a chance to turn it around. Many choose the addiction and die. As a species, we're dangerously close to that choice now.

SH: *The Sacred Feminine is very important in your work. How does She figure in this upcoming crisis?*

AH: The death aspect of this is Kali stamping Her feet, signaling the end of one kind of human being — the one that's suicidal, matricidal, and addictive. Her other side — the loving, nourishing, Mary side — is flooding us with grace and with new technologies that could wean us from our addiction to oil, and with mystical and spiritual revelations. The vision of sacred activism itself is a vision of putting the Mother's love into action and finding a way out of the madness.

SH: *Do you find women have more access to this vision?*

AH: Both men and women have a deep wound. Women tend to be more thirsty to discover this abandoned and derelict feminine, but men are waking up to their need to come in contact with their love natures, to stop being slaves and robots. Women are becoming stronger and men are becoming gentler and wiser. This amazing alchemy of the marriage of opposites is taking place in a great many women and a great many men at this time.

SH: *I have found from my own experience, unless people are actually doing some sort of deep spiritual work there's a tendency towards imbalance. I practice a form of Buddhist meditation and find it really helps.*

AH: It's not just spiritual practices that are required; it's also shadow work, especially in groups. Spiritually aware people can disintegrate just as easily as other people. Teachers like Thich Nhat Hanh have evolved a very powerful form of engaged Buddhism. What I believe to be the essence of the Buddhist transmission is the ideal of the Bodhisattva, who works ceaselessly for the salvation and good of all beings. That's the key.

I also believe the Dalai Lama is the supreme example of a sacred activist. He has offered ceaseless, loving critique again and again for 30 to 40 years — about our environmental policies, our addiction to arms, our addiction to consumerism.

SH: *Your book is such a call to reclaim our voices.*

AH: And, to reclaim the potency and

power of our divine empowerment.

SH: *It is not about the needs of the ego; it doesn't come from there.*

AH: No! It comes from enlightened consciousness. A major misconception is that enlightenment is the end of the journey, but it's just the beginning. Once you've awakened you have to embody that in everything you think, everything you feel, everything you do. The Divine is not static; it's evolving. Constantly.

Enlightenment is better phrased as the enlightenment field; it's an entrance into a quantum field of expansion.

The vision of sacred activism itself is a vision of putting the Mother's love into action and finding a way out of the madness.

SH: *That idea of something we achieve — that's so Western, isn't it? We want to get the A; we want to win the gold.*

AH: But, it's an entrance into an explosion that continues to explode! I'm sure the Dalai Lama came in very awake, but I do believe that at 75, his awakening is incomprehensibly greater now than its ever been — because of the intensity of his practice and the dedication of every single moment of his life to the salvation of every being.

SH: *Let's talk about love for a moment, Andrew. It's so much a part of what you have talked and written about over the years.*

AH: It's a cosmic power that is manifesting everything that lives as everything that is — behind the dance of opposites. It's a gift of the Mother-God; a vast, fiery, ecstatic, blissful energy.

SH: *In Return of the Mother, you describe the Virgin Mary as Tantric; ecstatic and fiery. I like that description.*

AH: Well, I don't believe in the traditional idea of Mary as an actual virgin; that's a patriarchal fantasy. The woman that we

revere as Mary was enormously strong and passionate — and radical. The Magnificat is the most radical thing in the New Testament. Mary calls for complete social, political and spiritual revolution. And Her example is of a woman who stood there, and endured, and expanded — just vibrating with the Divine Love. To this day, She inspires people who turn to Her.

SH: *Is there anything else you want to add?*

AH: Just that the signs of the Birth are there for everyone to see. These signs, from a mystical point of view, are that the crisis itself is both a birth and a death; that extraordinary new technologies are coming in that will show us the way through our addiction to oil; and that the mystical renaissance has made all the sacred technologies from all the mystical and spiritual sources totally available. To everybody.

SH: *So, everything we need is already here?*

AH: Everything we need is here for us to birth a new world — including crises to show we cannot and should not go on in the same way anymore.

SH: *Sounds like a good time to buckle our seats.*

AH: It's going to be a bumpy ride. But, everything is possible.

SH: *...Because we're still here.*

AH: No. Because She is here, with us. She is in us, and She is guiding this huge, terrible transformation. She is blessing us with the powers, and the passion, and the vision, and the clarity...everything we need is available from Her — Because She's here. That's why we can survive. Doesn't that make sense to you, deeply?

SH: *It makes complete sense; I can feel Her, too.*

AH: We have to come down, to this place, where we can feel the One who is here already. We have to arrive in our bodies, we have to arrive on the earth, and realize it is Her body; we have to see the animals as Her glorious creations, we have to fall massively in love with the reality that is Her. Then we will know Her, and feel Her and feel how much torrential grace is streaming towards us at every moment. Then we will wake up, and become strong, and do the work — not in the spirit of penance — but in the spirit of great, great joy.

SH: *Why do we hesitate to surrender and open completely to this?*

AH: Because we're afraid; it means the end of our personal agendas of power, personal satisfaction, personal manipulation — all the games of malice and cruelty, perversion and domination that we've chosen.

SH: *The very thing that would save us is what we resist the most.*

AH: Yes. But, isn't this the drama of the human race? We come close to the fire of Love, and are terrified because we realize this is the fire that will burn our house down. That is when we have to trust the great mystics. As our personal house burns down, we receive the entire cosmos as our new dwelling place.

SH: *I'm reminded of the poem about the monk whose house burnt to the ground.*

AH: I think it's Basho; "My house burnt down. Now I own a better view of the rising moon."

Our houses will be burnt down and we'll own a much better view of the rising moon. We're going to scream and think we're being destroyed, but the moon will rise on a new human race.

SH: *Yes. This feels like a great time to stop. Thanks so much for giving me this time tonight. I'm honored to have had this conversation with you.*

AH: Thank you and bless you; bless your life and your work, and I hope our paths will cross again someday.

SH: *I feel certain they will. Thank you, Andrew.*

This interview was conducted and written by Sharon Hall for The Whole Person Calendar.

LINKS:

All events, publications, lecture tours, press, and information:

www.andrewharvey.net

YouTube videos:

The Great Death, Sacred Activism Part One:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgK_pywP-84

The Sacred Feminine, Sacred Activism Part 3:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIMFZIKpvAI

Andrew Harvey:

www.mefedia.com/watch/30393164