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I. What is *Prana*?

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer, and my guest this week is Igor Kufayev. I interviewed Igor several months ago and he had a lot to say, and toward the end of the interview, it became apparent that we could actually do a second one in which we answer a lot of questions that were obviously not yet answered. So we invited people to send their questions in, and we've got quite a list here. We are going to go through those in today's interview.

If you want to know Igor's personal story, you might want to listen to his first interview first, as he goes into that in great detail from his boyhood, and his whole spiritual path; we're going to skip that in this one, and just go directly to the questions that have been sent in.

So, welcome Igor and thanks for coming back.

Igor: Thank you, it's a pleasure to be here again Rick.

Rick: It's funny – we got so many comments, “Boy, that guy is really handsome!”

Igor: I know, it's embarrassing, what can I do? I look as neglected as I could, so let's hope it will subside a bit, and divert people's attention to what is the content of the body ...

Rick: Don't worry ... you'll get old and wrinkly soon enough!

Igor: Geez ...

Rick: So, there is kind of a theme that Igor wanted to start with, and that is *prana* and Consciousness. Igor promised me that as much as possible he would answer all of these questions on the basis of his own experience, because anybody can read a lot of books and get fairly conversant with terminology and concepts like this. But Igor's experience is genuine and profound, and I think that to a great extent what he will be saying today has been confirmed or verified for himself in his own experience.

So the first question we want to address is, “What is *prana*?”

Igor: Okay. First of all we have to perhaps adjust the common understanding of that word, which by now has entered the western lexicon. You can find that word in English, French, Italian, German, and Russian languages, untranslated as the Sanskrit intended. However, all these translations fall short or flat, and this is the limitation of all languages, especially when it comes to translating Sanskrit terminology. **NOTE: This is a bit perplexing, as the previous sentence said it was intentionally untranslated from Sanskrit.**

When we say “*prana*,” most people understand it as life force or vital force, and indeed, that is what *prana* is; but that is not all. That is only a fraction, or just a very particular facet of that multi-dimensional – in fact it is an all-dimensional – term, the all-dimensional meaning. In order



to answer that question, I would have to go all the way to the philosophical ramifications of that word, where the word has arisen.

The word itself comes from the root “*pra*” and “*na*” in combination, which means “in constant motion.” A more precise translation means “something which constantly vibrates, something which constantly throbs or moves.” For that reason, *prana* was often associated with *akasha* – ether, space, or indeed the air we breathe - but again, that was only one of the functions of *prana*. That is not *prana* in its full capacity. So what is *prana* then?

When Consciousness in its undifferentiated state completely converged onto itself, when there is no manifestation whatsoever, there is a slight movement in Consciousness. Many and various traditions try to explain it, like the *Upanishads* - as you know yourself that famous line, “I am One, let Me be many.” So the slight desire arises in the core of Consciousness, and that desire, that motivation, that intention then prompts Consciousness to throb within. That original throb is that which gives rise to *prana*.

So essentially speaking, *prana* is not separate from Consciousness. One may find various translations and various interpretations when teachers and even traditions, even doctrines when they speak of *prana*, they often give *prana* the meaning of the link between the manifested level of creation and the unmanifested level of creation. That is correct, but that is not giving the full measure of what *prana* is. *Prana* is not something, it is not a vehicle, it is not a link, it is not like some kind of invisible link – it’s not the agent either. In fact, it is Consciousness itself; it is *Brahman* itself, it is the Absolute itself, it is Being itself, in its state as movement.

If we will take this as a prelude, as a kind of preface, or an introduction to what *prana* is, that will take us to very interesting revelations and discoveries. So perhaps you can take it ...

II. Understanding *Kundalini*

Rick: Sure. In fact, I was going to ask you why is *prana* so significant that you wanted to make it the title of this? But you just led into the answer of that question, so we’ll get to that in a second. Your next point was *prana* and *Kundalini* and how the two relate. And in the course of answering that, and in the course of this discussion, let’s talk about why is it important for people to know what *prana* is, to spend time on this.

Igor: Well, it is the same here. If we want to talk about *Kundalini*, we would have to adjust what we understand by that term. The mainstream meaning of *Kundalini*, which by now has also entered the lexicon of the western hemisphere and there are many, many different kind of *Kundalini* schools, *Kundalini* Yoga and what have you – *Kundalini* this, and *Kundalini* that. There are many, many books, so it is not like it is unfamiliar like in the 60’s when people were hearing that word, that term for the first time and they were perplexed; not even like in the 30’s when Carl Jung gave his first lectures in 1933 or 1934 [I think] in Munich, his legendary seminars on the *Kundalini*. It is much, much more accustomed terminology that is going around.



When we talk about *Kundalini* in proper terms, we would have to forget all these ready-made formulations, because in essence, *Kundalini* is not separate from *prana*. Since we have established that *prana* is inseparable from Consciousness, then *Kundalini* itself is not separate from Consciousness. In fact, several scriptures like the ancient *Upanishads*, Kashmir Shaivism, and some of the Tantras, they blatantly state that *Brahman* or *Shiva* is indeed *Shakti* – so energy is not different from the source. It is not like the source can be separated from energy – or energy can be separated from the source; in the same way, *Kundalini* is inseparable from the originator of that original vibration of that original throb.

When we talk about *Kundalini*, we have to understand that there are several levels applicable to that term. There is the *Para Kundalini*, which is *Kundalini* of the entire creation, and that concept is pointless or useless to talk about very much, because it is beyond the human concept; it is beyond comprehension of the mind, it is beyond the dichotomized or polarized ability of the mind to grasp those concepts, so we will leave that. The second notion is that *Kundalini* is also as *Chit Kundalini*, or the *Kundalini* as Consciousness, and that *Kundalini* which is more palpable because the *jnanis*, the men of knowledge that experience it directly – they become one with that throb, one with that vibration. And yet, there is a third meaning, which is the *Kundalini* as a coiled – in fact the word *Kundalini* as I mentioned in the first interview, *Kunda* means something which is coiled within itself, literally coiled - so *Kundalini* is Consciousness which is coiled into itself; the Consciousness which is coiled within the human being.

So these three different levels, they are different expressions of the same *Kundalini*. They are inseparable from one another; they are never separable – even the coiled *Kundalini* is not for a second, for a moment, separate from *Para Kundalini*, even if that is apparently being experienced on the physical level.

Rick: So would it be fair to say that just as Consciousness itself is universal, and it has its individual expression through the individual nervous system, individual reflection, *Kundalini* is universal and is in fact perhaps even an quality of the same thing, a quality of Consciousness - and then it has its individual expression in the individual physiology, and in that individual expression it resides coiled up at the base *chakra* before it awakens? Would that be an accurate understanding?

Igor: Well it would be a classical or a traditional understanding, and yes, it is correct in principle. However, whenever we try to pinpoint or graphically locate where Consciousness is coiled, this is when we inevitably will fall into certain conceptualized understanding. In this discussion I prefer to break through some of the existing concepts. It doesn't mean that those existing concepts have outlived themselves or that they are not valid in their own right, but sometimes in order to understand something, you need to leave the territory of inquiry; you need to leave the territory where you locate the subject.

On the factual physiologic level, *Kundalini* is not coiled at the base of the spine - although many, many scriptures say so – because when you go through the clinical experiences of *Kundalini*-awakened aspirants, many of them will relate that the experiences were not taking place there and then. *Kundalini* could awaken in various places; it could awaken and be experienced at the



soles of one's feet - and I would like to talk about this later when we talk about physiologic symptoms - it could be experienced at the base of the spine, it could be experienced at the gut, it could be experienced at the solar plexus, or indeed, it could be experienced directly in the heart in some very rare cases.

Rick: Well, actually people might argue, "Well fine, but it started out at the base of the spine and then it rose up and it became experienced at the heart." I wouldn't argue that perspective because I don't know what I'm talking about, but some people might say, "Well that's what is really happening there."

Igor: Sure. However, *Kundalini* when it travels, it doesn't travel in that kind of linear fashion, and it doesn't travel in that sense that we get accustomed to speak about. Because when we speak about the spiritual anatomy, *Kundalini* is chiefly assigned to reconstruct our spiritual anatomy: that of the astral domain, that of the subtle domain, in order to usher that process of transformation on the physiologic level.

So, the transgression of *Kundalini* is something that is still, very, very little understood – I would dare say even in some of the traditions which claim to be heirs to the Kundalini Yoga practices. For that reason, I am very skeptical when I hear that this and this teacher is giving *Kundalini* classes and people talk about piercing of the *chakras*, opening of the *chakras*, and what have you. If you have enough understanding and experience, you know that a lot of these talks [are basically] would have to be taken in very allegorical terms – and in fact, mean very little in the context of this conversation.

Rick: So you are saying that the function of *Kundalini* - if we had to boil it down to one function - ultimately is to transform the physiology.

Igor: Well, absolutely, because the physiology itself is the result of the convergence of Consciousness into the state where it can be experienced through physical matter, through this wondrous world. So the purpose of *Kundalini* – if that term could be applied – is in fact to take Consciousness back to itself. So the energy has to converge or transgress through the same passage or passages, which were used in the original stages of creation. So it is a transgression; it is the gradual withdrawal of *prana* from the respective stations ...

Rick: Back to its source.

Igor: Exactly, because the physiology is a projection which is manifested at the level of the elementary system, the five elements. [which we know what they are composed of] That gradual withdrawal, is that which creates the profound sense of dissociation, which then translates into the detachment, dispassion, and what have you, and which eventually renders the body toward what that body was originally meant to be - before the coverings took place.



III. What Constitutes Awakening and Self-Realization?

Rick: This actually may lead us into the third group of questions about the symptomatology of awakening – signs of pre-awakening, types of awakening, and so on. So let's talk about that now.

Igor: The symptomatology of awakening, again, is where we come into the domain where a lot of people experience all these various degrees of awakening. They are traditional so to speak – classical interpretations and explanations of the awakening, and by now there is also a very large protocol of clinical studies. Unfortunately, they were not done yet in a systematic manner as they could have been done, because these cases have been reported probably since Lee Sannella founded the Kundalini Clinic together with Gabrielle Cousins, who then migrated into more of a dietary – he runs retreats to do with diets and proper eating. He successfully combined the knowledge that existed in *Kabbalah* and the ancient Tantric knowledge of *Kundalini*. Those were the days when I was a kid, so I know very little about those days - it is more of your age group. In the 70's people were experiencing all of this through various and different means - so there is this clinical and there is this classical protocol.

When we talk about the symptomatology of awakening, it is very important to understand that many, many people who experience awakening are not necessarily experiencing *Kundalini's* full measure – and this is something that will lead us to the following questions, like the proper awakening and the improper awakening, and how the *Kundalini* could awaken. For instance, when *Kundalini* is stirred and agitated – in fact, many spiritual traditions speak of the purposeful, systematic stirring of *Kundalini* - so that they can prepare the body for that profound ascent.

Today, we live in a time when there is a tremendous flux – a tremendous flux of ideas, tremendous flux of energy, tremendous flux of what have you – which causes some people to “pop up” out of the blue, when they have no clue, no idea of what is happening to them. Many attribute that to the awakening and indeed, some experience genuine awakening, but in many of these cases *Kundalini* is not awakened as it were; it is being “poked at” - it moves, perhaps it becomes agitated. It is here that the traditional understanding comes in handy - that the difference between awakening and between agitation and stirring – is vast.

Rick: Well, I'll tell you from my perspective from doing this interview show, I have interviewed about 125 people and a great many people say, “Well, when I awoke such and such,” and they make it sound like this static event that took place at a certain time – they awoke. I often say, “Well, have there been further awakenings since then - or is that it?” Some of them say, “Yes, it keeps deepening and unfolding,” and others say, “How could there be further awakenings? I'm awake – that's it.”

The term “awakening” ... it's hard ... there's a group with some representatives over in Germany that I am going to interview one of them, and I got an email from someone the other day who said, “Okay, well now 200 and something people have awakened with this group and has seen through the illusion.” I always scratch my head, and think, “Well, to what extent have they awakened? To what extent have they seen through the illusion? Is it just a sudden, complete



fulfillment of the entire course of evolution, or is there just some glimpse and perhaps in many cases some people are just assuming that the glimpse is the full enchilada?"

Igor: Remember during the Siddhis Course, you remember very well when people received the flying *sutra*, and when people started moving about and started to hop; there are a lot of cases when people experienced that kind of awakening. And indeed these are awakenings in many, many individual cases - these are genuine awakenings.

Rick: Most of those people wouldn't presume to say, "Okay, well, this is enlightenment." There is just something going on, as you say, a "stirring" has taken place, but most of those people at least in that group in the TM tradition haven't jumped to the conclusion that this is full enlightenment.

Igor: Well, because they probably have been prepared in a much, much more gradual fashion to understand that this whole process of self-realization is not an overnight event ... it may be, but for one in a billion, I would say. Even the *Bhagavad Gita* says that such and such number proportionately would be able to sit down and listen to that teaching; then from that number you have to take that percentage that will be able to comprehend that teaching; then from that number you have to take a percentage who will be able to actually cognize that teaching.

So if you take that mathematical quotation, literally it is a very, very narrow segment of society, a very narrow ...

Rick: Right, but that narrow segment is a fairly large number of people these days with the popularity of Advaita and all these sorts of spiritual things ...

Igor: The demographic explosion alone ...

Rick: But then you have to wonder among the group of people who are actually interested in this stuff, and even claiming to have awakenings, it would be interesting if there were a clearer understanding – or a charting – of the degrees of awakenings that they are having. For instance, I heard an interesting quote from an old Zen master recently – I don't remember his name – and he said, "Well, I've had 17 major awakenings and countless minor ones." You don't usually hear that kind of talk among contemporary spirituality, there is not the sort of fine discrimination about degrees of awakening, and so on - it's usually just "awakening."

Igor: Let's face it, that the New Age and perhaps the currently prevalent Nondualist tendency is to view self-realization as something which is already a given, so there is really no need to self-realize yourself.

Rick: Because you are already realized.

Igor: Exactly! You are already realized because nothing is separate from Consciousness, hence all there is, is That.

Rick: That's just an understanding.

Igor: Exactly. That still vibrates on the level of dichotomized thought; it belongs to the domain of the language, and language is the greatest limitation.



Rick: A lot of people seem to be assuming that that is what realization is – just this intuitive, familiarity with the essential non-dual nature of life. And in many cases, when that becomes clear to them, in many cases they assume that that is what is meant by liberation.

Igor: Yes, as I said, this is normal because when certain teachings are basically watered down, when a lot of nuances and subtleties are being removed or brushed aside as not so important, let's face it, the western approach tends to extract everything very quickly; and the intellectual penetration into the essence, it is because we have a long history of science which is still there on a genetic level. There is this tendency to go to the core, cut through what have you in order to say, "Okay, I've got it!"

But it's not like that with spiritual knowledge; if you remove something, you remove a very important layer which vibrates on its own, and has value of its own. So this is why - the example of the Zen master, the Buddhist practitioner with 17 awakenings which he described as major and minor - because there is this subtlety, and there are those nuances that exist in their culture that cannot be just brushed off as irrelevant because all of this constitutes part of the greater whole, and every part of that greater whole cannot be neglected on the basis that it is less relevant because the greater is still greater, because it is applicable to that particular situation. There still are beings who are contained within the bound physiology in space-time convention.

So in my view, that is the beauty of journey of it all if you will; it is a pathless path – we agree on that, but the journey is that at the same time we are realizing our essential nature and yet we are constantly embodying – living from moment-to-moment within this physiology, within this human body, experiencing it – all the register of emotions and feelings, interactions with each other, and what have you. So this kind of clinical approach, "Okay, I've figured it all out," only creates a mood, and that mood can take you just that far – but not further. And you are bound to fall on your butt sooner or later.

IV. The Science of Pre-Awakening and the Internalization of *Prana*

Rick: In your notes, you have "signs of pre-awakening" and then "types of awakenings - proper and improper, higher and lower." Let's go into more detail about first, the subjective stages of awakening, and then we'll talk more about the physical symptoms of these stages.

Igor: Sure. If we go back to the concept of *prana*, because we should keep going back in order to fully establish the fact that the words *Kundalini* and *prana* are just words for the same thing; basically for the same thing that constitutes energy in its different states. One of the sure signs of pre-awakening is the internalization of *prana*, because what is awakening? Let's just do this little detour.

Awakening is the gathering of *prana* in a particular place in the physiology, where it can combust in order to unleash its full potential. That alone – that in itself – creates the possibility for the individual to experience himself or herself beyond previously identified concepts of being



so-and-so. This is what happens in all awakenings, regardless of how profound, how mild they are, what culture and what situation they take place in.

Rick: What do you mean by “combust?”

Igor: Combust is when *prana* gathers in a certain place, because all of our physiology is sustained by *prana*. Just going back to the Upanishadic myth, to give full understanding to the importance of *prana* – I forgot which *Upanishad*, I think it is the *Chandogya Upanishad* – is that all the deities, all of the *devatas* gathered together and started arguing that, “I am the most important! I am the one who is basically responsible for the functioning of this body.” Agni was boasting, “I am sustaining life, the thought processes,” and what have you. Varuna, the deity of the water was saying, “I am ruling this and that, the body is seventy or ninety percent water anyway.” Each deity would basically claim his right. *Prana* was quietly listening to all of this argument, and started packing to leave the body; as soon as the *prana* started to leave the body, all other deities found themselves spontaneously following the *prana*. So when that took place, they realized that there is a subordination; they all are subordinate to *Prana*. It is an interesting story ...

Rick: Is *prana* considered to be a deity?

Igor: Well this is it; *prana* is considered to be a deity in some of the *Upanishads*. However, it is not a deity in the sense like, let’s say, Agni, the *devata* of fire.

Rick: By deity or *devata*, I think we would want to translate as, “an impulse of intelligence.” Right? An embodiment of intelligence that has a particular role to play in creation, or in the body.

Igor: Sure, but hopefully we’ll talk about it a little later on - I don’t want to jump ahead.

So, going back to that story - that story in my view, illustrates something very profound. It illustrates the experiences that people have during *Samadhi*, or on a practical level, during the total withdrawal of the breath in yogic – in those who practice yoga, it takes place in the profound state of *kumbhaka*, spontaneous breath retention – or in some schools, forcible breath retention. We are not advocating that, because gone are the days when *pranayama* can be practiced without dangers, because our environment is no longer safe.

So that is what happens when *prana* moves and withdraws from the body, it draws out all functioning with it, and the body becomes like a log of wood; the body becomes inert as it were. All metabolic processes ...

Rick: Do you mean dead or are you talking about *Samadhi*?

Igor: I am talking about *Samadhi*. So the body becomes inert, metabolic processes become next to nil – everything subsides. In that story I forgot to mention, that when the deities re-entered the body, they assumed full authority of *prana* and never, never raised any arguments. This is very significant! It is a joke, it is a very sweet ... the Upanishadic stories are for kids, but they are very profound stories.



So what that means is that the being who has experienced *Samadhi*, when he regains the body consciousness, the deities act in accord with *prana*. And that is what it means - it is a very beautiful state in one's spiritual evolution - that you become in control of the physiologic processes, mental processes, emotional processes, subconscious processes, unconscious processes; you become the master in your own home for that very, very simple reason - everything becomes subordinate to the *prana*. Prior to that, in a normal human being, *prana* goes haywire – it goes here, it goes there; the being is not containing his or her own *prana*. It is being sustained by that *prana*, but it is at the mercy of all these conflicting tendencies within.

When we go back now to the symptoms, and to what constitutes the science of pre-awakening, it is that the *prana* starts from going out of the physiology ... The normal human being is constantly losing *prana* through all of the apertures; losing *prana* through looking, excessive consuming through the eye's sense organ, through excessive talking, through excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures, through what have you - *prana* is constantly going out. However, when awakening is about to happen, it is that process of internalization, and that is when people naturally prefer silence, they prefer to be alone; it may coincide with a tremendous emotional withdrawal, it may coincide with actually very painful symptoms of no longer being able to take this world ... you need to go *inward*. You need to internalize completely, so that is one of the most important signs. Please do not confuse it with depression; it has nothing to do with depression, even if at the onset it might feel like such. You don't want to see people, you don't want to talk too much – all of us meditators for many years know that; when you just want to be left alone, you just want to be within yourself.

V. Types of Awakenings: Higher versus Lower and Partial versus Full

Igor: Then what happens next, and depending upon the degree of that *prana* that was built up in a particular place, is that sooner or later that *prana* will reach the point when it can no longer be contained in that place where it has gathered. In classical terms, *prana* is gathered just below the gut, so that although awakening is taking place in the *muladhara*, the actual combustion of *prana* takes place in the gut, and that itself – that itself - awakens the dormant energy in the lower *chakra* and creates a very, very powerful resonance throughout the whole body - as if awakening the astral realm, the realm of the *chakras* - for the onslaught of *Kundalini*.

There are some rare cases when that awakening can take place in the much higher regions, and this is where not many people actually know that, not many people understand – even those who practice Kundalini Yoga so to speak – that a very profound concentration on something can create an awakening from the cortexes down; this is the *jnani's* way of awakening. A contemplation on “I AM” will eventually awaken the vital force, although the contemplation takes place in the cortexes so to speak, through the mental faculties ...

Rick: But you say that is rarer ...?

Igor: It is more rare, because the physiology has to be pure. The reason why all the recent common awakenings are down upwards, is because our physiology is completely polluted; it



needs to go through the profound process of purification – I think it's a following? 38:40 kind of theme, but going back to the questions, the theme of signs of awakening, and the types of awakening, is that there are higher and lower awakenings; higher and lower awakenings not what I just mentioned in terms of the gut versus frontal lobes, but the awakening in terms of in itself, the *Kundalini* can awaken very much down below. When we talk of *Muladhara Chakra*, it is not like a little disc in the picture portrayed in all these new age books – you know, the trunk of human physiology, and then along the spine. It's not like that.

The *Muladhara Chakra* encompasses the entire lower area, and that is what connects us to the earth; it includes all of our organs of locomotion - our legs and feet and what have you - and it goes deep down into the earth a little bit, because that is how we are rooted, through *muladhara*. So the awakening could take place in the lower regions, and in the higher regions.

When awakening takes place in the lower regions, then it will not take the aspirant anywhere; *Kundalini* will not have enough force to leave *muladhara*. There will be all this paraphernalia of awakening, there will be all this – but no more. That is why you see people who are awakened – you've met them three years ago, they were on top of the world, they were going through these experiences; three years later, or five years later, or one year later, you see that person doing the same things, maybe she or he thinks of herself or himself as being an entirely new being. However, from the outside you can see that there is a kind of falling back into the same patterns.

Rick: So what you are saying, is that a really complete awakening would bring about a transformation of both inner and outer, but that a lot of awakenings these days are incomplete, and so they only go so far and they stop.

Igor: Yes, because there is not enough force – or dare I say pressure in *prana* to drive *Kundalini* into *Prana Shakti*.

Rick: Do you think that there is a force of evolution which would prevent a person from getting stuck forever, or do you think that a person could be literally stuck for decades at the same level of awakening, thinking perhaps that it was complete - and yet it's not?

Igor: Absolutely. You see this all of the time, you see it around everywhere.

Rick: So even a lot of these people who are out there teaching, they may have had a partial awakening and they think that they have the full thing, and they have set themselves up to teach ...?

Igor: Well, if pushed to answer this question - because I don't want to cast shadows on any teachers - you know everyone fulfills their role, and everyone fulfills their karmic patterns – both those teachers who teach, and those who follow those teachers. But let me tell you this, Rick - the majority of teachers out there, teach from three basic *chakras* – three basic *chakras*; very few teach from the level of the heart, and there are a handful of those who actually teach from a fully realized state. In fact, just to give you an example, in some of the Buddhist sects in the northeast of the Himalayas, *Kundalini* practices were aimed at taking the *prana* up to the solar plexus, or the *Manipura Chakra*. Why? Because when the Consciousness resides there, when Consciousness purifies that region – it is known as the City of Jewels – this is where the



willpower is the strongest, digestion is the strongest, ego is the strongest, and power is the strongest, because this *chakra* is associated with the sun; it is a *chakra* of command. Many great *avadhuts*, or many great beings, had this *chakra* awakened; those beings who were able to lead people through the historical moments, when unbelievable, almost beyond human potential – it is another subject altogether ...

Rick: So, is that all that they were aspiring to? They consciously, knowingly, willingly, they didn't even ...

Igor: Consciously, because they knew. The interesting thing is that – if we just talk a little bit about it. [when Consciousness] *Manipura*, the City of the Jewels, or the solar plexus, or the *chakra* of the willpower is situated below the *Anahata Chakra*. The next station is the heart, but the difference is tremendous. Everything that you have gained in the City of Jewels, you would have to lose in the City of the Heart. This is why - and this has all been known, that in order to enjoy life, the idea of *bhogi* and *yogi*, the one on the path to Union or the one who is on a path to enjoyment – in some traditions they actually deliberately manipulated these processes, in order to enjoy worldly possessions. It is known, it is documented, and you can read about it - but the physical appearance, also the individual becomes the most vital at that time, extremely powerful, extremely convincing, and charismatic. When Consciousness moves further, it is a radical shift. It is a radical shift in spectrum; in terms of colors, yellow emanates at one length, and green emanates an entirely different wavelength level entirely.

Rick: I have met masters who seem to have progressed certainly to the heart and beyond, but they haven't lost their charisma or their power, or their ability to accomplish things, or anything like that.

Igor: Sure, like ...

Rick: Like Amma, or Maharshi, or whoever. Great masters ...

Igor: Sure, absolutely.

Rick: So it's not like it's all lost or left behind maybe ...

Igor: It is lost on the level of the heart, but is regained at the higher level, when the *Kundalini* moves into the cortexes, when it enters the frontal lobes, when it actually rekindles the most important glands, when the pituitary and pineal glands are being completely decalcified, then ...

Rick: In other words, when you reach the highest then you gain it all, but in the process of progressing toward that, you might have to relinquish something in order to move on to the next stage.

Igor: Absolutely. At the level of the heart, you leave your possessions; you have moved so far with everything, you have to leave it because you cannot move further, and that is what the heart does. At that stage, the *yogi*, the aspirant, the meditator, what have you, Kabbalist Sufi, Zen, householder – at that stage, you feel the most vulnerable. You cry, you weep all the time – you are madly in love with God. All this Sufi poetry, it comes from that experience of the heart level.



Rick: So, leaving your possessions means that you would have to leave your family, leave your job and all that? You couldn't sort of hold that all together and keep progressing?

Igor: Some can, some cannot. Look at some of the great historical examples like Ibn 'Arabī, the greatest mystic and philosopher of the Sufi tradition; he had to leave his family. He had a very, very big job; he was teaching as a man in the capital of the then Muslim world. He was teaching in Damascus, and he had to leave it. He had to basically leave his family, kiss his son, and kiss his job goodbye, because he was appointed by the local sultan. One day he just realized that - he is a profound scholar and his mouth was sealed - he could not speak. In the middle of a speech, he was not able to say much; so this was a realization that he can actually no longer speak what he cannot experience. So he left everyone and everything, wandered around, was realized – and then came back. So, just an example that some people can – but some people cannot.

What I mean about detachment from possessions, where you have to leave your possessions, is that even if you don't leave them physically, you have to leave them in terms of your attachment to them.

Rick: Right, right. Well, that's not a problem; being attached to them is a problem, so if you can progress to the highest level spiritually, and all you have to do is relinquish your *attachment* to things, then that probably would sound appealing to most people. Having to actually leave the things, especially if those things happen to be children or something, it might not sound so appealing to people.

Igor: No, but we have to be honest here because this isn't a *Hope Unplugged* interview; [an unplugged show and program -] we have enough façade spirituality even in the big movements, we have enough promises. We have to actually face certain facts – your particular program, as far as I understood, is listened to, heard, and watched by many, many very advanced, highly advanced spiritual practitioners. So certain things ... if we hide behind slogans here, then what do we do?

Rick: No, I'm not trying to do that!

Igor: Yes, I know that ...

Rick: Many of the people that I interview actually also watch these interviews; they are teachers themselves and have undergone profound awakenings, but they like to watch to watch a lot of these things themselves.

Igor: Let's go back to Maharishi. Maharishi was already a *jagadguru*, he was teaching all over the globe in his travels, and he was still reading the scriptures. He was still reading the scriptures. His ----- 50:25, *The Commentaries on the Brahma Sutras*, which were assisted by Vernon Katz, and Vernon Katz at some point realized that, "Maharishi ... you are just actually reading it now!" With childlike innocence he replied, "Well, yes."

Rick: He was always very inquisitive, and he was always surrounding himself with people who knew more than he did about certain things, in order to learn more himself and to augment and supplement what he was trying to do.



Igor: Absolutely. I admire these examples. For instance, from the history of art, the great French painter of the classical period, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, when he was already in bed practically dying - he was lying in bed with cushions propped up and doing some drawing. When one of his fervent disciples came over and said, “What are you doing Master?” He said, “I’m 51:45-----.” The guy is about to pass away, he created already everything that would be distributed in the world’s top museums and...

Rick: But he was still bettering himself.

Igor: Well, not bettering himself ...

Rick: Learning?

Igor: Learning, exactly ... why not? If you know the history of art, Giotto is considered to be the beginning of the Renaissance; a very primitive painter compared to the versatility of the visual expressions that commanded at the age when Unger lived. That is an example of humility, an example of beauty, and a profound appreciation, as he said that, “We are giants only because we stand on the shoulders of our predecessors.”

Rick: Right. Amma, the hugging saint, always says - she says this in pretty much every lecture - “We should always have the attitude of a beginner.” Meaning that you should never rest on your laurels, and you respect the mystery, and continue to be open to further clarity and depth of understanding and experience.

Igor: Well, isn’t that the state of a true mystic ... a perpetual state of wonder? Because whenever you understand something on a certain level, whenever you understood even what is considered to be *the* essence of everything, it immediately brings in a new paradox, and that throws you into that state of wonder. So that every time we gain something – a new territory, or covered some ground - that immediately brings a following paradox, because that whole relationship, that whole *lila*, that whole play, is founded on these paradoxes. The state of wonder is the state of the beginner, isn’t it like this?

Rick: So, do you feel we’ve done justice to this discussion of types of awakening – proper and improper, higher and lower – and stages of awakening, or is there anything more you want to say about that?

Igor: I don’t know what the next question is, but...

Rick: There is a point about sexuality in relationships in different stages.

VI. The Physical Expression of *Prana Shakti*: How does it affect One’s Sexual Attitudes and Relationships?

Igor: Okay. So we can just move to the physical expression of *Kundalini*, or the physical expression of *Prana Shakti*. I have received some questions from some people on the wake of the first interview, in relation to how does awakening affect one’s physical functioning, and



above all, the primal sexual attitudes, and sexual relationships? Because we are beings where on the lower level, on the base level, sexual energy is the ultimate manifestation of that energy. The orgasm itself is, as the French call it *petit mal*, the “little death,” this is when you experience yourself without “I am” as this individual. You lose that identity for however a short time, for however small, however sweet, but is wonderful. It’s not the actual physical sensation, but that experience of being completely lost – that is what drives us crazy and manic about sex – because we love that experience. Like U.G. Krishnamurti, that angry teacher, he used to say, “Sex is terribly, sex is painful – it is painful from the beginning, painful through the middle, and painful at the end.” Obviously, people take it two-dimensionally, but that is what he meant; people are mistakenly driven to what sex should provide, by actually missing the essence of what it does indeed provide.

Going back to how the life of an aspirant is affected, there is an amazing paradox that again, when *Kundalini* is first awakened – and if it is awakened powerfully enough – the position of the earth-based *chakra* and the water-based *chakra* are so close together; they are almost next to each other, and their energies are engulfing each other. It is earth and water, all these primordial, basic, very heavy, elemental realms, and the water realm is the realm of all relationships; it is a fluidity because Consciousness itself is fluid. At that level, Consciousness finds its most acute expression on the physiologic level, because when it projects itself further into the earth, it solidifies, it calcifies, it is what we take as the creation in that state. Matter, for a very long time, was associated with everything solid – at least in the scientific realm, in scientific terms. But when we talk about fluidity in terms of water, which is where Consciousness is very in Her own element in that realm, this is why many saints, many mystics were exclaiming that sexual energy is the closest in its expression in the way that it behaves, to the Absolute Energy, to the Primordial Energy. We try to contain it – a whole culture, all cultures are attempts to contain that energy – to channel it, to allow it to be expressed in a proper so-to-speak ‘civilized, acceptable manner.’ But we know when we tap into that energy, we get incredibly lost – this is what happens.

In terms of awakening, all of this could be magnified a thousand times over, because when *Kundalini* is awakened, and when the *prana* is combusted... Quickly going back to the proper and improper awakening: when awakening is proper, it’s not like, “Okay I’m awakened in the first *chakra*, now I’m doing second *chakra*, now I’m doing third *chakra*” – it’s not like that. Proper awakening is literally – you poked that cobra, and it stood on its head fully – that is proper awakening. It literally, literally penetrates several *chakras* immediately, but it doesn’t mean that they are opened, and it doesn’t mean that the *Kundalini* is established in the higher regions; it will drop down. It is bound to drop down and it does; and from there on it starts its work.

Many properly awakened teachers, when they speak of the initial impact of their awakening, and if you hear their story carefully, they are remarkably similar in terms of what they experience. What they experience is what often then takes years to stabilize, cognize and integrate. Why? Because the initial energy comes to erect itself, and it literally engulfs and takes over the entire physiology. So it is not uncommon for *Kundalini* to actually enter the median channel right from



the moment of awakening, if there is enough *prana*. But these are rare cases, so we are not going to focus on them.

Rick: I was going to say, I have seen both; I have seen most people in fact whose awakening seems to be a very gradual, incremental, gentle progression, and then others who have this sudden dramatic awakening. I know people who had sudden, dramatic awakenings 30, 40 years ago, who ended up getting into drugs, or getting completely lost in something, so they didn't end up properly integrating or stabilizing it.

Igor: Sure, well this is a theme in itself, and we are coming to it. Back to the sexual energy. When *Kundalini* is awakened, that long process of internalization often occurs in pre-awakening stages, and we become celibate. We want to be celibate.

I remember acutely, not even wanting to be touched by anyone; I just wanted to be completely left alone. You know, in spiritual community, people often come and give each other hugs and everything, and some people thought, "Oh, his heart is not open." But that wasn't the case! It was just that every touch felt like a slight electrical shock – speaking in plain language, it felt unpleasant, because the internalization was so profound. Then when the combustion takes place, when *Shakti* is awakened, then all this "stuff hits the fan." It just smears all over the walls – all your *vasanas*, all your psychic impressions are unleashed, and obviously a wild appetite for sex, for sexual pleasure - could be the result. However, that said immediately, if *Kundalini* is not awakened fully, then very often awakening will even intensify the desire for celibacy, because you still need that internalization.

When *Kundalini* enters the water domain, when it enters the domain of fluidity, the domain of *Svadhithana Chakra*, the *chakra* of water, the *chakra* of relationships, the *chakra* of all forms of communication – in terms of that lower form of communication – there is no longer the erogenic zone ... your whole body becomes erogenic! Your nails become erogenic, your eyeballs – you look at things and you feel excited!

Rick: I presume you are speaking from experience...?

Igor: I am speaking from direct experience.

Rick: In your case, were you able to keep this under control, or did you start acting like a wild man?

Igor: No, I had enough practice in discipline and I hope that in my case, there was a profound wisdom at the same time when the awakening took place, because there were a lot of spontaneous manifestations. My awakening was accompanied by very important yogic procedures: spontaneous *asanas*, spontaneous *pranayamas*, like *kumbhakas*, spontaneous *mudras*, and spontaneous *bandhas*. I used to do yoga for many year and I was very versed, I was a master of yoga by the age of 32, 33 ... but to tell you the truth, I could never sit comfortably sit in lotus, in full *padmasana*. I would force myself, but when Consciousness has boosted out – in one of the meditation I remember, I wasn't even moving my legs with my hands – my feet just naturally locked themselves into perfect, proper lotus – not *siddhasana*. It happened as if there were no bones, as if everything was in a jelly-like state, and I was amazed. I was like, "Oh,



wow, that's amazing!" From there on, all of my meditations – it didn't matter how long – 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours – I would meditate for 6 to 7 hours a day with breaks, I would sit in lotus. After that I would just release my legs, stretch them out, and then I could just walk. There was this absolute... that's why it is called *asana*; being steadily established.

When the *bandhas* took place, sincerely speaking, I had this permanent erection that took place for a very long time. In fact, I didn't even know how to ... you are a man, you know how when you sit in lotus, there is kind of not enough place where the appropriate member should go. That had to be adjusted, because I had a permanent erection, like in a straight spine, and internally I realized that this erection had nothing to do with lust or desire on that level. It was literally being erected towards that higher purpose.

Rick: By permanent, do you mean several hours during the course of your meditation?

Igor: Stiff as wood; as my spine would be straight, so there would be an erection. Often during sleep...

Rick: But there weren't a lot of desires and all in the middle of that?

Igor: When you are in *bandha*, don't forget, and when you have this spontaneous withdrawal...

Rick: Maybe you should define *bandha*.

Igor: *Bandha* is a lock. In yogic terminology, *bandha* is one of those very important tools in hatha yoga, like *asana*, *bandha*, *mudra*, and *pranayama* are prerequisites for stabilizing and tuning in the body and mind to experience higher states of consciousness. For instance, some of the *bandhas* that TM meditators experience, I know that, because when you see them sitting, the head goes down, the chin completely, completely – you think they are falling asleep, but when you speak to them, it actually happens spontaneously. That is one of the *bandhas*. It is the *bandha* which locks – what *bandha* means in Sanskrit is a lock; it has to lock certain stages so that *prana* moves in the body, not in a disorganized fashion, but in a directed fashion.

Rick: So one stage is locked so the next stage can go on?

Igor: Exactly. So yoga starts with forcibly introducing lower *bandhas*. In fact, *siddhasana* – you know, one leg over – it is a *bandha*. Your heel is pressed at the perineum, and the heel of the other leg is spread at the pubic area.

Rick: In your case, the *bandhas* were happening spontaneously.

Igor: They were happening on their own. This is why I said, there was this inner wisdom unleashed at the same time, so I didn't have to deal with all of this. Whenever those kind of latent tendencies would appear, I was just watching them, because the whole body was tuned into it.

Rick: This thing about yogis having all this kind of sexual energy, potentially going wild; a few weeks ago, I interviewed Yogi Amrit Desai, who had become a very famous yoga master In the United States, and then he had a number of sexual affairs and it became a big scandal and he got kicked out of the ashram that he was leading. Then he dealt with it in a mature way, and



everybody made amends and so on. I asked him about that, and he said, “Well, this happens with yogis, they have so much sexual energy that it is easy for them to fall; if there is not enough discipline it is for them to get involved in things like that.”

There are some people who are just profligate, like Adi Da for instance, just a huge amount of sexual behavior all over the place with other men’s wives and so on. In his case, it was rationalized as “crazy wisdom” and “being for the benefit” of all these people he was sleeping with, and so on. I gather that you would say that is just insufficient discipline to deal with that stage of the awakening of energy that is taking place?

Igor: Am I supposed to comment?

Rick: Yes, please!

Igor: Well, okay. [In my view, if there is indeed at that stage of which Amrit Desai] By the way, I know very well who Yogi Amrit Desai is, because I have some very close friends who were direct disciples of his, and now are yoga teachers in their own right in that hatha yoga lineage, Kripala Yoga. Some of them were in the midst of it all, when the scandal broke out. I don’t want to put any qualitative judgments. However, when there is enough *udana prana*, and when we talked about *prana*, I am sorry I forgot to mention the specific divisions of *prana* in the body.

Some may think this is the stuff of an academic approach, but *prana*, in order to exist in the physiology, and in order to sustain the physiology, it becomes delta-like, it spreads out. Each particular *prana* deals with a particular functioning, so there is *prana*, *apana*, *udana*, *samana* and *vyana*. Each of these *pranas* are functioning in their own right, and they are subordinate to the main *prana*.

Prana is the descendent vital energy, but in the ascending order – please try to understand. It is coming from here (points to the top of the head), but it is an ascending *prana*. *Apana prana* is that which is only descending *prana*, is that which discharges the feces, the urine, the semen, and the menstrual cycles. The *samana* and *vyana*, it is all integrating *prana* of the digestion, metabolic rates and everything. The *vyana prana* is present everywhere, that which holds everything together – all this “soup” – because human beings we are like this jelly liquid with some bones. We think of ourselves as being very solid, but in fact we are not; and all this is kept together by *vyana prana*.

There is this very important *udana prana*, which allows us to speak, because that *prana* governs speech, and as a result also the thought processes. It is an uprising *prana* which is usually functioning from the vocal cords on the level of the throat, all the way up into the point of confluence. But in a normal human being, that *udana prana* only directs what I just mentioned - the normal mental faculties and the speech. However, in the one in whom Consciousness is awakened, what drives Consciousness into the *sushumna*, the middle channel, it is the property of *udana prana*. So that is what really happens; all of these *pranas* that were gathered in the gut created combustion, triggered the awakening, and then converted into *udana*. *Udana prana* is when you cannot have sexual desire to express yourself outwardly, because it is already moving



upward in this subtlety of your inner subtle physiology. It is moving in the median channel; so when one is fully established in *udana prana*, a leakage of sexual energy is simply impossible.

So, as I said, not putting any qualitative judgment, if a yogi then goes loose, it means he is not fully established in that *udana* movement. It means that *Kundalini* does not have enough force to enter the *sushumna*, and it still wanders, and a tremendous amount of energy is still leaking out. That said, let's not confuse that with self-realized, God-realized - what have you - masters, who were caught in some promiscuous sexual activity with the disciples. I often get those questions as well about so-and-so, with some masters that I have great respect for - you know, like Swami Muktananda for instance. You hardly hear about Siddha Yoga anymore because of all these scandals, and again, if this is an "unplugged" show, certain concepts, certain culturally accepted behavioral patterns, you cannot apply them to the spiritual domain. The mistake of these masters was only that they were perhaps allowed to practice this where they should not have practiced it.

Rick: So you are saying that there are two types of situations: one where *udana prana* is not properly established, and so a person does not have full discipline or control over their sexual energies and so they engage in some promiscuous behavior, or there could be someone in whom *udana prana* is established, who is an enlightened, God-realized master who still has sexual relations with disciples. On the outside it might appear that the same thing is happening, but they are actually two different situations. Is that what you just said?

Igor: Yes, but with a correction that in the self-realized being there is no need for *udana prana* anymore, because the whole movement of *prana* has terminated - and we will speak about it later on, where it is terminated - and then the being is functioning, just in accord just with *karmic, dharmic leisha avidya* trajectory.

Rick: So the conclusion is, it is hard for a person to judge.

Igor: It is impossible to judge, but to be more specific, let me give you an example. This is a bit hard, because especially in the United States and Canada, in the Anglo-Saxon world, in North America and in England, the attitude towards sexuality is already covered with so many social, cultural *vasanas* and prejudices.

Rick: Even more in the Muslim world...

Igor: Yes, but we are not talking about the Muslim world now, and this show is not in Riyadh or in Bagdad - this show is taking place in America, mostly it is being broadcast from the United States. So the subject of sex in itself has not yet reached a liberation on the level of social understanding, let alone in spiritual terms.

The example I want to give you is that Tantric scriptures openly talk about several ways of transmission of energy. Some of them will sound disgusting for the western ear. For example, one of them is spitting in the mouth of a disciple. Why is that? Because saliva is the most direct expression of plasma, and plasma is the first *dhatu* in Ayurvedic terms, of all these different *dhatu*s. Plasma is the first *dhatu*, and that is where the transmission of energy is the most direct. There is obviously *drishti*, the passing or transmission of the energy through sight, through



touch. The spitting into the mouth – ejaculating even - into the disciple, is it a sodomy or is it a rape? We are not ready to discuss these things yet, Rick.

When I try to reply to these people who say, “So-and-so has been caught doing so-and-so ... isn’t that immoral and what have you?” I cannot judge, because these are two very different levels of consciousness. You are trying to judge from this localized level of consciousness, something which takes place on a very different level of consciousness. Immediately saying that, I know that the western audience is utterly and terribly uncomfortable with this, because in the world where the democracy is the most cherished concept, yet it is a failed concept. An utterly failed concept, because there is no such thing as a democracy. It is one very big misunderstanding of what the Greeks were trying to implement. So this ideal of individual freedom being taken for granted and abused in spiritual terms and in spiritual organizations – all of these are very sensitive issues.

So my comment on that is relevant to that one case of that yogi who says, “Because I am swelled with *ojas*, then it is very hard to contain so I go and I sleep with the others.” It is a bit contradictory, because when you are swelled with that, the convergence of energy... Well, first of all when *Kundalini* actually enters the *sushumna*, and when it travels properly, it becomes gaseous. The need for sexual expression outwardly is only when the *ojas* is raw and uncooked – that kind of raw physiologic substance – then it is eager to express itself. But once it is sublimated inwardly at the level of the heart mentioned above, it becomes gaseous, it is no longer liquid - it is no longer fluid.

Rick: It gets converted.

Igor: Exactly. Later on it reenters the domain of the cortexes, where it can become transformed into a qualitatively different substance, which is issued back into the physiology in terms of the qualitatively different hormones. It is basically like you are having sex with yourself. Why do you need someone else? It is like Shiva is entirely in an embrace with Shakti. Shakti is on the lap of Shiva, and it actually feels like that physically. You are totally happy! That is why they say, “For the yogi in that embrace, all of the *gandharvas* naked – divinely seductive beings – they walk around, but they will not distract him.” The yogi who is not in that embrace of Shiva-Shakti, then any temptation is a temptation.

Again, coming back to all these other stories about realized masters playing with their disciples and what have you – found in promiscuous activities – I am not there to judge. I am not there to pass a comment, because we have to apply a completely and very different perspective of understanding. Then of course, we enter the domain where certain accepted criteria will crumble – and we don’t want to do that. So I would say, follow your intuition, follow your guidance. For me, the physical activity of so-and-so is irrelevant, as long as there is a connection on the heart level. Of course someone will say, “Oh, but you were not the victim, you were not the one who was raped,” or what have you.

Rick: What I hear you say is, “Don’t judge.” My feeling is that I have to reserve judgment on a lot of these situations. I can’t come down with some sort of adamant attitude about it, because I really don’t know. But then, I am also open to the possibility that in some cases it was just



unbridled hedonism; the guy was just using spirituality as an excuse for indulging in all kinds of stuff, and was totally out of control.

So when we say, “Don’t judge,” we are not meaning to imply complete condoning, forgiving, and acceptance of whoever wants to do anything and use any excuse for it. We are just saying that there may be a spectrum, and you have to be careful coming down hard on any particular position - because you don’t know.

Igor: Absolutely, and every case is unique and different. So we cannot brush off everything, “So-and-so, and so-and-so, and so-and-so have been found doing the same activity,” so this is where a generalization1:23 recording cut off briefly here ...

Rick: There is a story about Shankara – it is probably just one of these stories – but he was walking along with some disciples, and he was ahead of them and they saw him drinking something. He kept walking, and they caught up to it, and it was some beer; so they drank some of the beer, and they kept walking. A little while later, they saw him drinking something else, and then they caught up to where he had been - and it was molten glass. It probably didn’t really happen, but it illustrates the point that you don’t necessarily just mimic whatever you see someone else doing, because their circumstance and state of consciousness and everything else, might be quite different than yours.

VII. The Dangers of Premature Awakening and Falling out of Grace

Rick: On your next point [on the paper here], we have kind of discussed this but maybe we have a few wrap-up points about this. You mention the dangers of premature awakening and falling out of Grace, and you use the words, “the other worlds and human beings.”

Igor: It is a very big theme in its own right, but I will try to be as brief as possible. Basically, the dangers of prematurely awakened *Kundalini* are seldom talked about in today’s Kundalini Yoga circles, because only the glorious side is being portrayed; you know, the glorious, the divine, the transformative, and the beatitude of that. Indeed, that *Kundalini* awakening is the culmination of this whole process of whatever (should this be wherever?) that evolutionary path has taken the individual. It is an entirely new era; an entirely new phase of existence can begin, because *Kundalini* awakening is just the beginning – let’s not forget that.

However, premature awakening is extremely dangerous because firstly, the physiology has to be able to withhold the...

Rick: When you say “premature awakening” do you mean that somehow an awakening takes place without the person having undergone very much preparation for it, and so they are not able to handle it? Right?

Igor: Absolutely. The premature awakening it is like the physiology is in a different state in relation to the *prana* that is awakened. The physiology, the body, is a vehicle, a content, a vessel which would be recharged with an entirely different level of energy. If that vessel has not undergone a qualitative preparation, then more likely the repercussions or ramifications could be quite dramatic. Often, I myself witnessed several cases of premature awakening, and I have



witnessed a tremendous de-what have you – everything that begins with “de” – the degradation, because the physiology crumbles.

First of all, *Kundalini* is associated with extreme heat; at least in the early stages that is what happens. In order for the impurities to be molten out of the body, in order for that process to ensue, a tremendous amount of heat is being produced – and that heat can damage brains, and it can damage the nervous system. If the nervous system is not powerful enough to withstand the charges of this energy, it will burn. The endings of the nervous system are extremely subtle. The human body can be compared to a sponge; the sponge, although it appears like it has a shape, you can squeeze it into your hand like that (demonstrates) and release it. Inside there are all these bubbles, holes of air, and only the outer structure of the sponge is making the shape of a sponge. In a way, that is how the subtle channels keep the body intact, but those subtle channels, called *nadis* in Sanskrit, are blocked in a normal human being. They are as if waxed; only a few major ones are functioning, but a lot of them are blocked.

So what happens when *Kundalini* is awakened in the individual when she or he is not prepared, is that that heat goes everywhere, and with the toxins that are still present – with all this that you call kind of fillings, all this wax that needs to be molten out. Instead, that is being spread everywhere – all over, and illness could be a result. I am not talking about the purificatory illness, because every aspirant during the course of *Kundalini* will experience illnesses from time to time, because that is what is stored there in the subtle body, in the *karmic* body, so that the evolution progresses experientially because the *sushumna* channel has layers. Although it is thinner than the human hair, and perhaps it is thinner than the spider’s web, but even within that very fine, fine pathway, there are three different channels; that is where the physical, the subtle, and the karmic are being stored. That is for the adept – we will leave it maybe for some other time for those who are interested.

Premature awakening is undesirable, and for that reason, many masters don’t even talk much about *Kundalini*. They don’t want anyone to start getting this idea that, “Oh, I am going to facilitate this very fast, rapid success in my *sadhana* by awakening *Kundalini* by means of agitation.” You know, certain drugs can awaken *Kundalini*, certain *bandhas*, - certain forceful applications.

Rick: Sure, you could do a whole lot of *pranayama* and you might awaken it.

Igor: Absolutely.

Rick: Christ spoke of “not pouring new wine into old wineskins.” You know, you have to have a wineskin that is suitable for holding the wine.

Igor: Beautiful.

Rick: Personally I have seen a number of cases where people have just gone stark raving crazy, when they had some profound awakening, and they literally had to be guarded and protected from hurting themselves because they were just so nutty. And yet from their side, they had thought that this wonderful and profound thing was happening.



Igor: Yes, this happens because everything gets magnified – everything gets magnified.

Rick: Sometimes the ego gets magnified too...

Igor: Not sometimes, it has become magnified; both positive and negative gets magnified. Everything – everything. Let's say you had the tendency toward that, it would become a massive tendency; if you had a predisposition for that, in a normal condition when Consciousness was dormant, you know, you could deal with that. But suddenly, it is eclipsing all of you – because what happens, let's just go back again to the notion of *prana and Kundalini* and what it is.

What is *Kundalini* on an individual level? What is it?

Rick: Are you asking me?

Igor: Yes, I am just asking you, so that I just kind of like ask myself.

Kundalini on the individual level, is that portion of ego that identifies with the body. So, it is you in essence – it is greater than you, because in essence that is what *prana* in the body is. So when that is awakened, it is like a new you; your dormant you is awakened. Even if at the initial stages you still feel like the “old me” is still there, and having that relationship, “I am experiencing these amazing experiences,” because it is far from the merge yet, and this is where all of the problems are of the early stages of awakening. Because the conviction that “I am great” is skin deep, you come very close to actually jumping to conclusions. Also, on a visual level people see lights, or hear lots of sounds in their lobes with the eyes closed, and they think that *Kundalini* is already in the head, but that is a projection. This is the magnificence of our physiology, is that something could happen down there in the very low, basic energetic centers, but the registration of the experience is as if it is happening here (in the head); the distance is vast. The distance is in light years, because *Kundalini* travels in the *sushumna* at the speed of light.

Rick: So that is another way of explaining what we were talking about earlier, that it is easy to mistake a very preliminary awakening for a final one. Actually, along the lines of what you are saying, I was thinking about these instances of people that had gone crazy when they had some sort of awakening, and it is very true. One guy proclaimed himself to be a world teacher and he was the “Shankaracharya of the west” and all this stuff. There are many cases I can think of, where people went into great ego aggrandizement.

Maharishi was asked one time when people were on some long course doing all this long meditation and rounding and everything, and they said, “Can't you just shortcut this? Why can't you just enlighten us?” He said, “You wouldn't want it - I would need ten strong men to hold you down.”

Igor: Absolutely. That is exactly what premature awakening could cause, or improper awakening could cause, because there is a lot that the body has to deal with - we forget that. That is why I am not at all interested in those dialogues that are prevalent in the Nondualist circles. Because to assume that you can just mentally shift, and forgo millions of years of this



evolution – millions of years and countless incarnations – and suddenly – poof! New you, you know? Like suddenly your identity with Parabrahman has been complete.

Rick: McDonald's enlightenment.

Igor: It is certainly an instant one.

VIII. The Subject of *Devatas*

Rick: Let's move on. There was a point here where you mentioned *devatas* – maybe we have covered this but maybe not – *devatas* in the body or body of *devatas* - what did you mean? And then you were talking about Dr. Tony Nader's recent book, the human body as a battleground, and so on - let's cover those points.

Igor: This comes from people's questions actually. We did mention at the end of our initial interview the subject of *devatas*, and I did suggest something which I am not going to dwell much on, but it is just an open theme, because I don't want to impose that this is necessarily how it has to be, because it might be a little bit too...

Rick: Simplistic?

Igor: Not simplistic – on the contrary. It might be a bit too advanced to actually comprehend, but just an idea. In fact, it will echo with some of the propositions or statements, which were made by mystics like Friedrich Nietzsche in the nineteenth century, that the human being actually doesn't exist. Some teachers actually didn't even like that whole terminology, “the human being,” and they considered that is a recent phenomena. It has evolved culturally on both sides of the hemisphere, independently and then they merged; now it is almost impossible to imagine that we don't have that concept of being humans, because there is a whole culture, a whole tremendous civilization with everything...

Rick: You'll have to explain that, because the average person is going to listen to that and say, “Well, what is he talking about? We appear to be humans – what does he mean?”

Igor: Well, first of all, that that concept of being humans, is a relatively new concept.

Rick: What was it before that?

Igor: Well, we don't know – we don't know. For instance, in the indigenous societies, those that had very little contact with western life and western civilization, that concept of human beings does not exist. They live in perpetual harmony, in perpetual connection with the environment to such a degree, that it is inconceivable for them to think of themselves as something other than part of that great environment.

Rick: I see, so that is what I thought you meant – so that they feel that they are just units of the whole, rather than autonomous, isolated entities.

Igor: Exactly. The idea of human being is very much culturally impregnated with this, that “We are this race of human beings” - which we are indeed. However, I haven’t stated this proposal – which as I said earlier echoes a lot of other beings who had come up with these ideas – that there is no such thing. Instead, the human being is entirely a divine structure, the crowning event of the whole evolutionary progression, where the divinities or *devatas* literally constitute the entire being on every level. So what we mistakenly think of as some kind of independent, self-sufficient beings with all these ideas of democracy, with individual free will from the lower case – not the unified, great Free Will of the Creator. [– so this whole idea that if you go down for instance,] The question was, “Does all this have anything to do with Dr. Tony Nader’s recent book on the *Ramayana*, which is he has currently been promoting in the states, in North America, and giving lectures?”

I haven’t read the book, but I have seen a couple of podcasts since our first interview, and I don’t know exactly if this corresponds one-to-one with what his new book is about. All I want to say is that I do see a human being as a battleground between the higher forces of creation, and those positive and negative – it is reflecting in the ancient literature of many different traditions. For example, in the *Upanishadic* or Vedic tradition, it is the eternal battle between *devas* and *asuras*, because both of them were churning the ocean to extract *amrita*. Because Vishnu was on the side of the *devas*, and although he promised that he would give the *amrita* to the *asuras*, the *asuras* got distracted, and the *devas* stole that *amrita* that was extracted...

Rick: The nectar of immortality.

Igor: Exactly. That was in the process of churning the ocean. So, as simplistic as this myth goes, it could relate directly to our human physiology, where the constant collision of the forces of goodness and evil or what have you – whatever are your cultural preferences – is at play; the play of polarities.

IX. Existence of Other *Chakras* and the World of *Patala*

Igor: Going back to the dangers of *Kundalini* and the falling out of grace, nobody seems to talk about the existence of other *chakras* other than those seven established *chakras*. In fact, Kashmir Shaivism does not see it as seven, it sees more, but I am not going to confuse the listener, because this is my own field of inquiry, and this is something from the tradition that I feel the most affinity with – so I cannot stick with that classical system of seven *chakras*.

Do you know there are also *chakras* down below, from *muladhara* downwards? They are the *chakras* of *patala*,

Rick: Some people say there are higher ones above.

Igor: Absolutely, the *sahasrara* is not the final *chakra*. It is not the *chakra* of abode, and that is it. From the apertures, from the fontanelles of the head, there are just as many *chakras* protruding into the celestial realms as there are *chakras* on the physiologic level. So one of the greatest dangers of awakening the *Kundalini*, is none of what we have mentioned before, none of what we have talked about - although they are serious enough - because it could simply lead to death



of the individual. However, that is not the most dangerous thing; the most dangerous thing is actually falling down.

When *Kundalini* is falling from a considerable distance, and when it is falling down, it can fall beyond the respective positioning – and fall into the world of *patala*, the world of the negative creatures, the entities and what have you. I am not going to dwell much on that, because some people may have ambivalent understanding of that. However, there are these warnings, and in some scriptures they talk about the warnings like, if you don't have the proper guidance - because what happens is that those entities they are not taking interest in a normal human being because there is nothing, there is “no meat on the bones” so to speak - there is nothing that they could be interested in. However, when an individual awakens, he becomes a very different playground; all of these things are rearranged, and he or she is much more powerful. So, if temptations are strong enough, sometimes these entities take possession of their individuality, and drag that individuality down below the human level of existence.

Historically, I wouldn't be surprised if some of the most demonic-like personalities were actually cases in the making, because falling beyond the - I am not going to start mentioning names here...

Rick: Well, everybody always brings up Hitler as a case in point – a powerful man, a lot of charisma – and yet, look at the fruit of his action.

Igor: Exactly, and Hitler is just one example, but there are many examples of when an individual falls victim - historically speaking - to the lower forces.

Rick: Hmm. Okay, so you are saying that to the average person this might not be such a relevant issue, but that for those that have risen to some degree of spiritual attainment there can be a vulnerability, because these lower forces would like to take them over, or usurp their power and use them for their own purposes, and so there can be a possibility of falling to a lower level perhaps than even the ordinary person just lives in routinely.

Igor: Sure, not only that. It is interesting that when *Kundalini* awakens, when *Prana Shakti* starts to move, we all have a different set of circumstances to deal with and we all have different psychic setups. And certain predispositions in ourselves – as we've agreed earlier – get magnified. So if there were certain predispositions to dominate, to dominate in the very negative sense of that word, then certain predispositions to rule, certain predispositions to – just use your imagination - what have you.

Rick: Sure, just look at the newspapers.

Igor: Yes, exactly. So then what happens, is that these individuals, these beings, they attract those kind of energies – and the pact is very quickly being signed. However, it is interesting that scriptures for instance, reassure us that when the Consciousness reaches the heart level and is fully established there, then a fall is impossible. But everything up to that - is very much possible. So that *Kundalini* when it reaches the solar plexus, and renders one a profoundly charismatic and powerful and what have you individual, it can still deflate ... or worse.

X. When Consciousness has risen to the Heart: When Shakti sees Shiva for the First Time

Igor: However, for one whose consciousness risen to the heart level, he can no longer fall. I obviously don't have experience in that domain, because I haven't entered other beings' realms to investigate, but there could be truth to that because on the level of the heart, there is this beautiful analogy, that that is where Shakti sees Shiva for the first time. That is where energy actually recognizes itself for what it is – so the fall is impossible, because when recognizing who you are, you cannot fall from that. So that makes sense, that before that, one is still in the realm of the very much egocentric universe, very much in the divisive universe. And although the heart region is not necessarily a unity yet, but it is there that the glimpses of unity, or the glimpses of the energy and its source recognizing - are directly perceptible. So the scriptures say that Shakti goes wild there, because She sees the Beloved, and nothing else can distract Her attention. And indeed, indeed – the attention becomes incredible; your level of attention is one-pointed.

Rick: It is interesting because in the western literature we have stories of making a pact with the devil, and you get certain powers or gifts, or abilities or wealth - or whatever - by virtue of this pact with the devil, but eventually you have to pay it off so that could be...

Igor: Sure, Faust and Mephistopheles isn't it?

XI. The Necessity for Guidance from a Qualified Teacher

Rick: That is the principle you are talking about. So the practical point here is that, practically, what can one do to secure that level from which falling is impossible? Would you say proper guidance from a qualified teacher or what?

Igor: That is a very good question – a very good question. First of all, there has to be a degree of unwavering, uninterrupted witness to check every tendency that is arising, and get on top of them, or “nip it in the bud,” as they say. If that quality is there, then one would be able to see those tendencies in their infancy or manifested state; but if one does not have that discrimination yet, then the danger is real. Obviously, the presence of the qualified master is very important, because the Grace of the master alone is a saving Grace. That is what saves the day, because very often the master engulfs the aspirant who is still wavering at that stage, and gives that protection. But since a lot of people out there today have ambivalent understanding of the role of the guru and master – and we all want to be masters of our own before we are ready to do so - we all want to. “The guru is within, I am one with the guru so why do I need the guru? Let's just do it on our own. So-and-so did it, why can't I do it?”

It is preferable to have that reassurance, at least at the stage when these things are a possibility.



Rick: It is interesting that the two gurus that I have had the most experience with, Maharishi and Amma, with both of them people go on for years and decades, and there isn't a lot of focus on awakening, "Come on - awaken!" It is more like all of this purification, do this service, and build these houses, and do this meditation and there is all this preparatory stuff, and some people criticize that. In fact the point you brought up in one of your questions about dismissal by some of the Neo-Advaita people of doing spiritual practices at all, and some people say, "Well, they're just keeping a carrot dangling in front of you forever. Why don't they just awaken you? Why is there year after year after year of preparatory procedures?"

I think what we've been talking about for the last hour is an illustration of that – that you really do have to build a foundation, and maybe it can be taken too far, when maybe some people can get stuck in preparatory phases, when it's time to realize and wake up. But on the other hand, it seems there can never be enough preparation in a sense, for the greatest degree of safety to be observed.

Igor: You said it all just now, Rick. You've just said it. You have explained very well why great spiritual teachers do not whack you on the head with self-realization. In fact, I see it often as a sign of very young teachers, very young masters – and it doesn't matter what their age – the young master could be at the age of 80, and the mature master could be at the age of 25. After all, Adi Shankara was teaching all of these old men sitting around him and this teenage figure - because Consciousness obviously has very little to do with what the physiological body embodies.

So this obsession with self-realization, enlightenment, Unity Consciousness – to me it sounds a little bit like teenagers being obsessed with sex that they have just discovered. It is not at all trying to give it a diminutive example; it is a bit like that. When something happened, and you just want to relate that, so that seasoned warrior doesn't talk about killing; he talks about the wonders of life. Likewise, a wise teacher in my view, a wise teacher helps the householder to run his house, helps a peasant working in the field – not directly working in the field with the peasant, but helps uplift that peasant so that his life becomes easier.

Rick: In other words, he meets people on their own level and provides instruction and...

Igor: More than – not only that – that yes, and more, because this life still carries in its own veins, through its own channels - through the channels of relative existence – and that life is glorious in its own right. So you cannot just suddenly say, "Pft, everyone is asleep – pft! Pft! Wake up! Smell the coffee. Okay, you are nothing. All this is nothing, we live in nothingness, don't worry." It doesn't work like that. In fact, the more one realizes this wonder of life, the more one sees the sense in all this which is considered to be an illusion, the more one sees that all of this is actually wonderful! All of this is beautiful! All of this has perfect sense!

So this is why the real *jagadgurus*, the world teachers, they give stages of existence, they prop you up, they help you so that where you are – off your mat, off your cushion, off your meditative or what have you inquiry practices – you are happy where you are, rather than walking around like, "Blast! I'm walking in this *maya*; instead I should just think hard and suddenly wake up! What's wrong with me?" No...



Rick: Maharishi said something like that to me one time. I was up on the stage making a fool of myself, and reading something out, and he kind of interrupted and he suddenly said, “Every day is life. Don’t pass over the present for some glorious future.” It was a good lesson, it was like you have to be happy where you are, and that becomes the stepping stone to the next day - the next stage.

Igor: Absolutely, that is why Ayurveda was given to the west first. That is why he brought Ayurveda, because first of all, balance your physiology – know what you eat, know what you are – realized or not realized, you are still in your physiology.

Do you know how many people that I know who have experienced high states of consciousness, and consider themselves perhaps masters, perhaps really realized masters? But they cannot help their aspirants in their day-to-day tasks to make their lives easier. They whack them on the head with the constant self-inquiry, with this constant point you out to the direct essence of experience, or point you out to the direct essence of who you are ... does that help your life? What will happen if the majority of people will realize? Who is going to bake the bread, who is going to sow the seeds, who is going to do all this stuff? You know? Let’s just face it.

Rick: Well, we could certainly have self-realized bakers and farmers and so on...

Igor: Yes, but the self-realization period goes through a profound period of stabilization; no integration.

Rick: Right.

Igor: The baker might decide, “I’m not a baker, I am Shiva! I don’t want to bake anything anymore! Why do I need to bake? I’m Shiva!” The wife walks out of the family, “I am no longer the householder; these children are not my children ... it’s Consciousness.”

You see, everything has its own place. So I don’t agree when people say, “The world needs to wake up.” The world is waking up on its own, and Consciousness can never - can never be homogenous in its expression in all human beings. It never was, it never will be. Even in the Golden Age that we hear about, that came to us from the dawn of the ages. When they talk about the Golden Age, they don’t say that everyone was realized - no. Everyone acted in accord with the laws of nature. They were *rishis*, they were saints and seers...

Rick: *Dharma*...

Igor: Exactly, everyone followed their *dharma* very well. You mentioned the word *dharma*; everyone was doing what they were born to do, and that is the definition of the Golden Age. Not that everyone is in Unity Consciousness.

Rick: Okay, I have like 3 more pages of questions here – and very specific ones that people have sent in - some of which we have covered, some of which we haven’t ... most of which we haven’t, and we’ve been going on almost 2 hours. I think our choices at this point are to either keep going and try to answer these as quickly as possible, or to do another interview - but it would have to be quite a while off because I have so many scheduled, and it would have to be in



the late fall or something - or, for you to do videos on these questions yourself, and put them online so that people can watch them. What do you think that we should do?

Igor: I don't mind, Rick. You are hosting, I am the guest so you have to call the shots.

Rick: Let's try to go through a few more of these, but we'll try to go through them quickly so that we can cover a lot and then you can obviously do videos later on. You could turn each one of these into a 15 minute if you wanted to.

Igor: Absolutely. No, as I said, those questions that we won't have time to cover, we will feature in the forthcoming podcasts, and perhaps will be subjects in upcoming webinars, because I just built a website for that particular purpose.

XII. What is it to be true to myself?

Rick: So here's one that is pretty common, as a lot of people have gotten involved with various spiritual groups and this can be useful but then again, groups always begin to take on a sort of a cultish quality and people begin talking the same way and dressing the same way, and so on. This person is saying, "A group can be useful, but how can I be true to myself and not lose my own identity in the identity of the group?" Also, there is a question here about the spiritual ego, becoming holier than thou, "I am spiritual, I know, I am aware, I am enlightened, I serve, I am the guiding light," and so on. What would you like to say about that?

Igor: It seems to me that the question deals with, "What is it to be true to myself?"

Rick: To not let spirituality become a badge of honor, where you begin to see yourself as higher than the guy who checks out your groceries or empties your trash.

Igor: Sure. Well, if I understand the question correctly, then obviously humility is in fact a sign of growing Consciousness – not the other way around. So if spiritual progress is followed by a sense of grandeur and some kind of sense of superiority, we know that is a certain stage – inevitable indeed, let's not pretend, let's not be dishonest - awakening gives one a sense of superiority. Let's be honest about it. "Oh wow! I'm awakened. Wow!"

Rick: Because of that ego thing you mentioned at the solar plexus *chakra*...

Igor: It doesn't matter. I don't have anything against ego and mind, all of these are beautiful faculties of Consciousness, without which it would be impossible to function in this world; in fact the world would not exist. So I for one don't have any problem with all this. Ego doesn't have to die - I don't believe in Eckhardt Tolle's formula. I believe that ego expands into infinity, rather than dies. The ego is not separate from the principle of individuation. Let's not confuse ego and egocentricity, ego and egoism. They are two different things; one is a quality of Consciousness, and the other is a quality we human beings attribute to it.

So, in terms of identity, how does one retain that identity when becoming part of any organization or any spiritual movement? Well, let's face it - whatever we do, we still have an



identity. We always have an identity. Whatever organization we are in – you know, if you work for a bank or an office, you have an identity of that bank at least while you are working there. Whatever your hobby may be – if you are rollerblading or a teaophile of a tea club, or some kind of other club, or what have you – you have an identity that goes with that club. So it is a mistake to think that because of the spiritual organization, that you are somehow trading your individuality, trading your identity for the identity of the organization. We cannot exist as human beings, as social beings in this world without some form of identity – it’s impossible. It is the way that life is on these relative levels of existence.

So my reply to that would be that your real identity should travel the immediate course of inquiry, which takes you within. And when it takes you within, then it doesn’t matter what identity the movement has - any movement or any club. Your identity is always there, and it is for you to rediscover it. So spiritual movements or organizations cannot be obstacles for that. In order for true individuality to blossom, the petty individuality has to be dropped at some point. It is a paradox of life; in order to become who you are, you have to trade your individuality. But we don’t want to do that; sincerely speaking, not many of us want to do that. We want to have the cake and we want to eat it too. I hope that...

Rick: That helps. Sounds like you are saying that it wouldn’t hurt to somehow learn to be a bit of a chameleon; if you’re working in a bank, you dress a certain way and you talk a certain way, and if you’re in a spiritual group the same thing may be true - but just don’t lose your integrity in the process.

Igor: Yes, absolutely.

XIII. Can Contemporary Yoga lead to Awakening and Emancipation?

Rick: Here’s one - how can yoga as it’s practiced today in the west, with the main emphasis on *asanas*, lead to awakening and emancipation - or can it?

Igor: Well, first of all you cannot put a hold on – Consciousness is omnipresent and it is not non-local, so emancipation can take place anywhere at any time. So, in the same respect, yes it can; but more specifically, it cannot, because those mentioned methodologies as *asanas*, which are being emphasized at the expense of all other aspects of yoga, all other limbs of yoga, cannot actually lead to anything other than what *asanas* are. Yes, they are incredibly powerful, they work directly on the endocrine system. If *asanas* are done properly - not in the fashion of aerobics, not in the fashion of how it is often done in this yoga, that yoga, I don’t want to mention the **adjectives? 2:07** of - but when *asanas* are done properly, the physiology benefits, the mind benefits, and the whole overall being benefits. But whether that leads to emancipation is another question, because in the process, the practice with the sole emphasis on *asanas* could actually reinforce the link between the physiology and the ego. It can actually strengthen that identity, when at early stages, that identity has to be relinquished.

So there is this contradiction in the contemporary rendering of yoga. I see that many speakers are raising these questions now. Many, many authorities on yoga are saying that, “Invent



another word – just leave yoga alone,” because it has its own lineage, tradition and purpose. Introduce another – that’s how I see it.

XIV. What is Time – is it an Illusion?

Rick: Okay, good. Someone asked a question about time – it is often just dismissed as an illusion, but they thought of it maybe as a mysterious spiritual force. Do you have anything to say about that?

Igor: Yes, I think I spoke about time in one very short podcast, reflecting on the idea that space today is no longer seen as devoid of Consciousness floating separate, in itself – matter. Many, many scientists give the possibility that space is conscious, or Consciousness itself. But space is not separate from time; time and space are interlinked forever. In fact, the universe unfolds in space and time, so that in itself presupposes the possibility that time is conscious of itself, just as space is conscious of itself. And indeed, the Vedic concept of time is not linear – it is concentric – time is seen as *kala*. It is also seen as one of the most principal *shaktis*, the *Kali*, the black Mother; not the *Kali* as the *Kali Yuga*, but *Kali* as the mother who consumes her own children. She devours her own children in order to deliver them, so this impersonification of time as a living entity is fascinating to me personally.

I see that we live in a time where we are still coming out of that reductionistic view of the universe, of ourselves, of everything, that was dominated by the Age of Reason, sometime from the seventeenth century up to the beginning of the twentieth century - but it is no longer applicable. It is a much more interesting universe that we live in in terms of the conceptual understanding, much more open to the unexpected possibilities.

To me, time is one of those; time is not an illusion as we are accustomed to thinking of it, that it doesn’t exist because it is simply being taken as a rotation of the earth around the sun, which gives us these digits of time. But if you think of time as a greater reality that contains everything in itself, when there is no past, no future, and no present but as a whole; then what we experience, is the figments of this reality which gives us the experience of one-to-one moments. But it all happens all at once ... I’m not sure if I am actually qualified to answer that question. I am just as I said, reflecting.

XV. The Subtlety of God Consciousness and Unity Consciousness

Rick: Yes, you are taking a good stab at it. I’ll go on to another one; I’m skipping a bunch of questions, because you can give videos on a lot of these. Someone mentioned that they’d like to hear you talk a little bit about the subtlety of God Consciousness and Unity Consciousness.

Igor: It is an interesting question, because recently I was trying to explain that in a personal conversation, and the subtlety is actually in the degree of appreciation. In God Consciousness, the appreciation is still there in terms of the appreciation of the reality, as opposed to the every



given experience. In Unity Consciousness, that appreciation is annihilated totally. In a way, it is like a childlike state, where you no longer have the witness of every experience. It is as if you have gone back to experiencing life as it is, in terms of what it is. There is nothing - nothing that you can say that, "I am experiencing this," in the midst of this experience. The merge is so complete, that it is almost as if there are two different polarities, between total ignorance and the Unity. In total ignorance, you take everything for granted, and in Unity Consciousness, in a state of Unity, you take everything for granted again, because you see everything from within yourself; you don't see things as a witness anymore, because the witness - the subject-object - has merged to such a degree, that the universe is no longer perceived, but projected. I don't know if that makes sense...

Rick: That is a good phrase, yes.

Igor: So this universe is as if you close and you open your eyes so to speak, and whatever you perceive, it is not due to the seer-seen and the experience, but is only due to the projection out of yourself. That projection comes directly from the spiritual heart.

Rick: Nice.

Igor: There is no possibility of even knowing of what it is, because it is what it is.

Rick: I get it; so there is a kind of innocence and a spontaneity, and almost a childlike simplicity in one's...

Igor: Completely. Completely, and it is also so natural - so natural [that there is no possibility of] - because it is no longer an experience. It is no longer an experience, because the world seen is projected outwardly as yourself. So it is no longer perceived as yourself, as in God Consciousness where you see yourself in the others, you see God everywhere. In Unity Consciousness you don't see anything anymore in terms of other than yourself, so there is not even a possibility of seeing "other," but it is very tricky to put it into language.

Rick: I presume that you are speaking in terms of your own experience here? You're not just extrapolating from things you have read, right? You've progressed through these stages of experience?

Igor: Well, I would hope if I was extrapolating I would be a bit more coherent! No, I was trying to be as simple and as direct...

XVI. The Nature of all Experience: It takes place in the Spiritual Heart

Igor: To give a further example, some teachers when they talk about the nature of experience - like this English teacher that you have interviewed about the nature of experience. He was going around and around, and it was very painful to watch you two talk - but what he was saying, is "Yes, it is true that all experiences are taking place within ourselves, but when it takes place, it takes place within the heart." So that experience only takes place in the heart, in any case. For



instance, the direct experience of that, the most direct experience of that, is unfortunately not often pleasant – and I will give you an example.

If you are in the areas which are prone to tremors, earthquakes - something that takes your breath away, and your heart skips a beat - before your mind or intellect registers what is happening, because that is the nature of an earthquake, when the earth starts to shake, the core of you is shaking. But instantaneously when that tremor happens, you feel Shiva in your heart; you feel it as directly and as palpably as anything. But it lasts such a short time, that it is immediately overshadowed; “Oh, this is an earthquake - I ought to do this, I need to run!”

In the same way, let’s say you are somewhere quiet, and your child, or your relative, or someone whose voice you know, screams in the background – whatever that scream of joy or fear or excitement – you don’t hear it at all in terms of a sound perceived through the faculties of the ear. You hear that sound straight here (points to the heart), it is a physical sensation. Actually, in the Kashmir Shaiva tradition, they give these examples that I gave you now, but they give their own examples, of how to experience Shiva immediately here (in the heart); this is a proof that Consciousness is not separate for a second.

However, these moments are always overshadowed, because our subordination of experience, cognition and response is so fluid that it literally floods over this initial “Wow,” that initial taking you – and it takes you straight in the heart. Then you know, it is actually here (in the heart), it is a physical sensation.

Remember that please, Rick, and you will experience it; when something happens, you will recognize it here (in the heart). It happens for some reason, usually when something terrifying happens, because it strips us bare; the faculties they fail to act in time, and we experience that first (points to the heart). On hearing the news for instance, on hearing some profound news; you might have that, “Ah!” and your heart skips a beat. That is the nature of all experiences, because that happens in the spiritual heart.

Rick: I don’t completely understand the point that you are making, but I’m not sure I want to push it. It’s like if I take an example, let’s say I fall off my bicycle or something, and there is the instinctive attempt to break my fall, maybe there’s some pain, and all that. When I had that experience last time, which was about 10 years ago, I noticed at the same time as I was going through all of that, there was a deep inner silence that was just almost observing that situation and didn’t get influenced or shaken by the trauma. Are you talking about anything like that, or is this something completely different?

Igor: It is different; not completely, but it is different. What you are talking about is still Witness Consciousness, it is still witnessing. It is still Witness Consciousness, and what I am talking about is...

Rick: Let’s say you feel off of your bicycle. How would you describe the experience?

Igor: I would just scratch myself as much as you did, it is much the same. What I am trying to say is that you walked somewhere in nature on a path that you haven’t been before, and you don’t know there is this absolutely steep drop, and you just came to it, and you looked there and



you had that “Whoa!” (Draws a breath in, as if in fear). Before “whoa,” what happened is your heart felt it here (points to heart).

Rick: Yeah, and if you were hooked up to electrodes, they’d probably show your heart rate increase.

Igor: No – that is after. The heart rate stopped. Everything stopped. I am saying that it is very subtle, but it is very simple, and you know it all the time, because the experience then takes over. Then the experience takes over, “Oh wow, it’s deep, it’s this, it’s that,” and all of the safety mechanisms. Before the safety mechanisms, before anything can actually register, that sensation of “Ahhh” (draws in breath quickly) that happens on let’s say receiving some unexpected news. I gave an example with the tremors, because I was born in a highly seismic area in Uzbekistan, and I had many of those experiences, so I related to that – I know exactly what it means when your heart stops for a split second, and you feel the intensity here (in the heart), and you are nothing but Consciousness. You are nothing - you are just this Consciousness – there is no experience whatsoever. Instantaneously, it flows into the experience which the mind interprets and that is overshadowed. The reason that is given, is that moment gives you the direct perception of your essential being.

Rick: That is why you brought this whole point up, to give people an example they could relate to, that in that moment they have a direct taste of their essential being.

Igor: Exactly.

Rick: And what you are saying, of course, is that in enlightenment that wouldn’t just be a momentary thing that happened under some unusual circumstance like an earthquake, but it would be an all-time phenomenon.

Igor: And what happens is that there are different levels of *Samadhi*.

There was one question about bliss for instance, and the levels of bliss, and I will skip it, and I will talk about it in great detail, as it is an interesting question. Since our creation is permeated with bliss, there is nothing that is devoid of bliss. The three states that we operate through – the waking, the dreaming, and the deep sleep – are all permeated with bliss but this is a very gross bliss, and then it progressively becomes subtler. Subtler, subtler, subtler – to Brahmananda, to Chidananda – to not Satchidananda, it is another term for that; to the ultimate bliss which is bliss beyond anything. So that experience, that which you experience is the bliss, but it is so profound it annihilates anything else.

For instance, going back to your bike example. That could be there, that before you fell off of your bike or even before anything happened, there was this” Oh” - you know you are going to fall, you had that sensation, and then the fall, Witness Consciousness, and then what have you.

Rick: Okay.

Igor: Do you see what I mean?

Rick. It’s getting clearer, but I am a little fuzzy on why you brought this point up, and what exactly you’re trying to convey here, but I feel like we shouldn’t belabor it too much.



Igor: Sure. We'll leave it there. One day you will walk somewhere, and a seagull will fly over your head and scream loudly. There will not be a seagull above your head screaming – you will hear the sound here (in the heart), but before you will recognize it as a sound, you will feel yourself for a split second, as your Self. This is what I was trying to say.

Rick: Okay, that helps. That makes it clearer. Good. I had to skip a lot of your questions, just because we can't go on for 3 or 4 more hours, but there is a lot of beautiful material here. In conclusion let me just say that you have a YouTube channel and a new website also, right? You are very interactive with people.

So Igor has already made a whole bunch of YouTube videos, and he continues to make them, and will be doing webinars and all sorts of things. Apologies to those people whose questions that I didn't raise – he'll be answering all of these questions in YouTube videos, and perhaps discussing them in the webinar he is going to be doing. I'm sure that people can send in even more questions, and you'll address those too.

So I just want to thank you. Your voice is starting to get a little hoarse, as we have been going on for quite a while.

Igor: I have been sipping green tea, not water and green tea actually makes it more hoarse.

Rick: So let me wrap it up. So, I have been speaking with Igor Kufayev who lives in Costa Rica these days, but who has a presence on the internet so that you can interact with him wherever you may be. This of course has been one in an ongoing series of interviews that I do regularly, a new one each week. [Blurb on batgap.com cut here] Thanks Igor.

Igor: Thank you, Rick. It was a great pleasure, and I really enjoyed it.