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Interviewee: Anadi (A)

Interviewer: Rick Archer (RA)

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RA: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer, and my guest today is Anadi. Welcome, Anadi.

Anadi first came to my attention about two weeks ago. I was sitting in the living room reading something that someone had sent me. It was an article that compiled a lot of your quotes, and after about 15 minutes of reading I said to my wife, “I found a really amazing teacher. This guy is really mature in his understanding. I really have to interview him.” So Anadi and I exchanged a few emails. At first he was a little reluctant to do it because he’s sort of a private person, but he agreed to do it. I’m very grateful for that, and I think we’re going to have a very lively conversation, which will be of great value for a lot of people listening. I’ll read a brief bio that was sent to me, and then we’ll get into it.

Anadi’s life has been dedicated, with uncompromising devotion, to the completion of his spiritual path. Among other traditions he’s studied in depth, Advaita in India and Zen Buddhism in Korea and Japan. Based on his disillusionment with the level of understanding and clarity present in past traditions of enlightenment, throughout many years of personal struggle, evolution, and exploration of the inner realm, he has created a unique system of teaching, presenting an entirely new vision of human enlightenment based on multi-dimensional evolution into the state of wholeness. Anadi has been teaching for over 15 years. He currently lives in North India and gives meditation retreats regularly in India and Israel.

So the one image which formed in my mind, Anadi, as I have been reading your articles and listening to some of your audios— Incidentally, Anadi has about 300 hours of audios on his website that you can download for free. I downloaded them all with a plug-in called Download Them All [*laughs*]. I’ve begun listening to them and enjoying them very much, but the one that began forming in my mind is that the current spiritual scene, if you compare it to a map, it’s kind of like the way the map of the United States was in the early 1800s before the explorers went West. People had a vague idea of where things were, but they really didn’t know. These days, of course, we know every square inch of ground. It’s been mapped and measured precisely. So on the spiritual scene, using this analogy, there are people who think they’re in California but they’re only in Ohio. Perhaps those are the majority. There are a few people who think they’re in Ohio, but they’re actually in California. There is just this sort of vagueness and indistinctness about what awakening really is, and a lot of terms are used interchangeably: awakening, enlightenment, and so on. What I found very refreshing about your work is that you are striving to define all these things very precisely, to point out the distinctions and subtle differences between them, and that it’s very experientially based. You’re not just philosophizing or

theorizing. You're doing this on the basis of your own experiential investigation. I think that kind of perspective is very much needed in today's spiritual scene.

So perhaps you can, over the next couple of hours, or however long we go— I would love to have you just give us an overview of your teaching. It's very detailed and vast, and there are a lot of things that we won't have to get into. But if you could give us the overview, and perhaps I'll manage to ask a few intelligent questions along the way, I think it will give people a starting point from which they can investigate it more thoroughly if they wish.

A: Well, I don't think I remember my teaching [*laughs*].

RA: I'll have to pull it out of you [*laughs*].

A: It's complex and it's simple, depending on which angle we look at it. It's basically the technology of awakening of various states beyond the mind which all constitutes an aspect of our true self and awakening of me, which is the fundamental point of the teaching. Awakening of who we really are, which has been really poorly understood or not understood at all, meaning that the fundamental question, "who am I?" has not been really answered thoughtfully by anyone as far as I know. The purpose is more to deny our individuality than to discover it. In order to identify with some kind of a universal reality, which cannot be realized without being the subject of this realization. So being the subject of this realization involves awakening of our true subjectivity as well.

So there are basically two parallel processes happening: entry to the universal dimension through different doorways and awakening of who we really are. Who we really are, there are three basic dimensions: consciousness, heart, and being, which constitute, when they are integrated, the identity of our soul, our higher self. That's pretty complex because our me exists on several levels simultaneously. Its evolutionary awakening cannot be separated from awakening to the beyond, from surrender to the beyond. So it's all interconnected.

The first step on the path I am teaching is awakening of consciousness. Maybe we can start with that: what is actually consciousness and who is conscious? When people speak about consciousness, it is kind of meaningless because this term is so abstract and taken out of the context of the personal experience.

RA: Also a lot of these types of terms are used interchangeably: absolute, consciousness, soul, God, self, pure me, I am. It's like the average person who is interested in these things wouldn't be able to give you any kind of distinction between those different terms; it all kind of sounds like the same thing.

A: That's also true. When we describe the inner realm, we need to develop precision. Sometimes certain terms need to be defined because they are not really defined. They are defined differently by different traditions. For instance the term "absolute," what does it actually mean? Nisargardatta Maharaj spoke about the absolute state or the state prior to consciousness. What does this actually mean? The deeper we go the more precision is required to describe different realizations.

RA: And you say that in your path, awakening to consciousness is really the first step, if I understood you correctly.

A: It's the first logical step. Without having consciousness awakened, one cannot progress because one is simply unconscious.

RA: And so what does that mean, then, to have consciousness awakened?

A: It means that awakened consciousness, which is not only beyond the mind, but which also involves awakening to our pure subjectivity beyond the mind. Basically consciousness awakens through the doorway of I am, which is the portal to universal consciousness. For that doorway in order to serve as a platform for awakening, we need to realize who is entering this doorway, which is the me. Normally when people speak about being conscious they refer to the observer: paying attention, being mindful. The observer represents only the mental dimension of consciousness, very limited, still locked in the mind.

Then it's possible that the doorway to your self-consciousness opens, but there's no bridge between that doorway and me, meaning that the observer is actually experiencing it. In this case it's very easy to interpret that realization purely in a personal way, not knowing who is actually realizing it. That's why the next step, after the doorway to consciousness is opened, is surrender of me. Through the surrender of me, one can actually embody this state and realize who one is, which is to realize the consciousness of the soul.

RA: So if we may, let's dwell on the first step a little more so that we thoroughly understand it. You make it sound easy. To the average person who starts out on the spiritual path, awakening to consciousness is often thought of as the final destination, and you're saying it's the first step. How does one take that first step?

A: It is the first step because awakening of consciousness has limitations. It does not manifest the condition of freedom or samadhi. It's somewhat like the entry to the dimension beyond the mind. We should not forget the initial consciousness, when it's realized, is consciousness experienced within the waking dimension of this universe. It is pure consciousness of this universe. It's not yet the consciousness of the absolute reality.

RA: Is it pure consciousness in and of itself irrespective of being conscious of something, in other words, some sort of transcendent experience where you're just settled into consciousness without an object?

A: Yes, consciousness without object.

RA: Okay.

A: Consciousness without object; however, consciousness without object is still our consciousness. It is still individual consciousness. You see there are two levels of consciousness, so to speak. One is pure awareness, which is, in our terminology awakening of the conscious me.

It is a kind of consciousness of me, which is separated from the universal I am. Even though it is still beyond the mind, it is still locked in the mental dimension, not awareness.

The next level is consciousness, which is realized upon the background of the universal consciousness where me enters the beyond, but there are several portals through which me can enter the beyond. In order to realize consciousness, it has to enter the, what we call, I am of consciousness portal. It is a center at the back of the head precisely. So within this realization, even though it is a consciousness without object, there are two aspects to this consciousness or two dimensions. One is the pure subjectivity of me, and second is the beyond itself. It is not who we are; it is more like space through which we transcend me or surrender to the universal reality. The meeting between pure subjectivity of me and the beyond constitutes the awakening of pure consciousness. Even though it is a non-dual state in its essence, it also is dual in terms that me is in relationship with the beyond. For instance it can, more or less deeper, surrender to the beyond. It can abide in it passively, or it can surrender.

RA: I'm reminded of a phrase, "lamp at the door." The awakened intellect stands at the junction between the universal and the individual and is standing in the threshold between those two as an interface between them.

A: Yes, but when consciousness is properly realized, meaning me is not only experiencing the opening—because when people speak about awakening it usually refers to opening. Something is opened, but this opening is still outside of oneself, meaning it is still on some level objective. Still it's not the I am. Usually this is the split between the observer and the awakened state, which is actually a fragmented condition. This is the place where usually people say that there's no one experiencing the awakened state; there's emptiness. It does not matter that the mind has not transformed. It's still unconscious because I am not the mind. Actually it is an example of being fragmented. The purpose of the opening to any state beyond the mind is to create the platform for me to surrender. So me has to actually surrender to this opening. Otherwise this opening is there. You look up at the blue sky, and it's still outside of you. You cannot actually enter the sky. It's the same with the inner realm. It's like the inner sky opens up, but you have to enter it. That is the function of surrender. Each is a doorway to the beyond. There are three doorways: consciousness, heart, and being, which require different kinds of surrender, different principles.

Now we will speak about consciousness. Consciousness, in order to awaken, has to be linked to the beyond, meaning there has to be an opening first. If there's no opening— One can practice 1000 years of meditation, and one will not reach consciousness because there's no bridge. One is locked in this human identity, the ego dimension. So something has to open, and we can say it is a function of grace or transmission.

Then when it opens, the process of making the state constant, which we call stabilization, and the process of surrender begins, meaning that the fact that something has opened does not mean that it is constant. Some people experience openness or opening in certain situations, when they meditate for instance, but after they lose it or they cannot maintain it in activity and so forth. So the state has to be stabilized, any state. Stabilization is a function of continuity of recognition,

which is remembrance and surrender. Surrender not only allows the continuity of recognition but allows merging between me and I am to happen.

As you spoke about being on the threshold between individual and universal, one has to pass through this threshold. Being on the threshold is a kind of a duality that has to be transcended. It is not the correct duality. The correct duality is beyond the threshold, meaning one is in relationship with the beyond, but one is in the beyond, on the other side. This is a function of surrender. We call it samahdi. Samahdi is absorption of the individual in the universal. In the case of consciousness, samahdi is unity of me and I am of consciousness realized in the headspace. It is what we call horizontal samahdi—absorption behind the headspace. The back of the headspace is basically a portal to absence, to universal consciousness, one of the portals.

RA: So when you say that, are you talking about specific organs or aspects of the physical brain that are responsible? Or are you saying that just more of the awareness in that area at the back of the headspace is the portal?

A: There is an energetic portal.

RA: Energetic portal, a subtle thing.

A: A subtle thing.

RA: Yeah, okay.

A: When they speak about witnessing consciousness, originally the meaning was realization of consciousness behind the headspace. Witnessing is happening from behind the headspace. The problem with the term “witnessing” is that it implies that me is not realized because me is feeling being witnessed. When I am is embodied, one is going beyond the witnessing state; one becomes the state. It is the embodying of the awakened state, meaning the consciousness of the soul is realized, meaning the consciousness is realized as an aspect of our higher individuality, not just as something beyond us, witnessing us.

RA: I’ve heard descriptions of sudden awakenings to a witnessing state in which the person actually felt like they were observing from somewhere behind their shoulder.

A: Yeah, it’s from behind the head, and it’s not observing because consciousness is not observing. The observer is in the front of the head. It is this part of the brain which is the function for the observing faculty, but it’s more like the sense of presence is moved to the behind. So it feels as if observing, but it’s not observing. It’s being there. It’s more like the center of perception from which one is seeing the reality, at least the manifested reality.

RA: So maybe the screen of awareness or something.

A: It is the screen of awareness and of consciousness, but at the same time it is the pure subjectivity, meaning it is who we are, meaning it has a sense of self, a sense of being oneself, so to speak, meaning you know it is you.

RA: Now you've said a lot of things in the last few minutes: grace, transmission, various kinds of stages or depths of awakening. We want to make sure that we've got a really clear vision of what you're saying. You spoke of portals also. It would seem that human beings in and of themselves are, in general, a sort of portal to the universal, and obviously there are many sub-portals or various faculties and different functions that can be utilized. What you were just describing, is it necessarily sequential in a predictable way? Or can things happen in a different order for different people?

A: It's a good question. First, there are three portals. So we are clear about this; there's a portal to universal consciousness. There's a portal to the absolute, which is the un-manifested, which is what they call hara, the center in the lower belly. It is the portal through which we transcend the manifestation and enter the realm of absence. Then there's a portal to the divine, which is in the heart.

RA: So you would not say, then, that universal consciousness, absolute, and divine are synonymous. Each one of those has a different reality to it or a different connotation.

A: Absolute reality is one, but it has many different dimensions. We, through our human body, enter these dimensions separately. You cannot realize them fully immediately because the experience would be too large. The realization is too large. You need to, one by one, enter them and then integrate. On some level the soul is a reflection of the ultimate reality. Somewhat like we have consciousness, we have heart, and we are being, so does the absolute reality has all these dimensions, intelligence, and many, many other mysteries.

RA: Jesus said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions."

A: Yeah, what we realize is not God. It's more like we are entering the dimension of God. It's not that we can realize God. No human ever realized God because it would destroy him. The realization would be too large.

RA: So what you're saying, if I understand you correctly, is that ultimate reality is kind of the ultimate constituent. It's all one sameness, one wholeness, but then as human beings interfacing with that, there are various subtle manifest values of it, some of which might have a divine quality, some of which might have more a consciousness quality—and I don't mean to put words in your mouth because I'm sure you'll correct me. But I'm just taking stab at understanding what you're saying, and please clarify. But I guess you're saying that if you could take anything and boil it down to its ultimate reality, we arrive at the same thing, but as soon as manifestation is taken into consideration, there are different flavors, or channels, or aspects which have to be realized individually or separately. Am I correct, or am I off the beam?

A: A further thing we need to understand is that we realize the absolute reality through me, meaning that who we are is, on some level, determining our realization. For instance, you can realize universal consciousness only through your consciousness. You can realize the divine only through your heart, and so forth. That's why if you're heart is not awakened you cannot realize the divine through your consciousness because consciousness is not the proper tool to realize the

divine. So who you are is, at the same time, a reflection of the ultimate, and different aspects of your identity are the portals to the beyond. So, as much as you realize universal consciousness, you realize your consciousness. In fact, realization of your consciousness is more important than realization of the beyond. We are not really realizing the beyond. We are reaching unity with the beyond in order so in the context of this unity we can realize who we are because we need to be rooted in the absolute reality and the dimension of absence to contain our higher presence.

RA: Can each of these portals be the exclusive path to the full realization? Or does each portal yield a different fruit, a different result?

A: It cannot be an exclusive. That is the problem with many traditions or paths. They are using one portal, and because they are using only one portal they limit their realization of the beyond and themselves to one dimension. If you use only the portal of consciousness, as I said, you cannot realize, for instance, the absolute. You cannot enter the un-manifested. You cannot realize the divine because consciousness has limitations. Consciousness is limited to consciousness. So you need all the portals and centers of the soul. They need to be integrated in order to have the integral experience of who we are and the beyond, both. That is the complexity of human evolution that everything has to be included, and it cannot be included from the beginning because it's too vast, too wide. So we need to, step-by-step, awaken all the aspects and then integrate them.

The two foundations of the path are awakening to our higher individuality, our soul, which is basically becoming our higher being, and the second is reaching unity with the beyond or samahdi through the three portals ideally. However, on top of that, the human self with all its complexities needs to be integrated and transformed and merged because if the human is not merged, it will resist the surrender of the soul. It will pull in the opposite direction. So the mind, emotions, and the various senses of identity based on the human consciousness needs to be infused into the soul realization. For instance, one can realize I am but be very fragmented on the level of the mind, or me. I'm not speaking about things like emotional immaturity and being simple and having lower tendencies, but even on the very simple level of being lost in the mind, having no stability beyond the mind on the level of the me. These are just examples.

RA: There are numerous examples of teachers, even famous ones, who seemed very enlightened and had a lot of followers and had a big impact, but they really fell flat in some aspect of their personal life. There just wasn't a holistic development of the personality.

A: Well, first of all, most of the teachings of enlightenment have been created, developed in the East where the model of human wholeness did not really exist. It was more about renouncing the human existence, the human self, whether through the institution of monastery or being a sadhu or renouncer. The idea of being whole on the human level is more like a contribution of the West because the Western people are much more, I would say, psychologically sophisticated and developed.

RA: And a lot of times these Eastern teachers come to the West thinking that they're in pretty good condition, and then they encounter Western temptations and get all tripped up because they hadn't really experienced those things in the context of their development in the East.

A: Yeah, there's the problem if you live in an artificial environment, a monastery, sometimes you are not confronting different aspects of a human existence. Basically you are not confronting the aspect of your subconscious that needs to be transformed.

RA: So to reiterate what you've been saying the last few minutes, and just to make sure my understanding is clear, you're saying that enlightenment, to use that word—if we really want to do justice to that word—it's a multi-faceted thing consisting of a number of different unfoldments or aspects of development and that, very often perhaps, just one or another of those aspects is awakened in someone. They assume that they've got the whole thing, but it's really actually only a very partial development compared to what's possible.

A: Absolutely.

Returning to the subject of wholeness, we should not forget that the basic assumption of the many paths of enlightenment is that we do not have individuality. If you deny your individuality, the need for purification or transformation also naturally loses significance because there's no self, or there's no individual, or there's no me. So there's no one to transform.

RA: I was going to say the need for practice may lose significance as well. There are many teachers who actually say don't bother doing any practices because you're only going to reinforce the notion of a practitioner.

A: These are low quality teachers. In many paths of enlightenment, like in Buddhism or even Advaita, the need for practice has been always accepted just based on common sense. So, like in Zen they practice hard, and this path has existed for quite a long time.

RA: I think some teachers regard it as a concession with duality. If there is no person, then who is practicing, and therefore why practice? You're kind of buying into the illusion—

A: Yeah, that's why basic assumptions are dangerous because people assume things even before entering the path, and after they're imprisoned in those assumptions. They already expect what kind of realization they are supposed to reach. Whatever they reach, they translate through the lenses of their preconceptions.

I would say that the main error, which is disastrous in its consequences, is the denial of our individuality. It is so false on so many levels. Somehow no one is really questioning it.

RA: I am [*laughs*].

A: You see, the thing is that it's not only that individuality is something valid, but it is something that needs to be awakened, meaning when we analyze the nature of the mind, let's say, through some Buddhist tools, you can see its illusion, its insubstantialities, its impermanence, but it is so only because the individuality has not been yet awakened. In the case of the ordinary person, there is no body there. There is mind, meaning the ego is extremely fragmented. So a me is something that actually has to be actualized. Not only I am, but me has to be actualized in order

to come into existence. Otherwise there is not really me. There's just a sense of me lost in the mind, or crystallized through the observer. There are many paths, through the practice of mindfulness, [in which] they develop this huge observer, which is trying to control the mind, and another kind of false me is developed.

RA: So would you say that probably the vast majority of humanity hasn't really developed a me in the sense that you're saying, and could you perhaps describe what the subjective experience of someone who has developed a me or realized the me might be, compared to the vast majority?

A: First of all, me can evolve within the context of me alone, or in the context of its surrender to I am, meaning that there are two stages of the evolution of me: prior to awakening to I am, and after awakening to I am. Right? When someone doesn't have access to I am, doesn't have this opening to the beyond, the me is still evolving, but it's limited because it is evolving within its own structure. It is disconnected from universal substance. And then there is awakening to the beyond, or the access to the beyond is opened, and the me can begin to evolve based on this connection. Prior to awakening to I am, the highest level of evolution of me is what we call the conscious me.

So there are three levels of me, roughly speaking. There's a subconscious me, which is not conscious that it is thinking. Everybody is experiencing it most of the day, but from time to time people are conscious that they think. When they are conscious that they think, it is called the observer. The observer is a semi-conscious me because it has a sense of me that is able to refer to itself, but it's still locked in the mind. It cannot extract itself from the mental reality.

The next level, which is the first awakening to me, is the conscious me. The conscious me is the me which is realizing itself fully in separation from thoughts. It is, you can say, awakened observer, which does not need the function of observing in order to become conscious of itself. This is what some call awareness. Awareness is basically conscious me conscious of itself without thoughts.

There's a lot of confusion in different teachings, what one is actually speaking of, whether awareness or consciousness. For instance, like the technology of the practice of Gurdjieff. The exercises he was doing, they are not pointing to consciousness. They are pointing to the observer, to awakening of the observer. Basically they point, ideally, to awareness, to the conscious me. I don't like to use the term, "awareness" because it lacks the understanding of who is experiencing it. It gives an illusion that there is no one experiencing it, or that it is something impersonal. Awareness is actually very personal. It is me conscious of itself and already linked to being, meaning it is already abiding in the now, so to speak. In an ideal world, every human being should have developed a conscious me, but in reality even the conscious me is very rarely found in people. What they experience is usually just the, more or less, developed observer.

RA: By way of example, could we say, for instance, that examples of highly developed me's who don't have access or a foundation in the beyond might be like great humanitarians and people like that?

A: Philosophers.

RA: Yeah, philosophers or people like maybe Mahatma Gandhi. We don't know what his spiritual experience was, but people who have shown great attributes as a human being—

A: No, no, no, no, it has nothing to do with being a humanitarian. It is about acquiring a deep quality of being a thinker. So each thinker, even if he is not a humanitarian, has more or less access to consciousness. It is basically the people who are really thinkers—deep thoughts—they have this contemplative quality to their me, which results in attaining the flavor in which they experience their own me, not only the contemplative activities. If one is a deep thinker, one usually has access to conscious me, but it does not mean that this conscious me is stabilized. You see deep thinkers, they actually don't think much. People who are unconscious think all the time. People who are thinkers, they think thoughts in slow motion, and their thoughts are potent.

RA: More subtle and—

A: And this reflects the quality of their me.

RA: Less static, yeah.

A: Less what?

RA: Less static in the mind. Like it's not like ten radio stations going at the same time.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, they basically have a stillness of the mind because to be a thinker you need to have a still mind. You cannot just be lost in the mind. You need to have the mind quiet to connect to this contemplative dimension, this sort of creative intelligence. So thinkers, philosophers, mathematicians, whatever, they might have access. Usually they have a conscious me, or access to it, but they don't realize its value. Understand? Meaning they don't pay attention to it. They don't see, ah, this is who I am. They are more interested in the content of their mind and their thoughts, philosophies. So one has to have this ability to meet oneself in order to realize conscious me properly, and one has to have the desire to meet oneself. Most people, they are not interested in meeting themselves. They want to achieve different things. They don't see the value to who they are.

RA: They may not realize that there's a self to meet, you know?

A: Yeah, they don't have this concept. Again we see here the importance of conceptual tools. You need to have proper conceptual tools from the start to begin your journey, and also spiritual maturity. There has to be longing for oneself. If one is not longing to meet oneself, one wants to just reach some kind of an image of enlightenment, or expansion, or disappearance, but is bypassing oneself. You can say that there is no education, not only in society but in spirituality which is making people sensitive to the value of who they are. They want to become the universal self, but they don't want to become their self, their true self. If they look for themselves what they actually mean is they don't want to disappear or to become the universal self, meaning that the very beginning of the very intention is not put in the right place. Nobody's honoring who

they are. Human beings are like beggars, and they see the spiritual dimension as some kind of a displacement, this inner poverty of trying to escape oneself.

RA: Well, there's even a popular notion kicking around that you should just give up the search, and what you're saying is that there's a value to longing, at least at a certain stage of the game.

A: I believe you are referring to Neo-Advaita. Let's not forget this is a recent development.

RA: Yeah, that's what neo means [*laughs*].

A: Yeah, it can be neo 100 years or so, but let's say it's basically the last 10-20 years, very new. I don't think it was present in the past in that way. It's kind of like the degradation of spirituality caused by the Western superficiality. It's not really something that was at the root of the great human spiritual traditions. It started with the death of Poonjaji, and there was this spread of this primitive Advaita ideology.

RA: As you probably know, the Advaita Vedanta— Vedanta means the end of the Veda, so it's not necessarily kindergarten teaching that you start out with. It's perhaps the final teaching, but it's something that everyone wants to start with.

A: Advaita is a question of interpretation because it was basically a teaching, which was a conceptual vision that was developed by Shankaracharya 1000 years ago, and after Ramana Maharishi was basing his own teaching on this philosophy. But one can find different versions of Advaita as well. It's a matter of interpretation. Advaita means non-duality, a-duality, which does not really deny duality. It just speaks about truth, which is beyond duality. It can be interpreted in many different ways.

RA: So we had that whole discussion about knowing the me, and I just wanted to keep that in context of the larger picture. I presume that you're seeing that as an essential stage or component of the development of enlightenment. I don't know if it's something that you would say one works on directly, or that rather develops as a byproduct some deeper development.

A: Yeah, because we stopped before, prematurely. So we spoke about the fact that the highest level of evolution of me within the dimension of me—and one is still not awakened to universal reality—is conscious me. And then the me begins to evolve based on the connection to the beyond, and it evolves through surrender. It actually becomes the subject to surrender. As it surrenders, it transforms into a higher me. So the combination of having access to the beyond, the universal reality, and surrendering eventually allows the awakening to the higher me, which is beyond the conscious me, and that higher me, in our terminology, is called pure me. Pure me is basically the result of meeting between me and the universal I am. At the meeting of these two, pure me is born, and pure me is actually what constitutes the identity of the soul, our higher being. It's like our universal individuality, so to speak.

RA: So would you say that until the me has developed to a certain extent, you really have nothing to surrender, but once it's developed to a certain degree then there is something which

can be surrendered to the beyond, as you put it? Then from there, that surrendering to the beyond further develops the me?

A: Assuming that there is an opening to the beyond, because first there has to be an access. Usually if the me is very undeveloped, in an ideal reality, one would not have access to the beyond. It can happen accidentally, but it cannot be stabilized. It cannot be like a permanent state. One can have a glimpse of something, but it cannot be a permanent state. For the permanent state to manifest, any state can be permanent only if the me is solidified to a degree.

RA: So do these glimpses help to develop and purify the me, and thereby bring it to the point where there will be a sort of perpetual recognition rather than just glimpses?

A: Well, it can be an accident, meaningless. Or it can be a way the soul is showing one that there's something higher than oneself; there's some higher truth. In an ideal situation any glimpse—it's not really a glimpse but an opening—which one has to embody to surrender, meaning there's the function of the teacher that actually shows, or is allowing this opening to happen and has immediately tried to create a bridge of surrender with that opening. If the person is very fragmented, all these openings are meaningless. They have no spiritual value because one cannot embody it. One cannot enter there. You see the concept of stabilization, integration of any awakened state, is very important. Many people are not conscious of it. They experience something after, or like they live in thinking about their past experience. You know what I mean? Or they wonder why I lost it, because they do not have a concept of stabilization.

First of all, any state, which is awakened, has to become constant, and second it has to be energetically mature because the initial opening and the end of the process of integration refer to very different states. The first opening state is not a pure state. It doesn't have depth. It's more like a twilight zone, something in between. The state matures through surrender of me. It doesn't mature just because it's there at the background of something, but the background—whether you call it witnessing or something, some state of expansion—if it's only the background, it will disappear. It has to be embodied, and it is embodied through surrender. So the me has to actually enter this state, and then we own this state. We are not dependent on whether it comes or it goes, arises or it disappears, opens or closes. We master the state. At that time, you can say you own this state; it becomes your identity.

RA: In my own experience, just as a case in point, I would consider myself to have been very fragmented when I first became interested in spirituality. I learned to meditate. I began to practice it, and there were glimpses. The glimpses were very profound and refreshing, but within weeks even I found my life changing quite dramatically. Then over the years and decades there has been an integration and a stabilization such that what I might have been once been glimpsing foggily and briefly seems to be a perpetuum. I'm sure there's much, much more yet to unfold, but I bring that up as an example simply because it seems that if a person has some sort of practice which can provide glimpses, then that's not a waste of time or anything. Those glimpses have an influence every time they occur, and if they are frequent enough and going on over time, they can kind of pervade, or infuse, or stabilize, really, to use that example. Kind of like dyeing a cloth: keep dipping it and bleaching until it eventually becomes colorfast.

A: Any state becomes stabilized and integrated through continuity of me being linked to it and surrender. The first level of relationship with the state is that you are conscious of it. This is the first level of self-remembrance. For instance, you awaken consciousness, and by being conscious of consciousness you make sure it doesn't disappear. This is self-remembrance. So your consciousness is actually activating this state. Being conscious of this state is activating it, but in this case there's still too much duality between the one who is conscious with this state itself.

So the next level of relationship is surrendering to this state, meaning the me is not just relating to this state from the standpoint of being conscious of it. It is disappearing into it. It disappears into the state. It's kind of like falling into the state and becoming one with it, embodying the state, and in this process of falling into the state, not only does the state gradually stabilize, but the me allows the state to expand into its final depth through its surrender. So me is kind of, through its weight, pushing the state to its final limits. Otherwise the state is shallow. It's more like something at the background, something you touch, but you cannot enter. Basically the state becomes complete—any state—when me is merged with it. As long as me is separated, the state is in too much duality which makes the state incomplete, and me is not transformed. It is still an in-between situation.

RA: And when you say, “state,” the word “state” has a connotation of, very often, temporary. Like Ken Wilber talks about states and stages, how there can be many, many states, but then a stage becomes more of a stable platform. Then on that platform there may be more states, but then again a new platform or stage is established. So is that the kind of terminology you would ascribe to?

A: No, I use state as something that stays, meaning something, which is an unconditional, independent from me, reality. You see there are many states of me, which are relative. For instance, there are many relative, mystical states, which one can mistake for being awakened and so forth, and there is a state, which is independent from me. It's objective, so to speak. The universal I am, from the standpoint of me, is objective. It is the objective subjectivity.

As we spoke about this, one can enter this objective subjectivity through the three portals, and each portal constitutes a slightly different realization of the state of the beyond. It is realized fully when me merges with it fully and enters the dimension of absence because you can realize many different states while being in the dimension of presence, meaning on the Earth in this universe. Or you can realize these states of existence on the other side, the unmanifested, which is what we call dimensional absence. The idea is that, in the highest level of surrender of me, me enters the state of absence. This is the proper samahdi, when me is actually merged with the other side of reality without disappearing. It maintains its existence but is being [inaudible 50:08] a higher me.

RA: So just to make sure I understand you, your use of the word refers to a level of reality which is what it is regardless of whether or not anybody experiences it. It's not dependent upon human experience for its existence, but we may experience it. You're saying that—

A: Objective, yes.

RA: Yeah, and we may experience it as if from afar as an observer, or more intimately by surrendering and merging into it and becoming that, in a sense, and experiencing it from its own vantage point.

A: Which transforms the state itself, our experience of it—

RA: Our experience of it.

A: Because if we experience it as the observer, we actually cannot penetrate the depth of this state because we are outside of it. It's like looking at the sea from the shore—

RA: Yeah, getting a flavor of it, or you smell it. But it's not the same as diving into it.

A: So diving is actually not only transforming the me and allowing it to merge with the state, but it's allowing us to reach the final depth of the state as well.

RA: And that's where surrender comes in, right? You can't dive into the ocean without surrendering being dry. You have to just dive in [*laughs*].

A: Yeah, that's my point. There is a big difference between experiencing consciousness from the observer, or being merged with consciousness. They are two different states of consciousness. One is much more shallow than the other. In this contemplation of the relationship between me and I am, the most important term—it's a dimension—is pure me, is the true experience of the universal I am. If pure me is not understood and grasped the soul cannot be realized, and the state cannot be properly embodied. One still does not know who one is. One can be even energetically in a state of samahdi but not knowing who one is because it's like the me is still not conscious of itself in a higher way, and that me is not really personal. The me is divine. It's like the light of God. It is godly, but we see it as something bad, negative, or something we want to get rid of because it has been the cause of suffering for most people, making them overly self-conscious. So they want to get rid of it, but in its essence me is divine. Through surrender with I am it actually realizes its divinity.

RA: So when you refer to knowing who one is, you're referring actually to knowing one's essential divinity. That's who one is.

A: Divinity, purity, one's essential light, which is, though rooted in the universal, individual. You see we exist for a reason. We don't exist just to disappear into nirvana or moksha. We exist to realize our individuality. There's a purpose of our creation, meaning we have a goal. Our soul has a goal to realize actually who we are, and who we are is not something— When we say to realize who we are, one can assume that we have been always it, but in fact we have never been it. So we realize something that we are meant to become, actualize our light. Otherwise on some level we have been it because the essence of this light is universal, but on another level we have never been it. So it's more like we remember our future. We bring our future into the present.

RA: So it has no practical significance or value. It's sort of like if a person, let's say, they won the lottery, but they don't know it. They've got the ticket in their sock drawer. They're a

millionaire, but they're living like a pauper because they haven't discovered the ticket and gone to claim it.

A: You speak about whom?

RA: Well, everybody. I mean you're saying—

A: You mean someone who has reached unity within the universal I am but has not realized himself? Or do you speak about the general population, which simply doesn't know who they are?

RA: Well, you're saying that, in a sense, you have never been it until you realize it, but then you also said that, in a sense, you have always been that, if I heard you correctly. But then that's of no practical value until you actually experience that that's who you are, and then that treasure which has been hidden for all time is accessible. Is that correct understanding?

A: It's correct on some level, yeah.

RA: How is it not correct? I'm just trying to make sure I'm tuned into what you're saying.

A: Knowing that you have always been this—you have always been your true self—is not true because, unless you become your true self, you have never been it. You simply don't exist as your true self at all. You exist as an unconscious human being.

RA: And in that unconscious human being, at some deep level, does not the true self reside, to be discovered, like water in a well to be dug up? Or are you just saying it doesn't even come into existence until you enliven it?

A: It doesn't come into existence. There's nothing there.

RA: Okay.

A: The unconscious human being is like an onion. You peel it, and nothing remains. So there is no essence that is hidden or waiting to be unpeeled because there's nothing. This essence has to come into existence, and then you can say you have always been it in the sense that who you really are is an expression of universal light, of creation, but you can say it only when you have realized yourself. Otherwise you cannot say it, and you are saying it only metaphorically because that realization is something that happens through the process of becoming.

RA: I think I remember in one of your writings—it might have been you—quoting that Zen saying where someone has asked, “Does a dog have Buddha nature?” and he said, “no.” So what you're saying is that, although the beyond is there at the foundation of all creation—for a dog as much as for a human being—there's something about the soul or the essence of the human being which is not developed yet. It's not like it exists in hiding. It has to be enlivened, or developed, or ripened somehow through our attention. Is that correct?

A: A kind of deceptive logic is based on this non-dual thinking that through self-realization, we dispel the illusion of being an individual, and what remains is the absolute reality, but if we remove our individuality, for us nothing will remain because we are the angle of perception of the absolute reality. We are part of it. We need to realize who we are to experience it as much as to experience ourselves. Self-realization has two dimensions: reaching unity with the absolute reality, which is not becoming the absolute reality, it's reaching unity, and to actualize our higher individuality, our higher individual consciousness in existence. This has to be clear because if this distinction is not made there will be always confusion.

RA: Yeah, that's why I'm dwelling on it. I want to make sure that this is as clear as possible in my understanding.

A: Basically universal self-realization is reaching unity with the absolute reality. This is a state of samahdi. When one is in a state of samahdi, one is in samahdi in something, not just in oneself. One is like being in the ocean, samahdi in the ocean of existence. One is one with the beyond, and the beyond is not like a final point. It is the beginning of something which has no end. One can actually travel through the beyond, journey through it.

When our human evolution ends, which is what we can translate as being liberated and whole, it is not like the end. It is just the beginning of this journey into the mystery of God. You cannot fathom it. So that is universal self-realization, meaning that you are not becoming God. You are entering the dimension of God. You are entering reality, basically. Like here we are, we live in this dream dimension, in this waking state of this universe, being relatively separated from reality because we have no conscious link with this. So throughout evolution we enter, we reunite ourselves with this foundation of reality, which is one side of our evolution, one purpose. Our second purpose is, based on this unity, to realize who we are.

RA: I heard you use the analogy of a dewdrop. The dewdrop reflects the sun and, in a sense, contains the sun, but it's not the sun. It's just a perfect reflector of the sun.

A: Yeah, that is a good metaphor.

RA: And so most people aren't pure dewdrops. They're kind of very muddy reflectors, and the sun isn't very clearly reflected. This kind of developing or knowing yourself, your individuality in its pure form, I guess you're saying, is like becoming that dewdrop which can improperly—

A: That's correct; however, we should not forget this can only happen in the context of unity with the sky, with the universal reality. Otherwise that individual cannot realize himself because he has no foundation. We need to be linked to the source of light of our existence to realize our light. Otherwise we simply are locked in this sense of separate self in this mind-ego reality, and there is not much to realize there, frankly speaking, other than suffering.

RA: So you just said that you can't really realize yourself or your individuality in its full value without connection with the universal consciousness, but somehow I understood you earlier to be saying that developing the individual self is a prerequisite to connecting with the universal consciousness. That seems contradictory.

A: It's not. You need to develop minimal me. We need to develop the minimum integrity on the level of me before we can begin to transcend it or to go into a deeper dimension. To give you a simple example, somebody who is a neurotic cannot meditate because meditation will make him more crazy. So he needs to have the ability, at least a little bit, to control his mind in order to transcend the mind. Then he has to be developed to a degree before he can actually enter the spiritual path. For most humans in this dimension, they are actually trying to develop as humans. This is their purpose, not to transcend. It's not their place. They're young souls. They are learning how to be human, how to experience human love, human sanity, human positive emotions, how to actually use their intelligence. They are still learning how to be human.

Then the human, to enter the spiritual path, has to reach a point of crisis. He has to reach a point where it's not enough. Not just because he is suffering miserably, and he wants a way out, because it doesn't work like this. The spiritual path cannot be an escape because one cannot escape from oneself is the truth. The spiritual path requires the ability to confront oneself deeper, but you know one has to reach a positive place in one's evolution where any concept of happiness, fulfillment, love, whatever is there, satisfaction on the human level, is not enough. This is why one actually seeks, so the deeper longing can enter. Something that one remembers; deep inside is the call of the soul, something that we all have forgotten, the remembrance of our divinity, our spiritual inheritance.

So the me obviously has to evolve to some degree, but the problem is that the me is limited in how much it can develop in itself. It can reach a tipping point, but after it's stuck. Conscious me, on some level, is free from the mind. It doesn't have the problem that it is thinking all the time, for instance, but it's not free in itself. It's still locked in it's own dimension. It's still in prison. So it still is not linked to the space of transcendence. It's still suffering, basically. That's why being free from the mind should not be mistaken for being free from suffering because suffering is deeper than mind.

RA: So if I understand what you're saying, a certain degree of development of the me is a prerequisite for spiritual progress, but you can't just develop the me exclusively without, at a certain stage, connecting with the universal consciousness. Then, at a certain stage, that becomes an essential component of further development of the whole package.

A: Absolutely. The me has to have a level of integrity, essential integrity, on several levels. One is in the mind. The sense of me in the mind has to be solidified to some extent, which is ideally conscious me.

Second, emotionally one has to have the minimal maturity and purity. If somebody has a deep impurity, this person will use the spiritual path for the wrong purposes. The ego will corrupt the meaning of the spiritual path. It is similar to the transformation of consciousness where there's a transformation and healing of our emotions based on surrender to universal I am, but for this to happen we have to be able to surrender. The fact that one is meditating or is able to even experience states beyond the mind does not mean that one wants to surrender, like the ego is happy here: I've experience all these things, but my status quo is not touched. I am still enjoying my own dimension of the ego, the me. The me is instinctively resisting surrender. It's very afraid

to surrender. It's afraid that it will disappear. It's afraid that it will not be able to protect itself in the material reality. It will lose control. The fear of surrender is very common to everyone who is touching this dimension of surrender, meaning he has a choice. You see when you are linked to the beyond, to the universal unity, for the first time you have a choice to surrender. It doesn't mean that you make this choice. You have to choose. You have to become one with the intention of surrender, and that requires maturity on the level of me.

RA: Perhaps the ability to surrender just begins to dawn by degrees, and it has to reach a certain degree before it can really be accomplished, you think?

A: There is an ability to surrender. You see the fact that me wants to surrender does not mean that surrender will happen automatically. It's an art of letting go. It's an art in which me has to be gradually emerged with I am. So me has to actually acquire a skill of how to surrender, but that is the very technology of merging between me and I am. Before that there has to be an intention to surrender. Me has to agree: I want to surrender, not just intellectually. Everybody will say, I want to surrender, but it's like wanting to die. People don't want to die; they want to live. They want to maintain their separate sense of self. Even if they hate it, they love it.

RA: So when you say gradually merge that implies that surrender isn't necessarily an all-or-nothing thing; it could happen step by step by step.

A: There is a whole map of surrender, stages of surrendering deeper and deeper. You can say that one extreme is that here you are the observer, and here you have the I am. And they are completely separated. On the way, the me is coming closer to I am, and there are many stages of how close it is to I am and then how deeply it is actually inside I am, how deeply it is merged. For any surrender to take place, pure me has to be awakened because the observer cannot surrender himself. He doesn't have substance.

Conscious me also cannot surrender because it surrenders through pure me. Pure me is the link between conscious me and I am. That's why I'm saying that to even imagine what surrender is, one has to really grasp the significance of who is surrendering, who is actually this deepest intimate subject to surrender, the one who can be in samahdi and be conscious of himself in samahdi. He has merged, but he still exists as himself. This observer cannot do it. There is a deeper dimension of me that is the true subject of surrender, the one who is surrendering and merging and eventually becomes one with the inner realm. That is pure me.

RA: And in becoming one, I believe I heard you say or read you say that there's never a complete, utter, total elimination of individuality or sense of personal self. Correct? The way some people speak, there's always some remains or remnant or structure of that regardless of how profoundly surrendered and merged in the universal you may become.

A: First of all we need to make a distinction between realization of our individual dimension and our personality or the human dimension because it's like a structure of identity that has many layers. The root of it is in the beyond, the universal. Then there is the pure light of the soul, which is individual, and there is this part of the me which is still linked to your personality, to your desires, to your emotions, to your human expression, meaning that you still continue to

exist as a human. You still can have desires, or you still want to explore your humanity in this way or another.

At first, obviously the individual is not disappearing through merging with the beyond. On the contrary, it is actually being actualized through it, meaning it is awakening through it. It is possible that one merges with the beyond to some extent, and the soul is not awakened, which we call then negative surrender.

Negative surrender is like you become one with something, but you don't know who you are. It is like there is still part which is unconscious of oneself. When the soul is realized, one knows who one is within the context of being one with the ultimate reality. So it is a subtle point that needs to be clarified, and then one still continues to exist on the human level. You have stability of your body and stability your mind, your intelligence, your emotions, and that obviously does not disappear. However, ideally, it becomes transformed through the soul because the human aspect, on some level, also merges with the beyond, but on some level it doesn't, meaning on some level it exists through participation in the relative dimension in the human world. So the human personality, the human consciousness, does not disappear but ideally is transformed in order to serve as a vehicle for the soul, as a positive expression of the soul.

To be whole, the human has to become whole as well, not only to realize unity in the universal reality, or not even to realize the soul, but also to be complete as a human. For instance, let's say one can be in a very deep state but still possess some neurotic tendencies on the human level, or have strong desires, you know, having different deficiencies, or having fears, or not being able to cope with human life, these are definitely examples.

So the human evolution is parallel to the evolution of the soul. They are like different layers of who we are. They all have to be somehow integrated and synchronized. In one scenario the soul is ahead, but the human is behind. In another scenario the human is ahead, the human is very developed, but the soul is dormant, unawakened. In this first scenario the soul is more ahead because the human is behind. He is pulling her away from surrender because we're one energetic system, one system of energy and consciousness. So it's all one me, you can say, which is functioning on several levels. If this me is still not in the world, it's still bound by many deficiencies, incomplete, has many desires, these desires will prevent the soul to be fully able to surrender and merge. So what you want to reach is a situation in which we call the human at rest, where the human is so relaxed, it doesn't have to be happy or even perfect but has to reach the minimum of fulfillment and psychological development, essential sanity, essential well-being, maturity in the mind, emotions.

RA: And if it's done that, then it will be in sync with the soul and not dragging it back.

A: Through this, and based on the connection to the soul, the human arrives at the state of deep existential relaxation where he is not resisting the surrender of the soul. In fact, he is kind of being, as well, taken by the soul into the state of surrender. So even though he exists in this dimension, on some level the human also is in the state of samahdi. Another scenario is that—

RA: The human is ahead of the soul.

A: Yeah, but in this first scenario, there is a situation where the soul can be very developed. One can have access to very deep states, but the human still needs to experience the joy of human life. We don't even speak of it as something negative, just simply exploring the world. If somebody's is young or has not experienced himself sexually or emotionally, he needs to experience these things. So the soul gives the human time. So the human gradually is catching up, but it is all meant to be, meaning there's no need to rush. On some level it is our soul choice, the soul will. The soul is willing it. Her intelligence, which is functioning to the human that actually wants to express herself on the human level more in order to be complete.

In the case of the human being more developed, it's rare but it's possible. Usually it's because of some karmic reason. The grace is not being given to that person in order to connect with the beyond, in order to open this portal to universal I am. It is karmic. However, in some cases the human can be very developed on some level but not mature spiritually. It can be very intelligent, emotionally developed, but it doesn't have the spiritual sensitivity to recognize the inner call, meaning it's developed on some level but not developed on another level.

So all these scenarios are possible. For the soul to fully surrender, the human has to surrender, and the human has to be purified, meaning if the human is sincere and is surrendering to the soul, and the soul is linked to the universal reality, her light is basically healing and transforming the human because the human is very problematic on many levels. Often it's evolution needs to be auxiliary for the soul to be complete which is, you can say, a function of grace of the soul. The soul is transforming the human.

So I don't if your question has been answered. It is basically we exist on all those levels, and they have to be harmonized, integrated, for us to be whole. If the human is pulling in the human dimension too much, he will obstruct the soul surrender. If the soul is surrendering too much, and the human has not embraced, there is a risk of remaining incomplete on the human level, and so forth. There are all these possibilities.

RA: You said an interesting thing awhile ago, which was that—I forget exactly how you phrased it—but it was something like, when you move into the universal awareness, when you surrender to that and merge with that, in a sense that's not an end to things, it's just the beginning. In your writings I also heard you say that great souls like the Buddha, maybe Ramana Maharishi or whomever, they're still around someplace on some level continuing in their evolution. It would be interesting to talk about that a little bit because in some traditions it's considered that you merge with the ocean like a drop does, and you're gone. You no longer exist. It's just the ocean, but there's evidence to the contrary, I think. It would be interesting to understand your conception of the scope of evolution and where it may continue after so-called enlightenment.

A: The problem is that science of enlightenment was created in the East, the far East, and was influenced by the impersonal interpretation of enlightenment. This conditioning goes very deep. Obviously if our individuality is denied, no one is reaching enlightenment, and no one can continue after death. It's like the Buddhist paradox: who is incarnating? However, they rationalize it, as a battle of skandhas or impressions, but truth be told simply nobody properly

described who is reaching spiritual realization. So this is the fundamental flaw, which is the cause of all flaws.

It's not even a question of whether somebody continues evolution after death of the physical body. It's about who is evolving, who is reaching awakening, who we are, but, you know, know yourself: that is the paradox because the question, who am I, is the root of Eastern spirituality. Yet it has been answered wrongly. So if this flaw is not corrected, everything that springs out of this will be incorrect. Like we speak about me, and everybody coheres immediately and thinks that they know what it means, but the me is the most subtle thing in existence because it is so close to who we are. So nobody is actually able to grasp it. It's easier to grasp some opening to the beyond, what it means, than me. It's simply extremely subtle. Nobody knows me. Nobody cares about it. Nobody is open to explore this dimension other than to negate it or to conceptualize in this way or another.

RA: Well one may negate it, but if that's not the way the universe works then tough luck. You don't change the way the universe works just by adopting a particular philosophy.

A: Yeah, but you can live in denial which human beings can do very well, living in denial.

RA: Well, there are plenty of atheists in the world who deny that there's anything after death or that there's any sort of divine intelligence or anything, but there will come a time at which they're pleasantly surprised, I believe [*laughs*].

A: Yes, but there is a much deeper denial that you are in an awakened state, and you deny that you are in that state. That is the highest form of denial because the very reason that you are in that state is to meet yourself, and you keep denying it. It's not just a matter of concepts. It's a matter of actually not being able to grasp who one is. It's very important.

RA: Do you feel that some of these famous teachers such as the Buddha or Ramana Maharshi may have been in such a state of denial? You're pretty familiar with their teachings.

A: Of course they were in a state of denial. It's like a paradox because they may have met themselves deeply but not being able to grasp the true meaning of that experience. This is how the preconceptions, the assumptions of how they can determine the nature of the experience. That's why the correct vision of the path is extremely important because the idea is that the true concept is as close to reality as possible. They are not reality, but they are so close. Like you touch something with a finger; it is the very thing. You're not merely pointing to it, you're actually touching it. Concepts of higher degree, they are not pointing to reality, they're touching it. Beyond your finger is reality. So they have been obviously influenced by their philosophies, by the ideology of their particular path, or the culture. Buddha was rebellious, but he was very much influenced by Hindu culture. It was the same state of mind.

I believe that this is what the West brings. The gift of the West is the honoring of individuality. Of course of those people who teach Advaita, they're not honoring anything, but energetically speaking, in terms of culture, the Western soul is simply deep. People from the West are, in my opinion, much deeper than the people from the East, in terms of soulfulness. They have a soul.

Their me is more developed. They are basically closer to their me. Obviously everybody is lost, but energetically, in terms of culture, in terms of what the West brings to the world, is me, the soul.

RA: You live in India half the time. My experience in going to India and the Philippines, and places like that, is that there is a sort of a sweetness and almost a childishness, kind of an emotional quality in people in the East. Whereas in the West there is kind of a crudeness in a way, but there's also—yeah, go ahead.

A: There's an East, and there's an East. There is a difference between Japan and India. It's opposite. So it's depending on which kind of East you refer to. The Chinese East is very different than, let's say, South Asia. They are very different people. Certainly the problem of Western culture is that, especially American, is a very overdeveloped mind. It is extremely mental, basically mental energy, but this is a paradox. It's like the way they developed, it created an imbalance, but somehow on the way something positive as well is present.

RA: Now the way we got onto this topic was I was asking about the continuation of evolution, perpetually, eternally, and I brought up Buddha and Ramana as examples. Then you began to talk about how, in their traditional understandings there was a denial of individuality or of any self, which could continue on and continue to evolve. But aside from whether or not they understood that, what is your sense of what this ongoing evolution may be, and is there any kind of experiential or intuitive cognition of it? Or is this just kind of a philosophy that makes sense to you the way maybe reincarnation makes sense to people but they have experiential verification of it?

A: First, if we use this metaphor if someone who is self-realized reaches unity with the ocean, we need to remember that someone who has really reached the state of samahdi, he is already evolving in the beyond in his present lifetime. He doesn't have to wait for the death in order to continue his evolution. He is already evolving beyond the human. So with the death of the physical body, the process just continues with the soul, meaning you don't have to die to begin to evolve beyond death. To reach natural samahdi in the beyond and to realize your soul is death. The body doesn't have to die fully to be experienced. It's simply the nature of evolution; the nature of existence is evolution. There is no mystery here.

RA: Right, and as you mentioned in one of your writings, when Ramana had his realization when he was still a teenager, he went through a couple of decades after that of maturation and further deepening and integration. So it wasn't like an on-off kind of light switch realization.

A: Absolutely, and unfortunately he forgot it.

RA: Based on the things he said, you're concluding that?

A: Basically he forgot it. Maybe not entirely, but on some level he forgot it. You know that is the problem, that if you do not have the conceptual vision of the path as a whole, you tend to simplify things. It's very difficult to understand the nature of the path. For instance, you can move through many different states, having no idea what has happened because the intelligence

cannot grasp the intricacies of those inner dimensions. It's like you are moving through something you are completely unfamiliar with; there's no map. If you don't have a map, you cannot understand, and obviously these people don't have a map. They have a simplified vision of the path.

RA: And this is quite common actually, that teachers may undergo decades of spiritual practice. Then they reach a certain stage of awakening, and they turn around and say you don't have to do any practice, even though they had done it for 30 years or something. So it seems common that one forgets all the details of what one went through to get to a certain stage.

A: Yeah, sure. It's also a matter of sensitivity. Some people, they are not sensitive. For instance part of our evolution is alignment of our sensitivity with reality, with the ability to recognize subtle things. For instance one can reach a state of consciousness even without merging with consciousness and actually think that one has realized absolute reality, that one is free, that there's no me above all, that is perfection. Where someone else would not want to live in such a state and would see it as actually a very limited state of suffering basically. So the lack of sensitivity to imperfection of different states of awakening is the cause of false interpretation, and also it causes the stagnation in evolution because if you think you are happy, perfect, you don't try to change anything. For instance, surrender is missing, the depth is missing, so you want to surrender more, you want to merge more, you want to deepen the state in order to make it perfect, but if you don't recognize it's imperfect you cannot make it perfect. So most of these people don't, because to understand the point of ego they have moved to some different dimension which feels wonderful, but this dimension is still suffering, still imperfect. The bridge between their past and their future, what they were and what they will become, there's no continuity of intelligence and continuity of evolution. They don't even understand their state.

RA: One example you brought out is that a person might be established in kind of an impersonal state, without really a lot of heart development, and there could be a vast range of development of the heart that they might have not even realize is possible. So they might kind of think they're finished, but by comparison with what's possible it's really a very dry condition.

A: For instance, in my personal journey, after I stabilized consciousness in Japan, for many years I was stuck because I realized the imperfection of this state. I knew that I was suffering still but could not find any way out. I visited these teachers in India, and they of course had no clue. They could not help. Zen masters had no clue. Nobody had a clue. They just repeat these concepts without seeing the subtleties of evolution. So, in my case my soul was ready to take the next step but could not because it needed help. Something had to enter to help.

It's a long story, things happen, but basically the bottom line is sensitivity. Spiritual intelligence is essential for us to correctly interpret any realization. A realization is not interpreting itself; we are interpreting it. We are interpreting it based on our previous evolution, our capacity to see what is really happening, and our concepts. So if somebody is Buddhist, he will interpret it in a Buddhist way. He will try to impose the Buddhist frame of mind on the experience, the soul. Sensitivity, and intelligence, and knowledge are essential. It is a science, a science however that requires to develop very, very precise inner tools in order for us to be able to verify things and to

recognize the next step. You reach a step, and what is the next step? You reach state of consciousness; okay, what next?

RA: So were you able to work that out on your own? Or did you actually find a teacher who helped you get through that impasse?

A: I have sacrificed all my life to contemplation of these matters. My teaching basically is each step of the path, which I walked, which I paid blood for each step, for each piece of understanding developed in many, many years.

To understand the spiritual dimension is very difficult. We need to really see that our human intelligence is completely foreign to the inner dimension. It cannot understand subtle realms, which are not psychic realms. They are realms of pure subjectivity. It's completely undeveloped. On the Earth our mind develops so much, science develops, but spirituality is not developing. It's like what did the Buddha say? People are just repeating. Nobody is developing any new tools of understanding. It's all just repetition. It's like there's no evolution actually in terms of deeper comprehension of the science of enlightenment on this plane. It was stark a few thousand years ago and remains there, and why? Because our intelligence simply cannot comprehend these things. We are like apes. That is our state. Our psyche is still in trees and in caves. We cannot grasp the subtle dimensions of the inner realm. That's why each seeker on the path has to really make an effort to understand because this intelligence can be activated through deep contemplation. Of course, this contemplation has to be linked to experiential reality. Contemplation is very important. It's not about understanding conceptually. It changes our relationship with who we are, with the inner reality, with all of those states beyond the mind. Actually everything is transformed; it's different.

RA: So what you're saying is that, although our spiritual muscles are atrophied, they can be revived, and we can acquire the capability of deeper insight.

A: Yes because there has to be desire to understand. Like the seekers have to be alive, not half dead as they are. Some of them are intellectual, but this is not what we are speaking about. We are speaking about intelligence, sensitivity. One thing to really understand what is happening there is like something has to be activated which is lethargic. Like I meet so many seekers, nobody asks the real questions. When there is a real question, then you are ready for the next step. You just need this push, but they are not coming to this point. They are just kind of like sitting there, lethargic. Something is not alive. There is no passion, no inspiration. They have never contemplated these matters in a real way.

RA: But you're kind of generalizing, though, I don't think we can paint them all with the same brush. There's going to be a certain percentage of the general global community of spiritual seekers who possess the kind of qualifications that you would respect and appreciate, right? I mean you must encounter them on your retreats and so on.

A: We can generalize. Part of my work is to activate these qualities, but it's like they need to be activated. There are not many real seekers. I don't think so. The seeker needs to be created. They

need to be born you know. Obviously there are some, here and there, but this is rare. Humanity, even the spiritual part as a group, shares very similar qualities.

There are some seekers, which are sincere, which have the capacity of intelligence, and which are lost because they cannot find a way out, and these ones need to perhaps push themselves more to their limits and not accept being stagnated. Usually they are just stuck in different traditions because this is what they know. They are in Zen, so they do Zen their whole life because they were, perhaps for many lifetimes, in this Buddhist energy so this is where they feel comfortable. They need to break through. They need to be more courageous. When you have courage, when you have passion, intensity, when you take a risk, life will help you. Otherwise, you just get stuck because it's not up to us, everything. Life has to help everyone. One has to have assistance; one has to have grace; one has to have help. The help will come when one is sincere, when one is actually using all of one's resources. It's not just they are lethargic and a victim of circumstances.

RA: The Bible says, "Seek and ye shall find; knock and the door shall be opened." So it does seem that when one reaches out, to some extent there is a response from nature's intelligence that comes to meet them.

A: Yeah, exactly. It's just there needs to be more intense knocking [*laughs*].

RA: Yeah, well the more intensely you knock, maybe the sooner the door opens [*laughs*].

A: Some people need to knock more intensely, yeah.

RA: You were saying earlier that for many people, psychological human evolution is exactly what they need as a prerequisite to going deeper. So maybe what you just said, maybe that's happening more on a mass scale, which could be a precursor for people in larger numbers genuinely going deeper.

A: There is a possibility that there may be, in a hundred years or so, some quantum leap. It's more like an accumulation of something. Something is gathering, and maybe it can translate as a quantum leap.

RA: Yeah, we'll see.

Just to revisit something we were talking about earlier, if you have the time. I don't want to keep you longer than you want to, but this is an interesting conversation.

A: Sure.

RA: I asked the question about Ramana Maharshi, and Buddha, and so on continuing in their evolution in some realm, and you said even after their liberation as human beings they were continuing in their evolution. You don't have to die to do that. Your sense, again, is that anyone who has lived, such as those people, or yourself, or me, will in a sense always exist in some

realm on some level and that evolution will be a never-ending phenomenon. Is that correct, and could you elaborate?

A: Through our awakening, we become part of universal evolution, meaning evolution will only exist for those who have awakened the continuity of their true identity. Those who have not, they may just disappear as well, meaning not everyone exists forever. It's like in nature. Certain forms are dissolved because they do not work. We have a purpose. We have been created for a purpose. We have work to do. If we refuse to do this work, we might as well be dissolved because we don't do what we are supposed to do. Basically we are being a form of wasted energy and consciousness. There is a Zen koan: why do you wake up every morning? Most people don't know why they wake up every morning. They just wake up, living an unconscious life. Well waking up in the morning, it's a deep thing. Coming into this existence is a deep thing. We have a purpose, and it's beyond our even personal search for happiness and freedom. It's something universal.

RA: So the universal purpose, would you say, is expansion of happiness or some kind of cosmic evolution?

A: It is the evolution of the light of me into the heart of God, into the heart of universal intelligence. It's a never-ending deepening of everything: love, intelligence, consciousness, understanding, a constant transformation of the sense of self. The self is constantly being transformed to something new, something of a higher degree.

As humans we are just touching the beginning of something, that something we cannot fathom because our brain would explode. There are beings in the universe that you could not have a conversation with because we are like ants. The human Buddha is like an ant compared with some beings. We are just beginners in universal evolution and getting out of this kindergarten, which we call enlightenment, which is just graduation from kindergarten, and then there is something infinite, infinite mystery. Understanding it brings humility. We are just beginners.

RA: I always tend to see it that way myself, not that I do so on any particular authority, but that just really makes sense to me. These beings to whom we are like ants by comparison, maybe they were ants at one point themselves and have evolved to become beings like that.

A: Sure.

RA: There's actually a story like that in the Upanishads where all these little ants are seen marching along, and someone comments that they were all once Shivas or some great being. So maybe it goes in a cycle.

I intend to continue listening to your recordings and reading your books, and you know maybe we can even have another conversation in a year or something because it is really a detailed and subtle teaching.

Do you have anything that you feel we haven't touched upon that would be important in this context for people to hear?

A: Well, for instance, those who meditate should understand that meditation is a profound combination of surrender into the beyond and embodying the light of one's own self, meaning to meditate is to be oneself in the higher sense and, at the same time, to be absorbed into the ground of existence. The intention to meet oneself within the context of surrender is important in order to grasp the heart of meditation. Otherwise one is just sitting there trying to pacify the mind to go beyond the mind and is missing the most important thing: who is sitting there? The impersonal, elemental meditation can distort its true meaning.

Furthermore, each state of meditation has to be integrated with life, meaning it should be experienced exactly the same in the context of activity. If it's not experienced, meaning it is either not integrated, or it is false, or in a relative state, which is not part of our true nature, the intention should be to realize our true nature, who we truly are in meditation and activity because meditation is the way to deepen it. It is the basic groundwork.

RA: Do you teach a particular form of meditation?

A: There is only one meditation, which is to be one's true self, and what does it involve? It involves to embody the three centers of the soul, which is the center of consciousness, the center of the heart, and to surrender through being. So in order to meditate one has to know oneself. One has to meet first the consciousness beyond thoughts, then abide in this consciousness, embodying it. It's like the first entry into meditation. Then from there, there is a descension of vertical surrender towards the absolute, or going through the heart as well.

RA: Do you feel that someone listening to this could actually sit down and meditate successfully as you have described? Or do you feel that it would require some formal instruction?

A: Usually I verify that the person is correctly experiencing consciousness because they have to experience consciousness. If they do not directly experience consciousness they have no space to abide upon. So they are trying with the observer to meditate. That's the problem. Someone who is mature, who has a connection to their essential nature, through this talk or through this concept, this can be helpful for him to deepen his meditation.

RA: You verify that through actually sitting with a person.

A: Yeah, I sit with the person.

RA: One-to-one.

A: One-to-one, yeah.

RA: Yeah, okay. So if a person wanted to do that, as I understand it— Obviously people can listen to your audios and read your books, but if they want to get serious about it and really work with you, they would need to go a retreat in Israel or India, right?

A: You know, visit me privately.

RA: In either of those places?

A: Yes.

RA: Okay.

A: Basically, as we spoke at the beginning, the space of I am has to be open or else the me is trying to meditate. As much as me can meditate a little bit, it is very limited because the identity of a normal person is what, is the observer. The observer is at the center of me in the front of the head. It's very limited, and it has no solidity. It has to, all the time, do some technique, some practice. It has to observe, and to have the observer overdeveloped can be also dangerous because one becomes too mental. You know there are many practices of mindfulness and stuff, and if they are done excessively they develop too much observer. It becomes like a monster.

RA: There's a lot of manipulation going on.

A: No manipulation, just concentration. To be too mindful is not a good thing. One becomes like a mindful robot. You know what I mean?

RA: I read in one of your writings, you were saying that the degree of relaxation that one experiences is indicative of the depth of being. Would you also say that concentration is contraindicated because it is not conducive to relaxation, that it's a sort of an unnatural or a straining kind of a thing? Or is concentration prescribed in your system sometimes?

A: Concentration is important on the level of developing the solidity of the observer in conscious me. It gives actually the continuity of attention without which one cannot overcome the subconscious mind. The ideal meaning of the word "concentration" is for the me to come to the center of itself. It's not like focus on an object. Focus on an object is not meditation. It is just a mental exercise. Meditation is a focus on the subject, concentration in a higher sense. So concentration and relaxation are—I would rather use the term, "letting go," because relaxation is too much psychological—two sides of the same process. You can let go if your me is solidified to an extent. Otherwise if you let go, you become unconscious. People who let go too much, they drift into daydreams, and they lose continuity of consciousness.

RA: So perhaps what's called for is a sort of a restful alertness where one is alert yet relaxed.

A: That's why alertness is a good term which shows this balance between solidification and letting go. It can be experienced on many levels because it can be experienced on the level of conscious me, and it can be experienced on the level of consciousness. They are not the same. You need to understand the me alone is limited. It has to have access to something which is beyond me. Otherwise it is stuck there. Even if it's doing the most skillful meditation, it's like it's still in prison. It's like in a cell sitting there.

RA: Well, to be continued. Hopefully you will feel satisfied with this interview, and we can even do another some day in the not too distant future. I do want to continue to study your work

because I think it has a lot of richness and depth to it. Obviously anyone who is listening to this, and thousands will listen, can get in touch with you and make arrangements to study with you more closely if they feel like doing so.

Any kind of concluding remarks you would like to make before we wrap it up?

A: Any kind of conclusion?

RA: Yeah, let's come to a conclusion. I can talk to you for another two hours [*laughs*], but practically speaking we should probably wrap it up and do it again, continue another day. Is there anything you'd like to say in conclusion based on everything we've discussed, or anything we haven't discussed, or anything you'd like to leave people with at this point?

A: My conclusion is that it's of the essence that everyone is serving the high intention of the soul and is completely honest and sincere in regard to their path, not compromising, not staying on the traditions of paths, which are not bringing change. Change has to happen. Things have to move. Life is short. We have a very limited amount of years. Things have to move, unfold. There has to be change, deeper realization, deeper entry into our true nature, deeper transformation of me. These things need to change. One should not agree to live in suffering because there is a freedom which is waiting, but one has to pay the price. One has to pay with the blood. Yes, the spiritual path can be painful. That is the fact. It's not a fairy tale because one has to face one's shadow, the unconscious, the lower nature. It's all there, hidden in the subconscious, and it has to be faced and overcome. One has to be strong, strong and sincere, and intelligent, smart, and knowing what one is doing, not just following blindly without discrimination.

RA: Well thank you, Anadi. I really appreciate your having taken the time to talk with me like this. Let me just make a few concluding remarks before we disconnect.

I have been speaking with Anadi. He has got a website, and I'll be linking to it. It's Anaditeaching.com. There are a couple of books there you can purchase, and as I mentioned there are hundreds of hours of recordings that you can download for free. There are some introductory ones and also a larger body of ones. There are a number of things you can read on the site. So there's just a wealth of information, and so if Anadi's teaching has resonated with you, please check it out.

This interview is part of an ongoing series. I've done 190-something of them so far, and I intend to keep doing them. So if you'd like to be notified of future ones, there is a place on Batgap.com where you can put in your email, and you'll receive an email each time I post a new interview.

Oh, I'm sorry, did you want to say something?

A: Just one more thing, that in our teaching we have a very particular language, terms. It often comes to my attention that someone, here and there, gets impatient or sees it as verbalism and using too much words, but it's important to understand that this language has been created for a reason in order to reveal the subtle, subtle dimensions of reality. There are no words for words.

Each word is pointing to a precise experience. One has to contemplate these things within the context, obviously, of practice.

RA: Yeah, that's one of the things that excited me about your teaching when I first encountered it is that I feel like I'm a little bit deficient in terms of my ability to discern between the subtle nuances of terms like absolute and consciousness, and being, and so one, and soul, and so I'm kind of intrigued by the possibility of dwelling on those more carefully and perhaps clarifying my understanding.

A: Yes, but it's all very precisely explained, meaning like absolute is a very clear state realized through the hara. It's a dimension of absence. It has a vertical dimension and representation in body, this particular center. Through reading the description of what the absolute state is, one can verify the experience. It's not something abstract.

RA: Yeah, and I haven't even had a chance to read your books yet. I've just been reading a number of articles that were sent to me, but I'm looking forward to doing that and just becoming more familiar with your teaching.

A: I suppose it was directed to the general public, not to my students, so they are not dealing with the concepts so specifically.

RA: Oh, well then the best is yet to come for me.

A: Okay, your interest shows.

RA: I am. I have your books, and I intend to read them.

Let me just conclude my wrap-up point. There's a discussion group with each interview. There's a donation button, which one can click if one feels inclined. There's an audio podcast. So that pretty much wraps it up. That's good enough for now. If you go to Batgap.com, B-A-T-G-A-P, you can discover everything, and from there you'll see a link to Anadi's website, which again is Anadateaching.com.

Thank you again, Anadi. Thanks to those who have been listening or watching, and we'll see you next time.

[*Music*]