



ANDREW HARVEY:

Mystical Activism



While in South India making a program for the BBC many years ago, I made the most momentous connection of my whole life. I had the great grace to meet Father Bede Griffith, a man who gave his life to live out the birthing of the new divine humanity. At that time Father Griffith was eighty-five years old, and that birthing was radiating from him in divine beauty, in divine clarity, in divine intensity, and in divine compassion. We spent ten days together talking about his life and the experience of his mystical evolution. Toward the end of those early conversations, he graced me with a terrible and beautiful clue to the time we are living in. Everything I have lived through—and the world has lived through—in the last ten years has proven to me that this conversation came from the heart and mind of God to play a part in the transformation of the world. The time for that transformation is now and there is no time to lose. I wrote the essence of that conversation in my book *A Walk with Four Guides*:

“The whole human race has come to the moment when everything is at stake, when a vast shift of consciousness will have to take place on a massive scale in all societies and religions for the world to survive. Unless human life becomes centered on the awareness of a transcendent reality that embraces all humanity and the whole universe and at the same time always transcends whatever level of consciousness we are in, there is little hope for us.”

We are, as a race, going into the eye of an apocalyptic hurricane that will decide the future of the race and the planet. This storm of destruction

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will demand everything of all serious seekers who long to see the future transfigured. As the hurricane deepens and darkens, it is critical to know in the deepest part of ourselves that what will look and feel like destruction is actually the necessary stripping away of illusions we do not need anymore, the smashing of fantasies we have outgrown, and the necessary, unavoidable waking up to our true divine power.

The core knowledge and secret that helps us get through this apocalypse and give birth to a new divine humanity is one the great mystical

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traditions have always known. Enshrined in the depths of all the traditions is the essential secret wisdom that total destruction, absolute stripping, horrible pain, apocalyptic annihilation and death are the birth canal of a wholly new reality. I call it the wisdom of the dark night. It is the wisdom that all the great mystics—like Rumi and Ramakrishna and Teresa of Avila—who have come into the splendor of divine love—have known. Jellaludin Rumi

said it this way: “The King never thrashes you without offering you a throne.” The secret of the dark night is this: the crucifixion and the resurrection come together.

A vast apocalypse is going on. A vast birth is also going on, in and through this apocalypse. Both are manifesting at the same time because both are interdependent. The apocalypse is the birth canal. The sooner we grasp that, the sooner we resonate with all of our being with that, the sooner we can become what we must become—mystical activists and warriors for the new transformation.

The angel of human destiny is standing before every single human being. She is standing uncomfortably close to every being, much closer than the prescribed thirteen inches of personal space. In her hand, she holds a magical mirror, a terrible and beautiful mirror. When she turns the magic mirror to the left, it turns black—revealing a seven-headed snarling beast. This appalling beast of total destruction is menacing all of life on this planet. It is essential that we look into that dark mirror and see each one of these seven heads very, very clearly and stare directly into their eyes.

The first head is a massive, unstoppable explosion of population. By the year 2050, there will be nine billion people on the earth if population continues to expand at the current rate. That is three billion more than the most conservative ecologists believe are supportable. An absolute nightmare which the religions of the world have wholly failed to address, this problem makes nearly all of our agendas pathetic.

The second head is that the environment is already in the midst of Armageddon. It is being massacred. A hundred and twenty species are vanishing into extinction every single day. Nothing real has been done, nothing real has been risked by society, to avert this catastrophe. Every serious person must face this heartbreak.

The third head of this seven-headed monster is the growth of fundamentalism. At the very moment at which it is essential that all of the religions of the world pull together, overcome their differences, relinquish their claims of exclusivity, and cry out with one voice to the divine for transformation, all instead have factions that are retreating into a terrifyingly separatist fundamentalism.

The fourth head of this monster makes this separatism even scarier. We are now seeing—on a massive and seemingly unstoppable scale—is the spread of the selling of weapons of mass destruction. There is not necessarily a growth of evil. There is a growth of the absolutely lethal powers that evil now has in its control.

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The fifth head is something we are all very well aware of. The technological worldview has created a great cement garden here on the planet. At the very moment when we need to be connected to nature at every level, the closest most people get to nature is a salad. People are perishing from inner meaninglessness and despair at a moment when finding meaning is the source of all hope.

The sixth head of this apocalyptic monster is the media. If the media had any sense of responsibility, any sense of crisis, it would be pouring out the truth about what is happening to the environment, to the poor, and to the defenseless. Instead, media moguls create reality shows. Those voices that are radical, and really empowering—that could teach the mystical truth that could liberate and transform the world—are kept out of mainstream media.

The seventh head keeps people in a state of terrifying anxiety, desperation and fear. In our culture, we have become so hideously busy, so unspeakably hectic, that it is extremely difficult to have any peace of mind, any calm in which to taste the depths of the divine identity which could empower us to transform ourselves and the planet.

This dreadful machine of destruction—an exploding population, combined with an environmental holocaust, the growth of fundamentalism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, technology that alienates on every level, a mass media addicted to triviality, and a human race in a state of perpetual, despairing motion—is a confluence of devastating forces that is supremely intelligent in a black way. This is what the mystics of the Christian tradition call the anti-Christ.

But this is not the only thing that is going on.

For when the angel of human destiny turns the same mirror the other way, it turns into a golden mirror. And in that golden mirror, seven pulsing, interconnected stars appear—the seven stars announcing the birth of divine humanity. This is not something that will happen in ten years, or twenty years. This is happening in me. It is happening in you. It is happening in movements all over the world in astonishing ways.

The first star represents the very extent of the crisis we now face. This crisis is so horrific that it will shake us to our depths and awaken the great slumbering divine secrets that lie at our core. This crisis is a supreme opportunity.

The second star is that the very technology that has created the cement garden is now developing astonishing new advances across the board. It is revolutionizing medicine, shaking loose the potential of quantum physics, and opening up all kinds of new fuel sources. These advances could, if we have the political will, transform everything that we are and

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do on Earth. One example is the hydrogen economy, which could free us from our dependence on fossil fuel at little cost to the environment—if we have the courage to embrace it.

The third star is the media itself. In the last few years the Internet has opened an unprecedented opportunity for the grassroots conveyance of radical information—under the radar of governments and corporations. This opens up the possibility of mobilizing tremendous forces all over the planet.

And the fourth star radiating right at this moment is the great mystical texts of the world's traditions. They have been translated into English and all the other major languages in the last thirty years. Mystical technologies and practices of meditation and inner transformation, kept sacred and secret for very long periods of time, are now open to anyone. This has never happened before. It's no coincidence that right as the apocalypse is shaping, an enormous array of divine power, awareness and knowledge is being given to humanity, to wake us up, to give us courage, to give us joy, and to give us the means to change. This is a huge gift.

The fifth star is one I have devoted my whole waking life to radiating more completely and helping to birth: the return of the divine feminine. For 2,500 years, the bride, the mother aspect of God, has been kept in a dark cellar with her hands and her feet bound. And now, at a time when we need the wisdom of the sacred marriage between heaven and earth, transcendence and immanence, human and divine, body and soul, politics

and action, the bride is being brought back in all her wildness and glory, her splendor and fury, and in all her majestic tenderness.

The sixth star in the astounding firmament of birth is the lives of the servants of God's love we witness in action in the world. In the last century we had two World Wars, we had Nagasaki and Hiroshima, we had the horrific exterminations in Nazi Germany, China, Russia and Cambodia. But we were also given in the lives of Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the Dalai Lama, and Nelson Mandela. These lives are examples of how non-violence, when lived with total sincerity and total truth, can transform insuperable difficulties by sheer, holy, God-given power. Gandhi secured the release of India by just standing in place, a semi-naked fakir, radiating the holy knowledge of divine truth and love. Martin Luther King ensured the triumph of a humiliated minority, and ensured the safety of a white population in the middle of a cauldron of hatred on both sides, by preaching and living the truth of Christ. The Dalai Lama, faced with the holocaust of his whole world, has never for one moment lost his unshakeable belief in the transfiguring power of compassion. And in South Africa, we saw a situation that could have degenerated into a total bloodbath transformed by the work of Nelson Mandela and F. W. De Klerk, working together in a spirit of non-violence.

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The lives of these people clearly suggest that God is on the side of those who are brave enough to go into the storm with their divine truth and their divine beauty and their divine power radiating from a full heart, mind and body, giving themselves up to be the perfect servants of love that all of us are meant to be.

The seventh star is one that has blown my mind and my heart and my body and my soul wide open. Rather than a detached spectator watching the play—as the patriarchal traditions tend to think of God—God is also a mother. In the mother aspect, God has an agenda. That agenda is the saving of the human race, the transfiguring of the human race, the co-creation with the human race of a new world. God as mother is protecting us, and pushing us deeper and deeper into divine mischief. Knowing that, we will stop at nothing because we know that the angels and the archangels and the bodhisattvas and all the ascended masters and mistresses are crying out for the transfiguration of the human race and pouring down on the earth blessing and power and protection and knowledge.

Having now seen what is in the black mirror and what is in the golden mirror, we must look at what it takes to align ourselves wholly with those seven stars in the golden mirror. All of these stars are interconnected, part of an enormous mercy being given us. What it takes to galvanize their power and magic is to become a mystical activist.

The future of the planet hinges not on mysticism alone, not on activism alone, but on the inspired marriage of these two potent forces. Mystics, vibrating and bathing the whole cosmos in light, are absolutely adorable. But in a crisis like this, they are so heavenly as to not be of much earthly use. Private pursuit of spiritual experience is absolutely not enough when the world is burning to death. It is absolutely incumbent on every single human being—including the ones who see the light dancing in the trees—to do something real about the real problems in the real world. It is not spiritual to hide from them in a cloud of bliss. The detached, transcendent spiritual ideal which reveals the world as an illusion is not true, because the world is not an illusion. That is bad mysticism.

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No government and no corporation fears people with Sanskrit names wandering about burning incense, saying, “All is One and we should love everybody.”

My first real mystical awakening happened when I was about twenty-one years old. It was winter, and I was a Fellow of All Souls College at Oxford University. I had just been left by someone I was very much in love with and was in a

state of extreme suffering and distress. The suffering had gone on for about three weeks of sleeplessness. One particular and devastating night, I woke up after only two hours' sleep, to see the entire world softly coated with fresh snow. Gazing out of the window in the early morning, I experienced the purest and most complete peace and rapture I had ever experienced, far greater than I had imagined possible.

Although I didn't know what was happening at the time, I later realized that at that moment I had touched my own inmost divine being. It was a tremendous experience that opened up all kinds of hungers in me. And it was largely because I had that experience that I found the courage to return to India when I was twenty-five, and start giving up academic life in favor of a larger, mystical life. For once I returned to India, all kinds of mystical experiences started to bombard me and open me. That hour of calm, healed ecstasy gazing at the snow gave me the courage to transform my life later.

To the New Age, and to teachers who purvey the transcendental clap-trap that people feed off like heroine addicts to stay in a bliss state while the world burns, I say it is time to realize that there are two initiations on the real path: the initiation into the light which is enormously important and which changes everything, and the initiation into the dark. I am not speaking of something I have not lived. When the dark spears your heart open, the horror and the heartbreak and the pain turns you into a helpless babbling before the awe and majesty and terror of God. Witnessing that

real agony of the real world, everything in you cries out to be of use. When those two initiations are combined, a real mystic is born—one whose divine illumination transforms him or her into a fearless love-warrior and love-servant.

Neither can activists change what is happening, for the simple reason that they are fed only by human sources of energy. Their hearts get broken, their wills become exhausted, and their bodies get tired when faced with the prevailing situation on the planet. They give up. Neither mysticism nor activism alone can give us the passion, wisdom, clarity, peace and strength we need. But if we marry a totally lucid, adoring connection with the transcendent in direct relationship with a wild, passionate outraged commitment to correcting the imminent injustice; if we marry the divine energies that are given through a connection to God with a focused plan to unnerve the powerful and the cruel and the destructive on every level—what we will give birth to is a new kind of human being. This birth is what this apocalypse is helping to bring about. The illusions of progress of the activists and the illusions of progress of the mystics must both be shattered. Fusing the two in a massive heartbroken realism can give birth to the power of God in action on Earth.

This great fusion is the equivalent, in human terms, of the leap from Newton's to Einstein's physics. This fusion asks for nothing less than the abandonment of all the illusions of the past and a seizing of the divine identity at the very core of us. A fusion of that core with a cry for justice for animals and women and gay people and poor people is a revolutionary power that none of the powers of the world can stop. The reign of the dark and of the ignorant, the reign of the demonic, will be over.

Becoming a mystical activist demands blood, sweat, tears, and real hard prayer. It is not a game. It is not something to do after the third vision of the light, it is something to do in total response to a crisis that could destroy everything we hold sacred. Mystical activism is a fusion of the forces of light. It fundamentally threatens all the dark forces that have kept the human race ignorant. In that act of threatening all the dark forces, all the dark forces are aroused against it. That includes all the occult, demonic forces, which means that all of us must get over our naiveté about evil. After the twenty-first century—after Dachau, Hitler, Hiroshima, the desolation of the environment, and all the other atrocities of the last hundred and fifty years—we can no longer paint ourselves into a corner with a koan that says “evil does not exist.” Evil is real and terribly powerful in this dimension. It is not so within in the absolute realm,

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but it is horrifyingly real in its human, its demonic, and its occult forms here and now. At a certain very important stage on the mystical path, we must meet it head on. This is what Rumi did in his dark night, this is what Jesus did in the crucifixion, and this is what is happening on the planet in its dark night. It is very important to become lucid about this and to prepare for this. Otherwise, we will be like lambs going to slaughter.

These are the seven laws of mystical activism:

First, to be mystical activists, we must get real about sacred practice. We don't have a hope in the real world, dealing with real problems, and real people with destructive agendas, unless we are rooted in sacred practice. Develop a profound practice which grounds you and irrigates you with holy intensity every single moment. We need to combine two kinds of practice: cool practices to chill out in the storms of neurotic karma, and warm practices that keep the heart open in hell, because we will all suffer from compassion fatigue. It is almost impossible, in a world of nightmare, to keep on hoping, and to find the energy to go on loving, without the warm heart practices. Like a bird that can fly on two wings, we need the cool practices for times when we become hysterical and need to taste the truth of divine being, and we need the warm practices when we need

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energy. By marrying these sacred practices of peace and passion at the deepest depths, the masculine-feminine sacred androgyne is born.

The second law feathers into the first. In a time as devastating as ours, I have found that only one thing works at all moments, and that is to keep steady awareness of our divine and deathless identity. All of us have to go on a very profound journey, not simply to read about our divine identity, nor to taste it in the occasional moment of bliss, but to steadily be in touch with that indestructible soul that is our immortal reality. Knowing that the core of what we are cannot die makes us fearless in all situations.

The third law, I cannot emphasize strongly enough: Know that evil is real. The demonic is here, and it will avail itself of your shadow side, acting through what I call the anti-Christ energies. Evil is not a poetic metaphor. I have met it, and I have been wounded by it. Love and evil are in a profound cosmic war, a mystery of antagonism that has a divine meaning we can only learn by becoming discriminating, by being realistic about our own addictions, and by understanding the amazing power of this darkness. Jesus said, "Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." Becoming a mystical activist will arouse tremendous antagonism from that darkness. Terrible things will manifest to try and unnerve you. If you don't know this, you will be defeated. But if you know that this is an occult war and the most deadly game imaginable—and that you have to

stay steady in your calling, and deeply at peace within your divine identity—then you will be strong.

The fourth law is a very subtle one. It has involved and tormented all of us at different moments. This law is a response to the question, “What do we do with anger?” The patriarchal religions have an interest in us not getting angry. They have told us that anger is an absolute obscenity and that we must get rid of it. That, of course, keeps us obedient slaves.

If unleashed, anger can blind us and lead us into hatred. Yet where are we without the power of outrage? In this world at this moment, millions of us ought to be absolutely speechless with outrage at what is being done in our name. But if we are so outraged that we are blinded by hatred, then the power that outrage can give us, rather than being a transfiguring energy, becomes a dirty, corrupt, damaging energy. So the fourth law is that you must awaken your outrage, face your outrage, and master your outrage by purifying your heart. You must constantly ensure, through deep sacred practice, that your outrage doesn't get sidetracked into hatred of others. To do that, we enact our outrage before God, offer our outrage to God, and beg the divine force to take that outrage and transform it into the living sacred fire of sacred passion. Outrage transfigured is the gold that is alchemized from the black, swirling, boiling power of anger. That sacred passion, when mobilized in the service of activism, makes you tireless, undaunted, extravagantly wild and unstoppable.

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The fifth law is absolutely central to the great Christian, Hindu and Buddhist teachings on action. Very simply, it is this: You must learn to give up the fruits of action to the divine. You do not act with a private agenda, followed by despair when your agenda is not enacted. You act from a love of God, for God, giving yourself selflessly up to God, and offering your actions to God as a sacrifice of divine love. If you can do that, what you do and what you say will have miraculous effects because it is not you who are doing it anymore. You are like a feather floating on the breath of God, a pen held in the hand of God. You have died to yourself; the God that loves the world is using you for God's inscrutable and mysterious purposes. If you are still acting from the ego you can be defeated. But if you're standing in the Self nothing can defeat you, not even endless defeat.

The sixth law has to do with ferocity. When somebody has the guts to stand in front of us, and rage like the lion on behalf of the lion in each of us, they are not assassinating us; they are trying to raise us from the dead. That ferocity is the fiercest and most gorgeous kind of love. We recognize it when it's in the room. I recognize it in the living Christ. I recognized it

one incredible evening when the Dalai Lama finally lost his smile because he was so overcome with grief. He stood before his audience and said, “When will you wake up to what is happening to my people?” He didn’t do it to hurt or humiliate people, he did it to appeal to their hearts, to wake them up. So the sixth law is this: As a mystical activist, act with deep love and compassion, with a total commitment to non-violence. It may not always be possible, but we need to steep our whole being in satyagraha and soul force, to act from that deepest place so the truth of the divine nature can constantly flame out and inspire.

I cannot emphasize the seventh law enough. It is this: None of us can do it alone. I cannot do my work without my husband and my great spiritual helper and warrior Ellia who is an incredible mystic and healer and wild woman. I cannot do my work without the help of Rumi, Jesus, without the help of all the beings on whose lives I imperfectly model my life. None of us can do it alone. We have to reach out to all of the people who share our concern. We have to pool our resources, become brothers and

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sisters, give up our egos, give up our private organizations, open our hearts, and work together.

When all is chaotic and burning and terrible, there are three main ways that I reconnect with the source of divine love. The first, and simplest, is this: When I breathe, I imagine breathing in the living golden light of the mother’s alchemical radiance.

That golden light goes to the ends of my toes, to the top of my head, and into every cell of my entire body until I imagine myself glowing like a molten ingot. I then hold the breath until I can feel that gold light in every pore of my body. I then release the breath, and with it, all my fatigue, all my sadness, all my rage, all my desolation. Do this several times, for five or six minutes, and you will be recharged by peace and power.

The second way I retune with the source of love is by saying the Hail Mary very slowly and calmly while focusing my mind on an image of the Virgin that I love and hold dear. If you do not have a relationship with the Virgin, then choose another divine figure and see her very clearly in her most radiant and divine aspect. Saturate your every cell with devotion. The power will come, and the peace will come.

Another wonderful exercise is to lie on the floor and imagine a black, powerful magnet, about seven inches below the ground. Imagine that black magnet literally pulling out of your body, heart, mind and soul, all the stress and pain you are feeling. Imagine all the different worries and doubts and sufferings looking like little black needles. They’re dragged out of you and into that black magnet. I conceive of that black magnet as the secret Kali, birthing us into generosity. Then imagine a light figure of the divine mother in exactly the same shape as your own body, about two

feet above you, radiating your whole body with golden light. You are being worked on in this exercise both by the immanent mother, the black magnet below the ground, and by the transcendent mother saturating your whole body with deep healing power. It helps to say your preferred name for the divine mother in your heart, opening your whole being up for healing.

Staying attuned to love in these ways is absolutely essential to being a mystical activist. Simple, powerful practices constantly re-attune you to the source. The simpler the practices are, the more they can be done in the hurly-burly of everyday life. Keep re-aligning yourself in these ways, and fuse your deepest mysticism with the most radical and brave action you are capable of. In this way you will help birth the new humanity that is appearing in blood and pus and shattered fragments of buildings and unutterable torment through the birth canal of the end of a world.

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