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FROM THE EDITOR'S HEART

Our theme for this edition of *The Eyes of the Golden Hall* is '*Freedom*.' We are blessed to offer you five themed articles in this newsletter. Our Founder, Richard Harvey, offers two articles that are adapted from the transcript of a talk called 'Absolute Freedom' previously published in his e-book *Dharma Sky*. The first of Richard's two articles is titled 'Authentic Being and Real Freedom;' Richard's second article is titled 'Human Condition and Sacred Binding.'

I offer two articles for this newsletter. The first is an honest look at what we often refer to as freedom; I call it "Freedom As False Autonomy." My second contribution echoes Richard Harvey's message in 'Authentic Being and Real Freedom' to share what I think true/real freedom is. I called the article 'Freedom As A Symbol of Love.'

We are so grateful to have a wonderful, themed contribution from PhDr. Mira Reiss. Mira writes about the paradox of striving and wanting freedom. Mira titles her article 'Freedom Is Something We All Crave; Yet We Don't Realize We Already Have It.'



Photo Credit: Pexels - Victor Freitas

We continue to be blessed with Michael Richardson-Borne's contributions to our newsletter. Michael shares another one of his poems from his collection of poems called *Two-Headed Monsters: Poems for a New American Dream*.

If you haven't heard about our ongoing Spiritual Seminar Series, *The Novena Teachings: Nine Jewels of Sacred Approach*, please visit this page of our website for details... https://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Spiritual-Seminar-Series.html . The series continues monthly through to December.

The theme for our next newsletter (January 2022) will be 'Compassion.' If you would like to contribute a piece for our January newsletter, write to us at info@centerforhumanawakening.com.

Please take a moment to review the 'Soulful Sharings' at the end of 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 info@centerforhumanawakening.com.

~ Robert Meagher, Editor

THEMED ARTICLES

1. Authentic Being and Real Freedom, by Richard Harvey

The human dilemma

The modern human dilemma is this: in our self-contraction—which is another term for our ego, or false self—we are doomed inevitably to suffer from a self-inflicted restlessness. Rather like being able to see Shangri-la or paradise through a thick glass screen, we are condemned to throwing ourselves at it in an attempt to reach the desired place where we would like to be. The activity of searching is like throwing ourselves against the glass, resulting in frustration, futility, despair, disappointment, pointlessness, and defeat. We must stop long enough to see that it can never be any other way while we are applying effort to attaining something beyond the screen which only *appears* to be there. When examined clearly, the screen is found to be merely a projection, not the real thing. Like the reflection of the moon in the lake, however many times we dive into the lake and swim toward the moon, we will never reach it. Neither will we *ever* reach our true state while we try to reach or gain truth from a point of view of lack and unreality.

The whole absurd charade can only mean one thing, apart from demonstrating human ignorance, and that is that we are the saboteur of our own efforts. Here we penetrate into the heart of the ego-processes. The ego, or false self, seeks to reinforce and preserve itself *at any cost*. And that cost is your life essence, your core reality, bliss, and joy. The price is your life, yet unconsciously you suffer, without understanding that it is you yourself who enslaves you to the pattern of suffering.

Consequently, all psychological, spiritual, traditional and modern, developmental and progressive schools and methods of inner and outer enquiry tend to be flawed. For about two thousand years humanity has been living under the all-pervading influence of romanticism, adventure, and questing. From the Arthurian legends in Europe to the *Ramayana* in India the



Photo Credit: Pexels - Brett Jordan

predominant, world, cultural understanding about inner discovery, self-understanding, and self-knowledge has been based on a journey-adventure-questing model; a paradigm that, in spite of being almost universally unsuccessful, we remain attached to. We may be attached to it out of ignorance or we may be attached to it out of our unconscious urge toward self-sabotage. Whatever the reason, I would like to propose that we embrace a new mythology and adhere to a more informed, intelligent (in the fullest sense of that word), and profoundly wise means of attaining the precious depths of wisdom, beauty, creativity, and devotion that is inherent in each and every individual human being... and the individual is intrinsically free.

But what *is* freedom? Today in the modern world we have freedom. But do we? Are people free? If they are not, how come they are not?

Do you want to be free? No one is going to say they prefer being bound, being limited, restricted, and constrained to being free, are they? Yet however free we apparently are today, are we *really* free?

What is freedom?

If freedom means having things, material things, if it means possessing, owning, then perhaps we are free. Similarly, if it means doing and achieving, our freedom to choose, then perhaps we are free. Politically, for example in Europe and the USA, we appear to be freer than people, say, in Iran or Afghanistan.

Politically and sociologically we play with the meaning of freedom with definition and comparison. One commentator, for example, argues that American slaves of the 19th century were freer than today's American taxpayer. Others argue for the rights of women or the employment rights of children in the Third World. Still others consider freedom means allowing mistakes or the right to individual choice or the liberty to allow freedom to those we despise.

Is freedom the right to make our own decisions, to think our own thoughts, to speak out without fear; the ability to move where we wish, reside where we wish, and live how we want to? And what about financial freedom, sexual freedom, emotional freedom, and mental freedom?



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Do any of these define freedom itself? What does it means to be truly free? Freedom itself seems to be elusive.

You are hardly free...

In fact we are hardy free at all. In even the simplest, most straightforward of ways we are less than free, completely un-free, and totally unconscious of it.

I read these words by one contemporary spiritual teacher, he said, "I was used to miracles the day I lived and now I begin my days myself." I

Do you begin your days yourself? It seems so obvious, doesn't it? Who begins my day? I do. But do you?

I observed someone I know well recently at the very beginning of her day. She launched into an end-gaining forward motion, meeting demands, responding to others' needs with noise, interaction, and bedlam all around. Later, she asked me why I thought she was always so tired. I said, 'Please try to listen to me carefully. The way you start your day is like our solar system. In my house we have solar electricity. If you use solar power for your domestic needs, one of the golden rules is to try to top your system up at the beginning of each day. If you can refrain from using too much electricity right at the beginning of each day, the batteries will fill up with power and you stand a good chance of having abundant electricity for your needs, throughout the whole day. Now, imagine you get up and you plug in a hairdryer, an electric toaster, and a power tool. Even if you only use these devices for ten or fifteen minutes you will bring your batteries to such a low state that they may struggle and never achieve

¹ Ruchira Avatar Adi Da Samraj, Crazy Da Must Sing, Inclined to His Weaker Side, Dawn Horse Press 2002.

maximum load through the day. The solar system becomes "tired," drained, because of how it started its day and that is how it is for you. You throw yourself into a forward motion of achievement, demands, and struggle from the second you rise out of bed and so you are sapped of energy before you start. You must start the day quietly, sensitively, aligning your energies and becoming aware of your feeling, emotional, mental, physical, and energetic state, and bring all this into balance. Some minutes spent at the beginning of the day in silent contemplation, physical, emotional, and mental peace to achieve balance and harmony throughout your body, mind, and heart—this is the right way to begin.'

I also know her mother and I could see that the pattern she unconsciously enacted and conformed to is the same pattern her mother is imprisoned in. So this is an example of someone who, if you asked her, "Do you begin your day yourself?" she would say, "Of course I do, who else?" But with a little examination and self-observation, the true answer is, "No, I do not begin my days myself. My mother begins my days." Totally un-free and completely unconscious of it.

You are not free to be yourself

Watch yourself and watch others. Use your awareness and your powers of observation on yourself and others. For example, watch social interactions; how you greet and leave another person. Now try this: make the basic assumption that your behavior is imitative. For example, you say goodbye *in character*, like an actor in a movie or like someone you admire. Maybe you don't even admire them, but they have provided a form, a structure, an act to follow, emulate, imitate. And this is better than not knowing what to do, what might be acceptable, what might be the "right" way to behave.

Isn't it the same when you meet someone? You direct yourself in an emotional stranglehold of how best to keep them at your required distance—whatever that may be—to manipulate them and dominate them and maintain your separateness. Although it is commonplace to the point of being ubiquitous, meeting another and manipulating and dominating him or her with your (usually unconscious) behavior is an idea that we have a lot of resistance to until we look and see it all clearly.

You are not free to be yourself. You are terrified to leave it all to chance. You are rehearsing how to meet someone before you arrive and before you leave them you have already gone over your act to check that it's alright, all good, that it makes the desired impression. If you didn't rehearse your act, you may be transparent, unprepared, and anything could happen! The other might see right through you.

The courage to be free

So you are not free, absolutely not! You are imprisoned in expectation, assumption, conformity, defensiveness, and thinly-veiled aggression. How can you get out of all of that? How can you call that free?



Photo Credit: Pexels - Dmitriy Ganin

To see all this clearly, you simple have to stay awake. Otherwise you will contradict what I am telling you, because it sounds all so ridiculous. But just stay awake. When you do and you watch yourself, eventually you will be able to resist conformism, because everyone else is really asleep. You must be brave if you want to be free, because it takes great courage to be free, liberated, and not require anyone's approval. You must be willing to be different, to separate yourself from the crowd, to resist the magical sleep of normality and conformity, to be real and true to yourself.

Relatively free and absolutely free

There are in truth three kinds of freedom:

First, there is the freedom to enquire, the freedom to decide to look inside, to challenge yourself, to grow, to nurture self-love in order to awaken from the spell of conditioning, historical emotional-behavioral patterns, and restrictive, guiding life-statements.²

Then there is the freedom to expand, to love, and feel the world, to experience compassion, to see further than your own satisfaction. The freedom to live from the heart, from soul, from your essence, the core of life contained in us and in all others from where you are inevitably and fundamentally connected with all other beings, Nature, Truth³, and with Life itself.

Finally, there is absolute freedom: freedom that is unassailable, that is inarguable, that pertains to no opposite whatsoever, freedom that is your natural right, your birthright, the natural state of a full and whole, developed and natural human being. This freedom cannot be taken away, cannot be removed, adapted, tainted, or touched by anyone else and it is yours for the taking.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Oliver Sjöstrom

Within the relative milieu of space and time, we are relatively free, within ego-bounds. For example we are not in prison, not in a country where laws and oppression mean that we cannot speak and act relatively openly and freely. But you are so much more than an egoic personality acting within the confines of time and space.

Withdraw inside and realize that you are emptiness, you are heart and whole, awareness, consciousness—the full state of being in which forms arise and fall, are born and die, swell and diminish. Everything does this: emotions,

² Life-statements are unconscious guiding assumptions about life originating in early childhood experience that are inevitably limiting and compromising to our authentic self.

³ The use of the uppercase denotes an absolute as opposed to a relative term. The defining aspect of an absolute term is that it has no opposite whereas a relative term is only understood in relation to its opposite. So, for example, love has its opposites in hate or fear, whereas Love has no opposite. Sometimes I have made exceptions where a word is made obvious by description—for example, absolute freedom, since it is self-explanatory.

conditions, good and bad fortune, your daily disposition. But what remains constant amid all of this, in its very center, that enables you to see and be aware of these changing conditions? This is the absolute being that you really are.

Absolute freedom, devotion and love

Absolute freedom is within. It cannot be taken away. It can be reached in one of two ways: through awareness or through devotion. Devotion is the way of love, the way of losing yourself in what is real and elative, joyful, celebratory. Devotional practice has no discernment, no intellectual objection, no intellect at all. It is irrational joy, full of life. In devotion you cast yourself into the flow of existence with abandon.

Devotion is the path of love taken to the nth degree, to the extreme. All things are the Beloved who is a gateway, a doorway into divine love through devotion. Everything begins and ends with love. That includes freedom. Remember the three freedoms. The first is the freedom to be aware, to transcend the individual character. The second is the freedom to grow in heart, to feel the world, and to practice loving. But the third is a quantum leap

into another dimension, the dimension of the absolute where there are no opposites, only permanent, natural, human, and spiritual conditions of the manifest heart; Truth, Love, Wisdom, Peace, Bliss, and Reality in all its forms. The way to it is through love, devotion, and surrender. It begins with awareness, because, as I said, everything begins with love and awareness is attention and attention is the expression of love. We always attend to that which we love. So awareness is where it all starts and awareness is love in action!

Exercise: Consider your life...

So to end the talk today, I would like you to make yourself comfortable, take two or three deep breaths, and become relaxed and aware.

For a few minutes consider your life just as it is, now, today, in this moment: the circumstances of your life, relationships, work or profession, your occupations, creativity, recreation, what is important to you, your material conditions, where you live, how you spend your days, status, prestige... everything.

Now *progress* this, progress your life forward five, ten, twenty, twenty-five, thirty years ahead... then take it all the way... as it appears to you to unfold, based on the present conditions, the present way you are living, your present orientation. Take it all the way to your death...



Photo Credit: Pexels - Andrew

Now imagine yourself looking back on it all at the end of your life ... how do you feel? Do you have any regrets? Are you pleased with how you have lived?

[This article is adapted from the transcript of a talk called **Absolute Freedom** published in Dharma Sky. See https://www.therapyandspirituality.com/books/dharma-sky.html]



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

2. Freedom As False Autonomy, by Robert Meagher

It is cycling season again in my city, and I relish every opportunity I can to get out for my day-long bike rides. I have written about this joy before. I get up about 4:30am, have my breakfast, pack my panier bags with food and water for the day, and head out for an adventure.

My trips will often take me to and through villages and towns. I will almost always visit forests, hills, lakes and rivers along the way. Many times, I will have the joy of cycling beside vast farmer's fields. There is never any shortage of splendid scenery to captivate and caress the senses.

I am also blessed to encounter much wildlife. Birds and water fowl of all kinds, deer, bears, fox, reptiles, squirrels, chipmunks, racoons,...just to name a few. I am never alone. There is always someone or something that accompanies me on the ride.

There is always a great sense of freedom I experience on these day trips. To get out in nature, peddling to my heart's content, is often blissful for me. I forget about the world, my



Photo Credit: Pexels - Daniel Frank

life as I experience it, leave my self-imposed worries behind and immerse myself in a hypnotic-like, almost poetic expression of my physical being. The hotter and more humid it is, the better! I have never met a hot and humid day I have not adored!

This freedom I mention above is an interesting experience. This freedom is peaceful and even blissful. It is full of joy. It is rapturous at times. This freedom will often give me a sense of being carried away to another time and space. I can easily lose track of time, especially if it's a gloriously-sunny-and-hot day. But is this freedom?

The freedom I speak of above is a freedom born out of a sense of self that is tethered to this world. It is a freedom born out of a sense of separateness (from existence). It is a freedom that thinks it is autonomous and self-sufficient. But this autonomy is a false autonomy.

The freedom I experience on my bicycle day trips is rooted in my sense of me doing something and experiencing something. The experience always brings awareness of another thing or body, in relation or comparison to me.

There is another freedom I aspire to. This other freedom is a true freedom. It is a freedom from the very bindings that gives me the freedom-as-false-autonomy experience described above. This true freedom is freedom from my mind.

True freedom for me is an absence of a sense of self. With no sense of something or someone separate and distinct from anything or anyone else, I experience 'being' instead of 'doing'. My bicycle trips are 'doing' in the very real sense, with the occasional glimpse of being. When I lose track of time on my bicycle trips, I am only just beginning to enter a state of being.

Freedom from my mind allows me to look on everything and everyone with equanimity. There are no judgements. There is not even any perception. There is total acceptance of everything and everyone—of all that is. That is freedom!



Robert Meagher: is Co-Founder of The Center for Human Awakening. Robert has been ordained as an Interfaith Minister and Certified as a SAT Therapist (Level 1 and Level 2).

3. Freedom Is Something We All Crave; Yet We Don't Realize That We Already Have It, by Mira Reiss

We talk about freedom, demand freedom, and struggle for freedom. Some even fight for freedom. We define freedom on different levels. The Oxford Dictionary tells us freedom is:

- the power of self-determination attributed to the will; the quality of being independent of fate or necessity.
- the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.

For our purposes, I refer to the second definition, the state of being imprisoned or enslaved. Genuine freedom means being free from our egos, from our dualistic minds, which label everything as good or bad.

We are talking about labeling and clinging to a reality we create in our minds. It is an illusion. We build a cage around ourselves and then feel isolated from others. We dwell in our egos and have forgotten our reality. We need to learn to eliminate dualism and allow what is to simply be.

You already have complete freedom. You don't realize it, and when you are told, you don't believe it. Then you try to find it beyond yourself. You look here and there for it when it is with you all the time. Sometimes when you cannot find the freedom you may blame others, the world, or your situation. That is when you are acting as a slave to the limitations you have placed on yourself. You are always the only creator and director of your life.

My Dzogchen teacher, Choghyal Namhkai Norbu, (1) used to say, that we are always walking through our lives with two legs: one leg - "I want it." Second leg - "I don't want it." We crave things we do not have and reject what we have. Then we are unhappy and don't feel free.

When you are ready to make the leap away from ego thinking, from illusion, then it happens!

Now, you are behind your dualistic mind and become the reality of yourself. Your own basic nature is to be free and perfect. You realize that freedom is not something out there. It is right here within yourself.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Elliot Ogbeiwi

Just relax and enjoy the present moment without expectations. There is no struggle with accepting or rejecting anything. Just be in the here and now – no pretense or pushing yourself, simply allowing the momentum to grow to something remarkable. Appreciate what you have. Be grateful for everything. Be aware of the here and now. Be in the flow of what you are. You are truly free.

You are sitting on the shore observing the flow of your mind like the flow of a river. You don't try to identify or change it; you simply allow it to be. Allow your thoughts to fly free like a bird in the sky, leaving no trace behind them. You are the king of your mind, not a slave. You are happy and enjoy every moment. With every breath in and out you release and are free. No ego, no dualistic mind, you are free.

You are much more than your ego, your dualistic mind. You're part of a fantastic universal play. You have an essential role. No ego, no personal pride or sorrows; you are complete and whole. You are a part of the great wholeness. You are One, perfect, and free.

Reconnect to the reality of you and find the freedom waiting. Everything is exactly as it is supposed to be. Do not put obstacles into the flow of universal energy. Don't work to achieve that connection. Just stop.

You put obstacles in your way and stop the flow of the universal energy by working too hard to achieve what is already yours. When you realize that life is a manifestation of your power, you will find unleashed freedom.

An ancient Tibetan statuette illustrates this. It has seven openings, two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, and a mouth. In the dark, this statuette pours forth light and lights up the darkness. It is the same for you. You manifest from the inside out into the world your reality. There is only oneness, and all is connected. When you reach this understanding and live in your lives, then you will have freedom. You are free. You are all that you are meant to be.

Notes: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Namkhai Norbu



PhDr. Mira Reiss: is a Thought Leader, Expert in life solutions, empowering her clients to be more enlightened in their life to create better success in their business and personal life. She is a Founder of the online Academy of Holistic Freedom. Mira works with her clients to balance their energetic system, using her knowledge and expertise in Eastern Wisdom (Dzogchen -Total Perfection, Chinese Metaphysics, and Mongolian Stones) coupled with her scientific background in Sociology. It gives her the ability to dig deeper into the personality of her clients, supporting them to find more personal power and control in their life, to walk from victim to being the director of their future, to their success. She is not only empowering them to use their unique magic in their life but to make the world a better place. Mira's mission is to assist her clients in connecting with their inner wisdom where MIRAcles are possible. And then they can enjoy peace of mind, happiness, and joyful abundance. Mira can be reached by email (coachmirall@gmail.com) or through her website (https://linktr.ee/mirareiss).

4. Human Condition and Sacred Binding, by Richard Harvey

Bound

The human condition is one of being bound. But the trick, the really crucial matter, is to detect precisely what you are bound to and what you are not bound to. You may mostly consider that relationships, financial constraints, needs, desires, politics, and society are your bindings. And you are right, if you are centered in the life of the world, then of course the world with all its bindings will bind you. But you have invited it. If you pitch yourself into the rapids in a boat, don't be surprised if you start speeding down the white waters and feel out of control—after all, you got into the boat! Enter the world on its own terms and you tend to have to abide by its rules.

So you give yourself to the world, to its physicality, its pleasures, its materialism, and its individualism. Sometimes, like Faust, you even give or sell your soul too. Everything inside becomes empty, everything appears to be outside, external, without and the outward fullness is matched only by the internal emptiness.

If you are of an inner nature, if you have had transcendent experience, if you have an intuition of God, if your instincts told you when you were young that there was more than this changing world of appearances, then you are an impersonal, immaterial person, someone with an inclination toward the spiritual. This of course is not enough, not by any means. Many sad people spend their last days, their last hours, regretting how they lived, how they have spent their days (this is why I offered the exercise of looking back at your life and seeing how you lived at the end of the last lecture-seminar). It is not enough to have spiritual tendencies; you must apply yourself, make life decisions, adhere to your inner commitment, persist, practice—above all *practice* spiritually.

You know this. You know it, but you may still withhold yourself from the primary spiritual practices of awareness and devotion, of awareness that through feeling the world, experiencing the world to the nth degree, you rise above the world, above desire and need and fear and sadness and longing, and release yourself from the binding of *longing for experience*. Experience belongs to the realms of space and time



Photo Credit: Pexels - Khoa Võ

in the relative world: the world of day and night, right and wrong, good and evil. It is the junior school of humanity where people need and judge, criticize and expect, hate and seek, and lie and conceal, because they are basically ashamed of their humanity, because they have not seen through this world of appearances. Because they are bound and unconscious, their experiences in this world are not filled with light.

There is of course another binding and that binding is a welcome one. It is the binding of the *religio*, the yoke or joining of yoga. Here I am evoking the etymological roots of two familiar words—religion and yoga. Both terms speak of the way in which we are given life in order to transcend it through persistence and spiritual discipline. Religio comes from the Latin meaning to go through again, also respect for the sacred, as well as binding, as in placing an obligation. Yoga is similar; it means yoking or union; to join together as one. Both eastern and western terms hold the secret to our freedom and liberation and how to accomplish it. We are bound to life in order to make it sacred. We have an obligation to make life sacred, to accept the yoke, to go through it again and again, until we have achieved sacred union with the divine. In other words we are bound to life in order to become enlightened and in that lies your absolute freedom, your liberation and Self-realization, your union with Reality itself.

Eternity in time

The instant we are enlightened, we are free and we laugh, feeling profoundly the humorousness of the truth that we were *never other than this*.

In "Fukanzazenji" Zen Master Dogen writes:

This body is as transient as dew on the grass, life passes as swiftly as a flash of lightning, quickly the body passes away, in a moment life is gone.

Your life is but an instant, a moment, a fleck of dust already blowing away, a momentary shard of light, a droplet temporarily separated from the waterfall to which it is returning. When we were young, we thought we had all the time in the world. When we "grew up," we still wished we had all the time in the world. As we get older, we forget that we ever thought it, as we confront the end of time and the beginning of eternity. But eternity is in each moment, if we only understand which way to turn, which way to be led, and how to live.

Student, disciple, or devotee?

The student of spirituality can wait, learn, practice, try things out, fail and try again, fail and try again. The disciple of spirituality can allow himself or herself to be led repeatedly, following, surrendering, loving, hoping, falling into despair, but returning and returning. But the devotee! The devotee has no time, no motivation, no hope, no wishes, no intention, nothing to attain, not even the exalted goal of enlightenment, for the devotee is absolutely free in every moment.

Put simply, as long as you are distracted, fascinated by the world, you are incapable of knowing yourself. If you truly wish to know yourself, turn your attention away from the world and look within.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Evelina Zhu

You must understand the direction you need to go in and it is not sequential, not linear. It is not of this world, the world of day and night, early and late. If you aspire to devotion, the direction you seek is through, in, down, up, before, out. It is any way but here, bound by the world. The devotee is not bound, for she has used the bindings to free herself, to liberate herself from suffering, to rise above it, through awareness, love, devotion, and finally surrender to the presence of the Divine in this life, in the everyday life. So everything is a meditation, a celebration,

a dedication, a consecration to God, to Love, to Divinity. For the devotee, there's nothing else, because *everything* is God, Love, Divine.

Practicing devotion

Because there is nothing else, anything may be a part of a devotional spiritual practice. You simply dedicate it consciously to the Divine. For example, motherhood. Being a mother is a complex, demanding, emotional, physical, spiritual task, a huge challenge, a fabulous opportunity. It is almost impossible to get it right; all that is certain is that you have to make decisions and consider yours and another's well-being, rise to the challenge of at times impossible demands, over and over again. A man cannot understand this challenge; he cannot even conceive of it. His challenges as a parent are altogether different. Just watch, notice, and see how different it is for you or your friends. The fatherhood issues are different, in some ways subtly and in other ways extremely, grossly different. In spite of the great challenge of fatherhood, a man needs the help of a *male* spiritual teacher (not necessarily a man, but a woman with a male approach sometimes) to show him the edges of experience, the governing limitations of belief and freedom.

Fritz Peters was a young man in Gurdjieff's spiritual community and, fatherless, he gravitated toward the master, Gurdjieff, as not only a spiritual teacher, but as the consistent, guiding father-figure he had always lacked. In the community he had been given the job of cutting the grass over several fields and one day he met Gurdjieff after he had completed his work. Proud of his ability to mow two large fields in a single day, he expected praise and he was given it by Gurdjieff, who then escalated his task by doubling the area he would be expected to cut the next day. Peters's depth of devotion to his guru was so strong that he managed to complete and sustain the nearly impossible task.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Mikhail Nilov

This is like mothering. In a way you could say it is easier for a woman. She receives her lesson biologically, physically, and naturally as a female, whereas the male must seek the lesson, unless he is fortunate to have it given to him first.

Ramakrishna was a wonderful example of devotion in spiritual practice. He was devotion personified. When a woman, a mother, came to him, asking how she could love God, he asked what or who did she love and she answered her baby—that baby then is God, he said. A devotional attitude helps enormously, because mothering can overwhelm you, immerse you in such deep concerns, such intense worries. How can you stay on top if it all and keep your head above water?

The answer comes from a singing teacher I knew in England. When you cannot reach a note, she used to say, aim even higher. Then you will fall short and find the note you were looking for in the first place! Reach higher through devotion, through the depth and intensity of love. Then in whatever worldly endeavor you are engaged, you will feel free and this inner freedom will be consistently present. However hard the challenge, you will know that you are fundamentally free. You will be clearer and more able to make good decisions, to be fully present and committed in your actions to be loving and compassionate. You will draw on an endless resource of love and power in the form of devotion, given back to you a thousandfold.

This holds true in matters of friendship, of wishing to behave and act authentically, and in following your true life path. Whenever courage, decisiveness, or guidance is required there are the fruits of love, the fruits of your devotional practice. How could it be any other way? You are aligned with the Divine.

Dedicated to the Divine

A devotional attitude may be brought to any activity or practice, so long as you consecrate and dedicate it truly to the Divine. In time perhaps, in what the Hindus call the path of *Bhakti*, 4 everything is dedicated to the Divine and a deep fire arises within. Meerabai is the preeminent devotee among many in the Hindu tradition. Her freedom is absolute and her needs simple: she is only happy and content if she can praise God. She wrote:

I am mad with Love
And no one understands my plight
Only the wounded
Understand the agonies of the wounded
When the fire rages in the heart.

Read the wonderful *The Chasm of Fire* by Irina Tweedie for a modern account and understanding of this condition that leads to absolute freedom. Some weeks ago I started my talk "The Feeling Practice of Awareness" with a quote from the poet Rilke:

Go into yourself and see how deep the place is from which your life flows.

Devotional practice may be done, but if you want to find out if you are a devotee follow the advice of Rilke. Everyone has a capacity, a potential, a depth of expansion to fulfill in this life that you can discover by going "into yourself." Whether or not you fulfill it is another matter, but at least you can see, through looking within, the depth of your capacity. Look without judging and it may surprise you. Then live to fulfill that potential and expand into that capacity.

You may be a student, you may be a disciple, you may be a spiritual teacher, or you may be a devotee. Your fulfillment lies in the knowledge that what you are is yourself. Your divine commitment is the spiritual expression of yourself in this incarnation.

Immersed in Unity

The devotee lives beyond thought, beyond forms. There is no object. In this ultimate love you merge wholly with the other, so there is only the Beloved.

This state of unity is, in my teaching, a third stage of awakening event. In the course in January 2013 we will talk in depth about the Three Stages of Awakening. For now, let me give you a simple summary. In the first stage of awakening we face the world as it is—or appears to be—and that world is always composed of three. Because I am separate to you, due to the ego assumptions, there is always I, you, and something in between. For example, I love you, I hate you. In the second stage of awakening there is only two, not three. Because the central realization

⁴ *Bhakti*, the way of love and devotion, directly contrasts with $G\tilde{n}\bar{a}na$, the way of knowledge. The other principal way to *Moksha* (liberation) is *Karma*, the way of action and service.

⁵ "The Feeling Practice of Awareness: Sacred Practices for the 21st Century" was an online course Richard gave on 17 and 24 Nov 2012.

of the second stage is that Love is only present when I am not, we work with our authenticity and heart-centeredness to lessen the ego-forces and create a real relationship with the world, one of care, compassion, truth, and ending suffering in all its forms. The experience of the devotee, however, is to be immersed in unity. There is only one, neither two, nor three. This is the secret of devotion.

I would like to quote from my book *The Flight of Consciousness*:

Live in the world, but do not get lost in it or consumed by it. You are divine—that is your reality. No effort is required—simply realization. You realize your divinity when you surrender to the Self. The Self is always within, always perfect in your heart, both faceless and beyond appearance and, simultaneously, all faces and all appearances. You have adopted a brilliant disguise—it is your "me-ness," your small self, and this must be surrendered to the unconscious forces of the Divine for transformation.

Surrendering your small self, the ego-self finally for transformation in the light of the Divine is the essence of devotion, the goal of devotion, if devotion could be said to have a goal.

So, before we finish for today, let's talk a little bit about how the mind works, because it is the mind that separates. The mind is the organ of the ego and the ego survives through identification, separation, and division; there are always three from the point of view of mind. If you aspire to living your life as a devotee, the mind must be sidelined. To do this, you must understand it first.

How the mind works

Plans, thoughts, worries, intrigue, fantasies... they are delicious and boring, fascinating, seductive, trite and tedious. Look at your mind, follow the mind in its meanderings and you will see precisely how you are bound. It is like a bad TV station; just repeats and more repeats. Why do you think you give it so much attention? You can learn a lot about the inner world of collective humanity by observing the outer world, the world of human creation. What are people doing today? Mostly looking at little screens, big screens, hand-held and desktop screens, screens in the back of car-seats, airplane seats, social media, surfing the net... and all these are extensions of mind.

I went to the Prado art museum in Madrid recently. I saw some wonderful pictures, beautiful art, all once again extensions of the human mind from centuries ago. You can see in the outside what is occupying you on the inside. Now, the tricky part: you have to be honest; you have to own up—at least to yourself—that your mind is sex-obsessed, money-obsessed, full of self-importance, revenge and hate, dross and boredom, or whatever. I promise you one thing: if you pay attention to your mind and its functioning, its interests and fixations, you will be bored within a few days, *maximum*. If you focus intensely, you would be bored within a few hours! You simply have to stay with it long enough to see this repeated programming. The mind tries to interest you in the same old small number of themes and narratives, the same old worries, fears, and hates.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Andrew Neel

You and I are absolutely free

You and I are free, absolutely free. Freedom is a state of mind, an existential condition of being. It is our true nature. When you do not feel free, you have limited, restricted, or constrained yourself in some way, out of some act of mind.

Exercise: How you feel constricted...

Now, if you would like to adopt an alert and relaxed posture, and try this exercise: Close your eyes and go inside... breathe and relax your body and notice what feeling is drawing your attention... drawing your attention, because you need to recognize something. Listen to your inner deeper wisdom, the wisdom of your body... as it reflects the wisdom of your soul...

Now consider how you feel restricted, bound, less than free in your life... pick one—just one—and bring your awareness, your loving attention to it... Perhaps it is to do with relationships... or finances... or home life... or family... or your work... or your health... it may be a particular relationship that draws your attention... how you feel restricted in that relationship... or it may be a specific work issue... Now feel the conditions... feel the specific details and the experience of constraint or restriction... contraction... and hold it there for a few seconds... just stay in the experience...

Now I would like you to breathe and, with *every* breath, feel expansion... expansion in regard to the particular issue of limitation that you have been experiencing here, now...

Later on and at any time during your days when you can, repeat this exercise.



Photo Credit: Pexels - Julia M Cameron

A summary

To end the talk today I will summarize some of what we have learned over the course:

Awareness is love in action and the highest form of love is devotion.

Devotion is unconditional love and devotion is the doorway to surrender.

Passion burns up everything between you and the Divine. There is no distance, there is no distinction, no separation, no division... and devotion and surrender are the way to your Absolute Freedom.

There is no object.

Freedom is seen only in love, through love, and absolute freedom only through devotion, which is overflowing love... and surrender to the Divine.

[This article is adapted from the transcript of a talk called **Absolute Freedom** published in Dharma Sky. See https://www.therapyandspirituality.com/books/dharma-sky.html]



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

5. Freedom As A Symbol of Love, by Robert Meagher

In my previous article, above, I spoke about freedom as false autonomy—it is the illusory freedom we experience most often in this world. I wanted to now write about what may be considered true, authentic freedom. Swami Vivekananda once said "What is then worth having? Mukti, freedom." But what is this Mukti that Vivekananda speaks of?

True freedom, or Mukti, as Vivekananda states it, can mean only one thing—freedom from our thoughts. Vivekananda goes on to teach that freedom is not something we attain. It is not something we can strive for. Freedom is already something we are. If we need to do anything, it is to remove the blockages we have built up around us to prevent our awareness of our inherent, innate freedom.

Vivekananda teaches that "Every idea that we are bound is a delusion." Many other Eastern and non-dualistic teaching speaks of the delusion of our thoughts and that to be free, truly free, we must jettison our thoughts. When it seems like every moment of our day we have a thought, to be free of our thoughts surely is a bridge too far for most.

My thoughts are often rooted in my judgements. I judge constantly. I judge in the blatant sense of the word—the sky is blue, the flower is beautiful, the dog if ugly. I use judgement in a relative sense—yesterday was nicer than today. I use judgement to justify my actions—I'll choose that car because it better suits my lifestyle. These are just a few examples of how I/we use judgement. But when I think about it carefully, judgement pervades almost every instant, every thought of my day.

So often our judgements rear their ugly heads in our relationships. We judge our friends, our colleagues, our lovers, our partners. We simply cannot let people be who they are. We need to impose our view on what they are doing, or



Photo Credit: Pexels - Wings of Freedom

trying to do. Our judgements in the context of relationships often lead to discord and arguments, and often lead us down the path of verbal or, even worse, physical attack.

One non-dualistic teaching I study, A Course in Miracles (ACIM), offers forgiveness as an antidote for our judgements and a ticket to our freedom, Mukti. "When you forgive the world...you will be free." ACIM teaches that the first step toward freedom is to sort out the false from the true. Any judgement we have is false, it is an egoic condition that simply cannot exist. We cannot judge anything because when we judge, we place ourselves in a position/situation that we cannot possible be prepared to do so fairly. I do not have all the information I need to judge fairly. To judge fairly means I would need to know everything about the past that resulted in bringing a situation to manifest in a given moment, and I would also need to know the impact of a given

moment on any conceivable moment in the future. This is simply not possible for me to do. Therefore, I am in no position to judge.

To divest myself of my thoughts, my judgements, is to be truly free. And to be free, I must forgive the world of the thoughts I have laid upon it. If I can do this, there is no greater expression of love. What greater expression of love can there be to accept things and people as they are? To be free is, therefore, a symbol or expression of love.



Robert Meagher: is Co-Founder of The Center for Human Awakening. Robert has been ordained as an Interfaith Minister and Certified as a SAT Therapist (Level 1 and Level 2).

OTHER ARTICLES:

6. Leaf, by Michael Richardson-Borne

NINE WIZ KHALIFA | JAGGI VASUDEV

LEAF

Mary Jane¹ is an American. She says 28 grams² is the weight of the world – she represents the people. She says another leaf³ on their shoulders and they will buckle. They live on the precipice of falling for a rose⁴ or discovering their true nature is a plot twist – where the sky is black and the street lights are yellow⁵ and the smoke is rising⁶ from the source. America – take heed. Don't let the lightness of the weeds⁷ fool you. The gravity is as real as chasing clout.⁸ From Pittsburgh⁹ to Peru they're begging to burn the green¹⁰ gap they found in being on your level¹¹

of being. Uninvited, the patriotic roaches¹² in the garden fight for joint custody of your thoughts. America – the endless competition has taken its toll. Living in the sludge of us versus them has taken its toll. The strain of capital and the ivory tower has taken its toll. The constant cry of deal or no deal has taken flesh they feel pushing them early into the soil. Listen and you will hear the eternal echo.¹³ Squint and you will see the pebbles of wisdom.¹⁴ Quest and you will glean the mystics and mistakes.¹⁵ All signs point to silence the revolution of your narrative, America. The grand event

broadcast on your nightly news is war between an animal and mnemonics. America – it's time to begin the reconstructed outreach to the jaded prison¹⁶ of people you've created. It's time to realize your inner engineering¹⁷ is outdated. To imbue them with oil and coal instead of wind and sunlight is a travesty. Your yoga¹⁸ stretches their hearts into an awkward position. They live where it's paramount to play the permanent pacifier without weakness, America. Let them have an enlightened encounter. Let them tame the mind's circus. Let them smell the flowers on the path of bold justice.

LEAF NOTES

- 1. "Mary Jane" is a slang term used to refer to marijuana. Khalifa is well-known for having a penchant for smoking marijuana.
- 2. A reference to Khalifa's 2014 mixtape titled 28 Grams.
- 3. A marijuana plant features broad leaves, dense buds, and has a short bushy appearance. The marijuana leaf is a global symbol for all who love cannabis and the culture that surrounds it.
- 4. Khalifa began dating model Amber Rose in 2011. They were married in 2013.
- 5. A reference to Khalifa's song Black and Yellow from the Rolling Papers album.
- 6. Marijuana is usually smoked in hand-rolled cigarettes called joints, or blunts which are emptied cigars that have been partly or completely refilled with marijuana.
- 7. "Weed" is a slang term used to refer to marijuana.
- 8. A reference to Khalifa's song No Clout Chasin from the 2009 album.
- 9. Khalifa was a military brat. His frequent moves lead to attending high school at Taylor Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
- 10. "Burning green" is a slang term that refers to smoking marijuana.

- 11. A reference to Khalifa's song On My Level from the Rolling Papers album.
- 12. A roach is slang referring to the remains of a joint or blunt after most of it has been smoked.
- 13. A reference to Vasudev's (popularly known as Sadhguru) book Eternal Echoes: The Sacred Sounds Through the Mystic.
- 14. A reference to Vasudev's book Pebbles of Wisdom.
- 15. A reference to Vasudev's book Of Mystics & Mistakes.
- 16. In 1998, Vasudev began conducting yoga classes for life-term prisoners in Tamil Nadu prisons. These classes are run through Vasudev's organization, the Isha Foundation.
- 17. Isha Yoga's flagship program is "Inner Engineering," which introduces people to simple yoga practices and the Shambhavi Mahamudra.
- 18. Jaggi Vasudev, popularly known as Sadhguru, is an Indian yoga teacher, mystic, and author.



Michael Richardson-Borne: is a transpersonal psychologist and the creator of Applied Awakening and the Path of Non-separation. In 2017, Michael was guided by Richard Harvey and the Center for Human Awakening as he went deeper into his spiritual journey and worked on healing a lingering depression. One of the outcomes of this guidance has been a flourishing of creative works that live at the intersection of contemporary spirituality and Michael's passion for American pop culture. One such work is a collection of poems called *Two-Headed Monsters: Poems for a New American Dream*. The poems tell the story of a dream experienced by a farmer from the American Mid-West. Each vision within the dream is spoken by a "two-headed monster," one head a

well-known spiritual teacher, the other a famous personality within the American pop culture scene. The message from the "monsters" is clear: it's time for America to culturally "level up" by embracing the gift of awakening in society's dominant worldview. Michael can be reached by email at michael@appliedawakening.com or through his website at https://appliedawakening.com/. If you would like to download Michael's Two-Headed Monsters, click on this link... https://appliedawakening.com/two-headed-monsters-pdf/

SOULFUL SHARINGS:

7. What's New and Upcoming at the Center?

If you haven't heard about our ongoing Spiritual Seminar Series, *The Novena Teachings: Nine Jewels of Sacred Approach*, please visit this page of our website for details...

https://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Spiritual-Seminar-Series.html . The series continues monthly through to December.

The theme for our next newsletter (January 2022) will be 'Compassion.' If you would like to contribute a piece for our January newsletter, write to us at info@centerforhumanawakening.com.

8. Other Center News and Offerings

The *Arhat Project* is a residential spiritual community for people seeking personal authenticity and Self-realization where the processes of personal inner enquiry and transformation are accelerated through a neo-sacred, 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-awakening.html and http://www.therapyandspirituality.com/human-awakening.html) 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 http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Contact-Us.html.

Personal Retreats for personal and spiritual growth. 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. For more information about the retreats, please visit http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Retreats.html.

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 http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/About-Research.html.

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

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 info@centerforhumanawakening.com.

- 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 http://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Volunteer.html.

Sacred Attention Therapy (SAT) Practitioners can work with you through the three stages of human awakening. Contact us for a 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. https://www.centerforhumanawakening.com/Contact-Us.html.

The Center's *BLOGs and VLOGs* are posted on a regular basis. 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, interactions in the Sacred Attention Therapy Study Group, or simple inspiration with a feeling for the moment's revelation.

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

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

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 book⁶ he states the case for us being "custodians of the future" in a world that is being debased as it

Purchase in US dollars (\$) here... <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Your-Sacred-Calling-Awakening-Spiritual/dp/1786129035/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1493308719&sr=1-1&keywords=Your+sacred+calling-to-sacred-c

⁶Your Sacred Calling: Awakening the Soul to A Spiritual Life in the 21st Century, now published by Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd.



9. 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

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-richard-

harvey/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.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

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