

Francis Lucille - BATGAP Interview (#147)

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{BATGAP theme music plays}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer and my guest this week is Francis Lucille. Francis is a spiritual teacher of the tradition of Advaita Vedanta, nonduality. He became a disciple of Jean Klein, a French Advaita teacher whom he met in 1975. This was the beginning of a close association that lasted until the death of his friend and spiritual master in 1998.

Jean Klein's own guru, Panditji Rao, whom he met in India in the 1950s, was a college professor in Bangalore, who taught Sanskrit and belonged to a lineage of traditional Advaita Vedanta teachers.

Francis and I have just been attending the Science & Nonduality Conference in California, and so I thought it might be appropriate to start by defining a few terms that are commonly used in this genre, so that we understand how we are each using the terms and so that our listeners also understand. So that if we mention a word like 'enlightenment' or 'awakening' or whatever, we all have a clear understanding of the sense in which we're using the term.

So let's start with 'nonduality,' since this was the nonduality conference and there are hundreds of teachers running around teaching nonduality, and writing books about it and everything, how would you define 'nonduality,' Francis?

Francis: Nonduality could be put in a nutshell by saying that, there is only one reality. It is a deep intuition that we all have. It's this deep intuition, for instance, that is at the origin of physicists seeking the unity behind the diversity, the reality, the vacuum, the physical reality of the universe, etcetera.

It is also the same intuition that there is one single reality that gives birth to religion and the notion of a Creator, of a reality in which we live, we move, we have our being. So this intuition that there is only one reality cannot be proven.

Rick: Can or cannot be?

Francis: Can *not* be proven. It is something that we all know, as Kant would say, "a priori," an a priori knowledge, just as we cannot prove that there is consciousness. We all *know* we are conscious, but there is no scientific

evidence of it as we can prove gravity by allowing for an object to fall. Consciousness is such an intimate experience that there is no objective evidence of it however, if one will negate the reality of consciousness, that there is consciousness, everybody who could hear him saying that would laugh at him because they are hearing him saying that, which would exactly prove how wrong he is.

Rick: Right.

Francis: So nonduality could be summed up by saying, there is only one reality.

Rick: When we say that that can't be proven, usually, I guess, we consider things that are commonly experienced by anyone, and *repeatably* experienced, as provable. For instance gravity - we all experience gravity, we've all stumbled and skinned our knees, and dropped things and so on, but there aren't too many people around who can say with certainty that they have experienced consciousness in its pure essence, or its pure form. But what if that were to become the norm in society, I wonder if we would then say, "Sure, we've all verified the existence of consciousness - you and you and you and you - and even though I can't hold it out as an object, it's as plain to all of us as the lamp," and therefore we accept it as readily as we accept the existence of gravity?

Francis: Let's be clear about it. I don't think that the fact that there is consciousness, that we are conscious, is in doubt; everybody, everybody, it seems to me, would agree that there is consciousness, that we are conscious. The disagreement would be as to the *nature* of this consciousness, and on one very specific point: most of us believe it to be limited, to be personal.

Most of us believe that there is one consciousness for each body-mind entity. And in fact, they believe that, and at the same time they believe that there is a full body of evidence in support of this belief. So they believe that this belief is a fact and not a belief. But in fact, when we try to find out what evidence there is, if any, that consciousness is limited, separate, etcetera, strangely enough it turns out that we find no evidence whatsoever. This belief, we have inherited from our ancestors at a very young age - from culture, education, parents, etcetera - and we take it for granted, simply, without questioning it

Rick: I was going to ask you why you think nonduality is so popular, but you just gave me an idea for adding an additional question to that, which is that, why do you think people are so fascinated with the possibility that consciousness *isn't* just an individual phenomenon or an epiphenomenon of brain functioning?

For instance, the cover of *Newsweek* recently had a story about a, I guess, a neurosurgeon who had meningitis and he went into a coma. And they were monitoring his brain constantly throughout the coma and they had proof that his brain really wasn't functioning; the cortex was shut down. And he had been a skeptic, materialistic kind of guy, but he came out of that reporting an

incredible experience that he had had, when he was in that coma, with vivid detail. And so the cover of *Newsweek* is “Heaven is Real,” and people love that sort of stuff. And this is turning more into a statement than a question but I’m sure you can elaborate, because I think we have an intuitive sense that we are more than just this flesh-bound individual.

And that’s why this conference is so popular and nonduality is so [popular]; people are looking for some access to something bigger than the confines of their individual existence.

Francis: Yes, and in fact, when we live under the assumption, as 99.9999% of mankind does, that “consciousness is limited and therefore dependent on the body, and therefore mortal,” there is something in us that revolts against that. If it were absolutely true, there wouldn’t be any revolt. You see, the fact that there is some revolt shows somehow that there is something fishy about it.

Rick: Good point.

Francis: And that as long as this problem won’t have found its solution, we will be seeking, there will be a sense of lack. This sense of lack is expressed in different ways, at different times, on different paths of the world, in different civilizations. It may be seeking God as long as I am separate from God, or it can be seeking the ultimate reality of nature, or the phenomenon, as scientists do. But there is a common goal, a common mission of being born as a human being, which is this search for the truth.

Rick: Yeah, I agree, it seems to be as innate as the impulse to breathe.

Francis: Now, what I’m not certain of, as you said, that nonduality has become very popular.

Rick: Well, from our perspective it seems to be because we are at conferences like this, but it’s definitely not mainstream.

Francis: Exactly, in fact, it’s a relatively *timely* word.

Rick: Yeah, out of 7 billion people.

Francis: I would like to add something to complete the definition of nonduality. I said it could be put in a nutshell by saying that there is only one reality, which is, as a result of that, the reality of everything, right?

Rick: Yes.

Francis: Now this seems to be very innocent and almost tautological statement or axiom – there is only one reality, but if we go into the details of its implications, we find stunning things. For instance, if there is only one reality, which is the reality of everything, consciousness, this fact of experience, and if we ask, “What is the reality of consciousness?” then the question, “What is the reality of consciousness?” could be put slightly differently by asking, “What is it, or who is it, that is really conscious?”

“Who is conscious in reality,” or “What is the reality that is conscious?” if there is only one reality, the reality that is conscious must be the same in all beings. Therefore the reality, as we speak, which is conscious through this body and through that body, must be the same reality if there is only one reality.

Rick: Yeah, and which again, as you said, has all sorts of implications. We were talking about the universal tendency to seek for deeper experience or deeper reality; it’s been a long time since I’ve felt that I was just a flesh-bound individual and nothing more. But people who feel that way, there must be quite a fear because you know, I’m 63, I might be feeling like, “I’m going to cease to exist in 20 years,” you know? But of course there’s no such sense; I feel like I could live to a 100, I could die tomorrow, really doesn’t matter, so there’s a kind of ease and security.

Francis: Exactly, exactly, and that is [the] peace precisely that we all seek, knowingly or unknowingly. Unknowingly in ignorance, knowingly when we are on the path, and then gradually we get established in it and then life becomes just a celebration of this presence, of this reality.

Rick: Yeah, so if consciousness is the reality of all things, then obviously it’s not just the reality of you and I, it’s not just that it’s the same consciousness speaking through us both, but it’s also the reality of the couch, you know, and of the lamp.

Francis: Yes, and that’s why I express it to be more precise [than that]. Although it is true to say consciousness is the reality of all things, I think it’s better to express this deeper and deeper thing: there is only one reality and therefore, that which is the real consciousness *is* this reality, you see?

Because there is only one reality, people can easily admit to it or they can say, “Yes, there is one reality, that is [the] reality of subatomic particles, that is the reality of the distant galaxies and of this entire universe, that is the reality of matter, of everything I touch, I know, and that is also the reality of this body. And if it is the reality of everything, it is also the reality of this mind.”

But what is the reality of this mind if not what we call consciousness, you see? That’s when everything comes together, because up until that moment I thought that this reality which is very intimate, and it is, was not only intimate but private, which it isn’t.

Consciousness is intimate but not private; we all share it.

Rick: Yeah, we share consciousness obviously, but then you know, there seems to still be an individuation which is very convincing. If let’s say you bang your finger with something, the pain is felt there. And although I might feel compassionate for you, it’s not felt here.

Francis: Well, in fact, in fact, it is not true that the pain is felt there.

Rick: Well would you rather I hit the table with a hammer or hit your finger with a hammer?

Francis: Well think about it. When you feel the pain, you say, "The pain is felt here," right? But where is this here?

Rick: This body, the body feels pain.

Francis: No, the body is felt.

Rick: Yeah.

Francis: The body is not that which feels. The body is located in space, but how do you know that because the body is located in space, consciousness is?

Rick: I'm not jumping to that conclusion.

Francis: Right, yes, but when we say, "The pain is felt there and not here," we *assume* that consciousness is *there* feeling the pain, and not here.

Rick: Oh, I see what you mean. It's sort of paradoxical because I'm agreeing that consciousness is everywhere, and ultimately is everything, but that then there is the ocean but there's still waves rising up, and this wave experiences its ...

Francis: But the problem is when we say "the wave experience." The wave doesn't experience; consciousness experiences the wave, you see? and that's a fine point. When we say "the wave experiences," the wave is the mind, and we identify consciousness with the mind.

What is important is what they call in India 'discrimination' - discrimination between the perceiver and the perceived, between the transient and the permanent, and between consciousness and the objects of consciousness.

Look, right now we are filming this dialogue and there are cameras there. And we could also be webcasting this dialogue, right? And the fact [is that] what is seen through these cameras is this room here, in San Rafael, California, and based on what is *seen* we could say that that which is perceived is perceived in San Rafael, California, but in fact, the webcast can be perceived anywhere in the world.

So the fact that that which is shown is localized somewhere, doesn't imply that that which perceives is localized at the same spot. It implies that some instrument, through which it is perceived, like the camera, is localized at the same point, but not necessarily that the receiving end, if you will, is localized at the same point.

In fact, in the case of consciousness, it is not in space or time; it is nonlocal. But we make this very simplistic assumption, which is extraordinarily simplistic, not simple; simplistic.

Rick: I have a friend who likes to use the phrase that “We’re all sense organs of the Infinite.”

Francis: We are not; we are the infinite who senses through this, through all this ...

Rick: Right, perceiving through various sense organs. Yeah, so it’s a matter of turning it around, and the habit is to sort of look at it from the individuated point of view. Okay, good.

Wake up my iPad again here. Now I’ve heard you use the terms ‘self realization,’ ‘awakening’ ‘enlightenment,’ as I understood you when I was listening to recordings, you use the term ‘enlightenment’ as with reference to sort of the first clear glimpse of pure awareness, or pure consciousness, or whatever you want to call it. Whereas then terms like ‘realization’ would be a more stabilized, mature state, is that correct?

Francis: Yes, yes. Let’s assume someone is digging for water for a well, and as they are digging or drilling deeper and deeper, at some point they encounter wet soil, if you will. And then finally at some point there is a ...

Rick: There’s a gusher.

Francis: Yes, there is a geyser, you know, and so there is real water. And when the water that was there under pressure surges, for instance in this metaphor, that would be enlightenment. There are glimpses prior to that, when we feel the dampness. They are glimpses of proximity, they are very important.

But the real turning point takes place with the realization that consciousness is universal, that that which is in me perceives, this seemingly ordinary consciousness, is in fact the eye of God, through which God sees Its creation. And so that’s the turning point, because there is revelation of the immortality of what we are, of the infinity of what we are, of the absolute splendor of what we are, absolute love, and the revelation of absolute happiness, absolute peace and happiness.

So in the revelation that that which we have been seeking all along finally has been found, that’s the end of the question right there. Up until that is reached, there might be seeming stops, but the quest will never end unless we have really found the full enchilada of that which we were seeking.

Rick: The full crepe. And obviously when you’re saying this, you’re referring to a very deep, rich experience; you’re not referring to some sort of intellectual notion of it?

Francis: No.

Rick: I interviewed a very sweet man about a couple of months ago who had been a Trappist monk for decades, and he had this very profound awakening and after a while he decided it was time for him to leave the monastery. And

when I interviewed him he was out, but no one knew about him, and I interviewed him and a couple of weeks later he emailed me and he said, "I'm still getting probably 40 or 50 emails a day from people asking me questions, who I would guess have maybe had a momentary glimpse into the absolute reality, or at least a relatively clear conceptual grasp of it, and then it fades and disappears. It seems that many then cherish a memory of this experience and form conceptual, philosophical beliefs around the memory. They then try to convince anyone who will listen that they are fully enlightened, which I am often relatively sure they are not. I try to be gentle and kind to people and quietly suggest that they may have more work to do, but many won't listen to me at all and become very defensive, and try to prove to me that they are more awake than I, which maybe they are, and I really don't care or know, frankly."

And so I mention this and take the time to read it because I kind of see this a lot in my interacting with people, in this milieu. There are a lot of people who seem to grasp an intellectual sense of what you're talking about, and then mistake that understanding for the realization to which it only points.

Francis: You are absolutely right, and it seems to me to be one of the major differences between the traditions in Buddhism or Advaita or in Christianity, for that matter, or in Sufism, etcetera. In the tradition, the first glimpse, even a total glimpse, was usually on purpose played down by the teacher, by the master.

There is this story, a Zen story which I love, so I'm going to take the time to [say it]. [It's of] this monk who has this satori and he goes to the roshi, to the master, and says, "Master, I had this experience." And the master said, "Ah no, that's not satori, come on, go back to the kitchen."

So the guy goes back to the kitchen but you know, the splendor, the revelation is still with him. So he struggles with it and after a few weeks he asks for a new meeting with the teacher, and he said, "You're *sure* it was not satori? I mean, it was so pure, I feel so, so free." And the master said, "No, it's not satori."

The three months later he asks again for an interview, and he says, "Are you really sure it was not satori?" And then the master said, "No, it was not satori." And then the student says, "You know what? You keep your satori and I keep my non-satori," and then the master said, "Aha ha! It was satori!!"

I don't know why I went into this tangent but yeah, in the tradition, this story shows among other things, that in the tradition, the satori itself was kind of kept under the rug so that the end game is really to be established in peace and happiness. It doesn't matter how we get there. It can be by relatively small, incremental satoris.

It can be that although a glimpse contains potentially the totality of what needs to be seen, and goes deep into the ultimate, into the revelation, the

mind comes right away, after, and kind of hides the revelation again; of course it is impossible to hide it completely. And then gradually through the post-enlightenment sadhana, if you will, like a diamond gradually gets freed from all the dirt that surrounds it, and then gets cut to reveal the light within and the beauty, it takes some time for this post-enlightenment sadhana to lead to this being established in peace and happiness, or at least as I often say, to be established 99% of the time. Because if you are happy 99% of the time, compared to a situation where you were unhappy 99% of the time, it makes a ten to the four[th power] difference.

Rick: You're getting your money's worth at that point. I imagine there's also something that has to take place in the nervous system, or to this culturing, so that this thing can become stable. There must be changes in the brain taking place ...

Francis: And in the body. I don't use the expression 'the brain,' but let's say in 'the mind' - habits, belief systems in the mind.

Rick: Sure, well those have their physiological correlates.

Francis: But also mechanisms of defense and aggression in the body, tensions in the muscle, tension in the organs, and even at the cellular level because that's a basic level. Years of being the slave of ignorance have put the body and the mind in a condition which is not its natural condition, not its normal condition. And it takes time then, although the main obstacle, the main road block has been removed by a total glimpse. To form the body and the mind to liberate themselves from these leftovers of ignorance, so that the fruit of the enlightened man who achieves liberation can be fully enjoyed.

Rick: So is it simply a matter of time, or is there - you mentioned the word sadhana, which generally means some kind of practice, so would there be something during that period that one could be doing to bring this about?

Francis: Definitely, definitely. In India they have this notion of a 'Karana guru.' The Karana guru is one who is established in peace and happiness, and can facilitate this transition from the enlightenment to being established in peace and happiness. It's like a friend on the bus who says, "Okay, I've been to the other side of the mountain. I can take you up to the summit and you can enjoy what is the valley and the oasis on the other side."

Rick: Yeah, so presumably this is what you do with your students? They've had an awakening or something, and then you're working with them to help them establish this as a permanent reality, right?

Francis: Yes, yes, we don't have really [students]; from my vantage point they are only friends.

Rick: Right, you call them friends, sure.

Francis: Because in fact, ignorance is not a problem; it's part of the way the game is being played. We are all the same consciousness, it's just that ... as they say in India, "To see God in everything and everything in God."

Rick: So what methodologies do you use to work with people?

Francis: You know, really, methodology comes mostly in the spirit of the moment. When a methodology comes from the past, that's 'tradition' with a small 't.' Tradition with a capital 'T'- there is only one. Traditions with a small 't,' with a lower case 't' - they are many.

Traditions with a lower case 't,' many of them, are attached to the form. The real tradition is a tradition, the transmission of this experience, which is formless, which is at the core, and which has to be the same for all men - Buddha, Jesus, Rumi, Shankara Shaya, Ramana Maharishi, Jean Klein. You name them, that's the same experience that they talk about. Meister Eckhart, that same experience.

And so then from this experience, the upayas, the skillful means of teaching will come in the spirit of the moment. Some [tools will come] because in your own sadhana your teacher has used them and so you like them. And so you use these tools as required, but others you create yourself. You know, just as you may use the racquet that your coach was using, but you may also try new racquets, and if one works for ...

Rick: Yeah, whatever works.

Francis: Whatever works.

Rick: So you mentioned the word 'transmission,' does transmission require physical proximity? Because you do webinars with people all over the world and they can't be in your immediate vicinity, as you were with Jean Klein.

Francis: There is something to immediate proximity that cannot be replaced, you know? If you have a loved one - your child or your loved one, of course you can meet them through Skype. It's much better than writing them a letter like in the old days when they had to wait one month, one month later they receive the letter then they write you an answer telling you, "I love you," and they say that in 20 pages, and one month later you receive the answer! Of course Skype is much better than that, but still there is a *huge* difference between seeing your loved child or your loved friend in person. It's the same here.

There is something, and I can't put my finger on it, there is something that is going to be discovered, and it's so, so vivid. When I would meet my teacher, and it didn't matter where I would sit - sometimes I would go to Paris or I would have go to Rome and just sit silently next to Jean, sometimes I had an urgent question about the truth [that] I would ask in the beginning, this question first, you know, I couldn't wait, and sometimes we would just have small talks. No matter what happened in these three situations, always I had

this extraordinary experience of feeling that the back of my head was expanding into space, and that my body was expanding into the room. It was strange, you know, and it was very sweet, and I could allow myself to dissolve, it was like taking a bath in peace.

So I have no rational explanation for that other than I became addicted to it. And as I said yesterday, at the end, this addiction at some point became my true nature. And the most important part of the teaching was in fact this silent presence.

Now, it may be, and I am certain that the modern means of communication through the Internet - like we are doing [here], taping this - because you don't have only the words on a piece of paper; you have the tone of the voice, you have the body language. So the wealth of information that gets transmitted through these means has more impact, if you will. You can see the sincerity and there is more to it than just words on a piece of paper.

Rick: Definitely.

Francis: You see, I've had people writing me things, very beautiful, that are pure. I remember this gentleman ... it was pure nonduality, it was a beautiful text ... and he asked for a meeting. He came to see me and he was so nervous when he entered. He spoke the entire time; there was not one single moment of stillness in him. It was his physical demeanor when I was in his presence, which was almost the opposite of what he wrote.

Rick: Maybe he was a little star-struck or something.

Francis: Yes, but you see, what I'm saying is this: that the words can only convey so much. The experience, what we are, speaks more loudly than what we say.

Rick: As you said with Jean Klein, I mean, you could just be sitting in silence or you could be talking about sports or something, but it was the presence that had the effect.

Francis: In the beginning I had a lot of questions and then there was this yoga, because the point was to also tame the body, to allow for the body to liberate itself from these leftovers. But then we would just enjoy a meeting in a restaurant, go to a concert, go to an exhibit, just relax, have breakfast together, clean the dishes, whatever, you know? It was just life.

Rick: But you still experienced that expansive thing?

Francis: But then it became ...

Rick: Then it became second nature ... right.

Francis: It becomes so natural that it's like the fish in the water. You know, I was experiencing this mostly when I would go back to him after a few weeks without seeing him, but then after a few days of being with him, or a few weeks, it was wonderful.

I was spending all my summers with him in a cottage in Switzerland, above Montreaux, and I was very happy. And towards the end of the stay - we would stay for the month of August - on the last week he says, "You know, sometimes it's so nice that we are somewhere, we spend a [whole] month." And in hindsight we realized, I was perfectly happy during this month.

And as he said that I realized, "Gee, that's what is just happening!" For this month, I was just like the fish in the water - no problem, you see? But it was not like a massive experience.

Rick: Right, just a natural state.

Francis: It was just natural ... "I haven't had any problems!" - any problem with relationships, or any problem with this or with that. Not that I *didn't* have, but nothing would have affected me; it was just the fish in the water. When the fish is in the water it's just a fish in water.

Rick: I think that's a good thing to emphasize, because a lot of times I think that people think of enlightenment or awakening as this massive experience, as opposed to just being a very relaxed, simple, natural state of fulfillment.

Francis: Exactly, and then it's a state of celebration. What matters then is the big game - the big game of life. You've been relieved from the seeking. You've been relieved from the fear. You are there just to enjoy the show. Sit, relax, enjoy the show, you know? That's the mission from that moment on.

And then follow your heart; follow your heart's desire. You enjoy playing tennis, play tennis. You enjoy playing music, play music. You enjoy reading again these stupid things about quantum theories that you used to read forty years ago? Go for it! Tomorrow it may be something else, but all of that against this background of peace and joy.

Rick: Yeah, which actually enables you to enjoy all these things so much more, because you're not encumbered by all the ...

Francis: Oh yeah, no pressure, exactly.

Rick: So it's really like ... I think you used the word 'celebration,' and also exploration. It's like sometimes people say, "End the seeking," and that kind of sounds like, "Well, I'm done, it's over," but in a way it's the beginning.

Francis: Exactly, exactly! Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Rick: And just touching back to a slightly previous point, I wonder - I don't want people to feel discouraged, everyone can find the opportunity if they sincerely desire it - but if you had had to have your whole relationship with Jean Klein over Skype, I wonder if it would have had the same effect as being able to really hang out with him?

Francis: No, no. You know, I didn't start with Jean Klein, I started with Krishnamurti. At the time there was no Internet, I was in France, there were not many books about these topics, it was much more difficult, but I was

ready. I *wanted* to see how someone who lived this experience, assuming Krishnamurti did, how he lived his ordinary life, because there is a great value in this exemplarity. And I would have taken a plane anywhere in the world, could I have had a one hour appointment with K, which didn't happen; you didn't know where he was ...

Rick: He probably had a lot of people around him at that point.

Francis: Yeah, and so for me, the desire for the truth, the love for the truth was so strong, that getting a plane ticket, or changing jobs, changing professions, which I did, was nothing, you see? But most people are full of fear and full of greed, and full of other problems that for them, seeking the truth is not the centrality in their lives. They are not at that stage yet.

Rick: It's not their first priority.

Francis: They are at the stage where seeking the truth is still a hobby among other hobbies. Eventually it will become their main profession, but for the time being it's just a hobby. And often they kid themselves into thinking that it is the most important thing. They *think* it but they don't put their money where their mouth is, if you will. They don't walk the walk.

Rick: Yeah, but one thing leads to the next, you know?

Francis: Absolutely! Oh, I'm not judgmental, no, no. It's already beautiful to be interested. You see, you cannot pull the plants to make them grow faster.

Rick: Right, right, yeah ... or pry open the flower or something. So we've *kind* of covered this, but it needs a little more exploration of this point. You've pretty much said that awakening is not necessarily an on-off, black-white kind of thing, like, "Okay, I awakened," but it's more like there are degrees of unfoldment, or stages of development. But in spite of that though, is there really some essential kind of watershed moment?

Francis: There is a watershed moment.

Rick: Yeah, an irreversible [moment].

Francis: Yes, and what I call enlightenment is this watershed moment when the universality of consciousness reveals itself.

Rick: And it cannot be forgotten again?

Francis: That will never get forgotten. Something at that moment opens up in the back of the mind. It's like something opening up in the ceiling and all of a sudden you see the sun, or you see the sky, and this hole will never close again.

But the impact in the mind of this nonevent, because it's not an event in time – it's still an event but not in time, so that's why I call it a nonevent – the impact in the mind, of this nonevent, may in the beginning seem to be innocuous. Like when you ... you can die as a result of getting a virus or you

can die as a result of being injured in a car accident. Now if you have a big injury in the car accident, you can really say, "Okay, I'm going to die and I know exactly when it happened," right?

Rick: Right, when the accident happened.

Francis: If you caught a virus you may say, "Oh, I'm going to die but I don't know *when* I caught this virus," right? So it's the same here: I'm going to die to ignorance but I don't know when I caught the virus, or I can trace it back to that moment;" it doesn't matter.

Rick: So in other words you're saying that some people, their awakening, they can mark it on the calendar and other people it just sort of sneaks up and maybe they only recognize it in retrospect.

Francis: In hindsight, exactly. But there is a distinct moment, and this distinct moment is this recognition of the universality of consciousness.

Rick: So you're saying that whether the whole thing seems to be rather sudden and dramatic or whether it seems to be very gradual and incremental, either way there is still, in both cases, a distinct moment.

Francis: There is a distinct moment. In fact, even before that, before that we have partial glimpses, and each of these partial glimpses is always instantaneous. So the process is never really gradual, as in continuous; it's incremental.

So it's increment by increment, each increment being a glimpse. What a glimpse is is an insight into consciousness. Now there are two kinds of insights: there are insights that tell us what consciousness is not, and these insights are very useful, but they are what I call the 'partial glimpses,' and there is a full or final insight, which is the revelation of consciousness itself in its universality.

So the partial glimpses tell us ... for instance, someone believes 'I am the body,' and then he hears a teacher saying, "You are not the mind, you are not the body; you are that which perceives it." And he says, "That's true! I'm not the body; I am that which perceives it." Is that a total glimpse? It's not, but is that a glimpse? Yes, because in order to realize that, he has to look into consciousness and compare it with the body, and make this distinction between the consciousness that perceives and the body which is perceived. And as a result he realizes, 'I am not the body.'

In other words, a partial glimpse is a negative glimpse: I realize what consciousness is *not*.

Rick: Right, but it's a significant milestone.

Francis: It's a milestone, it doesn't happen gradually; it's a sudden realization: 'I am not the body; I am the consciousness of the body.' So there are many glimpses like that, the same like 'I am not the thought,' or 'I am not the

mind.' Or another glimpse is where the teacher can say, "You know what, you think, but thoughts don't think. Thoughts are thought; therefore you are not the thought. You are not the 'I' thought," that's also a glimpse, you know?

And is that the final glimpse? No, not yet, but these glimpses are important in the sense that they pave the way to the first final glimpse. So now we are talking about various levels of teachers, there are teachers who teach the partial glimpses they had. There are teachers who can teach, who had the final glimpse, and they can take one to the final glimpse, provided that at that moment they are open. If the student is open then the thing takes place.

For the transmission to take place it requires openness of both sides. If the teacher is open only at certain moments, and the student ...

Rick: They might be out of sync.

Francis: Exactly. The beauty is that if the teacher is established, at the first moment of openness of the student, then the student gets cooked. So if the teacher is established in peace, the usually in the meeting something happens, there is a connection in love, a connection in something that touches us deeply [so] that we recognize it.

Rick: I was reading something you wrote where you talked about, that even during deep sleep, inner awareness is retained. And that interests me because I'm interested sometimes in whether there are litmus tests for degrees of awakening. So a person might think for instance, "I'm awakened now," and yet when they sleep at night, pure awareness is obliterated.

Was I correct in remembering that thing that you wrote and do you agree that there could be some kind of litmus test like that, which would sort of, in a way, certify that awakening has reached a certain degree or maturity?

Francis: Yes, there could be a litmus test that would kind of say that a certain degree of maturity [has been reached], but let's not forget that the real litmus test is happiness.

Rick: But a person might feel, "Hey, I'm really happy now," you know? ...

Francis: Yes, but to be established, to be free from the sense of lack, to wake every morning like this poem by Shankara Shaya, "When I wake up every morning, I celebrate."

You don't wake up; the body wakes up - "Ahhh." And you go back to sleep and you surrender the body to this presence, and you live in this perfume. *That's the goal, that's the goal - to live in this perfume.*

Now it's true that at some point it becomes clear to you that you never sleep, that you have this experience that you never sleep. But in my case, when I realized that I said, "Oh, that's true, I never sleep," but at the same time it became clear to me that that had been going on for years, you see? That I couldn't even trace it back to a first glimpse of truth, although that's where it

comes from, obviously, but it takes time for the mind to recognize something that has happened before.

The example I use is, let's assume that you have a headache and you take Advil, and then you [go] do [some] things. Two hours later you realize, "Oh, the headache is gone!"

Rick: But you don't know when it happened.

Francis: Exactly, you don't know when. You see it has happened sometime within the last two hours, but when precisely?

Rick: Interesting, and of course in this specific example it's not like you could be sleeping and thinking, "Oh this is cool, I have inner awareness even though I'm sleeping," because then you're not sleeping; you have waking state activity going on, you know, analyzing, whereas when you're really sleeping everything is shut down. And yet various people in different traditions have reported ... even the Bible says, "I sleep though my heart waketh," you know, *Song of Solomon*.

Francis: Something should be said though. In the Indian tradition they make a distinction between three states - the waking state, the dream state, and the deep sleep state. But there is a fourth state, Turia, which is the background of the three states. In other words, Turia is pure consciousness, is the only state without objectivity, without phenomena.

In other words, in what is called the 'deep sleep state,' there are still phenomena that take place, but no organized dreams. Now in fact, in meditation we can reach this deep sleep state *while* somehow the other senses are not completely shut down. The yogis they call it Yoga Nidra, the deep sleep of the yogi; it's a meditation in which you can reach the same resting quality you have in deep sleep. In other words, if one would take the electroencephalogram, the kind of wave you would be the kind observed during deep sleep, but you are not asleep.

Rick: We started this conversation talking about nonduality and saying that consciousness is everything, or everything is consciousness, whichever way we want to put it. And if we agree that that is the case, so it would seem that as spiritual progress continues, one would not only reach a state at which one lives the distinction between pure consciousness and relative phenomenon - and realizes that this body is not conscious and so on - but one reaches a state at which one would actually apprehend the consciousness value of the couch.

In other words, the real nonduality, in my understanding, would be complete, all-encompassing wholeness. There is a kind of preliminary state, it seems, at which there is sort of a separation of consciousness from world, but eventually the world is subsumed and it is all this one thing.

Francis: Yes, that is the saying of the Sufis: "Wherever the eye falls is the face of God."

Rick: Nice, and development of that is just a matter of time, of sadhana...?

Francis: Yes time, but sadhana... yes, yes, because you know, the sadhana under the supervision of your karana guru enables you to take shortcuts. There are experiments that can become direct exercises, the goal of which is precisely to dissolve these residues of separation at the level of the body. What you were saying, to experience everything in this seamless continuity requires the dissolution of some obstacles at the gut feeling level - those that create a seeming distance and separation.

And some of us have experienced fleeting moments of experience in which we are one with everything, but then this sense of separation comes back because the effect of the joint we were smoking has dissipated, you see? But what we are talking about here is to be knowingly established in this seamlessness, or in this seamless continuity.

And you may, if you are interested to enjoy the total fruit of this liberation, somehow conduct experiments that will reveal these obstructions and dissolve them.

Rick: What would those experiments be?

Francis: Many ... for instance, if you close your eyes, if you direct your attention towards the sounds and you ask yourself the question: where do these sounds appear? Do they appear inside me or outside?

You will realize that in fact at some point, you can perceive them as inside or as outside, but that the *real*, raw experience of it is that they are inside you. So now the question is: as we open our eyes, for instance, does the world appear inside or outside? Most of us would say, "It appears outside."

So in some tantric traditions, for instance, a lot of exercises are devoted to getting established in the same experience of interiority with regard to the sense of sight, which we [can usually] have more easily with the sense of hearing, you see?

In other words, just as we hear the world inside us with our eyes closed, then we can see the world inside us with our eyes open, and so then it makes a huge difference when we relate to people. There is something at the subtle level that if you are expanded in this way, it's a kind of "hugging the universe," you see, and it gets felt. And people will feel, "Oh, this person, I don't know why but I like this person," [or] "Gee, this person seems to have opinions that are totally different than mine, or no opinion at all whereas I have mine, but political opinions, religious opinions, whatever opinions on the football game, and in spite of that, this guy is nice!"

And I cannot account for that; that has to do with a more subtle level of realization that all is consciousness at the cellular level.

Rick: Yeah, that's nice, it's a nice example of it. There's this Indian saying, I don't remember the Sanskrit but ... "The world is my family."

Francis: Yeah.

Rick: And obviously these ways of perceiving are so deep-seated and long-standing that it's nothing you can expect to turnover overnight.

Francis: Yeah, but it depends on how much of your time and energy you want to devote. These exercises are very powerful, but on the other hand, there is powerful resistance that prevents us from even *trying* them out.

Rick: Yeah, that's interesting.

Francis: Or objections that come like, "Oh, what the guru is asking is so childish! I'm not going to go down that road, it is ridiculous!" That's why a lot of explanations and understanding is first required at the intellectual level to be *prepared* to do these seemingly childish experiments, to be confident that after all they may not be as "childish" as we thought they were.

Rick: Yeah, well it seems to me that if you've really committed yourself to a teacher, then you're going to do whatever he asks, more or less, you know ... [like if] he gives some technique like that.

Francis: You would be surprised.

Rick: Yeah, yeah. One thing I heard or read of you is [where] you used the expression that , "The body is expanded to the size of the universe and contains all things." May I ask, is that how you experience your body, and how would you describe [that]?

Apparently you are not referring to the six foot body that I see sitting in the chair; you're referring to some kind of other ...

Francis: That's how you perceive the body itself.

Rick: Really? Expanded to the size of the universe and contains all things?

Francis: Meaning simply that there is a seamless[ness] ... meaning that everything is your body. You know, if consciousness is universal, [then] the universe is your body.

Rick: Right, so in other words, *this* body here is not necessarily expanded to the size of the universe, but everything is ...

Francis: The feeling, the feeling is that everything is my body. Because what you call this body, is something that is just *part* of your body.

Rick: Right, I see, okay, I understand that now.

Somebody sent in some questions and I'm not going to read them all, but there are a few that could easily be my questions, so I thought I might ask a couple of them, in appreciation for this person taking the time to send these

in, to ask you. She said, "Was there some active aspect of your own awakening that at the time was particularly surprising or unexpected?"

Francis: Unexpected, yes. The most unexpected thing, I would say, was the revelation of absolute happiness. Before that, my experience of happiness was scalable. In other words, you would go see a good movie ...

Rick: That made you happy.

Francis: That would be, let's say four on the happiness scale. You had a good meal, that would be three. You had a good tennis match, that would be five, etcetera, you know?

But even, let's assume one day you had an experience that would be [a] ten, then you would say, "Mmm, yes, but I guess there might be some time when I would experience eleven or twelve," you see? In other words, happiness always seemed to be something relative and absolute happiness [was] out of the question. So that came really came as a surprise - the revelation that ...

Rick: You hadn't anticipated that.

Francis: No. The revelation of absolute happiness and absolute beauty also, and absolute love - and all of that was together. But that there could be a total fulfillment of the heart, with not a single, little nook or cranny remaining empty, that was a surprise.

Rick: That's lovely. And even now, I imagine there are some movies you like better than others, you know, you'd rather win the tennis match than lose, and some meals you like better than others.

Francis: Of course! I recommend *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

Rick: You like that one?

Francis: Yep.

Rick: Michael Kane and somebody or other, I forget. But you're saying that those are now just, maybe as opposed to being the whole experience, those are just ripples on an ocean of fulfillment.

Francis: Yes.

Rick: Good. What in your opinion, in your experience, makes for a good student, one who is ripe for the kind of teaching you offer?

Francis: The intensity of the desire for the truth, that's all that counts.

Rick: So some are kind of wishy-washy and some are burning with the ... yeah. Which proves itself in the amount of dedication they apply to it, I suppose? I mean, that would be the proof in the pudding.

Francis: You know it when you see someone who is in love with truth, you know it. Because you have been in love with truth yourself, so you recognize the kinship.

Rick: A kindred soul, right, right. Good.

Francis: Not that you have been; you *are* in love, but you have been through those stages, so you recognize this kinship.

Rick: Do you see any significance whatsoever in the manifestation of siddhis, or is it in any case an indicator of spiritual awakening? Is it a distraction, something one should pursue, avoid, or anything?

Francis: Oh, to pursue it is a distraction, definitely. When they happen in fact, I don't call that siddhis because siddhis don't belong to a person; siddhis belong to God. And the siddhis that belong to the totality, they are manifestations and therefore the proper term for that is 'miracles.' And what miracles are, really, they are God revealing Himself or Herself, choosing this way to tell the lover, "I'm here, don't worry." You see, that's all.

Now if you take the miracle in a practical sense, you know, "God, please make it rain so that my harvest be good," that's very selfish and personal. And if God is a rain-maker in this case, you're simply using God, but you're not loving God and you're not *knowing* God.

Rick: Once it's been raining regularly you might forget about Him.

Francis: Yeah, exactly. When God makes it rain, your gratitude should not be for God having given you rain, your gratitude should be for God: thank you God that you reveal yourself to me through the rain, thank you God that you exist, thank you God that you smiled at me through this miracle, you see?

Rick: Speaking of God, we haven't talked too much about God ...

Francis: We have talked *only* about God.

Rick: Yes, yes, okay, good. I've never been a religious person, traditionally, but I just have this sense more and more, of the kind of miraculous intelligence that's inherent in everything, and so vast. I mean even looking at a single cell, it's like we know maybe one percent of what's going on there, and yet even what we know, it's as complex as a major city and we have a trillion of them, or so, in our bodies.

To what extent do you feel that we can kind of really fathom the depth or the richness, or the vastness of that intelligence? Or is it always going to be something that we can at best intuit or get just a taste of?

Francis: For the mind, it is unfathomable. But the mind as an instrument, in fact becomes - first an instrument of research, but then it becomes an instrument of contemplation. So although that which is contemplated is unfathomable, at the end of the contemplation we touch the face of God somehow, we touch the unfathomable. [And so] we live only for - I was going to say, only for

these moments, but that's not true, because these moments are in fact one single moment. So we live only for this moment in which we live, in which we move, in which we have our being.

Rick: It seems that ultimately those whom we revere historically as having been great saints, have just become very great devotees, bhaktis, bhaktas, you know? Saint Francis or Jesus or Ramana Maharishi, they all are just swimming in an ocean of love and devotion, and that's their reality.

Francis: Yeah, but it's not only love; it's love, understanding - without understanding there is no beauty. All these Divine qualities, they are all one in this experience. It's like just as the white light, when you decompose it through a prism, reveals all the colors of the rainbow, the Divine qualities that are there in consciousness [are] all these colors, all these qualities - love, beauty, etcetera.

Rick: Nice. Speaking of love, what do you love most about teaching, which is pretty much your full-time focus?

Francis: It's my vocation; even before I was interested in the truth, when I was younger I always enjoyed teaching. I would teach math, physics, and other matters. I have experience in teaching and I have always enjoyed it. I was a born teacher, in a sense. And actually, some people believe that if you liberate yourself from ignorance, as a result you become a teacher. It's simply not true! I mean, it requires a vocation.

You can be free from ignorance and be an artist, be a house maker, be a gardener, be a manager; it has nothing to do with ...

Rick: You may not be very good at all as a teacher.

Francis: Right, and not good at all as a teacher. So teaching requires two things: it requires some spatial, God-given skills and talents, and also - it's a vocation - the desire, the enjoyment of doing it.

Rick: Do you find in a way that when you teach you kind of gain more than the people you're teaching; there's sort of a personal enrichment that takes place?

Francis: Absolutely! It's not only enrichment, it's an enjoyment and it's part of the celebration. You are like the bird singing on the limb. The bird doesn't care whether there is one person, one hundred, or nobody listening to the song.

Rick: It enjoys the singing.

Francis: Yeah, because the bird, in fact, enjoys the source from which the song, the music, originates and in which it is immersed.

Rick: Beautiful. Well, I better wrap it up and catch a plane, but is there anything that you would like to say in conclusion, to leave people with, or that was pretty good right there?

Francis: [Indicating there is nothing more to add.]

Rick: Great, thank you. Let me make a couple of concluding remarks. You've been listening to or watching - I also provide this in audio - an interview with Francis Lucille. This is one in an ongoing series of interviews, there is pretty much one each week. If you'd like to be notified of new ones that come up, you can either subscribe to the YouTube channel or there's a little tab on my website that you can click and fill out a form, and you'll receive an email every time a new interview is posted.

There is also a discussion group that crops up around each interview, so people like to get in there and discuss things that were mentioned in the interview, so feel free to participate in that. There's an audio podcast, if you'd like to listen to this on your iPod rather than sit in front of your computer, and there's a tab with each interview that you can click on to sign up for the podcast.

I'll also be linking to Francis's website of course, and you have, pretty much every weekend, you have a webinar, both in English and in French, right? And people can sign up for that and the cost is very nominal, and there's also even a scholarship program. So I'll be linking to that so that if you like to tune into Francis on a regular basis, you'll be able to do that.

And finally, I have a 'Donate' button there and I don't make a big fuss about it, but I appreciate it whenever people can donate to whatever degree, because it enables this whole thing to keep rolling.

So thank you very much for watching or listening and we will see you next week.

{BATGAP theme music plays}