

## Harri Aalto - BATGAP Interview #223

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{BATGAP theme music plays}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer and my guest this week is Harri Aalto. Harri and I are old friends, we've known each other for 15 or 20 years. I used to work for his company doing website development and while I was actually on the clock, he and I would sit around and have long philosophical discussions.

Then for years we attended a weekly Satsang – spiritual discussion group - here in town, which was not based on what teacher, but everyone sort of participated in an equal manner. I've always been very impressed with Harri's level of experience and clarity of expression, and since I started this show about 4 years ago I've wanted to have him on as a guest, but he's a very private person and he hasn't wanted to be on as a guest. And so every month or two I'll run into him at the grocery store and twist his arm a little bit and he said, "No, don't want to do it."

So finally a couple of months ago I ran into him at the grocery store and twisted his arm as usual, and after I got home I sent him an email entitled something like, 'Reasons why I keep bugging you.' And for some reason, I guess it was persuasive.

Harri: No, my arm was just getting very sore over the years.

Rick: And so finally Harri consented to do an interview! He hasn't written a book, he's not a public Satsang teacher or anything like that, which I think many listeners will find refreshing. I'm not qualified to judge anybody's level of consciousness or subjective experience or anything like that, but in my estimation, having interviewed ...

Harri: Take this with a grain of salt.

Rick: Having interviewed a couple hundred people, I would say that Harri is more clear and articulate than any of them. And I don't mean any offense to any of the wonderful people I have interviewed, many of whom have become dear friends. But I'll leave you to judge that for yourselves as we get into the interview, you can see what you think.

So I think I would like to start by just letting you get to know Harri a little bit by bringing up some various recollections I have of conversations that we've had over the years, either in his office or going on a skiing trip or whatever, together, and then let him fill in the gaps and say anything else that comes to mind as we go along.

So one of the earliest things I remember, in terms of the chronology of your life, is that you mentioned to me that at a very early age – the age of 4 or something like that – you recall being self-realized. Of course that was with a 4 year-old's understanding, but with your adult

understanding now, looking back, you feel that that was the nature of your experience – self-realized as it is commonly defined in terms that people would understand. Is that true?

Harri: Yes, and well first I'd like to thank you for having me on your show. I've been watching your interviews over the years and I must say, I find them intriguing because *so* many different kinds of people.

And yes, I suppose if I look back on my life starting at an early age, as I grew up from 3, 4, 5 years-old, I had some kind of awareness. It was around me, it was in me, it was everywhere, and frankly, that hasn't changed; that's still there. It's the same consciousness but what's changed is the – and I know that this might come as a shock but – the details of that wholeness has changed, the understanding and the knowledge of that experience has changed. And of course that's made it expand, made the experience of realization, if we call it that, it's made it a more fulfilling experience.

Rick: And we're going to get into a lot of those details. Most people if you would say to them, "Are you aware?" they would say, "Of course I'm aware. I'm talking to you, how could I not be aware?" But most people when they're growing up, or throughout their entire lives in most cases, feel that if you ask them who or what they are, they will say, "Well, I'm Rick Archer." "Yeah, that's your name, but who are you really?"

"Well, you know, I live in Fairfield, Iowa and I have this job, and I have this wife, and I have dogs, and I like to do this and I like to do that," and it's all descriptive of relative aspects of their lives. So when we say 'self-realized,' we usually mean the realization of something which is beyond individual characterizations or descriptions.

Harri: The interesting thing about this term 'self-realization' is it's [become] a goal, you know, everybody is like, "I'm going to get realized, I'm going to go somewhere, I'm going to have an experience and it's going to be called 'self-realization,'" and most self-realized people don't talk about self-realization because that term ceases to have any meaning once you have the experience; it's gone.

Self-realization is so natural, so normal that it's kind of like, I'm looking at the scene around this room and I don't have to tell you, "That's a couch, that's a wall;" it's just *there*! It's a perception, self-realization is a perception that ultimately grows to include even the senses.

Rick: So you never really went through a phase of life as most spiritual seekers did?

Harri: No, I did - many phases, hundreds of phases. And the wonder of that is that I've had all kinds of – let's call them 'flashy' experiences over the years - hundreds, maybe thousands of them. And let's say there's a peak here and there's a trough here, and I was just a normal human being, normal kid, normal teenager [through] all the ups and downs. But let's say the flashy experiences are going like this, going like this, they come and they go and they go high and they go low.

And over the years I began to realize that there's a common denominator to all these experiences that doesn't change. And what has happened particularly in the last few decades, the highs and the lows remained high and remained low but they kind of went into one river of experience, one wholeness of experience. Is that self-realization? It's certainly something.

Rick: Well did you ever go through a phase where you had this yearning, craving, feeling like the thing called 'enlightenment' in you, that you didn't have it and you wanted to get it, and all that stuff?

Harri: That reminds me of an experience, I was on a retreat, a long meditation group, many people, but we'd be in our rooms doing this. And we'd have group meetings where we would discuss experiences and everybody talked about "unboundedness" and "pure consciousness" and you know, "I was having all kinds of flashy stuff – celestial this or that," all kinds of stuff, and I thought, "What are they talking about?"

You know, I'm not intellectual by nature. I know it might sound like I am but I'm not; I have to have an experience before I can describe it. And I was walking outside from the retreat one day, just quietly walking, and suddenly something disappeared – in my consciousness. Suddenly I felt horrible, suddenly I felt terrible, everything contracted. That so called 'abstract unboundedness' disappeared! I didn't know it was there; it disappeared and what was left was this *horror* of smallness, I can't even describe it. I said, "Oh my God, I've had this unboundedness my whole life, where is it? Is it gone?" But gradually it came back, it came back, it came back.

Rick: Over what, 15 minutes?

Harri: Ten minutes ... in 15 minutes it came back and I said, "Okay, *that's* what I want, all the time." Now all this other stuff, which is wonderful and gives definition to consciousness, it comes and goes, but that ground state, that silence - I'll define silence later – but that ground state of silence was always there, and that moment when it was gone I realized, "Of course, I've always had that."

Rick: So basically – I'm just going to restate it - you are saying you had that unboundedness all your life, you didn't recognize it –like Joni Mitchell says, "We don't know what we've got till it's gone." So for 15 minutes it was gone and then it came back.

Harri: It's an oversimplification but yes, that's exactly right. It's kind of like an old analogy – I'm sure you've used this – it's like this room. The room is empty space but there's stuff in that empty space – oxygen and all the stuff you need to stay alive ... sun's coming through the window. You need all these things but it's in this empty space; you don't see it! And this empty space is defined by these walls, the empty space has no meaning without the walls.

When I talk about the details of pure consciousness, that's what I mean, I mean that which gives validity to pure consciousness, like that.

Rick: Okay, we'll get more into that. Let's go back to your childhood. So one thing we've established then, just to summarize so far, is that pretty much throughout your entire life, you have been in

a state which many people consider themselves to be aspiring to – it's a state of self-realization or whatever we want to call it – and that was made more clear to you by having lost it for a little bit, during your twenties I suppose, and then regained it 15 minutes later. We should all be so lucky!

Another thing in your childhood that I heard is that you had almost supernormal physical abilities for a little while, and you're not a big guy but I remember you telling me that ...

Harri: I knew you'd bring this up.

Rick: It's just for kicks, you know, whatever, for what it's worth. But like, you could jump higher than other kids and you also mentioned having this explosive energy that you could barely contain, you'd have to run around the block just to burn some of it off. And when kids realized that you had a little bit of unusual capabilities, they would want to challenge them on the playground and tackle you or whatever, and you were able to flip all these bigger kids just with some kind of energy trick, or something like that. What was that all about?

Harri: Yeah, when consciousness is super clear, it affects the body as well, it's not limited to the mind, it's not limited to the so-called 'consciousness;' consciousness *is* the body. And I guess if I look at that period which lasted maybe ten years, from maybe eight to early adolescence, my body always felt like it was floating, it was light, it was totally still. People talk about the runner's high, it was like a permanent runner's high for a decade, but because you're running, the physiology is involved, that would be the best way to describe it.

And yes, I felt like I could do *anything* physically, but I was a totally rambunctious, even a dumb little kid running around like a crazy. I was enormously energetic, I was so energetic my parents wouldn't want to take me to other peoples' houses who had kids because I'd just be too wild. But I didn't view it that way, I just viewed it as this was a normal state that kids go through. I had a thought, but it'll come back to me later.

Rick: Okay, so another thing I remember is in these interviews a lot of times I've brought up the concept of 'witnessing sleep,' and that's sometimes misunderstood as some kind of insomnia or something. But really what it is is that pure consciousness, which is a continuum which doesn't come and go, is so awake to itself that whether we're in the waking state, the dream state, or the sleep state, pure consciousness is awake to itself.

Most people conk out when they sleep, entirely, but you told me that around the age of 10, 11, 12, that experience became so vivid that it was as if when you went to sleep at night you were waking up, and when you woke up in the morning you were going to sleep. [You] want to elaborate on that one a little bit?

Harri: Well this term, 'witnessing,' is generally in self-realization circles. If it's permanent and they're 24-hours a day, it's called self-realization, but remember that the witness state, this unbounded, there are no parameters to it, so it's subtle, it's delicate, it's even hard to recognize. If it's clear

it's not hard to recognize, but for most people it's a universal phenomenon. It's there, so why don't you recognize it? This is often a question I have when I talk to people, I say, "Well you know, it's there, it's everywhere, pure consciousness is everywhere." But consciousness needs to have enough liveliness to be awake to itself, it can't just be pure silence; that's not an experience, so there's some realization or self-awareness to the experience.

And if it stays when you go to sleep, you can have many kinds of witnessing – it can be silent, it can be active, you can witness dreams, witness the body. And yes, I went through a phase that lasted many years where the nights would feel like that, and I'd close my eyes and open my eyes - that was the night. And other kinds of experiences there would be, yes, I would feel [as if] I was waking up when I fell asleep. Because the body was inactive, the pure consciousness was clear. And then when I'd wake up the opposite of that would happen. But over the years, that witness or that consciousness – it's still there, it's never gone anywhere. It can't "go" anywhere, there's nowhere for it to go.

Understanding is integral to the experience of awakening, to self-realizing. Understanding is half the show, at least half the show - and I mean understanding on the quietest level - it's self-understanding, self-awareness. It's called 'self-awareness,' self-awareness is self-knowledge. There's a *knowingness* to pure consciousness, a knowingness to pure consciousness that knows itself as being awake. And at first that's so abstract for most people, including for me ... it's the, "What is this? What is this self-knowingness?"

So it's kind of abstract, but this self knows itself, nothing else knows itself. And over time that self-awareness as if, in my case, woke up even more, and more and more. And every time there was more self-awareness, the self-awareness as if contained more – more substance, more structure, more light, more ... you could even say more celestial.

The quietest level of the mind became the most active level of the mind, but in a very quiet kind of a way. You see, there is structure to consciousness and you begin to see that, or at least I did. And I think most people see something but they just refuse to acknowledge it, that's my opinion.

Rick: You mean during sleep or all the time?

Harri: All the time.

Rick: Yeah, well the thing about the sleep is could be seen as a kind of acid test because a person ...

Harri: You can't make it up.

Rick: You can't fake it. And if you're just totally blotto during sleep, then you can assume that consciousness hasn't woken up to maybe a significant degree as it would when awareness becomes a 24/7 continuum.

Harri: That's right and that's certainly in the early days of self-realization - a pure consciousness at night is an acid test. Later on the acid test is having that awareness when you're running around like a chicken, or you're at work, or you're doing whatever you're doing but it's still there.

Rick: Is it more likely that running around like a chicken will overshadow pure consciousness or that the inertia of sleep will overshadow it? Which is the more overshadowing?

Harri: Both.

Rick: Both? Equal, more or less?

Harri: Equal I'd say, equal. And as a matter of fact, later on in the game, running around is wonderful because you see it in relation to the bliss, and you see it in relation to pure consciousness itself. And you begin to understand the relationship between consciousness and the body and the mind and the senses, and even the environment, and even the universe, ultimately!

Rick: So just to belabor this point a slight bit more, you could say, I suppose, that you haven't lost consciousness in 60 years – 50 years or something.

Harri: I suppose, yeah, you could say that.

Rick: Yeah, there's been this continuum of awareness regardless of waking, dreaming, sleeping.

Harri: Certainly seems that way, yeah.

Rick: Have you ever had surgery during that period?

Harri: That's interesting you know, I had an experience where I was in a hospital, doing something with my tonsils – the doctors [didn't find] anything, they removed them fortunately. But I was in the hospital, they left me there overnight and I was kind of scared you know, my parents left and I was in this huge hospital in this room and it was dark. And there was this person down the hall that was yelling, "I need water, I need water," making all kinds of noise. And it would go on for hours and nobody had come. And I finally yelled, "Come and give that person some water!" And a nurse came and said, "Would you please stop yelling?" to me.

Rick: Oh, were you the guy yelling?

Harri: Yes, to me, I was the guy yelling. And that's kind of what the witness feels like – the kid isn't doing anything or there's no activity taking place in relation to the pure consciousness. So an early stage of self-realization is that you aren't involved, there's no involvement at all.

Rick: So you were on some kind of drugs for your tonsillectomy?

Harri: Probably.

Rick: Anesthesia or something?

Harri: But that kind of stage where you didn't appear to be active in anything that the body was doing went on for a long time.

Rick: That's interesting. Well the reason that I asked about the anesthesia was that my friend, Francis Bennett, who I've interviewed a few times, has this experience of witnessing 24-7, throughout the night and so on. But he had some surgery on his foot and he said it was so unusual, because under anesthesia he actually lost consciousness. And although it's only been a few years since he has been having that witnessing experience, it was kind of a shock to him ... and then it came back after he came out of the anesthesia.

Harri: Yeah, I wasn't aware of that. But that's just summarized in a nutshell how I experience consciousness and daily life.

Rick: Sure, we're not jumping ahead of our story; this all fits right in, eh?

Harri: I hope so.

Rick: Because these historical things are interesting too.

Harri: Okay, if you want to continue.

Rick: No, no, you do your thing, we'll loop back.

Harri: So my experience is that over the years I have this and everybody has - and some people are aware and some people aren't - there's this consciousness, or pure consciousness, that has liveliness to it. Some people call it silence, some people call it the absolute, some people even call it God, in some religions.

And this self-awareness or self-knowingness has a quiet aspect to it, and when I look into that quiet aspect, I see something there. And even at an early age I saw liveliness, there was some kind of a wave function to it - self-knowingness and that self-knowingness had some kind of a wave function or some kind of function to it, some liveliness to it. Somebody was having the experience, I didn't know who [was] for many, many years, *who* was having the experience? Why that experience taking place? But it was there.

So over the years that self-awareness or that liveliness became clearer and clearer. It's kind of like seeing the details of this room, this empty space, suddenly you see the wall, you see this and you see this. Normally you don't see it, right? You look at that picture or that window, your mind tells you, "That's a window," you don't have to think about it, your mind ... you just figure it out; you know it, it's a window. Consciousness is like that. You begin to see structure, and it's just like a perception, it can be described after you've seen it ... "It looks like this," "There's a string going here..."

You know, I was reminded of Dr. Hagelin's Superstring theory, where he talks about all these strings and light and waves - so the structure of consciousness looks like that to me. Now, not

going into details there that you have this more silent level, and then you have this more structure level. And there's a form-level to that too and I'm not going to get into it very much at this point, but consciousness is a continuum. And the subtle levels of consciousness – all the religions talk about these subtle levels, whether the heavens of consciousness or in Vedic terms, the Devata consciousness, or in Christian terms it's the angels. That level of consciousness also exists, it's not *not* existent.

And there's a relationship between pure consciousness, the structure of consciousness, the Divine levels of consciousness, and the physiology. Somebody is have an experience, there's a body having that experience and that body is looking outside and looking inside. My experience is that 'outside' isn't an outside at all; it's the other way around. Everything is inside, the outside is inside.

And over time that outside to inside experience became bigger and bigger, and contained more and more. As funny as it sounds, on an abstract level, even the universe is contained within that consciousness.

Rick: That doesn't sound funny at all. I think most people listening to this will say, "Sure, if consciousness is infinite and unbounded, then obviously it contains the universe." And other people have reported the experience that the whole universe seems to be 'contained within me,' everything is contained within me – 'me' in the bigger sense of cosmic consciousness or unbounded awareness.

Harri: Okay, just one point I'd like to reemphasize is that to me the whole thing is one big oneness, one big continuum. All these layers define the pure consciousness that exists as the jewel in that experience, and knowledge of all those different layers and knowledge on the quietest level is embedded in the experience, on all levels. Including moving through space and thinking and all those, they're all related to that knower, and that knower is a person, is an individual.

Rick: Yeah, well we can talk more about that, but first of all layers. I sometimes get flack for using the word 'layers' so much, because intellectually if you think of oneness, it's oneness, how can it have layers, you know, if it's all the same stuff? I mean you could think of an ocean and deeper levels of the ocean but it's really water, and where do you distinguish between *this* water and *this* water; it's all just the same stuff?

Harri: Well is the universe one universe? It's one universe, but it's got all these planets and organisms and constellations floating around. So it's one universe with galaxies, with all these levels. How else would you put it?

Rick: Yeah, I don't have a problem with it. And physicists for instance talk about levels all the time – there's the unmanifest level of the unified field, and there are the four forces, and it gets more and more diverse as it manifests.



Harri: Okay, the way that it's come to me over the years is that the oneness is defined by the layers; you don't have the oneness without the experiencers having the experience of oneness, and that experience of oneness is defined by all the different phenomenon, and make that oneness whole.

In other words, a real crude analogy would be let's say, you have your eyes that look outside, and then as you get that inner eye, let's say there's a million eyes and they're all looking at something. What are they looking at? They're looking at wholeness. Same with ears, you hear these sounds, and there's a million sounds and all of those sounds are defining and telling you oneness exists, this unity exists.

In order to have a unity experience you have to have this part, this part, this part, to say this is unified with this, this is unified with that – that's unity. Unity isn't just abstract nothingness; unity is all the parts saying, "We are unified with you, I am unified with you," they're all shaking hands and saying hi to each other," they're saying, "I am part and parcel of the oneness."

And when I talk about layers, this layer is related to this layer, is related to this layer, and that communication between these layers – the celestial and the so-called gross-relative layers and the subtle – all of those layers as if communicating together, are expressing or knowing that they are part of a togetherness, a continuity of oneness. You don't have oneness ... you don't have this room without the walls; you only have this emptiness without the walls.

Rick: Yeah, so would that be a good analogy that you don't have the house without the wall and the pillar and the floor and the ceiling, and all the *parts* that make the house, otherwise you have nothing?

Harri: You have nothing.

Rick: It's sort of structures the totality of the house.

Harri: If you take the house away the space remains ...

Rick: But you can't call it a house.

Harri: But you can't call it a house, that's it.

Rick: So what you're saying is that all the parts that apparently make up creation enable oneness to be a living cognition, a living experience, and without parts it would be a moot point, there would be no nothing.

Harri: Think of a dark room, turn the rheostat way down and you can't see anything; you're still in the room. You know you're in a room because it's cold outside and so forth. So you're in this room, it's dark, start turning up the rheostat a little bit and suddenly you see – you see out the window a tiny bit, you see the pictures, you see the TV, whatever you see - and you keep turning it up. The process towards, for realization is like that. It's a rheostat and you see more and more of

what constitutes the knower of the – I hate using the word ‘silence’ because it is always misconstrued, in my mind. I do sense and know there’s a silence in my consciousness, but the ultimate value of silence, which is emptiness, isn’t even an experience; there’s somebody having the experience of silence, that somebody or that knowingness within the silence is something, and you turn up the rheostat, you see the structure of silence and you see the subtle levels of silence. And ultimately you even see your daily life and the universe as part and parcel of that consciousness that is being had by somebody. Turn it up.

Rick: So you’re talking now about dynamism within the silence, or activity within the unmanifest.

Harri: It’s the activity that knows itself.

Rick: Yeah, and that’s not, I would say, a clear experience to me but it makes total sense because if consciousness is omnipresent, if there is really nothing other *than* consciousness, then what are we looking at? We look at the couch, and then you and the camera and all this stuff, we’re looking at consciousness but it is also dynamic!

I mean even on the gross level there is so much going on, and on subtle levels physics tells us that there is an incredible amount going on. They say there is more energy on the level of the unmanifest in a cubic centimeter than there is in the entire expressed universe. So there is this infinite dynamism, but it’s not like some metaphysical, abstract, way down there kind of thing; we’re actually *experiencing* to whatever extent we can.

But I imagine what you are alluding to with turning up the rheostat, is the extent to which we can experience is going to get more and more and more and more.

Harri: Yes, and everybody has the potential to have a richer and clearer experience of consciousness and its full[ness] – everybody has that capability. The human body has that capability. I’ve never felt in *any* way special. I bump into the wall just like everybody else and hurt my foot, and ask my wife – oh no, I never get angry, right? It’s not like that; all the ups and downs are there but they’re on a kind of foundation of understanding and experience in clarity.

But we’re all individuals; it’s the individual that’s capable of having the experience of pure consciousness. It’s always the individual, it’s not some abstraction capable of having an experience.

Rick: Now some spiritual teachers or people seem to emphasize that there is no individual. You ask them who they are and they’ll say, “Well it’s just this presence,” or “This is happening,” or “Just this arising,” and they even try to change the vocabulary to point to that; they won’t say “I did this,” they’ll say, “Well, here it appears that,” or “It seems that...” but they’ll leave the first person pronoun out of their language. I was reminded of that when you said that there’s an individual experiencing things. So how do you reconcile that?

Harri: I reconcile that by saying both are true, and if you’re just running around the so-called gross-relative, then you have half show, if you’re running around in and convince yourself there’s

nothing but silence, there's no I, there's nothing, then you have got a glorious experience of nothingness! It's okay.

But I say that the glory of the experience seen more fully, that glorious quality of this knowingness - let's say it's the first dawn of the knowingness of what actually consciousness is, and ultimately the running around in the relative and the so-called changing universe, the subtle levels of consciousness and this silence level of consciousness, they are all one continuum. They maintain their integrity, in my experience, forever. On their own level, on their relationship to the subtler levels – I know I'll get into trouble over this but in my experience, everything is eternal, everything.

Rick: Oh yeah, you and I have had that debate.

Harri: Yeah, let's do that in another session.

Rick: Yeah, because we could spend a whole 2 hours on that.

Harri: Yeah, let's not be too silly, but you know, I just love the fact that there are so many people going towards the silence, or going towards God, or going towards absolute – it doesn't matter to me, it's all real, it's *all* real, it's all good.

Rick: Two thoughts come to mind and I'll utter them both in one sentence, but one is that: you're never finished; there's no end to the unfoldment. And I've interviewed a number of people who have disagreed with me on that.

Harri: And what do they say?

Rick: Well I'll say, "Well where do you see it going from here? What's the next horizon? How does it seem to be unfolding for you now?" And they'll scratch their heads and say, "Well I'm done, there is no more. What could it be?"

Harri: Well certainly that hasn't been my experience, and I've gone through very dramatic - let's call them 'awakening experiences' – and the next day I'd have another one, and the next day after that I'd have another one. I could never put my finger on so-called 'states of consciousness;' you just went into that, you just went into that, you just went into that. It's one river of experience that's unfolding itself to itself, and it's not distracting, it's not boring, it's fulfilling, it's exciting. And when I listen to the people describe their states of awareness or I read about it – there's a thousand books ... I've stopped reading, there's so many of them.

All these states of awareness people describe and they say, "It stops here," well, I almost hate to say it but I've had *that* state and it didn't stay there, and I've had *that* state and it didn't stay there. On a bigger level, evolution continues after the mind realizes itself, and not only does it continue, it accelerates, or it should accelerate, and it goes on and on and on and on and on. But I will say, there are definite states of consciousness, definite milestones that say, "Okay, now the mind is awake" - this 24 hours knowing that you're always awake is number one.

Rick: Yeah, I remember Peace Pilgrim. Remember Peace Pilgrim? That lady who just threw all caution to the wind and walked around the United States for years with nothing but the shirt on her back.

Harri: Yes, yes, that's right.

Rick: And she had a little chart in her book, I remember it, where she had the self-realization point. There was this up and down going on and then this self-realization, then after that there was this accelerating curve, like the climate change hockey stick kind of thing, where there was just this continuing, ongoing accelerated evolution with no end – just happened to come to mind.

I remember the second point that I was going to say and it relates to something we were talking about just previously, which is that what I've found to be a helpful definition of enlightenment is a very all-inclusive one, where you don't say, "It's just this," or "It's just that," but it's an incorporation of all levels of creation within one's experience, and facility with functioning on all levels of experience, and a complete embracing of the paradox of life, where it's not 'this or that,' it's both, and. And all the paradoxical levels and contrasts and so on, are all contained within one larger wholeness, or one totality. How do you like that definition?

Harri: I like that. Another way of looking at it is [that there is] this very quiet, almost silent level of consciousness, and then there's all this other active level. And in my experience, it's the relationship between those two that creates wholeness. And I use that word 'wholeness' loosely, but I would say that wholeness is an experience where even the I – the big 'I,' the little 'i,' the 'nonexistent I,' are all inclusive. And that experience of that activity of consciousness and the silence [of consciousness] creates this knowledge that encompasses *everything*.

And there is a state of consciousness after this witnessing experience that has a more celestial flavor, has a more unity flavor, and has a more holistic flavor – those are all decided states or definite states of awareness that everybody will go through, eventually. It's not exclusive to anybody.

You know, in a person's life, you're a kid, you go to kindergarten and then you know everything. And then you go to grade one and you look down at the kindergarteners because they're just babies; they don't know anything, I mean, "Just look what I know ... A-B-C-D!" I'm like that, everybody is like that, every experience you have you feel you know everything. But I've been hammered with my life, and I mean in a nice way, every time I think I'm somewhere, I'm nowhere, I go to another point.

I have a kind of a dramatic inner life in the sense that okay, I have this unified experience and I say, "Okay, that's great. Let's settle down, have a good life, that's it." The next day something shatters, to a degree, that unified state, puts it into the background – doesn't make it go away, sticks it in the background and says, "Here's a new experience, what are you going to do with that? What are you going to do with that?"

So all these states remain, they don't go anywhere. All this stuff I had as a kid is there, all this stuff I had as a young adult is there. You're putting little jigsaw puzzles, and every time you put ten pieces together – you know, let's say you've got this scene – you put ten pieces of the jigsaw puzzle together then you suddenly see, "Well that's a house! Great!" and then you start seeing some trees. And the jigsaw puzzle is huge, it's trillions of pieces, so you're putting the whole universe together.

Rick: There's this phrase from the Vedas, "Brahman is the eater of everything," and when I hear that I'm reminded of an amoeba who is always engulfing some new little bit, and ingesting it, and then a new little bit. Kind of reminds me of what you just described. There's this wholeness and how can wholeness be any more complete? And yet there seems to be no end to the details of creation, which can be revealed and engulfed within that wholeness.

Harri: Well consciousness is like, if I look out that window, I can't see through that wall. There's something I don't know then. I don't know what's behind that wall out there, I don't know what it is. That's a lack of knowing; consciousness is like that. It gets bigger and bigger and bigger and clearer and clearer, but there's always an area beyond, which is unseen.

And if your area of consciousness, conscious clarity starts seeing all these layers and this and that, and you're seeing farther and farther within the self and the structure of consciousness, there's always an area out there that's bigger now, that you don't see, that's fuller now, that you don't see. You've increased your ignorance as well as your enlightenment. I mean, it's a way of looking at it.

Rick: And of course human nervous system has its limitations, it's not given the capacity of total omniscience.

Harri: No! Absolutely not, otherwise you would be able to enlighten me.

Rick: Or vice versa, or, you could tell us where Malaysia flight 370 is.

Harri: That's right, which I can't, that's right!

Rick: Save us all kind of trouble looking for it. In fact, you would have known when it was going to crash or when the pilot went awry or if he did.

Harri: Absolutely, there's limitation.

Rick: But consciousness, and let's give it a bit of a personality and speak in terms of "God" a little bit, because it's obvious from any close observation of nature that there's an incredible intelligence at work, governing things - whether you look at a cell, or anything. So what is that intelligence? And God is said to be omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient - all those things. Are those qualities of consciousness or is there some distinction between consciousness and what I've just described as God? And to what extent can the individual participate in God's omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence?

Harri: Brings to mind, when you talk about God, and you asked me earlier did I ever had a period where I really wanted something. And yeah, I went through a period in early adolescence where I wanted to know "God," I just needed to know "God," didn't have a clue what God was. I knew God was somehow related to this pure consciousness state in some abstract way.

And I had this big longing and one day I was praying and I transcended, or I went into this really unbounded state. It was beautiful and all that, but it was very, very quiet. Was *that* God? I said, "It can't be, there's nothing there," or there's very little there. In a sense that propelled me to look deeper and deeper into that and I would say if I had a great desire, [it was] to know God

Now, I'd say in the last 20 years or so, I have gone through experiences where I experience, let's say, "God." And God is the closest thing to everybody's heart and so it's hard for me to even talk about it because it's intimate, it's not something you root out and show people. But to put it simply, human consciousness is capable of having an experience *with* God, rather than *as* God; *with* God.

So communication from the heart, and even from the mind and even from the body, is possible for human consciousness to have with God. God remains there, but sits in the heart as well, too, both. You don't want God just out there, you don't want God just in here; you want both. That's the best I can do.

Rick: Well there's this sort of a classic debate between the Advaitans and the Vaishnavites - the devotees ... the Hari Krishna type people -about whether you totally merge with God and become one with that reality, or whether you maintain some separation in order for devotion to take place. And Shankara said, "The intellect images duality for the sake of devotion." If unity is really unity and oneness is really oneness, and one becomes established in that oneness, how can there be anything separate from it ... well, unless it's like what Shankara said, that you imagine a duality for the sake of devotion?

Harri: Your camera has 50 parts.

Rick: Probably more than that.

Harri: Or a thousand parts, and it does something with those thousand parts. And what it does is, it's a camera. That's what human consciousness is, it's the cosmic camera. It's got all these parts, all these layers, all these structures, but all those pieces create something bigger than all that, and that's what you could call the "I" or the "Knower" or "self-realization." Self-realization is an experience that is being had, it's being had. Even if you say it's emptiness, somebody is having the experience of emptiness. You want to call it the "little i" or the "no i," go ahead, that's okay with me, but you're having it.

You're saying you have this experience called "silence," that [very] saying it is a knowingness, it is a fluctuation that knows itself; it's something *within* the silence. My opinion is that that keeps growing.

Rick: So here, when you say ‘human consciousness,’ you’re distinguishing between human consciousness and a bat’s consciousness or a cow’s consciousness, or some lesser developed reflection of consciousness. And I’m sure you would agree that there’s really only one consciousness, but you’re referring to the instrument through which that consciousness is appreciated, and you’re saying that human consciousness, sufficiently developed, can entertain or enjoy the kinds of knowledge that you’re talking about?

Harri: There are states of consciousness that can’t be described unless you’re there.

Rick: Because the words just don’t do justice to it.

Harri: No, it’s because the listener is not there. If the listener was there, you could use any words and they’d get it, you could describe it. In the ancient Vedic tradition there are states of consciousness way beyond what we’re discussing. Would we know what they are? If we’re not there, would we know?

Rick: No.

Harri: It wouldn’t make sense. So what I’m saying is, this confusion between oneness and everythingness – there isn’t any confusion for me; they seem like inseparably whole, here, here. Why? How is that possible? All I can say is, the parts make the whole. The pieces of consciousness ... how else can you say it, the layers of consciousness, the liveliness of consciousness, knows itself. That knowing itself is a kind of knowledge state. Knowledge keeps growing, knowledge keeps growing.

Knowledge looks at itself, as it were, and sees *more* wholeness, sees *more* absolute. I don’t know any other way to put it. These are great questions. It’s nice that we tend to agree, that always helps, right?

And I’m fascinated by all these nondualists, I’m actually fascinated by that. And I recognize where they’re at and I have great respect for that. I’ve never experienced emptiness myself because, maybe I’m ornery, you know?

Rick: So the word ‘void’ has never appealed to you or resonated with your experience?

Harri: Yeah, I see the void and immediately look into it and all this other knowledge, knowingness, structure - doesn’t eliminate the void, but it is there also, just as important. The void is contained in it as much as it is contained in the void.

Rick: I see, it’s all one thing.

Harri: But what I can’t grasp is that there can be such an experience of *nothing*, because that’s simply not an experience. You’d know by the implication that there is this totally unexpressed state, the implication of that is the knowingness, the knower. As soon as I put a knower in it, I put everything else in it as well – in my mind, in my conscious, in my experience.

Rick: Well people go through stages, and just like you said with regard to your experience, in my opinion, everybody is at a stage, even if they think they're finished. But some people stay at stages for decades - they stay at a certain stage for decades, they keep saying the same things over and over again: "There is no person, there's nothing you can do," and "There's no choice," and "Since there is no person, there couldn't be reincarnation because that would imply there's a person to reincarnate, and they have certain sort of pat understandings and ways of expressing that just go on and on and on. So it would seem that, like what you said earlier about evolution really took off once the self was realized, it is not necessarily a universal experience; it can kind of plateau, in some cases for a lifetime, perhaps.

Harri: As long as the person who is having the experience of no self or emptiness is having a genuine experience, where they haven't just decided they're there; it's awfully easy to intellectually decide that you're there.

Rick: Yeah, to mistake an understanding for the realization.

Harri: Because I say it's everywhere, how can I not be it? So I'm there. Boom! As long a person is having that experience, the nondual experience, and recognizes that they're having that experience, I think that's great.

Rick: If it's the real experience.

Harri: If it's the real experience, yes.

Rick: Not just an intellectual concept.

Harri: Yes, that's fantastic. And excuse me for saying this but in my life, that was kind of my *first* experience.

Rick: Yeah, I've repeated this phrase ad nauseam during these interviews, but there is this whole Tibetan that says, "Don't mistake understanding for realization, don't mistake realization for liberation." And I feel and I've encountered that many people are running around with a *concept* of Nonduality or whatever, without actually living the experience of it, but they're mistaking it for that.

And then there are also many people who have genuine realizations – a very profound abiding, they don't go away - and they mistake *those* as being ultimate or final or permanent, and yet there's going to be more.

Harri: There's more than I talked [about], ever.

Rick: In saying what we were just saying, I don't mean to be critical of people who are mistaken about their level of realization ...

Harri: It's not even mistaken in a sense, it's where we are! It's really not a mistake if you're going through it, in a sense. Sorry to interrupt.



Rick: No, it's alright, but my motivation, and it's actually part of the purpose of this show I believe, is that I think it would really help the spiritual culture to have a much clearer, more detailed road map of possibilities of what the full range of possibilities for development of consciousness.

Harri: You don't want to leave something for future centuries?

Rick: Well no, they'll have more to explore, because I think as we've been saying, the range is unlimited. But I think the better we can understand what's possible, the less pitfalls there will be for people, and the less tendency for them to assume they've arrived when they haven't, or whatever, and that's in everyone's best interest.

Harri: Yes, of course. So in relation to that, I've always said and it has been my experience that the growth of consciousness is an inclusive process, not an exclusive or a pushing out process. Yes there's an aspect to the growth of consciousness where you go inside, inside, quiet, quiet, go into a retreat, and that process has tended over the years to make the so-called relative, the so-called physical life, you know, 'out there, not good,' devalue it, what's it got to do with anything?

Now, that's not in my experience. My experience has been that you go inside, inside, experience consciousness, but it's like a light that illuminates not just the inside, but illuminates knowledge itself. And that consciousness eventually flows through the eyes and it doesn't bring it in, but it's as if your normal life, your relative life, your even walking down the street, your relationships, your feelings, brings them *into* the fold, as it were, into the consciousness of wholeness and *includes* it, not excludes it.

And ultimately, and I'd say it's happened to me in the last 10 years, this whole sense, and not only sense but experience that everything is included, *everything* is included. Even the table is included in a sense, because my eyes are functioning from within their quietest sense. And a way of looking at it is that the eyes look inside and outside. You hear inside and outside. You touch inside and outside, simultaneously, a continuum, even the senses are functioning like that.

Rick: Does this relate to that phrase, "Lamp at the door?"

Harri: Yes, very much.

Rick: Okay, and you can elaborate on that, but when you say, inside and outside, I mean okay – you hear outside, birds, you hear stuff outside all the time. When you hear *inside*, what are people going to make of that – hear your stomach gurgling, hear your blood coursing through your ears? What do you mean by "hearing inside," or "seeing inside," or any of the senses?

Harri: Let's talk about hearing for a second, because hearing is related to knowingness itself. There's a - and we haven't talked about it yet, but – I can *hear* consciousness humming. Everybody has heard this term 'hum' – 'Om,' that whole hum. Well there is a hum to pure consciousness. That

hum *is* the knowingness of the Self, it is the subtlest value of hearing, it's the subtlest value of knowledge knowing itself – *knowing, knowledge*. Now, that hum isn't one hum;

Rick: It has various frequencies?

Harri: It has trillions of reverberations that make the wholeness of that hum. Those reverberations are consciousness functioning within itself - within yourself, within myself.

Rick: So would you say that each of the 5 senses, obviously each has its function in directing our attention outwards to experiencing, but it also can be followed inward, and with each of the senses there is a junction point at which it ceases to become an individual sense, as it meets the transcendent.

Harri: That's a beautiful way of putting it. And that junction point disappears.

Rick: And it seems like according to the sense, there should be a different type of experience as you hit that junction point, where it merges into the transcendent.

Harri: So I have another analogy here. Twenty people go to the Grand Canyon and 20 people are at the Grand Canyon, "Oh, it's awesome, wonderful," it's always been there for millions of years, will *be* there for millions years.

Rick: It's only been there for 6,000, according to certain ...

Harri: Well alright, okay. So some people go over there, they're there with their family, they're smoking, they're drinking, they're this, they're that, they're stressed, you know, they're business isn't going well, and they look in the Grand Canyon and go, "Okay, let's go." Somebody else is there and looks down there and [they go], "Whoa! This is awesome! It's free, it's free, nature gives it to you for nothing, you don't have to do anything."

Rick: Really appreciating it.

Harri: Consciousness is like that. You look into the self, you see the vastness, the wholeness of it. This is kind of going into another analogy but let me just proceed for a moment here and hope I don't confuse anybody. You're looking at the sky, it's empty, but you see a bird or something. And suddenly that bird makes the vastness of the sky seem vast, because you've got something to relate. Consciousness is like that. When you begin to see the details, the points or the structure of the details, even if you just get little glimmers, it shows you the vastness of the ocean, the silent ocean, the almost silent ocean. And ultimately the vastly silent ocean reveals all of itself to you. I don't know if these make sense to you, but I don't know any other way to describe it.

Rick: No, it kind of does. I'm sure that it could be more clear for me, but through no fault of yours.

Harri: You know whenever I come in contact with somebody like yourself, and I talk to that person like I talk to you, [I wonder], "Is this guy fodder for me to give him something or some information

or knowledge?” And you’re the perfect [example] because you’re open, and you don’t think you’re anywhere, you know, any exalted state.

Rick: I make no claims.

Harri: You make no claims whatsoever, and we used to call you what, ‘the oozer?’

Rick: Oozer, that’s right.

Harri: And so I [think], “What can I say to this person so that he kind of gets it?” And you know, I do have that in me to the little degree that I like to be a teacher; that I have, when I see something like a person such as yourself - I might have something to offer.

Rick: No, you have a lot to offer. And I’ll say this at the end of the interview, but I think Harri and I are going to be doing a series, so this won’t be the first one or the last.

Harri: Well I hope so.

Rick: I mean it is the first, but it won’t be the last, because there’s so much we could talk about. Let me take it on this stack, I have a friend who has, like yourself, watched many of my interviews, almost all of them probably. And she’s very clear and articulate, and I actually had some really nice questions written down that she had sent me.

Harri: And you forgot them.

Rick: I rushed out of the house and forgot to bring them with me, but I’ll try to remember a couple of them because I think they’ll shed light on the whole conversation. She has a TM background and she went through a lot of intense kundalini stuff over the years, and eventually through the help of some teachers, like Pamela Wilson and then Neelam, who you may not know, that all eventually smoothed out.

And she’s in a very well-established state – I doubt my capacity to define it precisely or say where she’s at, but she’s in a good place and she writes very clearly. And she also has fairly definite ideas about what constitutes enlightenment or awakening and so on. And I sent her one of your experiences and I wish I had one of her questions that she fired back, but she was a little skeptical, because she has a feeling that first of all, if you’re still doing a spiritual practice, if you still sit down a couple of hours a day to meditate or something, you must not be there yet. You know, why would you do that? Because if you’re already there, what more could you gain by sitting down and doing a practice?

Harri: You have a body.

Rick: You have a body.

Harri: And it’s aging. It slows it down and the body likes it. Slows the aging down, the body likes it, you get an experience of bliss, and closing the eyes is a different experience than keeping the eyes

open. It's different, it's different. Pure consciousness *reveals* itself in a different way with eyes closed than with eyes open. And when you open your eyes, that inner experience doesn't go away, when you close your eyes, you're not going inside. When you're awake you're not going inside.

There's a little bit of a misinterpretation in her knowledge of what constitutes consciousness. Just because your eyes are closed, [that] hasn't eliminated the material universe, because it's all consciousness. So of course if something is good for the body or the senses you do it!

Rick: In your own case, and I know you still meditate, you're not just doing it for your body, right?

Harri: I get experiences every time I close my eyes, just like every time I open my eyes.

Rick: Okay, and she might say, "Yeah, you get experiences but experiences by definition are fleeting, and so they're not really the ultimate thing," and of course we've already talked about this a lot.

Harri: Let's call it 'the lens' that looks at itself as whole. Every time an experience comes into consciousness that is of a significant nature or a subtle nature, I've taken a speck of dust off the screen. That's the way to look at it, I can't look at it any other way.

And I can buy into to a certain degree that 'it's all natural, it's all happening, there's no path, there's no nothing, in a sense it's all determined' – I don't care if it's determined or not, I'm going to pretend it isn't; I don't care. Because when I put my attention, I don't care if I appear to put it or if I actually put it; I don't care. When I put my attention on something, [whether it's of a] subtle or of a consciousness nature, something unfolds, something nice that I like.

Rick: So it's enjoyable.

Harri: It's enjoyable.

Rick: And it's also a form of exploration.

Harri: It's a form of exploration.

Rick: It's a revealing of new petals of knowledge, so to speak.

Harri: If I want to go to New York, I don't sit here and think about New York; I get on a bicycle or a train, or I get on an airplane and go to New York. I have to *go* there. Consciousness to me is just like that, and I know some people won't like it, but you have to go there.

Rick: Let's take somebody that everybody reveres as the ultimate example of enlightenment – Ramana Maharishi. And I don't know how much you know about him, you've probably read a few books.

Harri: Not much ... yeah, I've read a little bit years ago.

Rick: It doesn't have to be him, but somebody that we might take as the epitome of enlightenment. Would you say that for somebody like that, there is still plenty of room for exploration, discovery, unfolding of the fine fabric of knowledge, even though he is totally immersed and established in the totality of knowledge, totality of consciousness, there are so many little things within that totality that can be explored if one is so inclined?

Harri: If one is so inclined.

Rick: And maybe some aren't inclined, maybe it's just not their thing.

Harri: And these world teachers, they talk to the audience. They're not like me, I just spill all the beans – can't help it, I'm not like that. They give you what you need and they limit what they tell you, they all do. Ramana Maharishi would have done the same, he talked to his [audience] and if he feels they are nondualists, he'll talk nondualism to them, and he knows what the experience is, he knows what it is, or she knows what it is.

Rick: I interviewed a guy a couple of weeks ago who had done a lot of Zen practice and he said they were saying in Zen, there's no love in Zen, meaning that it just has this cold, clear, realize the self – well, they don't call it the 'self' – realize the absolute orientation. But any consideration of devotion or all that sort of more flowery kind of thing is just not relevant in that tradition. So sometimes an entire tradition ...

Harri: Not relevant but you get to the point where you have the love that just sprung out out of those practices.

Rick: Yeah, and then your tradition may no longer be relevant. Adyashanti, for instance – Zen background, these days he's writing books about Jesus! Obviously, it seems to me, more devotional things are blossoming in him.

Harri: Devotion is a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful experience because it is heartfelt. Anything heartfelt is enjoyable, as long as it's not a mode. And then the realization from this devotion is *more* devotion, *more* love, *more* feeling. Feelings are great. The subtlest feeling is the feeling of enlightenment or self-realization.

You know, I told Kathy, my wife, that I'm not going to use the words 'enlightenment' or 'self-realization' in this talk, but I've been doing nothing but!

Rick: Well you have to use words.

Harri: You have to use words.

Rick: You can't call it just "X Y Z," or whatever.

Harri: Or Absolute, yeah.

Rick: Yeah, you've got to use words. And I suppose the reason you didn't want to use those words is that they're used so commonly, there could be a thousand understandings of them out there. And if you're trying to communicate something, you want to use words that actually convey the meaning you intend. But they're good words, as long as we define [them] for our purposes and say, "This is how we're using them."

Harri: Let's make a graph, and let's say a 100% is the highest level a human being can go and 0% is the lowest level, or 1% is the lowest level. And let's say somebody like me is at 10%, so I have got 90% to go, and I have a short life to do it in, that's how I look at it. And if some people are 8%, some are 7%, 6%, that's kind of a cool way of looking at it, but the experience isn't cool. And having your mind open to further experience, whatever level you're on, *whatever* level you're on, facilitates the process.

Rick: Yeah, I would think, and being convinced that there's no horizon yet to explore, one would stymie it, it would seem to me.

Harri: And most teachers and gurus, they have followers, they *have* to talk as if they're finished. If you look at the great gurus and the great teachers, when they were young they talked one way, middle life they talked another way, and then when they were old they talked another way, because they knew more. And their followers also grew.

Rick: Yep, and it's not like they just were getting their terminology worked out better; it's that their actual experience was growing.

Harri: Their actual experience grew. But they don't talk about that because [a] so-called "teacher's" experience is finished; that's the nature of a movement.

Rick: Yeah, so you said a few minutes ago that world teachers tend to parcel out their knowledge according to who is listening, you just spill the beans. So let's see how many beans I can get you to spill!

You and I were taking a walk one time at a trail in Fairfield and I asked you to describe your experience. And you described this beautiful experience, which I can repeat for you if you want.

Harri: Go ahead.

Rick: Okay, well you said – and you can clarify if I get it a little garbled – you said something like, "Well, I see all levels of creation, I see the devas, the gods, the impulses of intelligence that govern the creation, I see millions of souls coming in and out of me..."

Harri: You are spilling the beans!

Rick: Yeah, the beans galore. And I said, "Oh, wow, is that during mediation?" And you said, "No, right now, as we're walking down this trail." So if you would, clarify what I just said and talk about

what your experience is right now - not just talking to me and the obvious stuff here in this room, but the whole totality of it.

Harri: I don't consider myself an intellectual or particularly bright; I consider myself an observer. All I can talk about is what I'm seeing at the time that my mouth is moving. Whatever is coming out is what I'm experiencing, I don't have the brains to make stuff up, I'm not like that. I haven't *had* to be like that either; I've always had enough.

To me the definition of self-realization is [that] all experience, any experience is always there. If you have knowledge, it's there, all the time. Not even at will; it's just there. This room didn't go anywhere because I'm sitting in it; it's there, all the details of the room are here. That's what consciousness is like.

If you're seeing the celestial levels of creation [it's because] they're always there, they're not in another universe out there somewhere.

Rick: Yeah, if you're seeing them, you're seeing them here.

Harri: If you're seeing them then they're always there. If knowledge itself is full or it's as full as it can be, it's *always* there.

Rick: So you're saying that they're there whether or not you see them.

Harri: No, no, I'm not saying that. I'm saying they're there on a visual level.

Rick: I know, but for the average person, let's say – and we'll define more carefully what we mean by celestial levels of creation - but if such exists then it is there, like anything else, whether or not you experience it.

Harri: Whether you're experiencing it or not.

Rick: Yeah, bacteria were there before they developed microscopes, and so on.

Harri: Let's clarify just a little bit of that, what you described. Looking at those so-called celestial levels, that's where what, what's another word for the laws of nature, the elements?

Rick: Impulses of intelligence?

Harri: Impulses of intelligence.

Rick: Organizing principles?

Harri: You know, it's sunlight, it's growing the plants, you're eating the plants, there's air – all these elements of nature are forming your body but they also contribute to your consciousness, they're part of your consciousness. So these elements of nature, how to put this ... these laws of nature have administrators - I call [them] that. And you know, there are movements in the Christian tradition and there's an entire hierarchy of archangels and all this stuff, which is hardly

ever talked about in modern Christianity, but there's tons of them and there's a huge hierarchy of it, from God all the way down. And in the Vedic tradition there is the same, and in Buddhism - all of them have this hierarchy of deities [that] administrate, and they talk about administrating these laws of nature: fire, air, water, earth, etcetera, etcetera.

Now that's what I mean by the devas or the gods at the subtle levels, and they exist in these heavens that coexist along with this material universe, they coexist. They're always there, they're not going anywhere. Light is coming from the sun and it's coming in a certain way, and oxygen and all that, and they function on a material level, they function on a subtle level, and they function on an absolute level.

They function on an absolute level. That's the one that's hard to describe to people – how can they function on a level that doesn't "do" anything? The reason it doesn't do anything is because everything is watching it do nothing, as it were. And that two wholenesses, let's say, two absolutes, three absolutes, four absolutes, now that's a state of consciousness that cannot be told to somebody unless that's what they actually at least intuit, and possibly see with the senses.

Rick: Well the thing about functioning in the absolute, and you know the verse, Richo Akshare Parame Vyoman -the impulses of the Veda, the impulses of intelligence which are responsible for the manifestation and governance of the entire universe reside in the transcendental akasha, they reside in this absolute field. And then it goes on, "He who does not know that, what can these impulses do for him?" So knowledge of them begins to do something for you, right?

Harri: And this word 'transcendental' has always been interesting to me because something is transcendental only up until you have the experience, then it ceases to be transcendental. Transcendental means beyond, but soon the word no longer applies, once you see what that is.

So at some point they reside in you, these impulses of intelligence or creative intelligence resides in you. And if you begin to see them - intuit them first, hear them second, maybe see them third, like that - then they exist as your consciousness. I'd like to just emphasize that my experience has always been that we're filling the basket, we're not emptying the basket, but certainly part of the journey towards realization can involve emptying the basket.

Rick: What do you mean by that metaphor?

Harri: Consciousness becomes more and more inclusive, but let's say your life is overshadowed by the relative or you've got so many worries, well you've got to empty those out, that's what I mean. So that's why you close the eyes, that's why you meditate, that's why even so-called 'awake' people close their eyes.

Rick: It was said that the Buddha meditated all of his life, after his realization, he just kept going.

Harri: I actually feel like meditating more, not less.



Rick: Yeah, because it's so sumptuous.

Harri: It's sumptuous, there's more there.

Rick: I wrote an introduction to a book which is going to be published in a few months, by an Amma devotee who lives in India. And I started out by saying, "I've got good news and bad news. The bad news is that the honeybees are dying as part of the sixth-grade extinction and Fukushima," and I kind of outlined all this problems.

Harri: Global warming.

Rick: Yeah, all this stuff. Then I said, "The good news is that there is a spiritual awakening taking place all over the world," and then I went into explaining how spiritual awakening could actually be the remedy to those problems. Obviously all these problems are symptomatic of smallness of intelligence, insufficient intelligence, insufficient comprehension, and if we could expand our intelligence and comprehension to the level of that intelligence which governs the universe, and if enough of us could do this, then that sort of error-free type of intelligence ...

Harri: Even one person would be enough!

Rick: Maybe, but I think it might be helpful if we had [more].

Harri: Oh that would be very helpful if it would be dozens, hundreds, thousands, yes, of course.

Rick: Yeah, because at that level of intelligence, which governs the universe without effort or error, could be governing our society and helping to develop our technologies and so on. So all these problems which seem like they're going to do us all in within the next few decades could be diffused and eliminated.

Harri: I certainly don't have that feeling that anything is going to get diffused or an apocalypse is going to come; I have the opposite feeling.

Rick: That things are going to get better?

Harri: Better, not just "get" better, they are better. And I know there's a war going on here, there's war going on there, but you look at the consciousness of the people from when we were kids to now, everybody is far more open to spiritual values than they were.

Rick: Sure, we grew up in the 50s.

Harri: In the 50s! That's the Stone Age, right – Cold War, all this stuff. I would even go so far as to say that this so-called negative stuff is giving a spur to this positive stuff.

Rick: Mm-hm, nature abhors a vacuum.

Harri: It's kind of pushing it forward to get bigger and bigger. And do I believe everybody is going to suddenly wake up? No, but I think great quantities or numbers of people will, that's my feeling.

Rick: Let's get back to this celestial thing. We threw the word out, talked about it a little bit, I could give a definition but why don't you define what is meant by the word 'celestial?'

Harri: The celestial level of consciousness is one of the layers of human consciousness that can be experienced and can be known and the senses can function there. And it is one of the layers – you've got the absolute layer, you're got the knowledge layer, you've got the celestial layer, and you have the so-called relative layer.

The celestial layer is one of those intermediate layers - subtler than the gross-relative, grosser than the absolute, if you want to put those kinds of qualities on them. And in my consciousness they all maintain their presence, all of the time. And the way you can know that is ask me a question about any of them at any time, even if I'm not liking you at the moment, I'll be able to answer the question, and the reason you can answer the question is because that experience is lively in consciousness. And the celestial levels are particularly fascinating because there's a lot of sight there.

Rick: Yeah, there's a lot going on.

Harri: A lot going on and those Divine levels of consciousness, their sole purpose is to unify and administrate and propagate the laws of nature. And I'm not going to get into this very deeply because in another session we're going to have, we're going to talk about *how* pure consciousness becomes celestial consciousness, how celestial consciousness becomes physical consciousness, that's a whole other session, but it's a process. Part of self-realization, ultimate self-realization, is seeing this process, being this process, knowing this process, but I'm not going to go much deeper than that.

Rick: That's okay, and you've answered it kind of in terms of human consciousness again, but obviously human consciousness is just a filter through which creation itself is experienced. And creation is appreciated or not to the extent to which that filter is clear. So when we talk of the celestial, there's not only a celestial level of consciousness, in other words a level at which one can appreciate from a celestial perspective, but the physical creation itself has a physical level. So if you look at the pillar or the rock or whatever, you could perceive or appreciate the celestial level of that.

Harri: Even on the material level, yes, yes, that's right.

Rick: And by 'celestial' we just mean more subtle.

Harri: More subtle, that's all we mean. Yes, yes.

Rick: And the interesting thing about it, I think, and again just to step back, the reason I even talk about this or bring this up is that I go to these conferences, like the Science and Nonduality conference and it's a lot of fun and very interesting, but people will have this concept of Nonduality as more of just the absolute, nondual. But what about the relative, and what about

incorporating all the levels of the relative into a larger Nonduality that is really nondual, not just half the picture?

And if you start doing that and thinking about that and experiencing that, then inevitably - and maybe this is in the future for every spiritual aspirant - is going to be a revelation, a discovery that the world has all these subtle strata to it, and those strata are populated profusely with beings every bit as real as you and I, who have their own individual consciousness, their own purpose, their own function, their own nervous system, all that stuff. I think that's a valid realm for exploration and understanding.

Harri: That's another area we can get into, not too deeply today but, how does the absolute or pure consciousness, when you use the word 'pure' - whether it's pure consciousness or absolute consciousness - how does it manage to have these layers and still remain pure consciousness. And there's an answer to that and there's an experience to that, and it is that the nondual state replicates itself on every level.

Rick: I am one being many?

Harri: And I am nondual here, and yet I'm still changing. I'm nondual and yet I'm non-changing. That's the experience of the absolute when it is fuller. I used to see the absolute as one amalgamous mass of energy or knowingness, nothing much there.

Rick: And now? Because you said, I used to experience that - and now?

Harri: It's full of stuff, always full of stuff. Always empty, always full, always empty, always full. The relationship between the two is the experiencer, me, I. And I'm a firm believer in the little 'i.' The little 'i' is the big 'I', the big 'I' is the little 'i.' The 'I' exists and I am going to hold onto that, that's what makes me eternal. It's not the abstraction that makes me eternal, or you eternal, or anybody else. *Every* major religion talks about that 'you can be eternal,' they don't mean 'you can be nothing.'

Rick: Yeah, so they're not just saying the nothingness is eternal; they're saying the individual expression is also.

Harri: You can be like God.

Rick: Eternal?

Harri: Eternal.

Rick: Can be or will be or are?

Harri: All those.

Rick: I mean, you can't opt out of it, right?

Harri: You can't opt of it, you can't opt out of eternity, yes.

- Rick: You can be *unaware* of it as long as you like, but you can't opt out of it.
- Harri: What were you saying?
- Rick: The individuality, the 'I,' hanging onto that, and it maintains some integrity regardless of how cosmic you get.
- Harri: Can I say that my experience of individuality is the same as it was when I was 20? Do I understand what individuality is on the cosmic scale, on the Divine scale, and on the absolute scale? Yes, I do know what that is. And do I call it an individual? Yes, I call it a cosmic individual, a Divine individual, and I call it an absolute individual.
- Rick: Hm, so the individuality that we ordinarily think of ourselves to be and see others as being is just the tip of the iceberg, and there are all these levels of individuality which go deeper and deeper down the absolute?
- Harri: If there's an absolute and you exist as a physical body, and I exist and this couch exists, then the absolute is everywhere, *everywhere*. If it is absolute, it is everywhere, it's omniscient, omnipresent. But yet this couch is here, is this couch an illusion? No to me! It's part of the omnipresence of the absolute. This couch is, you are, I am – it's better to talk about human beings that way than couches, but nevertheless!
- Rick: Well there's also the sense in which this couch is *not* here, at the same time; there's a level at which there's no couch?
- Harri: Of course, because there was a time it wasn't here.
- Rick: Right, and even now, isn't there a time when it's not here, because if you boil it down to the absolute ...
- Harri: If you compress time to the 'now' experience, which is another way of realization, the couch is here and not here, yes. The couch is absolute and *not* absolute, the couch is a couch and has all the knowledge of what makes a couch, [and] you can sit on it and it has all the knowledge of nonexistence – both, both, both, both, both, both, both. And something bigger than both – I'm going to get in a little bit of trouble over this one.
- Rick: With who?
- Harri: With the universe!
- Rick: With the BATGAP police.
- Harri: Yes, that's it, you got it, there you go. That something that's bigger than the absolute that doesn't function, and that absolute that functions in all ways, is the individual self, *individual self*, *individual self*.
- Now, the individual *is* the silence, the individual *is* the all-the-activity.

Ultimately you experience it because, and next time I'll talk about that but yes, the individual, and I'm using the word 'individual' deliberately. I'm using the word 'individual' in the unified state, not in the state that you normally talk about the individual who is running around self-absorbed, small 'self' absorbed in the world; I'm talking about the individual in a state called 'unity.' He's still an individual, he's still running around, but that's another topic.

Rick: Yeah, P.T. Barnum said, "Always leave 'em wanting more." And I'm sure we can get into that and spend another hour on it, but there's a lot of nuggets in this interview which we could turn into entire interviews, and I intend to do that. Some people are going to scream and say, "You haven't interviewed me yet!! What are you doing this Aalto guy so many times for?" But I really think this deserves follow ups, and we'll probably do the next one in June and maybe also something in May.

Harri: Sure, whatever you want. I'm actually enjoying it – why wouldn't I, I think it's great.

Rick: Yeah! Well you typed up some questions that you thought I might want to ask you. And apologies again to my friend, who had some really good questions I haven't done justice to. We'll bring them up in the next interview, maybe she'll have some more for then. "

Alright, here's one I don't think we've covered: "What is the relation of bliss or love to pure awareness?"

Harri: Okay, so I have an experience that I'd like to relate there. I must be the densest human being on the face of the Earth because here it is, I've had all this bliss most of my life – of happiness, intense happiness, you know, I've told you about these experiences as a kid, I had to go run around the block to get rid [of it], tone it down and all this.

And here I am again on one of these retreats years ago, and people were talking about bliss..."I'm in this room having all this stuff," you know, "God this," and "Universe that," and "I'm describing them and it's permanent and it's never stopping," and they're talking about bliss. And [I'm like], "What the heck is bliss? I don't know what bliss is."

And I'm sitting in my room and I'm *intensely* happy and tears running down my face, my hair must have been – when I had more hair – standing up on my head, intense bliss. And it suddenly dawned on me: is this what they're talking about? I've had for years and years, all my life. But I'm making this point because all these things like knowledge-bliss, even as unboundedly dramatic they might be, you may not even know what they are! And if they're just quiet, you might probably just ignore them and say they're not even there.

Even in my case, I'd go to the group and I'd describe and they'd all look at me as if I'm a dumb-dumb. And I would say, "Is this what you're talking about?" "Yes! Yes," they'd say. You know what I'm saying though? It's funny.

- Rick: Well you know, a lot of people, when they wake up they go, "Wait a minute, I've always known this. I've always had this. How did I miss it, it was so obvious?" Or maybe that's a slightly different thing.
- Harri: No, it's a similar point that I'm making, which is that to me an awakened state is an *ongoing* awakening, ongoing awakening. So you can't get very egotistical about it or very bloated up about it if it is the real experience, because all it does is it shines the light on a huge area that you can't see, it shines the light.
- Rick: Well you know the thing about bliss, our friend Francis Bennett told me he's been getting some flak from people on Facebook because he's talking about bliss a lot, and people think that that is a sort of divergence or a sidetrack. Like, "It's really all about the absolute, the Self, pure awareness, why are you complicating it with emotional experiences or something that is going to come and go?" – you know?
- Harri: It's a consequence of an awakened mind. You *get* something from the awakened mind and one of the qualities you get, which is the nicest quality, is bliss, is happiness.
- Rick: Yeah, there's a line in the Upanishads which says something like, "The enlightened person extracts nectar from every particle of creation."
- Harri: And next session or the session after that, we can talk about what that is, how that functions, because that's part of the process of how pure consciousness becomes subjective and objective consciousness - there's a flow to it. I can describe the mechanics of how that happens and bliss is one of those consequences. In Eastern philosophy it is called 'soma,' and there are other names for it too, I'm sure.
- Rick: Or 'Ananda' for Buddhists
- Harri: Ananda, yeah.
- Rick: But soma gets us into the physiological mechanics [of it].
- Harri: Yeah but it's very interesting because if you can describe that process, it makes it more real. It's not just, "Hey, he's just saying he's blissful."
- Rick: Well we can get into that in another interview. In the Eastern understanding of things there is an actual physical substance called soma, which is not only derivable from the soma plant, but which is actually produced in our nervous systems.
- Harri: Oh yeah, yeah, just by meditating even, yeah, absolutely. Or when we eat certain foods.
- Rick: Yeah, if the digestion is really stress-free and the nervous system, and so on.
- Well, related to bliss, here is a question, you wanted me to ask you this. Do you experience heaven?

Harri: Oh God, I thought we covered that one!

Rick: Have we?

Harri: Sort of, I'll talk more about it if you'll help me.

Rick: If you feel there is anything else you want to say right now, but otherwise we'll talk more about ... heaven can wait, you know?

Harri: Well I can make one point and that point is that, here again, way in the past I would have always thought heaven and God, you know, sitting up there somewhere. Well it's not like that; we co-habit the same space, we co-habit the same space,

Rick: Just different dimensions of the same thing.

Harri: And I'll talk about those levels more like *family* in our next sessions, more like *what* those levels really are – they're more like family.

Rick: Okay, good. And you and I will both listen to this interview and take notes, to make sure that we cover what we've promised to cover.

Harri: Yes, yes.

Rick: Okay, here's one that maybe we haven't covered, at least you can add a bit more spin to it: "Are subtle levels or Divine experiences random, or can one experience a Divine purpose?"

Harri: The more subtle consciousness gets, the more purpose there is. And the purpose I'm defining is something - let's call it positive - the purpose of existence is the expansion of happiness, knowledge, all these things you want. Nobody wants stress, you don't go after stress, you don't go after negative things; you go after more and more [positive things]. And yes, these more Divine levels are *more* blissful, *more* progressive, yes.

Rick: When we speak of Divine purpose, a lot of people say everything happens for a reason, that the universe is being orchestrated by an infinitely wise Intelligence and nothing is random, and there's no such thing as an accident, and so on. And they also speak in terms of a force of evolution which is kind of the ultimate driving force of creation, that even though it might not seem like everybody is moving in an evolutionary direction, if you zoom out enough and look at a big enough picture, everybody is evolving even if they're having horrific experiences; it's what they need in order to continue on their particular path.

And so do you experience - and I understand that intellectually and talk about it a lot - but is that a visceral experience for you, that you sort of see the evolutionary force or purpose behind or within everything, motivating it? Can we get more than a head-nod?

Harri: Um ... it feels like both to me. It feels like I'm central to the process of not only my evolution, but a bigger evolution, but it also feels like it's happening automatically; it's more like you having a

good day. You know, let's say the sun is shining, you're happy, you don't think about your body, you don't think about your senses, you don't even think about the sunlight - you're just happy! It's a good day. That's what that whole process feels like to me – a good day. But this good day permeates relative life, Divine life, and absolute life, it's like that.

In the past I have sat in on meetings once in a while and people get so mad at me because I'm so blinking positive, you know, you've been there once in a while. But when I'm talking about this stuff, that's all that comes out.

Rick: Yeah, well let's say you watch the news probably.

Harri: Yeah, every day.

Rick: And terrible things happen, you know, Syria – it's a mess. A couple hundred thousand people have died, children are starving. When you look at a situation like that, how do you perceive it and reconcile it with the notion of a Divine God, a God who only has everyone's best [in mind].

Harri: Well let's look at it slightly differently. What would happen if nothing decayed or aged? Let's put it that way.

Rick: Right, we wouldn't have a relative life.

Harri: We wouldn't have a life! And I'm not saying it's good or bad right now; I'm just putting it that way. If people lived forever, physically on Earth, there would be a trillion people here, everything would implode, it's over. Life as we know it – we'd have to give up coffee. Well, that's my short answer.

Rick: So you're just saying that polarities are part of the way that creation seems to be set up. If you've got a hot, you've got to have a cold, if you have happy, you have to have sad.

Harri: Yeah, I can also describe at some point the mechanics of how subtle levels of nature function, both negative and positive, but not now.

Rick: Okay, and obviously there are all kinds of, not mythological but you know, stories or traditions of the gods and the demons fighting it out all the time, that's all representative of some deeper mechanics, I guess.

Harri: Yes, yes.

Rick: I don't know if you've covered this one or not: "How are the intellect, heart, and mind connected to these experiences you describe?"

Harri: Okay, so the self-realization process involves the intellect and the heart and the mind. Now the heart, in my opinion, is the beneficiary of the awakened state, that's where the bliss comes in, and that's where the love comes in. Even a person born in Finland, like me, who is considered by



many to be, you know, a little bit cool, the heart has exploded ten-fold and I keep it hidden, in business.

Rick: You don't hug people in business.

Harri: I don't hug anybody, ever! People think I'm strange. And bliss is a quiet experience too, what's that saying, 'bliss is not blissful?' It's not that it isn't there.

Rick: It's not blatant.

Harri: It's not blatant, it's not overt.

Rick: It's subtle.

Harri: Yes, and that's part of the self-realization experience. The intellect on the other hand has to know, has to be part of the experience of self-knowing. The intellect says, "Yes!" It doesn't say, "I'm not, no, no;" it says, "Yes, yes, yes." The heart says, "I feel this bliss, yes." What was the other one?

Rick: Intellect, heart, mind.

Harri: Intellect and mind – I call them the same.

Rick: So in other words, these are just different faculties and they serve different functions, and they have a certain typical style of functioning in an unawakened state ...

Harri: And they wake up more in the awakened state.

Rick: Yeah, and they're discovered to have even a more interesting *function* within the awakened state, that the heart begins experiencing degrees of bliss we hadn't known possible, and the intellect has degrees of insight, discrimination and knowledge and so forth, that we hadn't known were possible.

Harri: And they start the unification process; that's when it starts. Enlightenment or evolution starts *after* awakening, more than before.

Rick: I think we have kind of covered the most of it ...

Harri: Oh, I've never seen you at a loss for words before.

Rick: Well you know, I wanted to see if I'm getting to your questions. I could dream up my own questions still, but I wanted to do some of yours here. We sort of covered the bit about 'there's no path,' and one thing would be my friend who said, "Once you're enlightened, there's no need to do any practice," but there are plenty of people who even say that prior to any sort of enlightenment, they just feel like a practice is only going to reinforce the notion of a practitioner – someone who is doing something. And so therefore practices are counterproductive and ill-advised. I know that hasn't been your experience or path.

Harri: Well, I can see why you'd say that because you do discover that you've been home all the time *anyway*, you just didn't realize how big your home is. You didn't realize how Divine it is, you didn't realize how absolute it is, you *did* not realize that. Yes, you're home.

Rick: I just thought of another thing you told me years ago which is kind of interesting, it's a little bit of a change of pace from what we're talking about. We were talking about how you were on a course one time, I think it was a 6-month long meditation course in Switzerland. And you were meditating in your room for long hours and you went through this series of the chakras awakening, with almost a literal bang as each one awoke. Would you recount that experience? I just think that people find it interesting to hear.

Harri: I wasn't meditating; I just had my eyes closed. I was sitting on the bed and just thinking, "If I ever came close to pure unbounded silence..." - and it was this moment that started to happen, it was like this drumbeat of nothingness, it was just a *big* echo of silence started. And then there was just this little trickle at the base of my spine. I said, "What's this," you know, I'm looking around ... what's this?

So the first time it happened it was a little bit of a shock, and then this feeling, this spinning moved up my spine. And then suddenly there was a huge, like a hammer-blow to the base [of my spine], but it was blissful, it wasn't painful. And then suddenly my consciousness expanded *out*, in terms of light, and up my spine. It hit another area and then there was another bang, and this bang revealed stuff, cosmic stuff. And it was blissful, it was joyous, this echoing silence was there.

And it went all the way up my spine and got more and more – and how it got more intense, I don't know, but it did – it went up my spine and hit at least six or seven points, then it went into my head and became this – well you asked for this ... - but it became like this cosmic ocean of light and then it exploded out of the top of my head. And I don't know why I'm saying this, maybe I shouldn't.

Rick: Because I asked you.

Harri: And it felt like all these layers of creation were revealed to me, they were part of the physiology. There were hammer-blows that were incredibly blissful, there were heavens at every layer, and then there was this huge, white, glorious explosion in my head. And then the whole thing just sort of collapsed and there was this pure silence, or this pure reverberation left. And the funny thing is I do it the next day, exactly the same thing happened – the hammer ... - "Okay, well here it starts again" -same thing, only more intense.

And then the third day the same thing happened again, and whatever was a remnant of that experience, remained, it's always there, it's there right this minute. And memory is something we should talk about next time because memory is very important, it's all memory.

Rick: We'll do it, great.

Harri: Let's not end up on that note; let's do something more practical.

Rick: Sure, wanna talk about water jet fabrication?

Harri: Business?

Rick: How is the human body important in the spiritual path?

Harri: Well you know the same objection people might have, or listeners might have to the body, is [the same objection] they have to the individual. The individual has a body and the body is an individual. And the body is infinitely more complex and important to the process of awakening than is generally thought, that's my opinion.

Rick: It's a vehicle, isn't it?

Harri: It's far more than a vehicle; it's the actual experiencer on the subtle level. If I were to describe how the body is involved in the Divine levels, in the subtle fabric of creation and actually *sits* as the diamond in the ocean of unboundedness, if I would describe that process to you then the body would be central to that experience.

Rick: Do you want to describe that to me or do you want to save that for another time?

Harri: We're saving a lot here, aren't we?

Rick: Yeah, yeah.

Harri: We can go a little more into it. This is my experience and this started in the last ten years, so we're getting closer and closer to the present day. For *years* I looked for an 'I,' starting 20, 30 years ago, you know, "What is this 'I'?" I had these glorious experiences, I had this absolute knowingness that would well up all the time, "Where's the individual in this? Is he gone forever now? Is it gone, disappeared?"

And then gradually, over the last 15, 20 years, my senses became active *in* the process of these subtler levels. I could literally see the absolute - I mean hear it, see it. When my senses became active in that experience, the body became active in that experience, locations of the body became active in that experience, and I know that's maybe hard to swallow, but that's how I experience it.

Rick: I'm not sure people will understand what you mean by it, actually?

Harri: They won't.

Rick: Not the "can't swallow it," but what does he mean by that?

Harri: Well let's stay with the senses for a moment. The senses are grounded in the physiology. There are eyeballs, ears, nose, mouth, they have locations in the body. And there are the senses that are functioning multi-directionally – inside, outside, nothing in-between, are all one continuum.

Seeing the self, seeing the knower, every sense is a channel of knowledge, is a channel of knowingness, is a channel of objective reality, subjective reality and absolute reality. And when the senses are functioning like that, these senses, as if, locate themselves in a body, in a physiology.

So yes, now having said that there is a subtle physiology, there's a Divine physiology, there's an absolute physiology, and we can cover those things, but they're bodies, they're individuals, they're individual bodies.

Rick: Are they like Russian dolls, where they're not really separate individual bodies but they are, you know, subtler bodies contained within?

Harri: They're exactly the same shape as this body.

Rick: So what were they again, Celestial and absolute?

Harri: In just normal spiritual circles there is astral and causal, and yes, I would add the absolute body as well. So yeah, those bodies have longer life, longer life, and then the absolute life.

Rick: Interesting. Okay, well that's another thing to unpack.

Harri: We've got a lot of unpacking to do.

Rick: Yeah. Some people are fond of the notion of uncertainty, in the sense that you can never drop anchor at any point in your understanding or experience. I know we've talked about how understanding and experience can continually unfold, do you feel like you're certain of anything, or is it sort of like [you are] in a field of all possibilities, in which you never want to collapse it down to "I am sure about X Y Z"?

Harri: No, no, quite the opposite. I'm 100% absolutely, totally, positive of everything I say! 😊 100%, not even one iota of doubt

Rick: I'd hate to be your wife!

Harri: Well on the knowledge level, the experience level, daily life is another matter.

Rick: Yeah, yeah, you mean all this knowledge stuff?

Harri: Yes.

Rick: And yet, a lot of the things you say, if I speak to you five years from now you might think, "Well, you know, I said that then but now I'm going to say..."

Harri: I don't care, I had the same sense five years ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago; just a restatus clear, I had the same knowledge but it wasn't as detailed.

Rick: So you haven't radically revised anything? And you know, you and I have had conversations ten years ago, you haven't sort of said, "Forget that, I was wrong," it's more like you just getting into the finer details of things, which you were also totally confident about then?

Harri: I've never been wrong since birth, about knowledge.

Rick: Knowledge stuff?

Harri: Knowledge stuff.

Rick: That's going to raise a few hackles.

Harri: Well let the hackles arise, my own are rising too. I'm getting ready for the hackles ...hecklers!

Rick: Yeah, I mean you don't come across as a dogmatic person, you're not a fundamentalist.

Harri: No, I'm not. I want to be open.

Rick: You're just saying that there's kind of an inner certainty to these kind of things.

Harri: Yes.

Rick: You're not speculative.

Harri: It's not speculation.

Rick: And as you said earlier, if it's not your experience, you don't say it, and if you're saying it, it's your experience, or you wouldn't be saying it.

Harri: [Then it would be] observation.

Rick: Okay, good enough. I think we're going to wrap this one up. There are so many more things we can talk about but we planted dozens of seeds throughout this conversation that we can water and sprout in future conversations.

Harri: Well you know, I was a little bit nervous about this and I'm very pleased.

Rick: Yeah, well it took me 4 years to talk you into doing it.

Harri: Well 4 years is short for me, you know? But I'm pleased you've had me on here and I'm looking forward to another session. And I am happy to if people ask me serious questions about what I'm talking about, I'm no good at ...

Rick: "Should I marry Sally-Jane," or that kind of thing.

Harri: No, nor can I deal with issues, I'm no good [with issues].

Rick: Like psychological issues.

Harri: Yeah, I've got no ability there. But the only ability I have is that I can observe what I experience and I can speak it, that's all.

Rick: Well I'll tell you what, Harri hasn't had a website, hasn't written a book and all that, but as we speak, a website is being developed and it should be up by the time this interview is published, which is just a few days from now. And I think it's going to be [www.harriaalto.com](http://www.harriaalto.com), and that's spelled H-A-R-R-I A-A-L-T-O .com. So it will be very rudimentary to begin with but people can go there and there will be some kind of a contact thing.

Harri: And I'll post some experiences there, for the time being.

Rick: Yeah and post stuff from time to time, yeah. If you contact him, if you email him, and I imagine a couple of thousand people will as a result of this interview.

Harri: I hope not!

Rick: He's probably not going to respond to 95% of them, I would guess, because you're just not going to have the time to do all those emails. You will probably read them, or somebody will.

Harri: I'll read them, yes, I'll read them.

Rick: Yeah, and if you can you'll respond to some of them.

Harri: Yes, absolutely.

Rick: And also I think emails like that will provide us with ...

Harri: Content for future interviews.

Rick: Yes, and we'll note down points and organize them into a nice structure.

Harri: And I want all the Advaitists to attack me – no problem.

Rick: You want them to?

Harri: Yeah, I do.

Rick: Let 'em have it.

Harri: Both barrels!

Rick: All you Advaitists. So as far as Harri doing anything in person, we're talking about having ... Francis Bennett is planning on coming to Fairfield in late May, I think around the weekend of the 28<sup>th</sup>, if that's a weekend, and Kristin Kirk, whom I interviewed about a month ago, is probably going to come also. And we'll see exactly what the two of them are going to do, whether together, and we might bring Harri into the mix too, in some way.

It's all yet to be worked out, but at least Francis is going to give a weekend retreat, and whether Kristin gives the whole weekend with him or just does some healings here and comes in to one meeting or what, we don't know, but Harri will also come into at least one meeting. And we'll have a conversation with the three of them and we'll put it on [www.batgap.com](http://www.batgap.com), but if you would like to come to Fairfield and have a visit, the retreat is very reasonably priced.

And you will find details on Francis's website, which you can find a link to from my website, on the Francis Bennett page, and maybe I'll also put it on Harri's page, if he's going to speak there. What's left of Harri's arm ligaments, I'm twisting further still to get him to come to the Science & Nonduality Conference in late October, out in California, so he may show up there and we might even get him up on a stage, we'll see.

Harri: I don't know about that, but I am very pleased to be here and thank you for inviting me, that's great.

Rick: Yeah, I'm really glad that we've finally been able to do this and I think people are really going to enjoy it.

Harri: I hope so.

Rick: And we'll be doing more. Just to make a few more general, totally general comments about this interview series. It is a series and there have been 225 of them, or something, now. You can find them all on [www.batgap.com](http://www.batgap.com) B-A-T-G-A-P, they are archived both alphabetically and chronologically.

There are a number of other things you will find there: there's a place to sign up to be notified by email of new interviews, there's a discussion group that crops up around each interview, there's a link to an iTunes audio podcast, so you can just listen to these in audio if you like, on your iPod or i-thing. And there's a 'Donate' button, and BATGAP is a 501C-3, which means it's a non-profit in the United States.

And as donations become sufficient, I will gradually move into doing this fulltime, hopefully. If I were doing it fulltime, I'd be doing more than one interview a week. I've got 11 hundred people on the waiting list, I'll be well into my 90s by the time I get to them all if I do them one a week! And more suggestions come in every day, so I would like to make it a daily show if I could, at least four or five days a week, or something, but obviously I would have to drop my ordinary day-job to do that. So if you feel inclined to make a donation, or if you are in a business or affiliated with a business or own a business that needs a tax write-off, it's a 501C-3, keep it in mind.

So thanks for listening or watching, and we'll see you next week with Robert Svoboda. We will see Harri again in a couple of months.

Harri: Thank you, great, It's terrific.

Rick: Okay, thanks.

Harri: Thanks.

Rick: Good.

{BATGAP theme music playing}