

## Thomas Hübl - BATGAP Interview (#189)

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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 Thomas Hübl. Welcome Thomas.

Thomas: Hello Rick.

Rick: Good to meet you. I saw you at SAND in 2011 – saw you give a talk ... Science & Nonduality Conference.

Let me read a short bio. Thomas was born in Vienna in 1971. As a 26-year-old medical student who was also very interested in bodywork and related therapies, he felt a strong inner calling. He took the radical step of following this inner wish, abandoning his studies – you were a medical student – and spending the next four years in retreat in the Czech Republic.

During this time he did almost nothing except meditate and explore the spaces of inner consciousness. Looking back on this time, Thomas speaks of a fundamental opening that took place.

After returning to Vienna, he started offering one-to-one sessions. His ability to touch people very deeply and encourage them to take a look beyond what they usually see, soon led to invitations to lead larger workshops. His popularity then grew further and he became known internationally.

Since 2004 Thomas has been active worldwide, organizing talks, workshops, trainings, tonings and larger events, such as the popular Celebrate Life Festival, or his Healing Events which have brought together thousands of Germans with many Israelis to acknowledge and heal the cultural shadow left by the Holocaust.

When he is not traveling, he lives in Berlin and Tel Aviv, together with his partner, the Israel artist Yehudit Sasportas. Hope I pronounced that correctly.

Thomas: You did.

Rick: Good. So my first question is about your 4 years in seclusion or silence, did you have a formal teacher before that who instructed you to do such a thing, or were you completely on your own and just felt the call to do that, and went into that seclusion?

Thomas: I didn't have a formal teacher; I looked at different teachings at that time, before I went to Czech Republic. And I think one influence that was pretty strong was Ken Wilber. I read Ken's book and it was like an archive of knowledge, basically. So through Ken's books I got to know many other things, and I think some names that deeply inspired me

were definitely Ramana Maharishi, Sri Aurobindo, Ken himself, and then I had a very strong inner guidance at this time, so it was really as if I had my teacher inside. And there was a very clear instruction that I somehow got, how to go step by step and explore inner spaces.

So that was a very powerful time for me and I think whenever somebody asked me, "What are you doing?" -because it was very disturbing for my family, and I said, "I don't know, but I feel like I'm in a kind of training, a different studying time. And I didn't know where it was going, and it was also risky because I really loved studying medicine, but somehow this was stronger.

Rick: That's interesting. I think sometimes when you hear about people following inner guidance, it's just kind of moodiness and whims that they follow and it doesn't necessarily lead them anywhere, but I get the sense that in your case it was very legitimate, obviously, and really compelling. I mean, you weren't just fooling around; there was a definite burning direction that you took.

Thomas: Right, right, and I think the guidance that I had then and the teachings that come through now, [are coming from] a similar place. So it was truly a deep, deep direction that was in this guidance. Now when I look back I can see how one step built the other and built the other and built the other, so there was definitely something deeper emerging in myself.

Rick: What do you make of that guidance? Do you feel like that we are somehow guided by higher beings? You know, some people talk of guides that direct the course of our lives, or do you feel that we are just tapping into a deeper, more intuitive level of our own innate intelligence? Our own intelligence, obviously, is not just individual; it is cosmic intelligence – we're just tuning into that. Did you give some thought into what it was that was actually guiding you?

Thomas: I think that it is different for people in different levels of their development, and for different things, so it is not always the same. So some people speak of inner guidance, this is what I would call 'when they develop through their soul level,' and then there are other beings that we identify the guidance with.

But if you go higher than the guidance, more and more comes from what I would call 'the source,' or 'Divine intelligence' itself; it is more and more direct until you break through in a kind of a nondual realization, where actually you are walking and the guidance becomes "not two." And then it is not a 'something else' or a 'something other,' or another being or something like this; it is a deep coherence with the cosmic order, I would say, that we call guidance.

Rick: Hmm, that's beautifully put. And during that four years, did you have someone helping you out, bringing you food and stuff, or were you still going out to the store and doing basic things like that, but just spending most of your time meditating?

Thomas: Yes, I was with my first wife at the time, and we were in a countryside house of her family's, where we spent a lot of time. And of course I also did other things - I went out

to nature and I went for shopping, and of course I did these things. And this was not ... I was not sitting for four years, seven days a week in 12 hours of meditation, but there were many days of many hours of meditation, definitely.

And it was not always easy because I also had a bit of an inner struggle - with my studies and with my path - because I love healing and I love medicine and I love science. So I needed to go through a process myself, but finally it led to what it led to.

Rick: So at times you were wondering, 'What am I doing?' you know, 'I left medical school, I'm sitting here with my eyes closed! Was this such a smart thing to do?'

Thomas: There were doubts also, but there was something strong that was pushing from much deeper in my being.

Rick: Hmm, interesting. There are so many myths and fables about people overcoming doubts in order to pursue the thing which they feel they have to pursue, in every culture you hear stories like that.

What was the fundamental opening ... can you describe the fundamental opening that finally took place?

Thomas: Yeah, the closest I can say about it is that it is something fundamentally changed, like in my perception of reality or how I was viewing reality, something fundamentally changed and after that it was not the same anymore. 'Thomas' and 'the world' and all this kind of set-up, this construction in myself suddenly fell apart, and it was like suddenly the screen [became] much clearer. It is very hard to describe in words, but it is a very profound change in my whole way of being, or my whole way of being in the world, like me and the world - something fundamentally changed.

And I think afterwards, after that experience, for one year I was still just sitting many hours just in a flat in Vienna. And some people came to me for guidance sessions, but eventually I was still sitting a lot in silence afterwards.

Rick: You use the word 'suddenly' several times, so was it really a sudden thing? So one day you woke up and all of a sudden something changed?

Thomas: Yes, it happened at a certain point in a meditation, and there were some other experiences before that in these four of years, of course, but that was kind of the most fundamental change that I experienced.

Rick: You know the story of Ramana Maharishi where he had this fundamental shift, and then he spend many years just sitting in silence in caves. Is that sort of what you were doing in Vienna? I mean, was there a need to deepen or stabilize or integrate, or something, that caused you to continue to sit in meditation?

Thomas: Yeah, there was this deep wish, it's as if you are breathing and you love fresh air. It is like sitting when you love the silence and there is not really something missing, and then you just sit because it is simply delightful and delicious and deep. So there wasn't much that attracted me out of this state of sitting or being in silence, or being on my own.

But what I already felt then was that something will come, and that when the time is ripe, I always knew there would be a different phase; that I will need to go out at a certain point in time and that life will somehow pick me, so this was for sure part of it.

Rick: Again, the intuition. So it was like a preparatory phase?

Thomas: Right.

Rick: You mentioned that was your previous wife, was your wife a little bit unhappy with all this sitting in silence?

Thomas: Yes, it was also a pressure on the relationship because of course, she wanted to explore the world, and she wanted to have other experiences as well, and for me this was a deep pull. Because my life then suddenly changed, and from one day to another I started travelling and I was on the road all the time. And so from being together many hours, many days, all the time, suddenly our life changed. And I think from a certain point in time we also knew that that's not going to continue.

Rick: And I get the sense that there too when you began travelling and all, it was an intuitive pull that was rather compelling, and there just really was no choice; you just sort of had to follow that impulse.

Thomas: Yeah, it was also that another spiritual teacher came to town, his name was Polo. And when he saw me in his workshop, he actually also opened the gates because of what he said about me and my energy, and suddenly people started to invite me for workshops. And then I just followed, from this day on I just followed this movement and it just continued and it grew. And now I think it is ten years later, or even more, and many, many things have happened since then.

Rick: Hmm, it's an interesting thing, and it's a familiar pattern actually. My teacher was Maharishi Mahesh Yogi for very many years, and he had spent 13 years with his teacher and then after his teacher died, he spent a couple of years in silence up in the Himalayas. And he just felt this impulse, 'I gotta go to South India,' he didn't know why. And everybody thought he was crazy for wanting to leave there but he followed the impulse, went to do it, and people started inviting him. And next thing you knew was that he was getting plane tickets to go to the West. One thing just led to the next.

Thomas: And I deeply believe that that is also how it works: if things are ripe, they are somehow effortless. It is not that you don't need to too much; somehow they just open, and I think that's what it was.

Rick: Yeah, you just feel the impulse, cooperate with the impulse. I suppose there are some people who fight against the impulse, I don't know what happens to them, but maybe it is just a struggle, or maybe nature gives up and says, "Alright, this guy is not going to cooperate; let him keep doing what he wants to do," but it is good that you followed it.

So nowadays, do you still find that you are inclined to spend time in silence because it is so sweet, the way it was that first year after the shift, or do find that is unnecessary now

because whether you are sitting in silence, or eyes open in activity, it is all the same thing?

Thomas: I think now my meditation shifted a lot because I'm teaching a lot, I'm giving a lot of groups – quite large groups, and I work a lot with individuals. And so because my work is very much based on ... okay, there are more general things that we can teach, that apply to most of us, but then my work is also very specific, so that I give very specific feedback to peoples' individual path, intelligence, state of consciousness. And this attunement with people, to really go deeply to their source code, in a way, is a very deep meditation for me.

So when I give groups, I am in a deep, deep meditative state all the time. And so I think that it has just shifted. And because I do it nearly every day, all the time, it is something that continues and at this time, it is much more in movement than it was then. Back then was more the silent part, and now it is the meditation in action, in a way.

Rick: And when you are dealing with groups or individuals and you're saying various things to them, is it in any way based on what they are saying to *you*, or is it more of a nonverbal perception or intuition of what needs to be said? In other words, you could, let's say, have hardly had much conversation at all with an individual and yet you know what to say to them, or what to do to facilitate?

Thomas: Right, I think it is all of that. Often people come to me with questions around their life, around their spiritual practice, around their evolution. The more open somebody is to really hear something – because it is not always that when somebody asks a question that there is an openness to receive the feedback – but if somebody's energy and heart is really open and there is a kind of a readiness, then a lot of information comes to me. It's like as if the gates are open, the water just pouring in, and as long as the gates are open, the water is flowing. And once the gates close, the water stops, because I believe that the universe is very efficient and this higher intelligence doesn't waste energy.

If something is not ready to be said, it doesn't even come to me. So sometimes people ask me questions and I have nothing to say, and sometimes someone asks a question and there are loads and loads of information that are coming.

Rick: Good, well hopefully during this interview it will be the second thing. In fact, surely a principle in physics, they say the principle of least action, you can throw a ball and there are a million different courses that the ball can take, but it is actually going to take the one that is most efficient, because that's the way that nature functions.

Thomas: Right, I deeply believe that is how it works, yeah.

Rick: After having asked you about your own personal journey and unfolding, which I have already done, I was going to ask you to just kind of give us the overview of your teaching if you had to summarize it in five minutes, and then we can go into more specifics. So we started to go into your teaching a little bit, why don't you give us an overview – what it is you teach or say or do with people?

Thomas: I think my work is based on different pillars, I would say. So one part is that I believe that on the spiritual path, we definitely need to look at our individual development, and we need to look at our shadows. We need to look at which parts of our intelligence are in action and in movement, and which parts of our intelligence are blocked. So this is one pillar – we look at how much of your intelligence is currently active, because the suffering comes from everything that is held back and not active. So we look at what can come online more for you, or anybody, to have the richest and fullest experience of this lifetime [that is] available, so that is one part.

The other part is, we developed a tool over the past ten years, it is called *Transparent Communication*, because I say, if we deepen our awareness and our spiritual practice, more and more information is available to us. So every human being radiates physically the whole information to his or her life, every moment into space. And if I am present enough, as in not consumed by myself so much, and if I am tuned in enough, we can literally join each others' river of intelligence and have a much deeper understanding of each others' perspectives.

So this leads, in time, to a deeper unification of separate perspectives. As a cultural tool, [it is] something that a group, even a big group, can practice and it will actually align people into higher presence and higher alignment with the energy that is currently happening. So that is also one part.

We have developed loads of exercises on how to open this part in ourselves, because I believe that is an ability that we have available – that is one ability of spiritual intelligence and emotional intelligence – and if we open that so we have a much deeper understanding of each other, less conflicts, more potential-oriented culture, so that we support each other's potential and by that, the *culture* will make a jump. So that is one aspect as well.

The other aspect is that I, in the last years, have started talking much more about mystical principles, because I believe that there are some universal principles that life and existence are based upon. And if we know these principles so that we can align with them, this will mean much less suffering in life and more flow, and a deeper understanding. If we work against those principles, we actually get more stuck, more in resistance, and we will have more suffering in our experience. So that's definitely a part.

Then one part is like the transcendence part, [then] the stillness, the meditative breakthrough into unformed consciousness, that is certainly one part. One part is what we call *Service* – so how does my development serve the greater context and the greater environment [beyond] just my own spiritual journey? So that it doesn't stay "my" meditation and "my" practice, but that the radius of my influence through this will grow.

So we see... okay, how can we create, for example, in our 3-year training program everybody does a project that serves something in the world. So we are always looking for our spiritual programs to also have an aspect of service for the greater good. So these are the main pillars, I would say, of the work.

Rick: Great. Now if we may, let's retrace those and go into some more details and specific concrete examples, you can reiterate them better than I can. So the first one had to do with individual folk, please explain it again and let's get into more specifics.

Thomas: The shadow integration is [that] everyone of us is born with a specific intelligence, a composition of intelligence. Part of this intelligence can develop itself in the given context, and part of this intelligence is dormant for many people. And some people, let's say, have easier circumstances so they are fuller, they are more incarnated, more grounded, they have much more support for who they are so their intelligence develops itself easily. Other people had more difficulties, more traumatizing environments and so on, and so they might not fully be able to express the gift that they got.

So we developed this tool of *Transparent Communication*, which means that we are doing a lot of communication, or diads, or triad work, and we learn to read each other much more precisely so that we perceive, let's say, the sources of the symptoms that we have in our life. Because most of the time in the groups, when somebody asks a question, the question is a symptom.

So my job, or the job of people who are learning this work, is to find out what is the source in this being's experience that causes this symptom to arise. For example, if I constantly have troubles with my intimate relationships, if I have constant troubles with money and I don't know what to do in my life; these are symptoms on the surface. If we look in the mystical teachings, especially the Jewish Kabbalah teachings, we find that there are different levels of information. And the deeper our level of consciousness is grounded in the source, the more information is available for us.

Our speech, our actions, and our life basically, is much more coherent with this cosmic flow, and therefore when we open our mouth we say something that hits the point. So the higher our consciousness's development, the more my speech and my actions need to be aligned with this deeper flow of life. And therefore, I am less and less talking about life, but I am actually talking more and more *from* the present moment, from the intelligence of the present moment, and not from a reflection of this present moment.

Life becomes more direct and that's a very powerful tool, therefore also, I think a lot of therapies, coaches, people who work with people come to our groups, because they find this very helpful for their own practice – this addition of what we teach to their normal psychological knowledge that is anyway, already very popular. That is a very powerful mechanism – how to integrate the shadow aspects and get them more in line.

And actually, someone from our 3-year training program has developed [a program], he is the head of a university in Berlin, and they developed a campaign that transforms hundreds [of] schools in Germany from knowledge-based education to potential-based education. So how can we as teachers and human beings, and as a culture really, support each other in our potential development? So some parts are also based upon these principles and I think that is something that we need to evolve into as a culture, on a 'we' level in our spiritual development.

- Rick: So in other words, in those schools they would not just be concerned with filling the container of knowledge; they would be concerned with expanding the container of knowledge, you could say.
- Thomas: Right.
- Rick: So what you were just saying, it seems to me that it is a cart and horse kind of question, or maybe a description-prescription question. You know some people would say, "Well just develop consciousness and then all else should be added unto thee" – that all these various shadow things will resolve and hang-ups will clear out, and so on. Others would say, "Well work on the shadow stuff and then your consciousness will develop." So which comes first? Which is the chicken and which is the egg here?
- Thomas: None comes first.
- Rick: Simultaneously?
- Thomas: If we understand that the deep mystical mastery is mastery of stillness and the mastery of movement, together. I think people who have a strong tendency to stillness, sometimes miss out on the fact that the intelligence of life, the face of the Divine that is developing, moving, and expressing itself is equally important as the stillness. And that nonduality, for me, means that we master stillness and movement equally [and] not as two. And this means that both are actually true, both are equally important.
- If I am deeply grounded in the unformed isness of the eternal, timeless isness - or Eckhart Tolle calls it 'Space consciousness,' or whatever, there are many names for it – and at the same time I am like a laser in the very precise moment to moment speech, action, and way of living, so that I am [both] evolution and I am ever-present. And I think this kind of either-or is a sign that there isn't a full nondual realization, because otherwise, there wouldn't be an either-or. For me it's not an either-or; they are equally nondual.
- Rick: But in terms of your own development there was a sequence. You went through a phase firstly, where you were very inner directed and silent and not doing much, and then on that foundation you came out into activity and began and doing a lot. So I'm wondering if in your own teaching and working with people you prescribe that sort of sequence, where firstly there is a focus on inner directedness and on that foundation they go forth and get more involved in outer things?
- Thomas: No, no, no; we train these simultaneously.
- Rick: Alternately or completely simultaneously? It's not like... 'Close your eyes, go deep, then come out and act it;' it's more like completely simultaneous?
- Thomas: Yeah, it's like that, for example in our 3-year training program, in the first year people do a lot of shadow integration. This releases a lot of energy, the energy becomes new creativity, it boosts our worldly life, in a way, because many things start to clear up. Parts of lives that have been hanging for many years – difficulties in relationships, difficulties in finding one's vocation, or whatever – so that the areas of our lives that

constantly *pull* energy out, where it seems like a stuck CD, that have a recurrent pattern – we learn how to, with a higher competency, to really clear up these parts of our lives.

Because I think that [too] is a competency, it's not just something that happens but it is something that once we know the deeper mechanics of energy, all these things are like a science. Awakening is like a science, an inner science, and once I understand the principles I see, "Oh, that's why this is healing," [or] "That's why...." And this is the thing I think that needs to come; it is what I call competency. And that is not just a random happening; it is a random happening if I don't see the source that originates or that causes the movement. But in the moment I see the cause of the movement, whatever the movement is – a personal movement, a collective movement, or a very transcendental movement – it is part of a kind of hierarchy, an inner hierarchy, and a natural hierarchy of creation.

And there is a lot of knowledge around how to precisely relate to different levels and not to create a mess between those levels. And what I see in the spiritual field quite often, is that people use, for example, an argument from a very high level of transcendence and pull it down into a personal experience, and cover their individual shadows with it. And this is not health, and this also keeps our spiritual development stuck.

So the more we can put things into an order, I think it creates not only a competency, but it also makes the spiritual mystical knowledge... actually, we can reintroduce again into the marketplace and also to very scientifically grounded people and say, "Listen, you know, this is not just an airy cloud that we call spirituality. No, no; it is something very grounded, and if I know how to use it, it can actually be very beneficial for every area in life."

Rick: I really like that and I can see your old medical student mind coming through in this kind of thing. You are a scientist at heart and you are kind of approaching this in scientific, systematic way, which I think it *can* be, because I think ultimately, all this spirituality stuff is experiential, which is what science is all about. And you are developing and evolving all sorts of practices which are like ways of testing hypotheses and arriving at experiential conclusions, and I think that's great.

And regarding levels, I'm always getting flack from people because I'm always talking about levels, and very much in the context of what you just said, which is that people sort of misapply levels very often. They interpose and they take something which is valid on one level and then they try to apply it on another level, and it doesn't make sense, like for instance saying, "The world is an illusion." Okay, fine, on some level the world is an illusion, but on the level of stepping in front of a bus, the world is not an illusion and you have to obey those laws of nature on the level at which they operate.

Thomas: I think it is very important what you said right now, because I think [that] actually this saying is very dangerous. To say that the world is an illusion is very dangerous, because it can lead to the fact that if you ... I mean, if this is the (your) separate *experience* of the world is [that it] is an illusion, but not [that] the *world* is an illusion.

I think that is a very dangerous [thing to say], especially on some levels of development, where somebody is not yet really, truly established in a very strong realization of this. Like a master or a teacher might use this as an intervention in order to flip the coin in a way, but I think to tell this to the majority of people as “This is how it is,” I think that is very dangerous. Because I think if the world is an illusion, all the participation in the world, in the expression of the Divine aspect, is actually in vain because it is, after all, [only] an illusion.

So [in fact], all the aspects of my humanity, my deepest humanity, become my highest possibility. This means deep vulnerability, compassion, love, clarity, and so on - these values we only express if we really care about the world. And I think this is a pathology that I see arising in some of the satsang nondual fields, that there is an overemphasis on stillness and a lack of competence in the movement.

And then people that are not in the state that Ramana Maharishi was in, are using Ramana Maharishi’s teachings but are not in the transmission, and therefore it is not true. And that is, I think, a very important part to look at, because I think it can keep people very passive and not really relating to the evolutionary aspect of life. And then we say, “Well there is no evolution because evolution is an illusion,” and I think that is simply dangerous to say.

Rick: Beautiful, I feel like clapping right now. You’ve stated very eloquently something which is a recurrent theme in these interviews, because I feel very strongly about what you are saying.

In Sanskrit there is the term ‘Mithya,’ which means dependent reality. And there is the example of a pot, and really the pot is only clay – fine. There is not pot. But on the level of the pot, which is dependent on clay, you have a pot! You can put water in it, or beans, or whatever, and you can’t deny that the pot exists and can function as a pot. So even though, again in the same breath, you can say, “Well, it’s really only clay,” – yeah, fine, but it is still a pot. So this kind of paradoxical, both-and situation is the way life is structured.

Thomas: Right, and I think that in the moment, because the world is being born moment to moment out of consciousness, when something arises from nothing, something needs to fulfill itself in order to return to nothing. That is the Zen cycle, that is what is also written in the Tao te Ching: the Tao gives birth to the world and to the thousand forms. And then it is also written, “Express yourself completely then keep quiet.”

We are all already born, so we are already movement. And so we are not [even] asking the question [whether or not] we want to be born, because we are already here and we are exploring the movement and the stillness. So now we need to live our lives *completely* in order to return into nothing, to release the energy and leave without a trace. That is how saints are called in the Kabbalah tradition: the ones that leave without a trace, which means the ones that fulfill the energy completely and return into silence.

And if this is my moment to moment life, and if this is the fulfillment of my incarnation, then I can express myself completely and return into nothing, as nothing. And this sounds to me [to be] much more appealing than to say “The world is an illusion.” The world is equally Divine as stillness is Divine.

Rick: There is a T.S. Eliot poem, *Burnt Norton*, where he talks about – and I can only paraphrase – ‘There will not be an end to all our seeking until we come back to a place from which we started, and then discover it for the first time.’ And there is another Sanskrit phrase which, I don’t know the Sanskrit but the English is, “Contact with Brahmin is infinite joy,” but you can’t have that contact with Brahmin until there has become a contactor - someone, a living, breathing entity, who can retrace the steps back to the source. And then, *as* a living, breathing entity, live the source in the world. And that stirs up a joy, a bliss, which could not exist with just a flat unmanifest, had it never manifested.

Thomas: And the fact is there is a manifest world already, and therefore there is not just silence. And I think this is misunderstanding of nonduality, that the emptiness is the truest realization. And I think that is not fully complete, that is not the complete realization. The full awareness of the process of creation, how we are here now having this conversation, and how out of *nothing* the universe is being born, that holds this planet in which we are sitting and through the Internet, we are part of an evolutionary movement and we are really enjoying it, because it is the ecstasy of the Divine that creates this.

And so I think that flow and movement, and the masculine and feminine realization, they are equally important, and otherwise we wouldn’t have this conversation here.

Rick: Yeah, there would just be a flat nothingness. You know that Sanskrit saying, “Poornamidam, poornaat poornam,” this is full, that is full? So it is not just the one unmanifest, absolute fullness; the relative manifest is also full, and the two fullnesses together make a whole that is more than the sum of its parts.

Thomas: Right, right, and then we can be deeply grounded in the silence of this moment, and the presence of this moment, and the unformed timelessness and eternal beingness, and at the same time there is this incredible intelligence unfolding, and both are equally true.

And I think that is very appealing because then, what we do in life really matters. It is not that it does not matter; every word that we say has an effect, every action that we take has an effect, and that when we act out of alignment with our deepest authenticity, it has an effect! And then [it matters that] I care about you, I care about the world, I care about the global crisis because it is important, and at the same time I know that the deepest stillness of that which always is just here is also true. And I think that for me, this is a much more appealing version of nonduality.

Rick: Yeah, and there are a number of teachers who were primarily concerned with the inner world, who were getting more and more involved in improving the outer [world]. For instance, Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee just edited a book called *Spiritual Ecology*, I have just

about finished reading it, in which all of these great speakers are writing essays about – and who are all very familiar with nondual awareness – but who were writing about the soul of the world and how that has to awaken in order for the ecological crisis to be resolved, and they are very concerned about that issue.

Or like last year at the SAND Conference, David Lloyd and Llewellyn got up and gave a talk about spirituality and global warming. Then David had this interaction with Francis Lucille in which he was saying, “Well what about global warming? What about the climate issue?” And Francis was saying, “Doesn’t interest me, doesn’t concern me, the world is like a speck of dust.” And that went on for quite a while and got rather testy until they finally shifted the subject.

But it does seem that a lot of people who have been primarily concerned with nonduality, inner development, and just focused on the unmanifest, have turned it around and begun to engage. Which is great because many of the people who have engaging on these relative issues, such as climate change or political change and so on, haven’t had the unmanifest connection, and they tend to get burned out and frustrated, or angry, or violent, or all that stuff, so it wasn’t complete.

Thomas: Right, and you are saying it beautifully, that activism is something else, because activism comes from a limited perspective. But a true action out of alignment, of caring and deeper flow of intelligence, is actually what in the Jewish tradition is called ‘Tikkun,’ and it means a kind of spiritual opening that can take place. It is like a correction of our flow, so then our karmas actually free our intelligence into a certain quality, [so then] we can open it and release it, and then it can unfold into its highest potential.

And this quality is also something that we can apply on collective issues, and every time something is out of alignment, there is some kind of a correction for it. And so I think a deeper caring about the global context is definitely important, and if it comes from this deeper inner connection, then it is not just activism; then it is realigning with some cosmic flows and orders, and that is very powerful.

Rick: Yeah, and if it doesn’t have that deeper connection then it is just palliative – one is just messing with symptoms without getting to the underlying cause.

Thomas: Right, and there is a beautiful sentence from the Tao te ching that says, “The world is sacred, it doesn’t need to be improved.” And that is a beautiful sentence, but it also means that the world has evolution [inherently within it] as well - this is a part of the world, but my limited perspective cannot be the one that judges if the world needs to be improved, because we want to improve the world to make it more comfortable for us. And that is definitely a whole other department, but what I’m saying is, from a deeper inner connection, there is a deep caring for the manifest world as well, which is equal to the, let’s say, greater feminine enlightened principle that the mother will never leave her children, which means that the force of creation will always care for creation as well, and not just for emptiness.

And so then we have both aspects – the true emptiness and the fullness of life, equally important. And then we have a kind of caring and action in the world and for the world that comes from this deeper place of knowing.

Rick: Yeah, look what's been done to the world in the name of improving it, you know? I mean, "pave paradise and put up a parking lot," as Joni Mitchell sang. And obviously so many ramifications of that, I mean people who were drilling for oil in the Arctic – not the Arctic is melting – probably thinking they are improving the world ... like, "Yeah, we need the energy, it makes our lives better, it improves our world," but that is obviously not true.

There was something interesting you said in one of the talks I was listening to, where it reminded me of ... I guess I could summarize it to say: conditioning reinforces boundaries, or we might say: routine work kills the genius in man. In other words, when we experience we naturally have to focus in very specific ways, but that focus habituates us to narrowness. So what would be the antidote to that so as to maintain comprehensive awareness while focusing as we must do?

Thomas: Yeah, both to practice the deep, deep beyond, which is freedom, and to also practice the belief that everything that is in life - everything that is an energy, an object, a thought, a mind, a culture, a society – is pure movement. And the lower we go down the ladder, the more concrete and structured the universe becomes. The higher we go up the ladder, the more energetic, the more potential reality becomes.

And we have many different potential realities available, and one is forming itself right now. So that if I know that my inherent nature *in* creation is actually movement, then I will look to bring as many parts of my life into the highest movement [level] that is possible. And one practical example, for example, is that I believe that the nature of our learning and our mind and our brain, is that we create habits from everything. And that is very good because you don't need to learn to walk to the computer everyday to make these interviews, so you know how to walk. So that is a good habit to have.

The other thing is when we are in a long term relationship, an intimate relationship, we create a habit of our partner in our own awareness. And what we see when we relate to our partner is not our partner, but the image of the partner [with]in myself. And that is actually a problem, because it means that it *freezes* my experience of my partner and I don't push the refresh button every time, so I see the old, bad side every day, and that is a problem.

So what we do now as a practice is to say: listen, the more awake you are, the less you know people. Which means [that] every time I see you [will be as if] I'm seeing you for the first time], so I get a fresh impression of you. When I see you after a hundred times, I say, "Oh, it's Rick," but that is actually me being asleep. In the moment I say, "Oh, it's you," I'm asleep, because I'm not tuning in and being with you exactly how you arise right now in this moment.

So to overcome this conditioned reality that happens in my own perspective, is a very drastic and very fundamental spiritual practice. So to [be able to] every time see life as fresh, and even if my mind knows you, I'm still looking again [to see], "Who are you right now? Who are you right now? Who are you right now?" And this is a very deep spiritual practice because what I say in the teachings often is, that there are two different spiritual paths: one is the monastic part – so I go out of life, I retreat, and I have a very intense, deep spiritual practice in a monastic life, or in a cave in the Himalayan Mountains, and the other one is that I practice *in* culture. But if I practice *in* culture, I need to learn to live according to the laws of culture; otherwise I will constantly have troubles in my life.

And we see many spiritual practitioners that are actually very ungrounded, that have difficulties with earning money, difficulties with getting their life done, with their relationships, even with their children. So there are some things that are definitely not in place sometimes, and it looks like it is a more spiritual life, but sometimes it is just a more ungrounded life. As you said, sometimes people follow their intuition and say, "Oh, I'm in the moment," but they are not able to keep a commitment, and that is not what being in the moment necessarily means.

And so if we practice in culture, we actually need to practice in all four directions: we need to ground ourselves, we need to transcend ourselves, and we need to have a horizontal impact in culture, and an awareness of a higher or wider radius of life. And that is a very demanding practice.

And so if we mix the monastic life with the culture, as a spiritual practice, we might get in deep, serious trouble, because it might be that our suffering will actually be increased. And that is, I think, where we need to be careful when we import spiritual practices from the East, where we have more monastic or more retreat versions of spirituality. But here, in culture, we need to live fully, because everything that is not moving fully is actually creating suffering.

So every time I release the movement and I participate more, I participate more in the creative aspect of the universe, and this sparks my genius ability to be more "online". And then innovation, or rather, creativity is something that is an ability; it is not a coincidence. It is not that I have creative moments; it is actually that creativity and innovation is something that I can learn and practice. And once my channel is open, I am moment to moment innovative; I am literally becoming an innovative movement, and that is what the genius is.

Rick: So you mentioned being able to balance freedom with focus, and this has been an elaboration on that theme. I think most people are deficient in the freedom aspect. You know, people have, through decades of focus or living through the five senses, have become very bound and individuated.

And many people don't even realize [that] there is a dimension of freedom to be found, but those who do realize that still might not find it so readily. So we want to talk a little

bit about how you can create proper balance between freedom and focus, if we want to use those two words.

And also with regard to conditioning, I mean obviously you don't wake up in the morning and say, "Who is this woman in my bed?" There is a knowledge and a detailed knowledge of the person, and yet you are saying that there is a certain aspect of conditioning which is undesirable, and which limits the relationship or limits the experience. And the same could be applied to a violin player, a commercial airline pilot, whatever, that those skills demand a great deal of knowledge and experience and training and conditioning, and yet at the same time we don't want to lose our freedom in the narrow boundaries that the conditioning tends to reinforce. So go ahead and respond to that, if you would.

Thomas: Yeah, so I definitely agree with everything that you said. It is not that we don't know 'who is this person'; [it is that] at the same time that I know 'who is this person,' there is a high tendency to fall asleep in the memory of this person. So what I said before in the *Transparent Communication* we train to actually attune ourselves, again and again and again, to the moment that is happening. So when I talk with you I need to be attuned with you, and at the same time I am open space.

Rick: And how is it that you are able to be open space? Was that through those four years in silence that that got established primarily?

Thomas: Right, and I think it also came from my meditation practice before[hand], but it got gradually deeper and I think after these four years there was a deep shift in consciousness. So that is a home, and at the same time the precision in everything that is arising in this home is continuously also growing and developing, and so it is both.

Rick: So how about the people you work with, because you are not advising them to go off and take four years of silence? And I don't even know if you are advising them to sit in an hour of silence every day, or whatever. How do you enable them to culture the kind of freedom that you enjoy?

Thomas: Yes, we do some deep meditation retreats, which means that everybody who comes to me and says, "I seriously want to study," everybody needs to do quite an intensive meditation practice and spiritual practice, which includes the body awareness and inner awareness, the shadow integration and meditative awareness – different kinds of meditations actually, to open different parts of our being.

For example, in our 3-year training program we go for 18 days to the Himalayas, and we have a very intense meditation retreat, which is a 24-hour meditation. We call it 'The Cave,' and it is a very deep process that has a strong transmission and many hours of meditation, and also people sitting through the nights. And it is a very specific composition of parts of my work.

[We also have] a regular [format] for deeper students, for students that are long term students, they have a very intense spiritual practice. And so it gradually grows and I

think if one day I see someone in my group and I think it is time, then I would send him off for one year to a meditation retreat. So I definitely see this as a very important part.

Rick: Okay good, good. That kind of puts another piece in the puzzle for me. So now I don't know if we've covered it but, earlier when I asked you to summarize your teaching, you gave three separate things: there was the individual thing, then there was the more group dynamics thing, and have we really discussed that adequately yet?

Thomas: Yes, so what I say is that there are certain principles. And I believe that many people who come to groups are also people who have a high degree of spiritual intelligence available to themselves – intuitive intelligence as well as emotional intelligence. And these are aspects that in our current education system are not so promoted, let's say, they are not so developed actually.

So I believe that there are some abilities of our spiritual intelligence, if we just support them a bit, they start flowering, and this can become a collective or cultural ability. And so we are also working on a 'we' aspect of awakening: how does the 'we' awaken to higher levels of itself? And what does that mean? And so the increasing radius of awareness also creates a more awake culture.

And I am also very interested in what the impacts are, so we have research circles on consciousness in business, we have research circles on consciousness in education – I told you what was one aspect [of that] – and health. We are also looking at how consciousness development really effects different important systems of our society, so that it also makes a difference in the world, and this is where the 'we' aspect comes in.

And then the other aspect that we mentioned before is mystical principles. So for example, one mystical principle is: when out of nothing something is arising, this energy needs to express itself completely in order to return into peace or nothing. And many aspects of our lives are actually based upon this. This is true for every thought, this is true for every emotion, this is true for every incarnation, for every lifetime. This is true for bigger cosmic circles and this is also true, for example, for the nature of a shadow, and the nature of a recurrent pattern in my experience.

And so we are looking [for] how to deepen our awareness so that we can see the principles of creation more clearly in everyday life, in every interaction, in systems, like a company, or in different nature cycles. And then we suddenly understand on a deeper, more fundamental level, what actually are the forces that compose my current existence, and even my current perception of reality and that is something very powerful.

And then suddenly we see, for example, that even parts of the traditions, like in Christianity or in Judaism or in Islam, that many modern people expel from their lives, hold very precious principles that are not anymore filled with energy so much, but if we see the mystical aspect of it, then they are very beautiful principles and they have been around for thousands of years. And so we are not just reinventing the wheel, but we are

just bringing in the mystical aspect of some things that became empty rituals, and [we] suddenly see, “Wow, there is a lot of wisdom around us all the time.”

Rick: That’s great. Obviously, if intelligence or consciousness is the foundation of everything, and not only the foundation [but] if it permeates everything, if it is really the ocean in which we all swim, then nothing is dumb and routine and mechanical, merely; everything is imbued with intelligence. And so I guess what I hear you saying is that you are seeking to understand and awaken that intelligence in of its various expressions, to remove the cloud of dullness that shrouds intelligence in business, or in education, or in relationships, or whatever fields which have kind of gotten numbed by routine repetitiveness, constant attention on gross levels of life to the exclusion of the subtle.

Thomas: Right, the exclusion of the subtle and even the ignorance of the unformed, and that when we awaken this again and we see, “Wow, there is so much beauty in words like ‘confession,’ what is a sin, what is a marriage, what was the foundation of all these terms?” and how through the centuries things got lost along the way.

And I believe deeply that in the mystical traditions– it doesn’t matter if it is Buddhism, if it is Judaism, and so on – that the ones that really knew what they were talking about are just a few, these are the true mystics. And I think if you make contact with these true mystics in whatever tradition, there is such a beauty that is unfolding.

And I think therefore, even hundreds of years ago when there was no mass transportation, people were travelling half-way around the planet to [just] meet someone like that because the answers that came out of this kind of deep groundedness in consciousness, they were very different than all the other answers you would get from limited perspectives.

In the Western world we are missing a bit [of this] mystical competency and I think that is something beautiful to go for, and to reintroduce this as a very valid part, besides science and besides other things, that this needs to have its place in our society because it has an important role.

Rick: It has a critical role, and it seems to me that everything is so messed up because it is lacking – because that mystical dimension is lacking. Sometimes people think that an enlightened society would be ... we would return back to a simple life, where we are all farming and wearing loincloths or something. But really we could still have sophisticated technologies and everything else, but just infused with, we could call it, the ‘mystical’ or ‘spiritual dimension,’ which brings everything into proper alignment so that it is no longer inflicting so much harm on us; in fact, everything could be totally benign and yet technologically sophisticated.

Thomas: Right, and if you look into evolution and we see that life forms tend to grow into higher complexities, so I think it would be stupid to think that an enlightened society would just return to farming. Maybe some people would because this is their vocation, but other people would be totally thrilled with complexity and with the genius expression of human excellence.

And therefore, and [especially because of this], I think it is so crucial that we create a different form of contemporary mystical understanding that is able to relate to genetic engineering, that is able to nanotechnology, and to all the amazing parts that are out there, and that we are creating right now, moment by moment. And also to see that it is very important to see different levels of development and not judge them just by their pathology; to always see what is the amazing *contribution* that capitalism, that modernity, that the industrial age gave to humanity, and what are the shadow aspects. And to learn to look at this differently and see that, okay, we correct the pathologies and the shadows, but we definitely want to continue with the amazing contributions.

And then let's also be finished with this myth that enlightenment and intellectual knowledge do not go hand in hand. So either you don't think and you're enlightened, but if you think you are not enlightened, is, I think, a very strange notion.

Rick: That is reminiscent of Ken Wilber's *Pre/trans Fallacy*, you know? That enlightened people are going to be like babies, you know, innocent and not thinking ...

Thomas: Right, right.

Rick: Now you mentioned genetic engineering and that brings up an interesting point related to what you're saying, which is that, taking that as an example, and there are many other examples, at the present time it is a pretty scary thing actually, because the people who are doing genetic engineering really don't have a very comprehensive understanding of what they are doing. They are kind of messing around with a level of nature's functioning, which they only very partially understand, and making changes at that level, which could be devastating in their consequences.

And I don't know whether genetic engineering ultimately has any right to exist, but if it does, it will have to be in a way that we are completely cooperating with the intelligence of nature, rather than applying limited human intelligence to something that only the intelligence of nature really comprehends, you know what I mean?

Thomas: Right, and I think you are totally on. I think it is also funny to think that genetic engineering has no right to exist because it has a right to exist, because it can bring a lot of positive things ...

Rick: Potentially.

Thomas: Potentially, but if it is driven by money, if it is driven by ego-limited motivations, then it is a problem because then we actually apply things too early, we don't have a full, deep understanding and alignment, as you said, with the natural intelligence of life.

But from the enlightenment aspect, a crucial answer for our time is actually that the deep scientific revelations and the mystical revelations need to work together, that there is no other way. That the deep inner knowledge and the deep outer knowledge, they need to find a fusion and they need to find a much deeper dialogue, and then to see how much they can benefit from each other.

And [to see] that if you bring in the deep alignment of the mystical realization into science, then that is actually the inner connection to the scientific revelations, so it is much more connected to the growing evolutionary intelligence. And then we will use these technologies wisely, and if we use them wisely they can be a huge benefit.

If we just look at what modern medicine contributed to how much suffering was eliminated through this, it is incredible. And therefore sometimes when people come to my groups - and usually people come who have come out of alternative medicine cycles - and I am very appreciative of all kinds of healing technologies that work, and I am working a lot with healing myself, but to exclude one or the other is simply stupid, because the whole flower is important and we need to know when to use what.

And I think that is what you said, if genetic engineering will be used wisely, it can be a huge benefit for life, and if it is used egoistically, like just for benefit and profit and money or companies, then it can actually be a huge trouble that we have created for ourselves.

Rick: Yeah, I mean, taking medicine as a case in point, look at antibiotics - how wonderful those have been, and yet now, I live in Iowa, and they give antibiotics to all the pigs and the cows so that they can produce more milk without getting infections, and so that the pigs can live in these crowded little containers. And so all that is getting into the water supply and into the meat, and it is getting to the point where not very many antibiotics work anymore, and then all these super bugs are developing. And it all comes down to greed really, and short-sightedness.

Thomas: And that is a pathology, and we need to correct the pathology without dismissing the original invention and seeing all the millions of people that benefited from these antibiotics. And so if we keep this, that every level of development will create a shadow, because once something is being born and once something creates a structure, every structure will have a shadow. And we need to learn to relate to the shadows and to correct them. And I think [it is] then [that] we create a natural hierarchy of development that is beneficial, and that is in alignment with the intelligence that runs through us, and that is a very exciting tool to have.

Rick: Yeah, so just to reiterate and perhaps to summarize, and we can both summarize and reiterate, it seems that we are not going to dismantle society. All the structures, and the technologies, and the means of communication, and everything else that's been built up, it's not going to all be dismantled and we're going to get back to some kind of pristine, primordial world. So the only solution is to infuse or supplement all these structures that have been built with Divine intelligence, with cosmic intelligence, or whatever. And we human beings are the instruments through which that can happen.

We need to awaken that in ourselves and then through us, enough of us doing that, things will naturally fall into place. And all these technologies that are, at this point, so askew and so harmful in many ways, will perhaps become totally benign; they will serve their ideal intended purpose, yet without the unwanted side effects.

Thomas: Right, and to see that life is trial and error. And I think that Sir Ken Robinson puts it very beautifully - he is a very popular speaker on education and he puts it very beautifully - he says, "Look, most people when they come out from our educational system, they are totally afraid to get things wrong, and therefore we cannot be truly genuine and creative anymore."

And so we see that, yes, life is also learning. And I think if we are living our life in that high integrity, then when we see that we [have made] a mistake, then we correct it. Then we can totally experiment and also really be pioneers in the excellence of human intelligence, because I don't believe this myth that we will all come back and be farmers and have no technology.

I think it is also stupid because there are so many other things that will build upon the technology that we have developed until now, and we just need a deeper inner development, and a deeper inner connection, and then more and more people will actually have a breakthrough into this deeper awakening, and from that [they will be] fueled in whatever their excellence is.

And then again, we are there to really allow and support human intelligence and excellence in *all* the 360 degrees of flavors, so that we are not just saying intelligence and we mean intellectual or cognitive intelligence; there are so many other parts of human intelligences that are necessary to create a sustainable culture. And if it is deeply grounded in the unformed, [with]in more and more people, *and* we are really dare to live up to our highest potential, I think that we will then have this life that many people are looking for.

Rick: Yeah, I think it was Thoreau who said, "Go ahead and build your castles in the air, that's where they belong. Just put foundations under them."

Thomas: Right, okay, right.

Rick: Now you're doing some really interesting work, I think I mentioned it in the introduction, in trying to heal the shadow of the holocaust, and working with Germans and Israelis. And you yourself are Austrian and you're married to an Israeli, let's talk about that a little bit, if we may. Do you feel like the holocaust still casts a pretty dark shadow? And let's talk about collective consciousness and the evolution of collective consciousness, and so on.

Thomas: Yes, I think that my work started out of Germany and then mainly in Germany, in the first years. And what I have seen is that in many groups, I have seen the same pattern happening, that when we come to a certain intensity and depth, then there would be an eruption. And really, literally, like 30 or 40 people out of a 100 started crying and were seeing horrible images, in one moment. It was like a fire through the group.

And so once we allow a deeper sensitivity, a vulnerability, openness and space, the valves are open, [as if] the pressure in the collective consciousness is looking for ways [of] how to discharge itself. And this we see in pathological forms and sometimes in people that are becoming psychotic, but we also see it in groups when spiritual

practitioners open their inner world more, so that this energy can suddenly come to the surface. Which is actually a very healthy process; it is a kind of inner hygiene process.

And so I thought, wow, I saw this again and again and again, especially in the training programs. And then I said, "Listen, I think we need to develop tools on how to take care of the collective shadows." And the holocaust shadow is one, but there are many more on this planet through atrocities that have happened all over ...

Rick: And are still happening.

Thomas: Yeah, and are still happening, and so if we understand an individual shadow and how one trauma can create a deep impact in a person's life later on, then we [can] understand that the collective trauma can create a deep impact. And so now we have two possibilities: either the generations of the generations will actually live through the symptoms of these traumas until they are so diluted that they disappear, or we do some very precise consciousness work.

A collective shadow needs collective caring, which means big groups of people, like thousands of people coming together and taking care of this collective unconscious energy, that is just looking for a kind of conscious awareness in order to appear to integrate itself and then to become free energy, or creativity.

And so we developed some tools to help do this with large groups, and I did some big events, and we are also still doing this big Celebrate Life Festival in the summer. And so we are looking as to how to use part of our spiritual practice to also take care of our collective life base.

I am also currently living in Israel, so I see the other side of it in Israel. And now we are creating workshops and projects [around] how to work with this energy, because it is a very strong impact, or scar in the collective consciousness. And I also believe that there is a lot of writing now about the European Union and about the financial crisis in the European Union, and I think, yes, that's true, and if we want to unify Europe, we will also need to take care of the collective unconscious layers that have been [built up] between the countries in Europe. So many things have happened here, in history, that are crazy.

And so if we put it (Europe) together, this collective unconscious material will show up as financial crisis, political crisis, social crisis. So it will find symptoms to express itself, but [it is] actually [that] deeper in our collective psyche, we have something to take care of. And I think that on a collective level, we need to express a global consciousness. Without a global consciousness we are not able to deal with the collective problems or stuff that we are dealing with, like global warming, for example, and there are others.

In the mystical knowledge we are always talking about 'free energy', which is free possibility and intelligence in structure. And the tension, the creative tension between the structure that has a gravity and the free energy that constantly pulls evolution to new heights, is called 'evolutionary tension.' And if this tension is healthy, a human being develops and stays grounded and inspired. If we are too much [on the side of] the

energy, there is a lot of inspiration but not so much happening in one's life. And if the structure is too strong, we are very much in life but we are stuck in it, because we are not really developing. And so we need a healthy balance.

And when we open in the expression of life, our energy to higher levels of consciousness, like Aurobindo describes, so we also need to create a proper vessel for it, otherwise we cannot handle the intensity. And what I see humanity going through is, we need to create a global vessel that much more intelligence can flow on a global level, and deal with the topics with the topics that we need to deal with. And on the way there, we need to transcend, not give up but transcend, national identities, national interests, in order to create a global caring. And on the way there we will need to deal with our collective shadows.

Rick: Interesting. So couple of questions, one is, do you feel that a relatively small group of people, maybe thousands, but still a fraction of the total population, can serve as a sort of "washing machine" to heal the collective shadow for the benefit of the entire population?

Thomas: Right, of course there is a correlation to the intensity. For example, a few thousand people are not enough in Germany because what happened here was so, so out of alignment ...

Rick: So extreme, yeah.

Thomas: So extreme that we would need like stadiums full of people to really ... if you really want to create a massive impact. But actually, even a group of a thousand people can create a difference. And if we do it more often, and if we really work ourselves through this energy, I think we can clear up quite a lot with this size of a group.

Rick: It would also depend on the potency of the group, which would depend on the potency of the individuals in that group. I mean theoretically, a group of a hundred could do it if they were powerful enough, theoretically.

Thomas: Right, if you had a hundred masters, then that would really make a difference.

Rick: Right, right, and this thing about – I'm letting dogs in and out here. I mean obviously we have our own thing in the US with slavery, and it was kind of a big deal that we elected a black president. And of course there was a backlash to that; there's a lot of oppositionary resistance and all that he's been getting, which people won't acknowledge, but I think it is largely because he is black and it really pushes peoples' buttons.

And these days now there is the Arab Spring, and Egypt is in the headlines, there is a huge thing happening there. When you look at these situations, like for instance Egypt, with your knowledge of the deeper mechanics of life and the collective shadow and so on, do you read more meaning into it than the average person would? Do you kind of get the symbolism or the significance of various events that are taking place?

Thomas: I definitely think that something very fundamental is happening at the moment on the planet, and that the Arab Spring is part of it. There are simply some structures in consciousness that are [no longer] serving the evolutionary development of life; they are breaking open. [For example], the financial crisis in some Western countries is part of it, also the Arab Spring, [which happened] by itself, is actually just a sign that things crack open, but it is not an easy transition.

So the problem is that many people are really suffering and there [are also] many casualties. Also, when you look to Syria, it is incredible what is happening there, but on a more collective level, I think if you see it from a higher perspective in time, like in terms of human evolution ... we are looking at this from the span of 70 years, but if you look at this on a much longer timeline, I think these are just some deep movements in the human consciousness to break open structures that are too old, and to open them into a fresh[ness], to let the wind in.

And Leonard Cohen sings a very lovely line that says, "The cracks where the light comes in." And either there is a voluntary development, which means when we are aligned inside so that we are actually developing before we need a crisis, but if we don't do that, if we are too fixed in the conditioning, in the structure, [we will] need something that breaks open the structure for life to develop, which is in itself a very healthy movement.

Art for example, good art, is our cracks in society, and we need these cracks for our sanity, this is what keeps us sane. And I think what is happening in the Arab Spring right now is that there are cracks, and new movements want to happen. In itself it is a good movement, but many people are suffering from the way that it is happening.

Rick: Yeah, back in the early 80s or late 70s I participated in groups, where we went to trouble spots in the world. Like I spent 3 months in Iran and we just meditated for hours and hours a day in a hotel, with a few hundred guys. And there were other groups in Central America and other places where there were trouble spots; in fact, there was a group in Israel. And the theory was that we were sort of softening up the collective consciousness and helping to filter out a lot of this stuff.

Because you know, change was inevitable; it was going to be [that] higher consciousness is dawning and the world is going to have to be restructured in order to accommodate it, but the hope was that the restructuring could be less tumultuous, less traumatic than it might otherwise be. Maybe we didn't do a very good job because obviously there is a lot of tumult, but it could have been worse.

So I guess one of the things you're trying to do with your groups, in healing these collective shadows, is grease the wheels to enable the inevitable transition to be more smooth and less full of suffering and cataclysm.

Thomas: Right, and I think what I said before that more and more people will find this inner alignment and what I call 'Divine FM.' Divine FM for me is when the nondual state, or awareness, in the "becoming" part has a radio station. And the radio station I call Divine FM, and everybody has in their heart a kind of a receiver. And the more attunement we

find in ourselves and the more authenticity, [we will find] there is a deeper inner guidance that is coherent with the cosmic intelligence.

And I think what we need to hope for is that more and more people will listen and live according to this inner guidance, and it doesn't matter in which area of life [it is applied], and by this, there will be a more smooth and voluntary development. Because I think many people have already known for a long time; there has been like an evolutionary impulse knocking at their door and saying, "Listen, you need to move, you need to develop," or "The relationship is over," "The job is over," "The way you are living your life is over," "The way you care for your environment is over and something new needs to happen."

And I think that the more we all listen to this natural development then we can have – and this is what people in the traditions mean when they talk about "people coming from the future" – when you literally are connected to this higher possibility that manifests through us, and you live accordingly, then we won't need crisis or breakdowns in order to restart the system. And that is I think what we can hope for.

Rick: I heard you say something in one of your interviews, you said, "Great scientists and artists and people like that come from the future," and I didn't entirely understand what you meant by that.

Thomas: I think that there are two different levels of how to look at the future: one is that people dream of a better life because they don't like their current life, and that is not really the future; that is the imagination of an escape of now. So that is really un-present.

But then there are people that are so present in what they do that they have become excellent. And these can be artists, scientists, and in all professions actually, sportspeople - that when you are so present in what you are doing, you actually kind of exceed the limits of this specific human intelligence, and you tap into something new, you become a pioneer. And this is what I call 'reaching through the ceiling of your consciousness' and you collect fruits from the future. And when you come back, you have fruits that people don't know. And these are insights, they are breakthroughs in science, they are breakthroughs in sports, these are breakthroughs in art, in music, in visual art, in films.

So suddenly you hear this piece of music and you feel that it comes from a different place, or you see this painting and you plug into a different consciousness. Then the future is actually your higher consciousness potential or development. It is not 'tomorrow', because tomorrow can be in the same circle of consciousness like today, then tomorrow is not the future. But if you develop into something, into a new version of yourself tomorrow, then you are actually coming from the future. So you are grounded in isness and at the same time you are allowing the future to manifest through you.

Rick: I think I understand what you mean. So people who are on the leading edge, who are the real innovators, they are embodying, or you can even say channeling, tendencies

that need to manifest in order for the evolution of whatever. Like Steve Jobs or The Beatles, or whoever has really broken through cultural boundaries and apparently changed the world, they are kind of vehicles or conduits through which emerging possibilities can be realized.

Thomas: Beautiful, beautifully put, yes, wonderful, and it doesn't mean that these people are fully realized. You know, you can have a genius musician and when he or she goes on stage you are just amazed by what comes through this music.

Rick: Sometimes they're amazed as much as you are.

Thomas: Yeah, and then they go down (off the stage) and emotionally or socially they are very poorly developed – they cannot get their life online, or maybe they take drugs or whatever, but when they go on stage, it's amazing.

And so one line of development can actually be very refined and the others not so much, and therefore I think holistic human development is so important. And you said another thing that is very important, that one sign of healthy spiritual development is that you or everyone, we, are surprised by what comes out of us – [out of] our mouth, our actions - more and more often. So if you are not surprised very often in your life by what you are doing or saying, it means something is not working.

If your spiritual opening is getting bigger, then the new information that comes through you, that your system is becoming more open, means that new things can come through you. So if you say something and are surprised by it, that's a really good sign, because then it means that the systems, the nerve systems in life are getting more open.

Rick: It also pertains to what we were saying half an hour ago, which is that you are not functioning out of mere conditioning; you're functioning out of pure intuition, or deeper intelligence.

Thomas: Right, beautiful, yeah yeah. And that I think is a healthy sign of healthy development.

Rick: You are working with the holocaust shadow, obviously there's the Arab-Israeli thing and the Palestinians and all these deals. Do you see collective consciousness as being various collective consciousnesses? As in having 'family consciousness,' 'city consciousness,' 'national consciousness,' 'regional consciousness,' 'religious consciousness,' – do you see all those things as actual conscious entities in and of themselves, in the same sense that we might see ourselves as an entity, but really we are a colony of trillions of cells - both human and nonhuman that make us function - and yet there is this intelligence or a consciousness that is created through the collaboration of all those cells? So with regard to collective consciousness, is there like a 'German consciousness,' which is like the deva of Germany, or a collective, actual entity that forms the consciousness of that country?

Thomas: Right, I mean you could say that whenever something creates boundaries around itself, any structure in consciousness that creates a boundary and an identity, so that the entity can be *viewed* as a certain consciousness, so to speak, then when you attune

yourself, when you embrace this field with your own awareness and you read the energy of it, then you could say, okay, this is specific information regarding this consciousness, and it might be a family, as you said, a state, a globe or something bigger. But that is just a help to read the specifics, and what we are looking for is how to transcend these boundaries and literally create a more open field awareness.

So my answer is: yes there is something like this, and it is also being co-created with part of consciousness that is looking at it. So when we look at Germany, we co-create this field by looking at it in this way, as well. So it is both; it is a co-creation in a way.

Rick: Along the lines of that, I've heard it said, in fact it was my teacher, Maharishi, who used to always say that a national leader, let's say a president, can't really do what he wants entirely, not just because of political pressures, but because there's a collective consciousness that is co-created by all the people, all the millions of people in that country, and that has its own karma, its own destiny, which is very powerful.

And you know, as soon as the leader gets into office, despite all of his plans and hopes and dreams, he finds himself governed by that collective consciousness.

Thomas: Yes, right, and therefore it is so important that when people complain about the corruption of governments and why things are not working, [they recognize that] fundamentally it comes down to the fact that everyone of us, in order to create a functional democracy, needs to be a grown up human being. And grown up means that we are intellectually, emotionally, and physically grown up, and at the same time that we are caring, that we are participating fully in the life that we are living.

And if every part of the democracy is really taking care of the so-called problems or issues that come along "my path," then I am not waiting till the government does it, but there are some things that we as human beings, as grown up human beings, are responsible for. And I think if this breaks through fully, then democracy, some sort of democracy will work. So what you are saying is totally true, there is always a correlation between the consciousness of the state and the leader, and this is one unit, so to speak.

And therefore I think that the leadership of the future, the politicians of the future that live out of this inner connection, can become a voice of the evolutionary power that drives the system. So [for example], a corporate leader would be someone who is attuned to the evolutionary drive of the system and can voice it, and can lead accordingly, and a politician would do the same with the whole state. Then I think the deeper intelligence in this system, and not just a symptomatic intelligence of the system is driving the boat. And then it is more essential, so then it is actually more serving.

Rick: Beautiful, I was reading something just like that last night in that book by Llewellyn Vaughn-Lee. It was one of the essays [where] the person was [talking about] the tradition of wise elders - and they are very rare these days - but really we need a world in which our leaders are like wise elders who are not just telling people what to do, but are reflecting Divine consciousness, or the intelligence of the universe, and kind of like just representatives of that, and therefore can really lead from a cosmic perspective.

Thomas: Right, and like in the tradition[s] it is written, “The more empty you are, the more light flows through.” So when there is less and less conditioned structure, then naturally the light falls through effortlessly. And this means that sometimes when you see more awake beings, you see that from the outside they look like human beings, but from the inside they are pure light, why? Because it is empty and the personality doesn’t filter the higher light, so there is an effortless creation that is running through, and therefore they are also called ‘the ones that leave without a trace.’ This means that we don’t leave garbage, but that our life impacts the world and then there is no karma that is being left, no karma that life needs to take care of, in a way, or clear up.

Rick: You said a little while ago, and maybe this is one of my final points, you eluded to a world in which we really had no national boundaries anymore. Is that what you meant to say?

Thomas: That we transcend the national boundaries. Maybe we will need them for some time still, but I think we need to *transcend* them and create a much bigger caring. So yes, we can be Austrians, Germans, Americans, whatever, but that’s not so important. What is more important is that I am at least a global citizen, and that my actions need to be infused and beneficial for a global system. And I think if I can embrace a global system in my consciousness, I am also [simultaneously] creating a global vessel in myself.

And I think if more people will be able to do that, then there is naturally a global caring, which also means that the intelligence that we already have on the planet, is also able to deal with the issues that are there. We just need to allow the flow. And I think the Internet or the externalization of the brain so to speak, the external neurons, are helping a lot with this.

We also need to breakdown some structures that simply still limit the flow of intelligence on a global level, and the national interests are actually a part of these kinds of walls that we build, that somehow limit a much more global unfolding of intelligence. And if a global intelligence would unfold, suddenly you would see many more inventions come out, that are actually once again able to deal with the kinds of challenges that we have.

Rick: There is a Sanskrit phrase that goes, “Vasudhaiva kutumbakam,” which means the world is my family. And you know in a family you have brothers and sisters and mother and this and that, and they are all autonomous individuals; it is not like they are all one being, but they are family, so there is this kind of harmony and closeness. So I think maybe given the cultural diversity of the world, it may be a long time before we don’t actually have separate nations, but all these nations can be like brothers and sisters to one another, if there is sufficient foundation of wholeness or oneness in the awareness of the people.

Thomas: Right, and I think it is not about breaking down the borders of the countries now; this is illusionary because it cannot happen so quickly, but what can happen more quickly is that enough people will actually create a caring, and an inspirational quality for the whole global context. And then I think we will be able to deal with [both our] inner and

outer competencies, for example, [in dealing] with facts like global warming, climate crisis, food crisis, whatever, there are many topics.

And I think we need these inner and outer competencies, not just one or the other; we need both in order to come up with something that can face the challenges.

Rick: On the same theme, if one were really in true nonduality, not just unmanifest nonduality, then the Amazon rainforest is my lungs, you know, the rivers are my veins and the ocean is my blood, and so on. And you would no sooner damage those things than you would cut off your own finger; there is a kind of intimacy with everything that is naturally going to express itself as a much more intelligent way of dealing with the world.

Thomas: That is beautiful, and therefore I am so much [in agreement] with you when we talked about the world as an illusion, because the expression of the world is equally sacred and [so] is the stillness of the world. And if this is true, I will be grounded deeply in and as the unformed ever-present isness, and at the same time I will totally care for the expression of the Divine. And then also, everything that I say matters, and everything that I do matters. And both is true – it is not either, or. It is *both* is true.

And then we find people where the wisdom and the groundedness in isness will express itself in true action and participation. And I think that is what we need, that the wisdom and the mystical insight is actually flowing as a natural, authentic impulse into life. Because when do we care for things? When we feel intimate with them. And if I feel intimate with the world, I will care for the world.

Rick: Yeah, exactly, and I think that's what Christ meant when He said something like, "Whatsoever you do unto the least of these, you do unto me." He didn't mean "Me" Jesus Christ, or whatever His real name was; he meant me – the oneness that we all are. When you harm something in some way, you are harming yourself.

Thomas: Right, right, and that's I think what it is.

Rick: "Ask for not whom the bell tolls, it tolls for thee." I'm not really as literary as I sound; I have a very spotty education. These things come to mind ... a limited repertoire. As people who listen to these interviews often enough constantly remind me, "Why are you saying the same old quotes over and over again?"

I'm just fooling you!

Alright, great, well this has been a lovely talk. I really enjoyed speaking with you, as I knew I would. And I hope we can do it again in the future sometime, or maybe we'll run into each other at some conference or something.

Thomas: Yeah, beautiful, I would enjoy this as well.

Rick: Let me make a few wrap up points. I've been speaking with Thomas – or I guess you say "To-mas," right, officially?

Thomas: "Thomas H-you-ble."

Rick: Thomas is good enough... 'H-you-ble.' I will be linking to his website and several different links that they've given me, on the page that I create for him on BATGAP.com, where this video will be embedded. There will also be an audio version of it that you can download. Or you can subscribe to iTunes and get it as a podcast.

There on BATGAP.com you will also see both an alphabetical and a chronological list of all the interviews I have done, and I do a new one each week. So if you would like to be notified of new ones, there is a little email sign-up link that you can just put in your name and email address, and you will get an email about once a week notifying you of new interviews.

There is also a 'Donate' button which I appreciate people clicking on, if they have the capacity ... enables me to keep doing this thing, although I don't do it full time. I have a day job, but you know, I take a lot of time doing it and [there are] various expenses, and so on. So I appreciate the support that people have given and continue to give. There is a discussion group there that crops up around each interview. We are currently having a few technical issues with the way that works but we'll sort them out, so feel free to plunge in and discuss the points we've brought up during this interview.

So I think that's about it. Thank you for listening or watching. Next week I have Foster and Kimberly Gamble, who created the movie called *Thrive*, which is a very interesting movie. I think you can see it on YouTube; you might even want to watch it before the interview. We'll see you next week.

{BATGAP theme music plays}