

THE DIRECT PATH

Barbara DeGraw: For those of our readers who may not know who you are, who are you?

Andrew Harvey: I am a 56 yr old English mystical scholar and spiritual teacher. I have written 30 books on the full range of mystical subjects. My favorite of these books are; Return of the Mother, Son of Man: Mystical path to Christ and the Direct Path. My greatest passions are Rumi and Bach. I am evolving a vision of what I call Sacred Activism which I believe can help people empower themselves and transform the chaos of our contemporary crisis into an opportunity of radical acts of compassion.

BD: Why did you write “The Direct Path?”

AH: I wrote the Direct Path out of an overwhelming experience of the direct connection with the divine. I believe it is this direct connection and the experience it gives of your eternal divine self that most help us now empower ourselves and work with wisdom and passion in the world.

BD: How do we reconcile our inner voices that we have internalized from our external authorities with our divine voice?

AH: This is a very hard and complex process. It involves deep shadow work and growing understanding of the depths of ones illusions, fantasies, agendas and social conditioning. It also involves profound inner experience of the divine presence. Over time, you will begin to see the difference between the frenetic urgency of your will and the subtle, peaceful, silent guidance of your heart and soul.

There are three linked ways of setting oneself free from these darkening inner voices; meditation, prayer to be released from the past and commitment to a course of real action in the real world. A commitment, you stick to through all the fears that arise.

BD: Aren't the parents, teachers, religious leaders that were a part of our early lives there for a reason?

AH: Of course. But the reason may be more mysterious than we think. And it may take a lot of courage to undo the damage that those parents, teachers and religious authorities have done. This work of discrimination and clarity is holy work, and just as our enemies can be our greatest teachers of patience and compassion, so as we undo some of the illusions of what we inherited, we should try to do so in the spirit of radical acceptance and forgiveness.

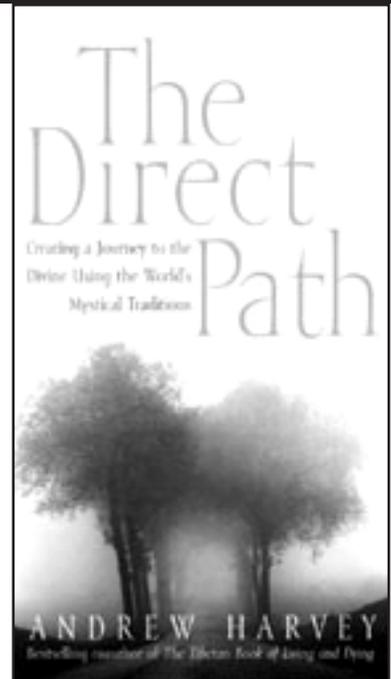
BD: How do we honor them AND honor our own voice? Meaning our own divine authority?

AH: Through a long and demanding process we come to see both the light and shadow of what we have inherited. In that process we discover our essential nature and mission.

BD: Are we meant to totally leave those external authorities behind? How do we take the lessons we have learned and move forward to totally surrender to our divine?

AH: My belief is we should go direct at all moments to the divine itself. The only way we know that our lessons have been truly learned is that surrender to the divine becomes more natural and easy.

BD: In “The Map of the Transformation” you discuss birthing as the last stage, this is the most challenging. To totally surrender to service, to let go of all those that told us we couldn't do what we are meant to do and do it anyway. Listening to that voice from when we were young, yielding to that external authority, which may



have been a parent, grandparent, teacher, etc, was a way of bonding with them; of feeling their attention and approval. How do we let that break down? How do we suffer the grieving of letting that go and surrender, totally surrender to our own divine? Is it possible?

AH: It is certainly possible and I believe it is essential for all of us to unlearn our learned helplessness. And to gain a profound distance on those sabotaging voices that constantly mock us, minimize our efforts and make us feel guilty, absurd or impotent. There are three linked ways of setting oneself free from these darkening inner voices; meditation, prayer to be released from the past and commitment to a course of real action in the real world. A commitment, you stick to through all the fears that arise.

BD: What can we expect when we let that happen?

AH: We can expect great resistance, bouts of extreme anxiety and a gradual deepening, serenity and sense of self respect that emerge only through struggle and radical spiritual practice. No one frees themselves for their true work easily. But to anybody who tries to, great grace is always given.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANDREW HARVEY

BD: How do we become that ardent tool through which the Supreme manifests?

AH: Only through repeated radical surrender, grounded in ever deepening humility.

BD: When you write “His reality is birthed into concrete expression.” How do you decide what is his concrete expression?

AH: You never decide, the spirit reveals and you must be prepared always to make mistakes and to get things wrong. What happens however, if your life is truly surrendered is that your mistakes will be corrected and grace will make of your getting things wrong a door into new opportunities for wisdom and growth.

BD: On the one hand you say that we are trapped by the outer materialistic world, but isn't that the “concrete expression?” Is a beautiful large home a “trapping” or a “concrete expression?” How do we look at people with everything and decide that they are trapped? Or expressing? God didn't make the Grand Canyon or the Night skies or the oceans, small and humble, he made them larger than life. How do we decide when it is a “trapping” or a “concrete expression?”

AH: So much of what passes for wealth and power are concrete expressions and unfortunately of illusion, addiction and the lust for status. This

has nothing whatever to do with the divine and everything with our loss of sacred balance and sacred humility.

Displays of exaggerated wealth in a time when two billion people are living on less than a dollar a day and the entire planet is blatantly burning in the fires of obscene and unfettered greed is I would think a sign of sad and dangerous spiritual ignorance. In my experience the rich and powerful only become truly happy when they understand 3 things: that their wealth and power are a divine gift and not theirs, that they are responsible in deepest sense to use those great gifts with humility and generosity and that the greatest joy is never in hoarding for oneself; either money or influence but to spend oneself lavishly and freely in the service of others. Those who wake up to these truths

irradiate their wealth and power with divine intelligence. Those who do not, drown in illusion and keep going a dark, sad, cruel world.

BD: What is one thing we the reader can do today to get on, stay on or get back to our path to express our divine?

AH: The one thing that we can do to get in contact with the is divine sit down, open your heart and know in the silence that you and the divine are one in eternal knowledge, awareness and bliss.



Andrew Harvey is an internationally renowned religious scholar, writer, and teacher, and the author of over 30 books, including the critically acclaimed *Way of Passion: A Celebration of Rumi*, as well as *Journey to Ladakh*, *The Return of the Mother*, *Son of Man*, and *The Direct Path: Creating a Journey to the Divine Using the World's Mystical Traditions*. He is also coauthor of the best-selling *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. His work (*Mary's Vineyard: Daily Readings, Meditations, and Revelations*, with photographs by Erik Haunt) has been honored with the Benjamin Franklin Award and the Mind Body Spirit Award; and *A Journey in Ladakh* received the Christmas Humphries Award.

Born in south India in 1952, Harvey studied at Oxford University and became a Fellow of All Soul's College in 1973. He has devoted much of his life to studying the world's various mystical traditions while living in London, Paris, New York, and San Francisco. He has taught at Oxford University, Cornell, the California Institute of Integral Studies, and the University of Creation Spirituality. He is Founding Director of the Institute for Sacred Activism, which will be offering its first programs in 2009. www.andrewharvey.net

**You never decide,
the spirit reveals and
you must be
prepared always
to make mistakes
and to get things
wrong. What
happens however,
if your life is truly
surrendered is that
your mistakes will
be corrected and
grace will make of
your getting things
wrong a door into
new opportunities for
wisdom and growth.**