# **The Eyes of the Golden Hall** ~ A Newsletter of The Center for Human Awakening ~

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### FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

Our theme for this edition of *The Eyes of the Golden Hall* is 'retreats.' Should I go on a retreat? Do I need a retreat? Are retreats worthwhile? What sort of retreat is best? Where should I go on retreat? These are just some of the questions that may arise when you consider taking a retreat.

Our founder starts off this month's newsletter with an article titled "Honoring Your Divinity, Respecting Your Humanness". The article is a rich and inviting sharing of the role of spiritual retreats. Richard explores the myriad of options available to you for retreats and provides sagely advice on choosing the right retreat for you, based on your wants and needs.

Next, I offer a piece titled "To Retreat? Or Not to Retreat? Is That The Question?" The article explores the many questions one may ask when considering a retreat. Give yourself the gift of some reflective time to contemplate the retreat experience you want. Trust your instincts and intuition. And always follow your heart in these sorts of matters.

Our Founder then offers the second of his three articles in this newsletter. His second piece is titled "A Basket of Blessings." This article is a series of quotes from spiritual teachers and masters on retreats, and Richard's comments.

Sticking with our theme of retreats, we have a beautiful, personal account of retreat experience from guest contributor, Michael Luckett. Michael shares his experience travelling to our Founder's personal retreat centre on the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains in Southern Spain, in an area known as Las Alpujarras. Michael recounts his experience of beautiful surroundings, good food, comfortable accommodation, and the opportunity to dialog and work with an experienced, talented therapist on a daily basis without life's usual interruptions.

The last of our themed articles is the third contribution from our Founder, Richard Harvey. He shares a piece titled "Who Am I?" which is the story of his Enlightenment Intensive Retreat as told in the introduction to his book *The Flight of Consciousness*.

We have two other guest contributors this month. In his article "Attention," Nick Heap explores what attention is, why attention is important, and difficulties in practicing attention, both for the giver and receiver. Alan Inskip shares his love for being creative, particularly writing poetry, with his poem titled "Awareness."

Please take a moment to review the 'Soulful Sharings' that round out this newsletter with news about what's new and upcoming at the Center, as well as links to a plethora of resources. Let us know what you think. Write to us at <u>info@centerforhumanawakening.com</u>.

~ Robert Meagher, Editor

### **THEMED ARTICLES**

### 1. Honoring Your Divinity, Respecting Your Humanness, by Richard Harvey

In order to understand the world, one has to turn away from it on occasion. - Albert Camus

The role of the spiritual retreat is to strengthen and support your inner work. It acts as a refresher and a reinforcement for well-being. The time you spend in retreat represents your deepening commitment to yourself and your recommitment to the inner journey. You may find that the time between retreats is spent grounding yourself in the insights, following through on the breakthroughs, and deepening into the revelations of your most recent retreat.

During retreat, with a lack of distractions to inhibit you, your practice deepens and you deepen with it. Without extraneous demands, relationships and accompanying complexities to occupy your inner world you may devote yourself freely and fully to the business of awakening.

There is a symbolic aspect to retreat. Attending a retreat expresses your longing for your true self and your devotion to your personal and spiritual unfolding. Think of it this way. What could be better than going away on holiday with your lover? Giving yourself precious time together to spend precious moments together and let your love deepen and your relationship thrive. As well as the profundity and the pleasure of it there is the basic statement you are making to each other: I want to be with you. And it is this I want to be with you that you express toward yourself when you go on a retreat.



Here at Cortijo Llano de Manzano we have been welcoming retreatants to the center for almost seventeen years. Each and every time I meet a new retreatant a part of me is in awe of the act of self-love that has enabled them to come here. We speak initially of the routines, the workings of the accommodation, the surrounding area, the nuts and bolts of retreat life. But beneath the conversation I hear the voice of the retreatant's heart, the uncertainty, the authenticity, the divine longing, the apprehension, the wonder, the anticipation. What will happen in the days ahead is unknown.

Whenever we go out, go somewhere, a location to see someone in or to indulge in some practice, we want something. This is extremely important. We go outward, reach out, because we want something and we intend more or less to get that something. Now when a retreatant books to come here I tell them to think about what they want from their retreat and then to write that down and send it to me. Simply writing it down enables the retreatant to clarify their aims, in some cases refine them, modulate and even change them, as they realize the deeper issues underlying their presenting problems.

For some the solitude of retreat is welcome, for others it is challenging. Some prefer to retreat with a group, others by themselves. Some like activities, inner work, to be given to fill the time, others prefer the space, the emptiness and possibility that inhabits time that isn't prescribed.

In a conversation I had recently with a friend of mine who follows the way of Soto Zen I owned my projections onto him. For some time I had been lightly taunting him by asking when he would be taking robes, i.e. becoming a full-time monk (as opposed to a part-time monk?).When I owned my projections I explained that some part of me always felt that going on retreat at the monastery and maintaining a one- or two-hour sitting practice at home begged the question: what do you do the rest of the time? Of course, in Soto Zen everything is understood to be training or spiritual work. However, I asked him, didn't it seem like the real discipline was to be had in the monastery where everything was supported by the community, the routines, the

rituals and the schedule? We talked about some remarks his spiritual teacher had made to the effect that there was no difference between being a monk in a monastery and training in secular life as a family man in the domestic setting. Oh come on, I said, "those months I spent in the monastery have informed me ever since, I have never forgotten that time and those events. I tell and retell the stories in books, articles, at gatherings, in satsang, over dinner tables... because they were so strong, so very powerful and illuminating, unparalleled largely in my experience. Well yes, he concurred, he had his doubts too. It seemed to him that family life and the domestic challenges prohibited the extraordinary deepening of monastic living and the inherent discipline that accompanied it.

On retreat we participate in some of that discipline, spiritual discipline, monastic discipline. Discipline has tremendous rewards and for those of us who are committed to secular life, the family, a primary love relationship, a job, and so forth the discipline of retreat may yield or provoke tremendous deepening which may accompany our process for some time after the retreat event itself.

Using our time on retreat well is part of the discipline. I suggest you consider seriously what you need, what you want (not always the same thing!), what you aspire to achieve over the retreat period, and finally what you expect of yourself. You may need rest for replenishment and refreshment from the demands of everyday life, time to commune with nature, silence and stillness, good food and a regular night time routine for adequate sleep. You may want beauty and the time to take it in, time to read inspiring literature, the opportunity to apply yourself to your yoga, chi kung, dance or other physical practices, the opportunity to meditate intensively or walk quietly and contemplatively in peaceful surroundings. You may want

to explore your spiritual progress and take stock of your psycho-spiritual journey over the last year or more, you may have a spiritual question to examine.

Retreat is a profound going inward. We retrieve our attention from the outside world and concentrate on the inner by being with ourselves. The inner is more powerful, more richer than the outer, why is that? And how come I say it with such stark certainty?





The inner is richer than the outer because all things arise from inner being. Some of this is obvious. Take a house for example, someone designed it, made plans, obtained permissions, and designated the size, color, and shape of the building. All of this was done before the builders received their orders for construction material, calculated how long the work would take, how many workers were needed, and what equipment has to be brought in. When all this was done the building commenced and finally the whole process was finished off with interior decoration, furnishings, and appropriate appliances. The entire manifestation of the building began inside the human being who originally conceived of it. Without that inner picture or vision no outward building would be possible.

There are many different types of retreat as I am sure you know but if at the heart of retreat itself this inwardness is common to all, then why not try this – and remember that you can journey inward any time, any place, while doing almost anything – simply take a breath and close your eyes. Try it now. Breathe and close your eyes. Now what happens? Very likely you find yourself distracted, caught up in the momentum of your present activity, focused on imaginary outcomes, physiologically and mentally geared to

what you've been doing. But as you persist in turning inward, so you begin to feel more present, less distracted, drawn to the inner world. If you stay with it long enough – and long enough may only be two or three minutes – you may experience some of the peace, tranquility, and insight which the inner realms offer. In which case you return to this life of outward action and endeavor refreshed and ready to take on challenges.

A cursory look at the selection of retreats on the internet reveal spiritual retreats, vipassana retreats, detox retreats, yoga retreats, tantric retreats, couples retreats, healing retreats – the list is as long as the activities of humankind are varied. Of course, any of these kinds of retreats may yield insight, teach and be beneficial. However, our focus in this short article is on authentically spiritual retreats.

The outer world is distracting and fascinating in equal measure. It seduces us to respond to even actively intervene, at the very least with an opinion about what is happening, if not some personal version of what should be happening and what would make things better.

Of course, the relative reality of outer world events is real in the sense in which anything in the outer world is real. But they are not ultimately Real, in the absolute sense. We know this because they are always changing, adapting, being rerun, rerouted and appearing in some new version. They appear again and again – corruption, political excess, aberrant behaviors, abuse in all its forms, greed, possessiveness, narcissism, egoism, callousness, prejudice and bigotry. When we look at the world today our hearts are affected by the cruelty and the ignorance of our fellow human beings.

There are some who would say that rather than be navel gazers we should consider this world of relative reality and be more active in changing it. Perhaps instead of spending money on taking a break by going on a retreat, we could make a donation to a disaster fund, write emails to express our opinion, lobby politicians, go on marches, and be politically active, working for outward change.





When we go on retreat we show our willingness to look at ourselves in a radical way. We show fearlessness in the face of all those aspects of ourselves which disgust us, to which we are averse, for which we criticize ourselves and judge ourselves. Over time we may heal through accepting ourselves, acknowledging and recognizing ourselves, and honoring ourselves. We may come to a relationship with self that is devoid of prejudice or bigotry, which disallows reactivity and violence. We may discover how we can show love to ourselves, feel compassion, respect ourselves, and begin to reveal the spiritual, the divine wise dignity of our real self, our true self, our essence, our core self in spirit, soul, and human existence, transparent to all veils, dismissive of all aggression and defenses, transparent to transcendence. For we are divine beings, extraordinary ordinary beings, we are love, we are awareness, and without belief in our lack, without desiring, hating and inner conflict we may become that which the world so sorely needs now. The basis of all violence and evil in the world is the self-identification with the ego self. That ego self is self-serving, self-aggrandizing, and self-absorbed. It thrives on separation, division and conflict. On retreat we honor our divinity and respect our humanness and if we are fortunate it may be possible to realize our wholeness and through that the unity of all things.



~ Richard Harvey, Founder of The Center for Human Awakening ~

## 2. To Retreat? Or Not to Retreat? Is That The Question?, by Robert Meagher

Should I go on a retreat? Do I need a retreat? Are retreats worthwhile? What sort of retreat is best? Where should I go on retreat? These are just some of the questions that may arise when you consider taking a retreat.

Retreats can complement and accelerate your spiritual growth and development. Retreats can give you the time and space to look at specific issues, or broader, philosophical explorations like your life purpose. Retreats may offer you the opportunity for clarity, relaxation, personal growth, deepening insights and replenishment. Retreats can give you the opportunity to withdraw



from your world and turn inwards, away from the world of ordinary everyday demands, pressures and responsibilities.



How do you know when it's time to take a retreat? Any number of signs or experiences may indicate the time is right to consider a retreat. Here are just a few. First, you know something needs to change in your life. Your current life trajectory may no longer be working. Life may no longer be fulfilling. You may feel a lethargy or emptiness. You know something needs to change but you have no idea what it is. You may feel lost and do not know where to go in your life.

Second, you may feel that you are consistently tired or exhausted. Sadness, worry, or even depression may have become the norm for

you. You have tried various things to change your state of mind but nothing seems to be working. Fear, doubt, worry, anger, anxiety, and any other plethora of devolving emotions may remain to haunt you each day.

Third, significant upheavals or traumas in your life can thrust you into states of mind you never experienced before. You may shut down, feel you want to escape from the world. The upheavals and traumas may render you unable to function in the world as you once knew it.

Lastly, you know you need to get away in order to take that next step in your personal and spiritual growth and development. You may have a daily spiritual practice but your daily life, and all its responsibilities, is holding you back from taking that next step. You know that without a dedicated and / or extended period of time away your practice may stagnate or deteriorate. You know you need a spiritual rejuvenation or 'shot in the arm.'

Retreats can come in different shapes and sizes. You can find retreats that allow you to bring the specific issues you want to address to the retreat. You may want a themed retreat that will allow you to focus on a motif or



thesis. You may be looking for a silent retreat, or some combination of silence and interaction with others. You may want a guided retreat or a retreat that you direct yourself. If you are practitioner, you may want to a retreat that will allow you to reflect on your practice and specific aspects of your work.

Location may play a crucial role in selecting the retreat experience that is best for you. Perhaps you want to go on a retreat in the mountains. Maybe your want to be by the ocean so you can walk along the beach. Maybe you will want to go on retreat deep in the woods. Maybe your want a country setting or even something in the heart of an urban setting. Or maybe you will want some combination of these elements to be part of your retreat experience. In addition, you may not want to travel far to the retreat location. Or you may want to purposely travel afar to accentuate the feeling of 'getting away from it all.'



Amenities may also influence your decision of where to take a retreat. You may want your retreat experience to offer you all the creature comforts you are accustomed to at home. Or you may purposely want an austere experience with only the basics of amenities in place.

There are many things to potentially consider when deciding if you will go on retreat and the type of retreat experience you want. Give yourself the gift of some reflective time to contemplate your retreat experience. Trust your instincts and intuition. And always follow your heart in these sorts of matters.

Enjoy your retreat! You and the rest of the world will be better off for it!



**Robert Meagher**: is Co-Founder of The Center for Human Awakening. Robert is a Certified SAT Therapist (Level 1). He has been an understudy of Richard Harvey since 2012.

### 3. A Basket of Blessings, by Richard Harvey

Quotes by Spiritual Teachers and Masters on Retreat with my Commentaries

## Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth. -A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada , the founder of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) movement, states the traditional case for spiritual Self-realization. This point of view lends itself more easily to the eastern mind rather than the western. Nonetheless, how spiritual life "works" may not be so different anywhere in the world (and at any time). We are of course reeling from the twentieth century experience of the abuse of power by spiritual teachers in the west, which raises many issues and constitutes a complex enquiry.<sup>1</sup> As I have said so often, although it may not be a popular idea, the presence of a spiritual teacher, mentor, or guide in your life is indispensable to the serious devotee of spirituality. So, we can learn from these illustrations of the relationship between the devotee, the truth, self-realization, and the mandatory relationship with the spiritual teacher or master.

### A life is either all spiritual or not spiritual at all. No man can serve two masters. Your life is shaped by the end you live for. You are made in the image of what you desire. – Thomas Merton

Yes, spirituality, true spirituality, practiced in an authentic manner is unlike any other practice. Since it is whole and One you cannot ultimately practice part-time an any sense of doing so is merely an expression of psychological splinteredness. Notice also the profound truth in Merton's last statement, "You are made in the image of what you desire." This reminds me of how you may see into a person's soul through their face and eyes when you are empathic and sensitive. Since what you desire signifies what you lack so you are made in its image and so you appear in the beautiful form of your living essence or the compromised form of your hunger, your lack, and your deficiency.

#### Meditation is not a means to an end. It is both the means and the end. – Jiddu Krishnamurti

Again, unlike any other practice in life, spirituality, in this case practicing meditation, does not ideally participate in the World of Three (subject-verb-object).<sup>2</sup> Rather meditation or awareness is our natural state. Our individual aware self is a direct reflection of the Divine Consciousness. In this sense we are both individual and All and Everything at the same time. Don't try to make rational sense of this, rather allow yourself to deepen into understanding through your practice.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> For those who have delved into my teachings, please consider the Three Stages of Awakening and, in particular, the second stage to reflect my understand of this phenomenon, as well as a potential "solution."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The World of Three is explained in several of my writings. In particular see "The Three Worlds: The Grey, Bright, and Brilliant Worlds" in chapter 7 of Richard Harvey, *Your Scared Calling: Awakening the Soul to a Spiritual Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd 2017, 162-167.

#### You may control a mad elephant; You may shut the mouth of the bear and the tiger; Ride the lion and play with the cobra; By alchemy you may learn your livelihood; You may wander through the universe incognito; Make vassals of the gods; be ever youthful; You may walk in water and live in fire; But control of the mind is better and more difficult. – Paramahansa Yogananda

Yogananda makes the case for the superiority of the inner realms. Who would argue with him! I agree! Make no mistake, the accomplishments of spiritual life, practice and discipline, are vastly greater than any achievement in the relative world. Discuss.

### Your duty is to be, and not to be this or that. I Am That I Am sums up the whole truth; the method is summarized in Be Still. – Ramana Maharshi

Being is retreat, inner work, meditation, awareness, centeredness and groundedness; being this or that is less being and more doing. It is identifying with the distractions of worldly life, becoming what you do (rather than doing your being). It is making the spiritual mistake of investing yourself in the outcome of your actions, living in the relative world at the expense of eternity. Remember that your true self is eternal. Here you merely masquerade as a human being!

### We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience. – Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Who has heard this one before? Teilhard memorably expounds our essence by stating that our true nature is spiritual while our temporary adaptive form – human – is merely temporary. However, distant that may feel in our day to day experiential reality, it is surely worth remembering and acting on when we "retire from the world" to go on retreat!

### Since ancient times, spiritual masters of all traditions have pointed to the Now as the key to the spiritual dimension. Despite this, it seems to have remained a secret. – Eckhart Tolle

Tolle misinterprets the ancient teachings. How can the now be the key to the spiritual dimension when that dimension is outside of time? If the relative speaks of and refers to time then the spiritual refers to not-time or rather timelessness and the eternal. Time participates in past, present and future. None of these may exist without the other. Thus the now or present is as time bound as the past or the future. Disregarding this obvious fact Tolle not only enlists the authority of undefined mysterious "spiritual masters of all traditions" but he also attempts to seduce us with the revelation of a secret. The generality about spiritual masters is facile and demeaning to both him and us. Are we really that silly that we would place credence in phrases like this? The secret strategy has been used in popular spirituality for too long now for us not to see through it, surely.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> For more on this subject see chapter 9, "Now: Enlightenment has Always Been" in Richard Harvey, *Moksha Dawn: Talks on a Radical and Innovative Approach to Spirituality and the Sacred in the 2st Century*, Useless Tree Press 2014, 137-148. This book is available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, etc, or directly from the Center or Human Awakening.

## A soul mate's purpose is to shake you up, tear apart your ego a little bit, show you your obstacles and addictions, break your heart open so new light can get in, make you so desperate and out of control that you have to transform your life, then introduce you to your spiritual master. – Elizabeth Gilbert

Gilbert has perhaps an ideal notion of love relationships, romance, and soul-matism. Following this incredible ordeal of being shaken up, tone apart, shown your obstacles and attachments, breaking open your heart, receiving the light, losing your inhibitions in a major way, personal transformation she tells us you may be introduced to your spiritual master. I suggest it's the other way around. Without diminishing a significant primary love relationship the process she describes is suggestive of a spiritual teaching presence at its most effective. It is unlikely to the point of ridiculous that a romantic or soul mate relationship would accomplish this. I think what I particularly dislike about this misrepresentation is that it supports people's search for "the one" and the idea that personal or spiritual transformation is dependent on a human relationship, which fuels the romantic search.

Bountiful is your life, full and complete. Or so you think, until someone comes along and makes you realize what you have been missing all this time. Like a mirror that reflects what is absent rather than present, he shows you the void in your soul – the void you have resisted seeing. That person can be a lover, a friend, or a spiritual master. Sometimes it can be a child to look after. What matters is to find the soul that will complete yours. All the prophets have given the same advice: Find the one who will be your mirror! – Elif Safak

I prefer Safak to Gilbert on what is essentially a similar point. However the equating of the spiritual master with friend, lover etc. is ill-advised and misleading. Yes it can be almost anyone or anything that jolts you into your spiritual search or journey, but that initial impetus and how it is experienced in your life is not necessarily the presence that sustains you through the journey itself. That is the spiritual teacher, mentor, guru, master. He or she will indeed be your mirror and many other things too but he or she is the presence of the divine in your life experienced objectively as long as needed until you transcend the boundaries of inner and outer, here and there, self and other, and realize you Self.

Devotion (to the spiritual master) becomes the purest, quickest, and simplest way to realize the nature of our mind and all things. As we progress in it, the process reveals itself as wonderfully interdependent: We, from our side, try continually to generate devotion; the devotion we arouse itself generates glimpses of the nature of mind, and these glimpses only enhance and deepen our devotion to the master who is inspiring us. So in the end devotion springs out of wisdom: devotion and the living experience of the nature of mind becomes inseparable, and inspire one another. – Sogyal Rinpoche

Sogyal Rinpoche speaks of the fast lane of spirituality – devotion. He is right, but let us not forget that some of us tend toward the other means to realization. The three main centers of the body – mental, emotional, physical – reflect these other means.

### If you went to live in the Himalayas and everyone was lovely there, I'm sure it would be fairly easy to be a spiritual master. – Marianne Williamson

Not a new idea from Williamson and not an idea without merit. However, what this really points to and emphasizes is the need to work on a thorough psychological basis for spiritual realization. Many of us may have the experience of great peace and tranquilly on retreat, in the monastery, or the Himalayas. Nothing wrong with this at all. But many of us also experience the atrophy and absence of such peace and tranquility when, subject to time and our re-engagement with secular life, these positive states disappear. When we are subject to fleeting forms our consciousness is fleeting; when we are subject to permanence, transcendence then consciousness is permanent. It is a matter of practice and application, consistent returning to disciplined practice and effort, willingly and joyfully for as long as it takes. Remembering Krishnanmurti's advice above (and I paraphrase) spiritual practice is both a means and an end.

#### What really pleases the Spiritual Master is our intent and the quality of our character. – Radhanath Swami

In our dual western mind this kind of eastern sentiment always sits badly. But the true meaning of this is that to satiate our spiritual hunger and thirst for the divine the guru who is inner and reflected back to us via the presence of the spiritual teacher in the world is fulfilled in our inner being aligning itself to Truth, and realizing ourself in Consciousness. The character here is not the character of human psychology but rather the true self, the spiritual self, that Self which is continuous with all others, that is not separate or divided from All and Everything. Therefore to have single-minded intent and transcendent quality of our inner being brings joy to the Divine.

#### I always say, don't be a Christian, be Christ-like. Don't be a Muslim, be Mohammed-like. Be Buddha-like. Emulate these great spiritual Masters and what they were teaching. – Wayne Dyer

This unoriginal piece of advice simply points to the fact that spirituality cannot be organized. When it does, it becomes religion... or merely another institution in the societal, political machinery of mass conditioning through fear-mongering. Be Christ-like etc. has also come to be suspect today. Yes it refers us to the timeless aspect of the Master, impersonal in manifestation as he might be. But today we live in a new era, the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and as I have endlessly tried to point out those religions that have sought to inform us of spiritual wisdom and which stand as a backdrop to our spiritual realization should no longer be accepted either as the word of God or as necessarily examples to follow. To go a little further can we be sure that 2,500 year-old teachings are relevant for us today? If they are relevant then why has the world not listened? Why is the world not a more informed, wise and loving place? Whether they are relevant or not are the world religions worthy of our allegiance? Are they where we should be looking for wisdom, for compassion, for answers to our urgent and timeless questions?

### Sincerity in sadhna and eagerness to serve is the basis of one's relationship with the spiritual master. – Radhanath Swami

Sincere spiritual discipline, or sadhana, closes the gap between ourself and our master, our humanness and our divinity.



~ Richard Harvey, Founder of The Center for Human Awakening ~

### 4. A Retreat Experience, by Michael Luckett

I first came to hear about Richard Harvey and his retreats through a close friend of mine who is also training to be a psychotherapist. Both of us had been harbouring a desire to connect more deeply with our spiritual paths and potentially add a spiritual dimension to our psychotherapy training, and during one of our many conversations on this topic, she recommended a book she had read called "Your Essential Self," by Richard Harvey. She very kindly lent me her copy and I read it from cover to cover in a matter of days. I then ordered Richard's follow-up book "Your Sacred Calling" and devoured that too. At that point, I knew I needed to speak to Richard, so I contacted him by email and spoke to him a couple of times on skype before booking a 5-day retreat in June 2019.

#### **My Retreat Experience**

I flew from Gatwick to Malaga and picked up a hire car to drive the circa 1hr 45 mins to Richard's home just outside of the little mountain village of Cañar, situated on the southern slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains, in an area known as Las Alpujarras. The drive to Cañar was straight forward and thereafter it was a short drive further up the mountain to Richard's home and the retreat accommodation. Within 2 hours of leaving busy Malaga airport and the developments of the Costas, I found myself in the quiet and serene surroundings of this mountain top retreat with amazing views and I felt excited about the week ahead.

Richard greeted me outside the entrance to his home and showed me to my accommodation, "the ruin," that sits just across the way, which means you enjoy your own privacy while not feeling too isolated. The accommodation was just as described on Richard's website and I felt immediately at home, which was such a relief for someone going on their first solo retreat for a week!

By the time I had unpacked my bags and settled in, it was time for my first dinner cooked by Richard's wife, Nicky, and delivered to me on my terrace by their daughter, Lily. And it did not disappoint! Nicky's cooking is fantastic, combining delicious flavours, wholesome organic produce, and that magic ingredient of love that made me nostalgic for my own mother's great cooking. It was a wonderful feeling to know on my first night that I would be so well looked after while I worked with Richard on my retreat.

The next morning, I made myself breakfast from the homemade bread, eggs, cold meats, and fruit provided and then met Richard in the mountain

yurt for my 1<sup>st</sup> therapy session. After recapping on my goals for the week, we got straight down to the process of therapy and developing our working relationship. Very quickly, I fell into a daily rhythm of my morning and early evening therapy sessions in the yurt interspersed with a short walk down to one of the two cafés in Cañar, where I would journal and read for most of the afternoon. Each evening after my 2<sup>nd</sup> therapy session of the day, Lily would deliver my homecooked meal to me on my terrace, which I would usually devour while reading my book. I should stress that this is the routine that I fell into and worked for me. If you come on your own personal retreat, you may choose to enjoy longer walks in the surrounding area or jump in the car and visit some of the other local villages in Las Alpujarras region in the time between therapy sessions each day.





Over the course of the retreat, Richard and I worked on the issues I had asked to focus on and more, as is always the case with therapy! Without wanting to be disrespectful to other therapists I have worked with, I found Richard's approach to be the most dynamic, powerful, and authentic that I have experienced. As per his own website biography, his approach to therapy is based on an authentic meeting and combines the mix of psychological counselling, guidance in exploring the deep unconscious, and spiritual teaching that I was looking for. As a result, I found myself having the breakthroughs I'd been hoping for.

#### Who Is This Personal Retreat For?

I think anyone would benefit hugely from one of Richard's personal retreats. Whether you are looking for psychological counselling, spiritual teaching, or simply precious time away to recharge your batteries in a beautiful, tranquil setting, you won't be disappointed.

Personally, I was drawn to Richard's retreat specifically because of his psycho-spiritual therapeutic approach. I have completed foundation courses in psychodynamic psychotherapy and transactional analysis psychotherapy at respected institutions in London, and while I enjoyed them immensely, I knew I wanted to connect the psychological with a spiritual dimension both for my own personal growth as an individual and as a prospective therapist. Going on this personal retreat and reading Richard's books, "Your Essential Self," "Your Scared Calling", and "Flight of Consciousness," (my personal favorite) have had a big impact on me. Indeed, I may find in time that they changed the course of my life.

#### Conclusion

My personal retreat combined all the things I value: beautiful surroundings, good food, comfortable accommodation, and the opportunity to dialog and work with an experienced, talented therapist and wise human-being on a daily basis without life's usual interruptions. I was a little apprehensive about being there on my own without any other retreat guests, but I didn't feel lonely or isolated for a moment. I felt connected with Richard through our daily work and with his family through Nicky's delicious homecooked food delivered by Lilly and sometimes their friendly dogs, Rabbit, Timba, Bilbo, and Little Fella!

I would certainly do it again either in the same one week format (a 5 day retreat with a day either side for travel) or as part of a longer break with some days on the Spanish coast afterwards to allow extra time to process and relax before returning home.



**Michael Luckett**: started his professional career as an employment solicitor at an international firm in London before moving into legal recruitment in 2004. Since then, he has lived and worked in Hong Kong and set up his own legal recruitment company on his return to the UK in 2013. Michael has also trained to be a personal and executive coach and is currently in training to be a psychotherapist. Michael can be reached via email at <u>michaelluckett@legalspace.co.uk.</u>

### 5. Who Am I?, by Richard Harvey

Here is the story of my Enlightenment Intensive Retreat as told in the introduction to my book The Flight of Consciousness. This event proved to be one of the turning points of significant breakthrough on my psychospiritual journey. I present it here in the hope that it may inform you, clarify for some of you, and inspire. I offer it here in fondness and gratitude to the teacher whose profound question "How is Life Fulfilled?" continues to guide me to this day, thirty-five years after I received his timeless guidance and grace. – R.H.

For some days I had been engaged in a communication exercise on a Tantric Buddhist retreat. Long spells of sitting meditation interspersed with slow walking gave way to successive forty-minute sessions in which we would pair up with someone, and sit opposite them, and on the strike of a bell ask, 'Tell me who you are?' When the bell struck again the other would ask the same question.



The question is, of course, maddening. Once you have

exhausted your personal details – statistics, faults, virtues – and your interminable history, you scratch your head. You have been instructed to carry on responding and so you begin to face the knowledge that either there is no answer because no one is there or, if you are truly there, you do not know the answer. The question is a koan – it has no logical answer – it is designed to awaken you.

The teacher was waiting for me in his room. I walked slowly through the meadow towards the French windows that opened directly onto the fields. The warm summer wind cut swathes through the lush green field like a comb brushing a giant's head. I could hear the starlings wheeling low, just above me in the magnificent azure sky. The sun was warm on my skin and there was a refreshing breeze. As I approached, I smelt the musky aroma of incense coming from the room. I sat down and looked into his face, noticing his kind and alert features.

'Tell me who you are?' he said.

Now, when the teacher asked the question, I felt a fork in the road open up in my consciousness. My mind focused on a very clear and definite choice. I could trot out the same old, tired, unconvincing and dead material from the past, interspersed with a few remarks designed to win approval and



make him think well of me and the progress I had made on my spiritual quest. All of this was well known to me. Alternatively, I could take a leap into the unknown, abandon the usual parameters and safety settings and simply not know. It felt life threatening and yet strangely familiar. I had, after all, been avoiding this moment all of my life. And here was my opportunity...

I do not know how it happened. I do not know what I said or for how long I spoke. I dimly remember seeing a bird flying by and the deep blue sky framed in the window. I remember not feeling separate from the bird, the

sky or the teacher. My awareness flew with that of the bird... I remember feeling at one with existence... the self in me dissolved and I was released... I flew and I soared... I knew nothing and everything... I was consciousness flying in total freedom.

When I stopped speaking the teacher looked at me and said, 'Now you are teaching me'. We smiled at each other. He gave me a new question and I left to return to the group, who were sitting in pairs engaged in the communication exercise.

As I returned, I can remember my old self returning, beginning to take hold again, pulling me out of the glorious feeling of oneness with all things. I started to relish the achievement, the graduation to the new question. Just after I sat down, the bell rang out. I leaned forward and said proudly to my partner, 'I have a new question', and promptly found that I had forgotten it – at least, it was not so much that I had forgotten it, but more that the words were 'swimming' inside me and I was not able to pin them down nor arrange them into what felt like the right order to reflect their meaning. I approached the teacher, who had returned and was sitting overseeing the group.

'Would you tell me my new question again?' I asked him.

'Existence is only now. What is it?' he replied. As I was returning to my seat he called to me. I turned. His demeanor was a mixture of intense seriousness, light humor and complete detachment. He had recast my question.

'How is life fulfilled?' he said.



~ Richard Harvey, Founder of The Center for Human Awakening ~

### **OTHER ARTICLES:**

### 6. Attention, by Nick Heap

Attention is wonderful to receive and rewarding to give, but there is not much of it around in our busy lives and work. How can we give and have more?

#### What is attention?

You are giving attention when you are concentrating on another person by listening, noticing everything about the person, putting yourself in her or his shoes, imagining how she or he might feel, asking questions that help the other person think *and not thinking about anything else*. You are truly present for the other person.

#### Why is attention important?

#### For the giver

If you give attention, the other person tends to feel safe, valued and to want to talk to you. This helps you understand the other person deeply, so you know what she or he needs and more about what makes the person tick. You build a trusting relationship and a strong connection with the person. With this connection, you can easily create win-win situations. (E.g. you sell a service or product that is just right for the other person and that she is delighted to buy).



#### For the receiver

Just receiving good attention makes people feel good. If someone is interested in you and shows it, you must be worth knowing. When you talk and someone listens, your thoughts become clearer. Attention improves your ability to think. It is that simple.

Good questions can provide you with a new viewpoint that will help you move on and perhaps act powerfully to resolve a problem. Being listened to can help you discover what you need.

It all sounds straightforward. Why is it so rare to get and give good attention?

#### Difficulties for the giver

The main difficulty for the giver is to stop your "inner chatter" and concentrate on the other person. The other person may raise an issue that is interesting or problematic to you. Before you know it, you are thinking about your unproductive relationship with your (boss or partner) rather than listening to her issues with hers, which will certainly not be the same as yours.

In my experience, coping with this is much more important than getting the more mechanical things, like sitting still and not interrupting, right. If you are genuinely interested in another person you will sit still and not interrupt, for example, quite naturally.

#### How to overcome them

If you are to do any significant amount of listening to others and want to give them good attention, it is essential that you have lots of time to be listened to yourself. This is the one good way to understand what it is like to be listened too. (This is much more uncomfortable than people imagine). It is also a good way to think about and deal with your own difficulties, so you don't get too stirred up by other people's difficulties.

You can decide not to be stirred up by other people's problems while you are listening to them. If something happens that is interesting or disturbing, think about it later!

#### Difficulties for the receiver

It can be very difficult to receive love and attention. You feel vulnerable and raw and the more open you become, the more vulnerable you feel. There is often an inner tussle between sticking with the pain you know and facing the pain of learning and changing. Sometimes you don't know if you are making sense even to yourself and that can be disconcerting too.

#### How to overcome them

Test the person who is giving attention by starting with easy things first. Is your listener genuinely interested in you? You can be assertive in the session and ask for what you want and refuse what you don't want. This is very helpful for the giver, who now knows how to help.

#### How to have more attention at work (or home)

#### You can ask for it

A client of mine was feeling ignored. She wanted an occasional half an hour with her boss, where she could talk over her concerns without being interrupted. She asked him for this and got it.

#### You can offer it

You can say to a colleague or contact, "I really don't know what you do or how I can help you, could we have half an hour to talk this through?" These conversations happen a lot between the members of some networks and are very rewarding. They would be equally rewarding inside an organization.

#### You can exchange it

You can ask a colleague to have half an hour each way with you. This means that for half an hour you give attention and the other person receives it and then you reverse roles. This can be intensely rewarding as you learn about giving and receiving attention as well as getting and giving some help.



#### You can share it in meetings

You can take a few minutes each to share your thoughts on a topic while everyone else just listens attentively. This is *magic*. It makes such a difference.

#### You can buy it

There are people like me who sell our attention and the benefits this provides. It is something you can buy like any other service. The only certain way to know if it will be any help to you is to experience a taste.

#### You can teach people to give each other attention

This is probably the most effective long-term solution. People take turns giving each other attention. You build in feedback and the process builds mutual trust and gets better and better. For more on this see <a href="http://bit.ly/ccnstlng">http://bit.ly/ccnstlng</a>



**Nick Heap:** is an independent facilitator of change and learning based in the UK. He listens to people, in organisations and as individuals, and helps them listen to each other. Nick can be contacted via <u>nick@nickheap.co.uk</u> or Skype "nickheap" or via his site <u>http://nickheap.co.uk</u> which also has 300 + other practical developmental ideas. These are all freely available for anyone to access and use without preconditions. Any comments or reactions to this piece would be very welcome.

### 7. Awareness, by Alan Inskip

There is no future and no past Lungs moving slow and steadfast No initial birth nor finality of death Just the In and out of breath

No higher place, no hell Be still, be silent, thoughts dispel No fall from grace, no accent Inhale, exhale, be present

Hear, see, smell, touch & taste But let thoughts be misplaced Sensing, cleansing & freeing find peace by simply being

To be aware of all around Smell the air, touch the ground See the sky, taste the breeze Hear the rustle from the trees

Notice all that our senses convey But hold out of reach, keep at Bay For the clearer the mind The greater the soul unconfined

You can only truly become aware If awareness itself is elsewhere Should you summit this peak You will be granted all that you seek

When the journey is endless and hard As life challenges and bombards Bringing fear, reservation and doubt Just breath, in and out. In and out.

**Alan Inskip**: is 39, happily married to Ellie with 4 children aged 10, 8, 6 and 4. He is a successful entrepreneur, owning his own insurance business, and his hobbies revolve around sport - particularly basketball. Recently he began inner work and rediscovered his love for being creative, particularly writing poetry. Alan can be reached at <u>alaninskip@gmail.com</u>.





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### **SOULFUL SHARINGS:**

### 8. What's New and Upcoming at the Center?

### In the Heart of Life

Support and Shared Reflection on the Inner Journey

#### Four meetings over two months (Sep-Oct 2019) with Richard Harvey

*Richard says*: 'We often hear people ask, "How long does inner work take?" It is a question that supposes an end, but more it speaks to the urgency to not waste a single minute, hour or day in unawareness, in partial living, in unconsciousness. How long the journey takes and whether and how it may end, and where you may find yourself when and if it does, are questions without answers. However, of one thing I am certain. The supportive gathering of likeminded souls, those who are intent on awakening, is indispensable to your personal and spiritual unfolding. When a group comes available to you, ask yourself, "Do I want to grow and develop in the inner realms?" Since you are at one with all of life with all others, beyond prejudice, differences, bias, concealed judgments and latent intolerance of any kind, gathering together with others, learning, sharing, supporting, resonating, developing the capacity for patience, tolerance, compassion, heart listening, receiving and giving is one of the most powerful methods for inner growth there is. So I encourage you to take advantage of this international online gathering, not only for your own personal development, but also as a commitment to the tolerance, unity, and collaboration that is required to bring healing to the human collective.'

This online group conducted over a Zoom conference call is for you if

- You have embarked on your personal inner journey
- You want to deepen your understanding of psychospiritual inner work
- You want to share and explore with others as a practitioner, therapist or counselor for clarification and deepening

Dates: Sep 18; Oct 2, 16, 30, 2019

Times: 16.30-18.30 CET (Central European Time)

For more information and to register visit:

https://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/In-the-Heart-of-Life.html



### 9. Other Center News and Offerings

If you would like to support the philanthropic work of The Center for Human Awakening, you can do so through our *Donation Center*. Your donation will make it possible for either: (a) those people who cannot afford therapy and counseling, but who sincerely need the support, to receive it; or (b) those who cannot afford the tuition fees to enrol in the Center's revolutionary and transformative psycho-spiritual training program called Sacred Attention Therapy Online Training. For more details, and to offer your donation, go to... http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Donations.html

The *Arhat Project* is a residential spiritual community for people seeking personal authenticity and Selfrealization where the processes of personal inner enquiry and transformation are accelerated through a neosacred, engaged schedule and life-style of spiritual discipline and focus and psychological exploration and awakening. Based on the psycho-spiritual approach described in Richard Harvey's book Human Awakening, particularly The Three Stages of Awakening, Arhat is a neo-spiritual living project where personal and spiritual development are intensified and potentized through communal life, group work, lectures and study, meditation, spiritual and sacred practices, and spiritual direction. If you are seriously interested in being a part of a residential community based on Richard Harvey's *Three- Stage Model of Human Awakening*(see http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/interview-stages-

<u>awakening.html</u>and <u>http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/human-awakening.html</u>) and you find yourself in the first, or possibly the second, stage of this model and you would be inspired and enthusiastic about establishing a core group for a spiritual community where personal and spiritual development is accelerated, intensified and potentized in a semi-monastic, secular structure of scheduled tasks and spiritual discipline, then please write via our contact page at <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Contact-Us.html</u>.

*Personal Retreats* for personal and spiritual growth are offered through the Founder's spiritual center, Cortijo Llano de Manzano. Whether you are looking at a specific issue or exploring your life's purpose, a personal retreat allows you the time and space for personal exploration, clarity and relaxation, personal growth, deepening insights, and replenishment. A retreat gives you the opportunity to withdraw and turn inward, away from the world of ordinary everyday demands, pressures and responsibilities. On retreat you make time for issues that are calling to you from your inner world, to relax, recuperate and refresh yourself spiritually, physically, energetically, mentally and emotionally. Your retreat can be self-directed, or themed with guidance, skillful reflection and encouragement from our Founder. Retreats are available to individuals and couples. For more information about the retreats, please visit <a href="http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Retreats.html">http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Retreats.html</a>.

Have you considered becoming a *Friend of the Center*? Friends of The Center for Human Awakening come from all walks of life. Some friends are psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, complementary and alternative medical practitioners and therapists, counselors, coaches, healers, spiritual guides, spiritual teachers, students of spiritual and psychological growth and development, and more. What all these Friends have in common is a heart-and-soul-felt support and interest in the teachings and practice of The Center for Human Awakening. See the benefits of becoming a Friend at <a href="http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Friends.html">http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Friends.html</a>.

*The Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) Project* is a rare, unique and exciting project will produce a body of writing that explores the psycho-spiritual psychotherapy of Richard Harvey through his 3-stage model of human

awakening. The resultant published works will endeavor to guide readers through Richard Harvey's model with practical exercises, examples and theory. The work will almost certainly be illustrated by personal material that arises in the process of experientially learning about Richard's Sacred Attention Therapy through this collaborative venture. For more information about the SAT project, please visit <a href="http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/About-Research.html">http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/About-Research.html</a>.

There is a plethora of *Resources* available to you on the Center website, many of them free. You can enjoy articles, books, integrated bundles of teaching aids, videos, and more. Begin your exploration of these resources at <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Community.html</u>.

*Volunteer opportunities* abound at The Center for Human Awakening. If you would like to volunteer for one of the opportunities below, or if you think of other ways you would like to share your gifts and talents with the Center, please email us at <u>info@centerforhumanawakening.com</u>.

- Web Developer (WordPress) to Customize BLOG
- Crowdfunding Researcher and/or Coordinator
- Hosts for Traveling Satsang
- Social media promoters
- Transcribers
- Writers
- Editors
- Mock therapy clients

For more information about the above volunteer opportunities, please visit <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Volunteer.html</u>.

*Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) Practitioners* can work with you through the three stages of human awakening. See the list of SAT Therapists that are available to work with you on your journey of self-discovery, transformation into authenticity, and union with the source of consciousness. Visit <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/SAT-Therapists.html</u> for all the details.

Richard Harvey's *BLOGs and VLOGs* are posted weekly. Both the BLOG and VIDEO BLOG are spontaneous, short pieces. The material is written or recorded in response to questions, remarks, and responses on spiritual matters that Richard has received or read during the week, interactions in the Sacred Attention Therapy Study Group, or simple inspiration with a feeling for the moment's revelation.

*Read the BLOG at* <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/BLOG.html</u>. *View the VLOG at* <u>http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Video-BLOG.html</u>.

The *Study Group* brings together psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychologists, complementary and alternative medical practitioners and therapists, counselors, coaches, healers, spiritual guides, spiritual teachers, students of

spiritual and psychological growth and development, and more. We gather on our LinkedIn and Facebook Groups to build a community of SAT students and practitioners; provide a forum for raising awareness of SAT and for studying and practicing SAT; and facilitate the journey of self-discovery, transformation into authenticity, and union with the source of consciousness. The Study Group moderator posts questions and readings on Monday, Wednesday and Friday each week. For more information about the SAT Study Group, and to sign up, visit <a href="http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Study-Group.html">http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Study-Group.html</a>.

*Please tell others about The Center for Human Awakening*; please tell your friends, your therapists, your relatives, and any forward, progressive thinking people who could benefit from this work. In Richard Harvey's newest book<sup>4</sup> he states the case for us being "custodians of the future" in a world that is being debased as it loses touch with the genuine sacred-spiritual truths and ceremonies. If we do not act in all the ways that our true nature dictates we will become complicit in the destruction of the human consciousness of the inner worlds, responsible in whatever way for the degradation of the outer world, and ignorant and helpless in the insight that there is truly no separation between the inner and the outer, between us and them, and between the human and the divine. Thank you for being with us!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Your Sacred Calling: Awakening the Soul to A Spiritual Life in the 21st Century, now published by Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd.

Purchase in US dollars (\$) here... <u>https://www.amazon.com/Your-Sacred-Calling-Awakening-</u> Spiritual/dp/1786129035/ref=sr\_1\_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1493308719&sr=1-1&keywords=Your+sacred+calling

Purchase in British pounds (£) here... <u>https://www.amazon.co.uk/Your-Sacred-Calling-Awakening-</u> Spiritual/dp/1786129035/ref=sr 1 1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1493308719&sr=1-1&keywords=Your+sacred+calling

### 10. Links

#### WEBSITES

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/ http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK https://www.facebook.com/CenterforHumanAwakening/

LINKEDIN https://www.linkedin.com/in/human-awakening-228506131

TWITTER https://twitter.com/CenterforAwaken

YOUTUBE CHANNEL http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD pJVba LktmEzfuc51kfQ

#### BOOKS

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Books.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/books/ http://www.amazon.com/-/e/B004WC4YQI http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-flight-of-consciousness-richardharvey/1004783095?ean=9781853981418

#### ARTICLES

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Articles.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/articles/ http://ezinearticles.com/?expert=Richard G Harvey http://www.buzzle.com/authors.asp?author=51337 http://www.articlesbase.com/authors/richard-harvey/835688

#### LECTURES

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Lectures.html

#### VIDEO TALKS

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Videos.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/video-talks.html

#### STUDY GROUP

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Study-Group.html

#### BLOG

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/BLOG.html

#### VIDEO BLOG (VLOG)

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Video-BLOG.html

#### RETREATS

http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/retreats.php

#### INDIVIDUAL AND COUPLES THERAPY

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/About-Us.html http://www.Centerforhumanawakening.com/SAT-Therapists.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/individual-therapy.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/couples-counseling.html

#### PRACTITIONERS' SUPERVISION

http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/practitioner-supervision.html

#### MUSIC

http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/richard-harvey-music.html

#### DONATIONS

http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Donations.html http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/offer-support.html

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