

Adyashanti & Francis Bennett on "Resurrecting Jesus" - BATGAP Interview (# 255)

October 31, 2014

{BATGAP theme music plays.}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at The Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer and I have the privilege today of hosting a conversation between Adyashanti and Francis Bennett. We'll be talking about Adyashanti's book, *Resurrecting Jesus*.

I listened to the audio version of this book, and I had the feeling as I was reading it that it was something I could read or listen to repeatedly, periodically over the years, and that as I progressed in my own spiritual development, I would be able to appreciate deeper and deeper levels of what Adyashanti was bringing out in the book. I think it has a lot of vertical dimension to it. Francis read the book four times (Laughter), including once when...

Francis: It's kind of right up my alley, I would say.

Rick: So I assume he liked it. So let me introduce Adya and Francis. Adyashanti is the author of *The Way of Liberation*, *Resurrecting Jesus*, *True Meditation*, and *The End of Your World*.

He is an American-born spiritual teacher, devoted to serving the awakening of all beings. His teachings are an open invitation to stop, inquire, and recognize what is true and liberating at the core of all existence.

Asked to teach in 1996 by his Zen teacher of 14 years, Adyashanti offers teachings that are free of any tradition or ideology. Quote, "The truth I point to is not confined within any religious point of view, belief system or doctrine, but is open to all and found within all." - end quote.

He teaches throughout North America and Europe, offering Satsangs and weekend intensives, silent retreats, and a live Internet radio broadcast.

Francis Bennett was an ordinary, sociable young man - he's still relatively sociable, not as young anymore - who answered the call to a life of spiritual adventure as a contemplative in the Monastery of the order of Cistercians, of the strict observance commonly known as "Trappists".

Thomas Merton, the pioneer and Christian mystic of the 20th Century was Francis's inspiration, and it was Merton's influence that led Francis to explore the deepest reality of being, within the frameworks of Christianity, Buddhism, Advaita, Vedanta, and Non-duality.

Francis has worked with the sick and dying in parishes, hospitals, and hospices, since he moved away from the gnostic life. In 2010, while in the middle of mass, there came what Francis describes as "a radical perceptual shift in consciousness", which made it clear that the pure awareness that is at the heart of all, is no different from the presence of God, which he had been seeking outside of himself for so long.

So as I was listening to this book, pretty much every point, I felt, could easily be a springboard for a whole conversation. It's very rich. There's a lot to unpack and I kept thinking, "What are

we going to talk about in this interview, because there's so many different angles we can take?" and you know, it could be so comprehensive?

But I sort of hoped, and I still hope, that with a little bit of a send-off, Francis and Adya will just get into a conversation and I'll stay pretty much out of it. Maybe I'll have a couple of questions towards the end. Which is unlike the way I usually do interviews – but we will relieve those who say I talk too much. So, where shall we start?

Francis: Well, Glenda from *The Wizard of Oz* says, "It's best to start from the beginning," right? Isn't that the line from *The Wizard of Oz*?

Rick: I think it might be. So let me ask, just to kick-start it, what motivated you to write this book?

Adya: Oh, a love of the Jesus story, as I said. Loved the story since I was a kid. Like so many people, [it] totally captured my imagination. It's really the founding story, or mythic story, of our whole Western culture. I think it still dominates our culture, even though Christianity as a whole doesn't dominate the culture like it did 500 years ago, but still, you just feel it everywhere in the culture.

And personally, it was just something that totally captured my imagination. I was taken by the story when I was a kid - the "magical" quality, as children love, magical things. And it also had, a real - probably more than anything - it really connected me to the magic, I would think, of Existence, just that feeling of sacredness.

And even for me, every Christmas would roll around and about 2 months before Christmas I thought I always felt I would enter into this different domain. Almost like into a Harry Potter movie. But it would just start, you know what I mean? Like the whole atmosphere, the energy of the land, of the space, would just alter. And I could feel it. And it would bring me in this place that felt very, very, very sacred. And it would last about a couple of months before Christmas, and it would last for at least a month afterwards. So it was like a 3-month window.

And it still happens to me to this day. There is like this 3-month window that is sort of extra extraordinary. And to me, that was always tied in with this amazing story of this amazing, amazing being. So it's that feeling I think, more than anything, that has captured me.

Rick: Since your awakening and since you became very busy as a spiritual teacher, had you really had much time to put your attention on the story of Jesus and give it much thought? Or was this like a real discovery adventure for you, researching and writing this book, kinda' like all kinds of aha's come to you that you hadn't thought about before?

Adya: Kinda' both, kinda' both. I mean I really got into the whole Christian Mystical tradition probably in my mid-twenties, after I'd been doing Zen for 4 or 5 years. When, you know, in your twenties, 4 or 5 years seems like forever. Especially when you're doing Zen, it can be so difficult.

But I felt something was missing, something I couldn't connect with. And I didn't know what it was, I didn't know how to find it. I didn't know where to search for it. But I started to see it in these books of the Christian mystics.

And when I was in my mid-twenties I just started devouring books. I mean probably 200 books, all of the Christian mystics. And only in retrospect, you know, like looking back in the rearview

mirror - we're all so much wiser than we are - but looking back, I can see that what it did was connect me to the Sacred Heart, to the Spiritual Heart, which I couldn't find in Zen. Now I can see that it was there, but it wasn't there, as a Westerner, in a way that it was easy for me to access.

Even the idea of 'compassion' to my way of being, wasn't a way. I could feel compassion, but it didn't get me into the Spiritual Heart. It didn't really open the whole thing up. And then just reading some of these mystics, it was almost like entering into that 3 months of magic again. That I could open those books [from] centuries - St. John of the Cross, Meister Eckhart, and many, many others, and all of a sudden it would be ... so that's what started.

Rick: We were talking in the car on the way up, about [that] in certain Buddhist traditions - maybe predominantly – there is very little talk of God. And actually, a number of prominent Buddhists proclaim themselves as Atheists. And we were kind of speculating as to why that is and whether Buddhism, at least as those people practiced it, only took you so far. And that there's a whole other range of possibilities, which I think you're eluding to now, which involve the heart and more refined perception, and deeper appreciation of God's creation, of God Himself, or Itself.

Adya: I think to me, the Christian, at least for me – because I don't like to make general statements, because the way people interact with their traditions is very unique to them - but for me, I think on the whole, the best of the Christian tradition as kind of an enlightened duality.

Rick: What do you mean by that?

Adya: And I mean that in the very best sense. I mean that as a tradition, of course the mystics go beyond that, beyond any kind of duality, or a lot of them go away beyond any duality, but I think one of its gifts - and its gifts are a very needed gifts in the world of non-duality and spirituality - is that, our minds get so stuck on these hierarchies like: nonduality is better than duality. Really? Where, where is that written?

Francis: And what is that? Duality!

Adya: Exactly, and here we are, right? We call this 'duality,' but to me, enlightened duality is to me, I could summarize it really simply, is when you see and feel and experience everything - everything you see, taste, touch, feel is God.

And you know, in the radical non-dual circles that the world has, this is called an illusion. Like something that's a dream. And that has a legitimacy too, because contemplatives for thousands of years have had these experiences, where the world does seem like a dream, does seem, comparatively, to some deeper state of being, of very little importance, and that's very freeing and very liberating.

But the other side is the completion of that insight, when you see it's also absolutely God. Not as a philosophy or as a theology, but you actually experience it that way. And that is to me, you can talk about that I suppose, and use lots of different language, but to see everything as God, or as Ramana Maharishi might see everything as the Self - whatever language works for you - to me, that's what I mean when I say 'enlightened duality.'

You know, the seeing duality for what IT really is - it's Divine. This whole thing where we call some parts real, some parts unreal, it's a convention of our human minds; it doesn't actually exist "out here" in life.

There's not things like "a tree is real or not real;" these are ways that, I think, we confuse ourselves.

Rick: Chime in Francis?

Francis: What I liked about this book is that it really captures, for me, the essence of who Jesus really is for me now. I grew up Catholic and a little boy going to mass and loving Jesus all the time, and then ended up in religious life. So my sense of Jesus was very devotional, and so on.

But then after a shift happened in around 2010 - well, shifts happened for many years, over many, many years, little shifts and big shifts. And then in 2010 it seemed that everything was spun on its head and Jesus took on a whole different meaning for me.

And what happened with me was that I discovered, you could say, the Christ within me. That who I was in my essence, in transcendence, was the Christ, that the Christ was living in and through me. And a lot of the early Christian formulations about Jesus, the theological formulations, the creedal statements, and statements by the fathers of the church - fathers and mothers of the church - they talk about what they call the "hypostatic union of humanity and Divinity," in this one person.

And for me, that's a beautiful, beautiful model of enlightened consciousness. Because Jesus is fully, fully human and fully Divine. Not 50% human and 50% Divine, but 100% human and 100% Divine, altogether. It's like 2 sides of a coin, you can't really separate the sides of a coin, they both make up the coin. And I think in the non-dual scene it's a needed approach, just [to have] this idea that, yes, it's necessary to transcend our humanity, to realize that we're not merely a body and a mind; we're not limited to that. We're not somehow confined to that.

And so we experience this reality of transcendence that who we are on the deepest, most profound level is pure consciousness, pure awareness. *But*, that's incarnated *in* a human being - in our case a human being, in another case it is a giraffe, or an aardvark, or a praying mantis, or whatever. But I think that Jesus is just a beautiful model of that, that marriage of the human and the Divine, and that they're not separate, that they don't need to be seen as mutually exclusive.

That coming to a place of transcendence doesn't obliterate our humanity; it actually causes it to flower. We actually come to realize that what it really means to be human is just this glorious, Divine incarnation. That what they said about Jesus - the early fathers and mothers of the church - that it wasn't only true for Jesus, but that is true for everybody on the planet; that we all are, potentially, incarnations of God, that we need to wake up to that.

We need to wake up to that transcendence, but then it needs to be embodied in an ordinary human life through things like marriage, and work, and raising children, and living in the world, and loving in the world, and playing in the world. The whole thing, the whole thing.

So I really was thrilled to find this book in a non-dual kind of tone, but using Jesus as a model for that, because I think he's a great model.

Adya: And I like what you said, as seeing Jesus as a model, because that's what I discovered - going back to your earlier question - later in life, after I was teaching. And that's what so surprised me when I did really go back and start to - because I'd read like a couple-hundred books on the

mystics, right - but I actually, believe it or not, it seems crazy now, but I hadn't actually read through the New Testament all the way through. I had never done it! I had read parts of it, but when I sat down and did it, the first thought I had was, as I said in the book was, "Who is this guy?! I've never heard of this guy!" Because the only Jesus I'd ever heard of was the theological, which is an amazing Jesus, but then I go into the story and this is this amazing being that is, as you said, Divine and also extraordinarily human.

And one of the things that struck me, and still strikes me to this day about him, is what I thought about the people sitting there writing this story, or probably telling it orally before that - the tradition. I thought, "How did they not edit all his humanity out?" Because usually that's what happens, right?

In the Buddhist story you don't get that much humanity, right? You go to the Hindu saints... so much of the [traditions], there's like no humanity; absolute, sort of, abstract perfection. And I was amazed to find there's so much humanity.

He could get upset, he could get angry, he'd get extremely despondent, and he could have all these amazing spiritual insights, and all this was mixed up in the same being. And when I rediscovered it I thought, "Okay, now there's an accurate depiction of a human being - of what it means," you know? Highly developed human being, obviously, but this mix of human and Divine, and I just found it extraordinary because I had so much heard about the theological...

Francis: ...Super guy, superman.

Adya: This kind of superman. And then you read the story and you realize, there's a lot that's in here that is superman, but there's a lot in here that's not superman.

Francis: Right.

Adya: And I was just floored like...they didn't take this stuff out?! Because usually, I think it's erased. It's erased to this day; you know? Like I always tell people, if you want a perfect teacher, pick a dead one, because then you can make anything you want out of them.

Francis: They're hard to argue with.

Adya: They're hard to argue with, right. You can make them into anything you want. So I think I connected to what you said very much about that. I just think it was so honest, so honest.

Francis: Yeah well, in the garden he was there, the disciples are all asleep, he knows he's basically cooked. He knows these are going to come and get him and it says that he, he actually wept and said, "Please take this cup from me" and sweat great drops of blood. I mean, this does not sound like some placid, benign image of somebody sitting in lotus posture. And then, not to mention the cross.

And I know, a couple of years ago - Rick you know about this, and a lot of people that know me know about this - but I was in the hospital and I got diagnosed with diabetes, and I had an infection in my foot - almost lost my foot. It was a big deal; you know?

And a lot of things happened at that time. I felt very vulnerable in a lot of ways, and yet it was post-awakening, you could say. So there was this sense of being in this pure consciousness that was very stable, and had been there already for several years. And what I discovered was this

human vulnerability, the human pain, the suffering of being sick, of not knowing whether I was going to lose my foot or not. I went through these kinds of reactions pretty quickly, which was different, *but* - the full range of human emotions was there. The full range of a certain anxiety about losing my foot arose and then went away. But what struck me was how that, all that, is arising in this pure, pristine perfect peace, and even bliss. And it was just amazing.

And I thought a lot about Jesus during that because I thought, that must have been a lot of what he experienced. He didn't shut down around the human aspect of it; it was arising in that transcendent identity, but it didn't shut it down, it didn't turn it off, it didn't obliterate it or try to annihilate it or deny it.

And I think that's really, really important, that in this journey of awakening and awakened living that I often talk about, awakening from awakening! That [is what] people in Zen talk about - "The stench of awakening," where somebody awakens and then they're stuck in this very transcendent place, and they're just denying all the human vulnerability and any kind of human emotion, and so on.

And what I'm talking about, sometimes with this "awakening from awakening," [there] is like a full-circle journey. That yeah, you awaken to the transcendent...like the pendulum is way over here in the relative, then it swings over into the transcendent, then it swings back! Until it finds a balance and realizes the two have to be held in a wonderful union; they can't really be separated. So I think Jesus is a really good model for that.

Adya: What struck me too was, I love the images, because the imagery is so powerful and so strong, that I think it resonates with, especially [with], the Western mind. But I remember, this was after I started to teach, when I started to read through the story again, and the image right at the beginning of the Gospels, where the Spirit descended upon him in the River Jordan, like a dove.

And I read that and I went, that's it! Because I had had the experience of Spirit - Zen would call it "Spirit leaping", literally up-and-out. And I also had it coming down-and-in, and I hadn't really heard that talked about. Then I read that and I went, oh! That's a completely different spiritual movement. It's a different realization than up-and-out.

Francis: Yeah...

Adya: It's literally the Divine, almost completely surrendering, giving Itself back into existence. And to me that's...that was a key that helped me really get the whole story. That the whole story, it has this transcendent feel through the whole story, but really what it is, it is enlightened duality. It is Spirit recognizing the Divine here.

And coming to grips with what that means, to me, there are two things absolutely certain about life, which is: death and tragedy.

Rick: I thought you were going to say taxes.

Francis: Well, and isn't that the first noble truth?

Adya: It does tie in with the first noble truth.

Francis: Dukkha...

Adya: Yeah, and you know, I think a lot of people, a lot of us...part of spirituality was hoping to transcend that in some way. And you can to a great degree, but then you find out that that's not the end of the journey.

Francis: Yeah.

Adya: The end of the journey is... "Okay, I can transcend it, I can let go, almost even let go of my own life, but can I actually embrace it?"

Francis: Right...

Adya: That is, to me, actually a bigger letting go and a bigger surrender. And that's what I find in that story over and over again, I find the surrendering back into life, on life's terms. Not on some idealized terms, but on real, actual terms, and then, how beautiful that is.

Francis: It's neat to me that you were really drawn to the mystics, and then didn't really know the direct Jesus story that much. Because for me, the mystics are a re-embodiment of the Jesus story, they are just the Jesus story extended through time, in all these different forms.

One image I often use in my retreats and things, is this idea of stained glass windows. And I lived in Europe for a while - I was lucky enough to live in Paris - and there are many beautiful cathedrals with all this beautiful stained glass, like at Chartres and Notre Dame. And each stained glass window is unique. Some of them can be similar; they can have similar colors, similar shapes, maybe similar scenes, but no two that are exactly alike, and yet the sun comes in and illuminates all of them and shines through them. And they all have this beauty that's really, essentially from the sun, but it's filtered through that particular filter - that particular shape, those particular scenes, what they depict, and so on.

And I think that's the beauty of humanity, that's why I talk so much about humanity. And that's the idea of the mystics, that they each, in their own way, are like a stained glass window that just shines this light into the world; this Christ-light, this Jesus story, re-told in the life of each of us.

And that we're all called to be mystics, you know, the mystics aren't just these people who lived in medieval times. They got canonized because they performed so many miracles and so on and so forth, but that every person on the planet is a potential vehicle for that reality - that transcendent reality.

So, it's kind of neat to me that you first saw it in the mystics and then went back and read the Jesus story. Because my sense - and I can't prove this, but just an intuitive sense - is that that's kind of what Jesus was trying to get at. That, I suspect anyway, if you read all the extent stuff, you read the Gnostic Gospels, you read the Canonical Gospels and all that, my sense is that a lot of the stuff that later Christian theological formulations said about Jesus, Jesus was trying to say is true for all of us. That we're all "the only begotten son or daughter of God," in the sense that we all reflect this glory of God in a very particular way.

That's never ever been seen before, will never be seen again. How wonderful is that? Like snowflakes, or any number of things in nature like that, that just can't be reproduced. They're similar, but they're not exactly alike.

Adya: And I think that's one of the important things especially for today, where we have, in the last 20 years – there has been a lot of effort to have... I call them "ecumenical kumbaya moments." Where all different religions get together and then they all pretend like they're talking about exactly the same thing, which is great, because at least it gets them not to argue so much. But what gets lost with that, at least as I see it, is that there is an underlying mystical truth they're all tapping into, but they're actually bringing very different qualities of that truth, and manifesting those. And that's actually a good thing, as soon as you realize you don't have to sit around arguing about who has the best way to do it.

But that's coming back to your point of that each - not only each person, but I think even traditions and people within those traditions, are manifesting very unique takes on that same reality. And to me, that makes it much more rich when you realize, "Wow...you can see it through Ramana's eyes, you can see it through Jesus' eyes, or Saint John's eyes, or you can see it through your eyes, or you can see it through that person's eyes."

And sure, people can be deluded in their take, can be completely in illusion, but people can also be very clear in their take, can be very legitimate and very beautiful.

Francis: Sure. You know when I was a Trappist at Gethsemane, we were engaged a lot in inter-religious dialogues. There are even some books: *Gethsemane - What is the Experience*, or something, I forgot what are they called now, but there were books that were accounts of some of these dialogical processes that went on.

And I remember the Dalai Lama one time saying at one of these (dialogues at Gethsemane) that, he said, "People think that Buddhism is the highest religion. Or if you're Buddhist or if you're Christian, you think that's the highest religion. But in my opinion, maybe somebody in one particular lifetime, they may be best-off being in a very dualistic, devotional place. Or, they may be better off being in a very nondual, unitive vision of things. And that it all just sort of unfolds and works itself out the way it's meant to, and each of those insights has something kind of special to bring to the table, and they're valid. They have a validity. So non-duality is maybe the absolute, ultimate truth, but duality has its place; it doesn't need to be seen as something that needs to be obliterated. It has a validity; it has a kind of relative validity."

And I thought that was neat, that he could recognize that, especially [being] somebody that's representative of a huge Buddhist organization.

Adya: Yeah, yeah. Well, he obviously has a very ecumenical, vast view. Which is, I think, makes it even more extraordinary when someone like that is - basically, the head of that whole sect of Tibetan Buddhism and yet can have that view, which is transcending his own religious perspective - to say something like that.

Hopefully we all can do that; we can certainly all learn something by it.

Rick: Pope is starting to talk that way too.

Francis: Oh yeah.

Adya: Amazing.

Rick: Maybe he and the Dalai Lama...

Francis: He's got a great name too.

Adya: Yeah, he's extraordinary. It's fun to watch him operate.

Rick: One thing you talk a lot about in the book, you talk about Jesus - he's symbolic of a lot of things, But what if we could say that it's possible that he also *literally* did the things he was said to have done?

Adya: Sure.

Rick: Walked on water? Healed the sick? Raised the dead? Turned water into wine? All those things? Then if that is true, then to me, that makes Jesus a very interesting example of what human beings can actually aspire to, or become.

Rick: And on the one hand, you don't want to make him into some super-ultra thing that nobody could ever attain, and then people feel that he was some kind of unique being, that none of us - and this is one of the major aspects of Christianity - that none of us could ever aspire to; that he was something special and unique, and one and only.

But on the other hand, I see a tendency in many spiritual circles for people to "dumb down" spirituality a bit. To have some little awakening and to say, "I'm finished." Or to say, "It's only this," or whatever, and to actually criticize when people start talking about what may sound like more flowery or extraordinary possibilities. To criticize that as a distraction or, "you're falling back into delusion," or something.

Adya: To make-believe, or something.

Rick: Yeah, yeah, because it's only this "simple thing" and that's it, I'm done. I probably used twice as many words as I needed to get out that point, but maybe you guys can...

Adya: I think it's a great point. And if you go over to India and you start talking about their saints and sages [being] able to walk on water and heal the sick, it's like, "Man, they're a dime-a-dozen over here!" Doesn't mean they're not special - I mean, that's overstated to say they're a dime-a-dozen - but it's not an unusual thing reserved for one person, and they don't see it as just magical thinking.

With someone like Jesus we'll never know. There were no cameras - we'll never know. But, I think what you're saying brings up a really good point, because it's a part of spirituality that, I think, is easy to lose sight of. I think the absolute nature of reality is something that - well, it's just the absolute nature of everything, whether it's ordinary or extraordinary, unique or unified, whatever it is. And in that sense it is just so the underlying suchness of existence.

Then we also got this whole part of realization that is about what is the extraordinary, almost infinite capacity of any being, but we'll just talk about human beings. Obviously, human beings - the human mind - has extraordinary capacities, potentials, in it.

And there's a whole part of spirituality that is a lot about unlocking those potentials, bringing them into manifestation. Whether they're miraculous or they're healing, or all sorts of other human potentials that, again, I think if we just go to the absolute, those potentials don't take on much importance. In fact, forms of spirituality that aim exclusively at the absolute, you're often

told directly, "Don't put your attention on that stuff," [or] "Oh, you can read someone's mind... don't worry about it, let it go. Just focus, refocus."

You know, in Zen they do that. No matter what...

Francis: Some mysticism too...

Adya: [Like, "Oh,] some mystical thing happened," ... "Oh, don't!" And there's a reason for that because you can become side-tracked. And so I think for a lot of people, for a long time, that's really good counsel.

But there's also another aspect of what people are bumping into, which is the extraordinary nature of human potential. And some of that potential verges on what we would think of "the magical." And I do think we just discount it when we just discount it as some, some fiction; we're actually discounting some certain potentialities within ourselves.

Rick: I used to be a student of Ramana Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, as you may recall from your visit to Iowa. He used this analogy often, of capturing the fort. He says, "Life is like a territory where you have all these interesting things you could explore: diamond mines and gold mines and silver mines, and everything in this territory. But there's a fort, which commands the territory, and if you just start going off after mines without having captured the fort, then the territory doesn't really belong to you, and so you're on shaky ground."

And so he said, "First capture the fort. But having done that, then there's all kinds of interesting possibilities. Then you could explore."

Adya That's what part of relativity is about, right? -is exploring those human potentials.

Francis: Well, it's interesting you say that's what relativity is about, because that's what came into my mind just now, was that there are so many different dimensions and levels of being – levels of manifestation of this infinite reality. And a lot of people think, "Oh, it's just confined to this human body and this planet, needs trees and animals, and all the phenomenon we see every day, and most everybody sees. But there are all these other levels, there are all these infinite levels - I'm convinced they're infinite.

And in all the spiritual traditions they talk about angelic realms, and demonic realms, and heavenly realms, and hell realms, and all these things that to the normal, ordinary human person, they can't perceive them. But just like a dog - dogs can hear noises that human beings can't hear - dogs have a whole different experience of reality than a human being.

Or even ants or flies, the way they see with those eyes, those many-faceted eyes. They see something completely different. And I think that when a person - this is precisely pointing to that point I was trying to make before, when a person transcends the relative, then for the first time can they really appreciate the depth and the nuance and the profundity of the relative; that it's not just about what seems to appear, you know... what's appearing before us.

In the Creedal statements they say, "I believe in all that is seen and unseen," which is an interesting phrase to me because it's implying that... okay, there's a lot of stuff that most people see, and there's a lot of stuff that most people don't see, but that doesn't mean it's not real. There are a lot of sounds that only dogs can hear [that] we can't hear, but they're still frequencies; they're still sound waves.

Rick: Sure, we just have a little sliver.

Francis: We can't perceive it, but I think when a person awakens to this transcendent reality, obviously then, when they do this return movement, when they awaken from awakening and they realize that there's this integration of both, they realize the amazing beauty.

You know when we had that panel on "Celestial Perception," this analogy that came to me just in the moment was, it's like if you're in love. If you're in love with a woman or a man, they're so special to you, they're so precious to you. And if you're sitting across from them - candle-lit dinner or whatever - and you gaze into their eyes, you can see things that other people can't see. You could see the little flecks maybe, in her or his eyes. You notice things about them. And my sense is that when a person falls in love with Divinity, or with this transcendent reality, then they actually heighten, somehow, the perception; that you appreciate things and your perceptions become much more subtle, much more refined.

And I think that is a reality of awakening that often is like you say, dismissed, and yet it's an aspect of the path. It is maybe not the most important aspect, it's not crucial to awakening itself, but it's a natural fruition and it's mentioned in all the traditions. The Christian mystical tradition, the Buddhist tradition, the Hindu tradition, they all talk about these realities.

Rick: And I think it needs to be addressed because if people don't get stuck in their spiritual evolution, they are going to continue to unfold and begin to encounter this stuff! And so they're gonna wonder, "What is this? What does it mean?" or, "Why am I seeing this, or perceiving this?" and, "Why do I have this ability that other people don't seem to have?"

And so, if all those things are part of the full range of spiritual possibilities, then we need to understand them as a contemporary culture because people are going to be progressing into them. And I know a number of people, from this room, who already are.

Adya: And yeah, this is going back a lot of years, but I remember Mukti having a conversation with me. We're talking and she said, "Adya, you gotta be more careful about what you just "casually" say that you want." Because I would just say, "I'd like this, I like that, wouldn't that be fun." And I wouldn't even really mean it, and then it would just show up.

And then it just shows up and sometimes you're like, "Ok, now what do I do with that? I didn't really mean it!" - which I actually think is the secret to manifesting anything, to think you gotta not mean it so much, in a way - and then it just shows up.

So something like that just happens, and it's not uncommon. It doesn't make anybody special. [There are] lots of people that that kind of stuff occurs to. And then yeah, then you do have to kind of go, "Okay...geez, I gotta take responsibility for this. I do just have to be a little more careful about what I "casually" say, because apparently, me and the universe, or God, have a more intimate understanding of each other now."

Francis: Well, and the story of Jesus, if that's a model for this whole unfoldment, it's chockfull of all of this. And he's giving this teaching: whatever you desire, whatever you want, believe and you will receive it.

And angels are coming and ministering to him, and angels attend his birth and sing, and announce that he's going to be born to the shepherds, and healings are happening. And all this kind of things... He is calming the storm and things like that.

And I'm not saying that all that, necessarily, is historically, literally true, but I'm willing to guess that some of it probably was. Because look at all the different traditions, all the mystics and saints of all the different traditions, [they] have had all these experiences. And even to this day, people have experiences like this.

So it is also in the story of Jesus, if we want to use that as a model, it's saying that yeah, this is part of the journey. This may be not the crucial, central theme, but it is part of it. He often would say to people when he'd heal them, "Don't tell anybody."

So you can see that even Jesus, he kinda had this sense of - "This is not what I want people to mostly focus on but, it's there."

Adya: Yeah, which to me was a really interesting part of the story, is that he had this whole healing, miraculous thing going on, but he was always trying to keep people to be quiet about it.

Francis: Keep it on the down-low

Adya: Keep it on the down-low, because he had a different message. He had a very different message, and most of his miracles were - not all of them, but many of them were - done for the sake of someone else, not for the sake of displaying [a] miracle.

Yeah, He healed people that He didn't even want to be there. He really didn't; He would rather have not had to deal with it, [like] "Ah well, okay, I'll show up and I'll..." - you know? That's compassion. That's not somebody going, "Look what I can do".

Francis: There's this beautiful, beautiful story. I think it's in Mark, where the lady is a Samaritan or something; she's not Jewish. And she comes to Jesus and she wants Him to perform a miracle, to heal somebody. And He says, "Well, I've come only for the children of Israel, you know, that's mostly my mission. I'm out to preach to Israel."

And she persists and persists, and He says, "I can't give food to the dogs," which is a pretty strong statement actually. "I can't give food to the dogs when the children are hungry; I have to feed the children first."

And then she says, "But Lord, even the dogs get the crumbs that fall from the children's table."

And he says, "That's so good. I'm gonna do it." And he heals her!

Adya: You (referring to the woman) gotta good point.

Francis: Yeah, I think that's a great story.

Adya: I do too. And I think the counterbalance to that is also found right in the beginning, where He goes to the desert. Basically, the whole temptation of the devil is basically, in lots of different ways Saying: "Use your powers for self-centered reasons." And he's always rejecting that at every...whether it's power, or to show off, or to test God, or to prove his own enlightenment.

Anything that's self-serving, He's basically saying, "No, I won't use any of my powers for any of that." That's a teaching that dovetails with all the miracles you'll see, because all the miracles you'll see are not self-serving miracles. The devil, everything he wanted Jesus to do was always

egoically utilizing that power. And I've always seen those two teachings dovetailing each other really quite well.

Rick: That's interesting because a lot of spiritual teachers have perhaps succumbed to that temptation.

Adya: Sure, perhaps

Rick: From the devil. "Guru" is almost a dirty word because so many gurus have tripped up when tempted by this, that, and the other thing.

Adya: Sure, well, power's a dangerous thing, any kind of power, whether it's just power somebody gives you as authority, whether it's spiritual power, any power is. Anybody that thinks they're beyond the temptations of power, have already begun to succumb to it.

You know, it's a potentially very dangerous thing to play with, and I think that's why all the traditions talk about what it is to wisely utilize power. Whether you call it, in Buddhism "right action," or you see it in the devil tempting Jesus, or however you do that, there's always an acknowledgement of the dangers of power, and the necessity to be able to use it in a wise and compassionate - basically a selfless way, because that's part of waking up. You become a more powerful person, it's part of the deal.

Francis: And it's the insight too, isn't it, that you don't own that power? There's nobody really to be enlightened, in a certain sense. You don't own enlightenment; there's just clarity of vision, there's clarity of seeing. It doesn't belong to anyone. You can't claim it and say, "Oh, you know, that's something that will give me something to talk about at cocktail parties now. I'm not only a millionaire at 35, but I'm also enlightened."

Adya: And Jesus, when he would often, always say, basically, "I'm not doing this; it's the Father that's doing it."

Francis: Exactly.

Adya: His reference was always to something larger than his humanity. And I think that's another important counterbalance to certain other forms of spirituality. Even forms of our own insight, where we can forget that on a human level, that it's really wise to have some sort of sense of something bigger.

That's the paradox. It's like, I am That, I am the All *and* I'm a human being. And I have to be in a correct relationship to the All because it is me, and in one sense, it's also bigger than me. And I think that if it gets out of balance, that you're only in relationship, then you're never fully awakened.

If you just go, "It's all me," and you fall out of any human relative relationship with what's bigger than you, then...

Francis: You're a megalomaniac.

Adya: You're a megalomaniac, yeah, yeah. Your enlightenment has unfortunately deluded you.

Francis: There's a great line in the spiritual 14th century classic I'm going to be talking about at SAND,

called *The Cloud of Unknowing*. And in that - and it's a radical statement for a 14th century Christian mystic, but he says, "God is your being. But always remember, you are not God's being." So that's what he's pointing to.

Adya: That's a great line.

Francis: Yeah. There's this transcendent reality that is at the core of your being, who you are and yet, who you are on a relative level in itself, isn't that. It's part of that, but it's included in all of phenomenon, all of reality, because that's where when the ego becomes God, well then you're in trouble.

Yeah we're all God in one sense, but in another sense, we're not. So it's always good to remember, I think.

Adya: I always remember - and it was very telling to me, this is years ago - when me and Mukti did this intensive, this 2-day intensive. And it was one of the worst-attended intensives that I ever did at that time, and it was because of what it was about, and the title was "Servants of Truth". It was all about what it was to be a servant of what we realized, to basically come into right relationship with what our own realization is, how to embody it and move it.

And it was so telling to me when we had it and I thought, wow! These intensives usually get, you know, 350 people, and there's less than 200 here. What it did was made me - it wasn't that the numbers mattered - but as a teacher, what it made me do was go, "Okay Adya, what aren't you getting across? There's something that you have not been able to communicate the importance of. You're trying to do it now, at this event."

But the fact that so few people were that interested showed me that I had not been communicating the importance of how to be in that relationship with your own realization, or with Divinity. That the idea of being a servant to It was so off-putting to a lot of people. It really clued me into something really important - what I felt was important.

Rick: And so why did you feel that people were uninterested in that?

Adya: Westerners don't like being a servant of anything. In the West we all are taught to be the top-dog, to be the head of the class, to have people serving you, or something serving you. Even if it's God serving you; we're taught how to ask God for exactly what we want. We're not often taught so much about how to give ourselves completely away to God, as I call it, "giving the keys back to Divinity."

So I think there's something in our Western psyche that's harder for us to make this shift to realize that to embody our deepest realizations, it's a kind of a relationship where we're serving It. We're literally serving something like a ...

Francis: Like a vehicle for It.

Adya: A vehicle for it. And to be a vehicle for, it takes a kind of humility, because we won't ever do it in some, sort of, idealized, perfect "way." That's the beauty of it.

I think we all have infinite capacity to embody and express the Truth, but because It's infinite, there's no line you cross where you go, "Got it! I can now perfectly manifest the Divine in every situation."

Francis: But there is, as I go around and do retreats, I get a sense that a lot of people kind of look at it that way.

Adya: I think they do.

Francis: You're going to one day get it and then you'll be done. And I've even run across a little group that will remain nameless, but they'll know who they are, but there are some people who have had some teachers, and they would talk about people in the group being "done."

And when I first heard that I was like, "Oh!" - you know? Crime in Italy! Done? Who's ever done? But also this points to something that, again, that goes back to the Jesus story, [which] is the importance of humility.

And the saying of Jesus that appears in, I think, all the Canonical Gospels and even in some Gnostic Gospels as a saying, which the scholars will say that indicates that it probably did come out of the mouth of Jesus at some point along the way, is that, "The Son of Man came to serve, not to be served." And that is the model; that servant-leadership, that true leadership serves. That true leadership washes the feet of those who they're leading.

And so Jesus is a great example of that, which as you say, it is so countercultural, even in spirituality. I mean, even in the spiritual scene, there's a lot of spiritual materialism. It's like, I want to be the top dog, I want to be the most enlightened, I want to ... and just look at Facebook. You've got different people trying to prove they're more enlightened than other people, which seems, ironically, quite unenlightened, doesn't it?

But you see it in the spiritual scene, this kind of materialism and wanting to achieve, and wanting to, kind of, feel like "I've arrived". And then here, Jesus has a model, he comes along and he says, "No, if you want to be the greatest in the kingdom of God, serve everybody else. Be the least. If you want to be the greatest at a feast, take the lowest place, and then the master of the feast will say, "Hey friend, come up, higher." But if you take the highest place, he may say, "Hey, go down. There's somebody else at that place." Very counterintuitive for our Western [culture].

Adya: It is, because we're so taught to make, almost unconsciously, everything as kind of an exchange. Even if we have devotional practices to God, which can be really beautiful and heart opening, but if you're not careful, they can become an exchange too. Like, "I do this and then I feel bliss, and I feel open and wonderful," which can be fantastic.

Francis: But it's a pay-off like.

Adya: There's a pay-off: I do this in order to get that. What if you were devotional and you never got anything back? And so I think there's that way in this when we stop, I think it's just part of spiritual maturity. We've all done what we're talking about.

Francis: Oh, absolutely!

Adya: We've all, and that's how we know anything about it. We've all been there, but I think it's just a matter of us, at a certain point of maturity, things start to shift and we start to realize, "Oh, okay, yeah, to really serve; I haven't been given this just so I could feel great, feel blissed out, feel "top dog," or whatever. It's there, I think, to embody It, and I think that is to serve It." To me, that's

the feeling, that's what I also love about the Jesus story, you just get this sense of that, this feeling of that, you know, [that] washing [of] the disciples' feet at the Last Supper.

And remind me the one, which one was it that didn't want his feet washed?

Francis: Oh yeah, Peter.

Adya: Right! And he basically...

Francis: ... "No, no Lord, don't wash my feet. I'm not worthy to do that." And he says, "Well, if I don't wash your feet, you can have no part of me."

Adya: Right, you're out.

Francis: Then Peter says, "Okay then, wash my feet and my head, and my hands and everything else." Peter was always kind of not getting it, pretty much all the time.

Adya: Yeah, yeah. I think of Peter as "Saint every man."

Francis: First Pope, you know, [and] the person that really tries hard but doesn't quite get it out of the box. But that was a great teaching.

Rick: Yeah.

Adya: You know, it was like, no, this is how it works, this is how it has to work.

Rick: It's an interesting point on this service thing, which is that, if we, if there's a sort of evolutionary force that's governing and motivating the universe, and evolving more and more sophisticated forms through which the Divine can know Itself, then it would seem that as we embodied the Divine more and more fully, we're going to be called to be a servant of that force; to be a conduit through which that force can do Its thing, which It very much wants to do.

Otherwise it's a waste for us to, in a way say, - [as] if enlightenment can be a selfish thing - "Oh boy, I got it, I'm so happy, and it's for me." Then it seems like that would contradict what, apparently, is the motivating spark of the universe, you know? It would run counter to Its purposes.

Francis: What's that whole idea that some teachers have expounded on? This idea of evolutionary enlightenment and the whole integral spiritual movement is into that. And that there's a quality to the absolute consciousness, that it wants to embody. It wants to serve life. It wants to, somehow, pour Itself out.

And I love that part in the book about Jesus, that you wrote, where you talk about that Scripture that's been a bone of contention in world religion for decades and centuries and millennial, is this idea that - it's that John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whosoever should believe in him should not perish." And that God sent His son into the world to save the world, and so on.

And then Adya was saying in the book, well, that's true for all of us. That all of us are this Christ-embodiment, this Christ-incarnation, that came to pour Itself out, that came to serve, that came to, somehow, give everything back to life.

When I work with people in my teaching, I talk about a contemplative practice, or a meditative practice, surrender and service. Because service, to me, is a spiritual practice. Not only do I think that a lot of people look at it like, "Okay, it's a "result" of enlightenment." Like if you're really enlightened, if you're really awakened, then you'll just naturally - service will spontaneously flow from you. Okay, well that's fine, but what happens in the meantime? It can also lead to that awakening, like Mother Theresa. When she had sisters come to her, she'd say, "Go to the home for the dying, touch Christ in this dying person. Feed Christ, wash Christ's feet, wash his wounds". And there's an awakening that can happen in that. You can be doing that and suddenly see, "Oh, I'm not separate from this other, this what-I-think-of as an "other." That's the Christ in them that I'm serving. That's the Christ in me serving the Christ in them."

Rick: It also seems that it would attenuate the ego to serve like that.

Francis: Oh, absolutely.

Rick: Because if it's all about "I gotta have this experience, I want that experience," then it's all [Rick points inwards], but if you're focused on serving, then you're not focused on me, me, me. And everybody talks about how attenuating the ego is the key to spiritual development.

Adya: And I think it's such a nice counterpoint, the image that that provides. Because like I keep saying I love images, because I think it transcends theology. I often think of certain statements when I read them. I'll often think, what state of consciousness would say that? Which is like, can I find the place that that might feel true in me? Can I find that place? Rather than worrying about whether the statement is true, can I find that place?

And I think you can find that place, where it really does feel like that. Your deepest nature pours itself back into life, from the transcending, pours itself back into life, knowing what it's all about. It is a sacrifice. It's a sacrifice. You're not holding on to the heavenly state to do that; it's a sacrifice.

You're letting go, you're subjecting yourself to all sorts of unpleasant experiences, but there's something about us that is really that quality of love. Which is, to me, what Divine incarnation is really all about - it's an act of love. Why would you throw yourself back into life? Out of love, that's why.

Francis: That's what love does, what else can you do?

Adya: Imagine if we had as our founding personal myth, that we weren't here as a mistake, that we weren't here because an illusion, or somehow the universe screwed up, we weren't here because we screwed up, you know? That Adam ate the apple and now God's pissed off forevermore.

Because you have both the Eastern and Western sides all saying that, "This is a mistake, and you're here to pay for it," whether it's karma, or Jesus has to redeem original sin. But, and I'm not even saying that what I'm going to say has absolute truth, I'm just saying that if you go into your imagination - because I think all this stuff is imagined anyway - but imagine if your founding myth was, "What am I doing here? Because whatever I am so loved the world, that I poured myself into it as an act of loving sacrifice, in order to redeem everything that was hurt, in pain, confused, about my own human incarnation, which will allow me, then, to broaden out and touch others." Can you imagine if that was our founding myth, that we just grew up with, from day one? I think in one way it would be at least as true, and probably a whole hell-of-a-lot less destructive.

Francis: And maybe we need to make our new, our own new founding myths. Using the old imagery and symbol and archetype, but then putting a different spin on it and realizing that really – and as you are talking about this, what came to my mind immediately was - that's the Bodhisattva ideal.

I mean like in the Mahayana-Buddhist tradition, when I did my Zen stuff, and we did this thing to the Bodhisattva of compassion, and Kuan-Yin and all that, and that is the essence of the Bodhisattva. The Christ is, in a certain sense, a Western embodiment of the Bodhisattva ideal. Of this person that is absolutely aware of this transcendent quality, and yet comes back down on the wheel, you know - the wheel of karma or whatever.

Even though he's transcended it, he decides, I'm going to come back so all sentient beings can join me in the transcendence, and how beautiful? It's just a beautiful, really heart-filled, heart-opening way of looking at it.

Rick: Yeah, I found that I kind of shifted myths as I went along. Thirty years ago [it was], "I wanna get enlightened and never be reborn again, 'cause life sucks." And now it's like, I'm having so much fun and I seem to be contributing something. I could do this any number of lifetimes, I don't care. It's so enjoyable to be a conduit for something that helps to better the world.

Adya: Well, different myths and different stories that actually, as you say, they serve us. They're good vehicles, at different parts of our lives, where we are. Sometimes a myth or a story that says, "Yeah, you can transcend this all and just be done with it and never be reborn," and all that, that can be a really powerful motivation - completely.

Francis: To get out of our stuckness.

Adya: That's right. As I say, I think of all spiritual teachings, ultimately – which really freed me from worrying about looking for the truth, necessarily - to me, I'm clear: you can't state the truth. But most of good spirituality - I look at it all as strategy. Is this a useful strategy to help me or someone else awaken? Is this a useful strategy, or a story, or a myth, or a teaching to help me embody that? Is this a useful strategy to help me?

And I think when we start to look at these as strategies, we can stop arguing about which one's right. It's like, does this strategy work for where you are? Yes or no? Now, does this, now [that] you're someplace else? Does that old strategy... do you need that anymore? What's a new one that works, that's relevant to where you are in your life, to where you are spiritually? But we've gotta let go of looking at the teachings to tell us what's true, in order to look at them with that kind of discrimination.

Francis: They're a means to an end; not an end in themselves.

Adya: That's right.

Francis: That all spiritual paths are, a means to the end, and the end is to live in that transcendence and that being, and they all are like different vehicles. Just like you could have a Volkswagen, you could have a Maserati, you can have a Honda, you could have a Toyota. They're all gonna get you to the same place, they're just different vehicles. The idea is to try to take you somewhere, but the idea is to get there. It's not to focus on the vehicle.

It's like the finger pointing to the moon analogy, you know? The idea isn't to focus on the finger and build a shrine for the finger, and dress it up. No! The finger is pointing, look at the reality that it's pointing to.

Rick: There is a verse in the Gita which goes, "Because one can perform it, one's own dharma, though lesser in merit, is better than the dharma of another. Better that, than one's own dharma. The dharma of another brings danger."

So it's like, there's still a lot of squabbling among spiritual people - as certainly it is among religions, they're all fighting with actual weapons, but even among spiritual people, there's a lot of squabbling about ... "Oh, well, that's non-dual what that guy's doing and my thing is so non-dual," or whatever. I don't want to pick on the non-dual people, but...

Francis: My non-duality's bigger than your non-duality.

Rick: But if we just had the attitude that, different strokes for different folks, and whatever a person feels affinity with, or is drawn toward, then maybe there's a reason for that, you know? Let him do that. And if they lose interest in it, then fine, they'll pick up something else. But, you know, God is not a one-trick pony.

Adya: No, I remember when I was in this - I think it was the very first retreat I ever did, and my teacher taught out of her house, so she didn't do these long [retreats], because I wanted to do one of these long [retreats] - "Zen sesshin". And I went up and she sent me to a teacher she trusted, and I did this thing, and I just found it bone-crushingly difficult.

And at a certain point, literally, all I could do was sit there and meditate, like 14 meditation periods a day, or something. And just at a certain point I was praying, just get me through this thing! Just anything, anyway, of reaching out for help!

Francis: Sounds like an initiate.

Adya: Yeah! No longer was it, "Can I get enlightenment;" just like, "Can I get to the end of this? Can I survive this?"

And I remember, I kinda went in sheepishly and talked to the Zen master. We had a little private meeting. It was like a confession, you know? A Buddhist confessing that they're praying. You never hear Buddhists talk about prayer. I said, "Well, I'm praying." And he said, "So how are you praying?"

And then I told him exactly how I was doing it and he was very sweet, and he just said, "That's absolutely fine. Don't worry about that. Pray that way as much as you want. That's absolutely beautiful." And then, in the afternoon talk - he was so compassionate, I thought - he even brought this up again. He didn't say it was me, but he said this holy talk about prayer, and he talked about the kind of prayer that I said that I was doing, basically.

And he said, "Yeah, when you pray like that, it's Buddha praying to Buddha. And that's true prayer." And it was nice, I knew what he was doing. He was reaching out to this young kid - young vulnerable kid. And without pointing me out in a whole group of people, he was reaching out, again, and saying, "Kid, it's alright."

Francis: Yeah, but you knew who he meant.

Adya: I knew who he meant, and I think he also was probably talking to everybody, also. And I thought it was amazing because, it was kind of ironic that you'd think in spirituality you would have to confess praying, but it felt like that!
My point is that's what I needed at *that* moment. If somebody said - some hard-line Buddha said - "No, we don't pray. There's no God, there's da-da-da-da-da," you know, I might not have made it.

Francis: Right.

Adya: But he, he knew, and he was like, "Yeah, okay, that's fine. Do that."

Francis: I thought it was great when you mentioned in your book, and especially because I have an affinity for her too, Saint Therese of Lisieux, and how you were in this Zen and it was very dry and very "no-God". And then suddenly you meet this sweet little French bourgeois Carmelite, who talks about surrender, and God as your "loving Father," and all this. And that was somehow a path for you, for your heart to open.

Adya: Absolutely.

Francis: And that that opening of the heart is an aspect, it's a facet of awakening. That if it's not there, it's just not a whole awakening. That the heart needs to engage, the heart needs to love, the heart needs to, even be passionately loving, in some way.

So I thought that was just beautiful, and especially because I actually entered Gethsemane on the feast day of Saint Therese of Lisieux, because I had so much devotion to her. I'd read *The Story of the Soul* when I was just a teenager and just loved her.

They talk about her path, her teaching, as being the path, or the way of spiritual childhood. Of always remaining like beginner's mind.

Rick: She's the one they called the "Little Flower?"

Francis: The Little Flower, yeah, unfortunately that "little" may be an unfortunate name, because people then think all she is is this sort of sweet little thing. But actually, in that teaching, there's a very ruthless devotion, and dedication, and emulation of the ego, that she teaches.

Rick: Emulation?

Francis: Emulation.

Rick: Yeah, like burning it up.

Francis: Yeah, yeah.

Adya: And I think she was also this beautiful midway point, because there are so many different experiences of love, right? From something that's really personal when you fall in love, to something that can be totally impersonal, like the universal love of existence.

And then I think that she was, for me, something, in-between, because there was something, like I said, I think, in the book, but it was like having a little high-school love affair, which was

really weird for me - being a Buddhist and this falling in love with this Saint that's been dead for a long time. And yet it felt [like] it had such a personal ...like you do when you're in high-school and it's very personal. And yet it was also touching me into a love that was also beyond personal. But at that moment I needed a bridge, and that was a bridge between the personal. I don't even like the word "personal;" I like "bigger than personal!"

Francis: I like "transpersonal."

Adya: That'll work for me.

Francis: I don't even use 'personal' or 'impersonal' anymore; I use 'personal' and 'transpersonal.'

Adya: 'Transpersonal' works great for me. But then she was a great bridge, later, I had a very transpersonal love open up. But it goes back to the same thing: what do you need at that particular moment? What serves you right now? Rather than, what's true in some ultimate sense that we all have to conform ourselves to and hold that as dogma. Whether it's dualistic or non-dualistic, whatever works.

Rick: Well, funny thing is, Vedanta really means "the end of the Veda."

Adya: That's great.

Rick: 'Anta' means end, and I can't believe that everybody who is really into Vedanta needs the "end" teaching, at this stage of the game. There could be all kinds of intermediary teachings that would serve them better. And this sort of adherence or focus on the end teaching, can often end up being just an intellectual concept, or an intellectual understanding, or maybe with some intuitive flavor to it, but which can unfortunately be easily mistaken for actual realization.

Adya: You know the people that I find are most impacted by a real, radical, non-duality that really serves them really well - not always, but very often? It is people that have a long spiritual resume. They've really gone on a lot of spiritual practices, you know; the seeker has really been utilized, developed very highly. And then comes in this completely contrary teaching, and it just hits them right at the right moment.

Francis: Because they have to throw it all away.

Adya: That they've been set up. But if you haven't been set up, if you haven't done anything, sometimes it works, but more often than not it becomes more intellectual. Sometimes what you need is to develop a little seeker-energy. So you gotta take responsibility for the urge within you. So every teaching, it's like, when's the right moment for it?

And often what I find [is that] people that have the most authentic shifts from those radical teachings, that I myself utilize at times, is often when they've put a lot of years and a lot of energy, and that's what they know. And then you come with this very surprising thing, and it just stops the whole game. But, you don't necessarily want to stop a game that hasn't even begun.

Rick: Yeah, I mean, a lot of times these days people go, "Oh, spirituality? That looks good." So you go, "Here's a book."

"Hmm, it says, 'End search, give up the search?'- okay!"

Francis: Well, you have to have a search to give up though.

Adya: And we forget that the great proponents of, especially in the last hundred years, of that kind of teaching - someone like Ramana Maharishi, or Nisargadatta Maharaja - these are both people that had no problem handing out practices to people: sadhana, and then in the next breath they might totally discount it when they're talking to a different person. They'd say, "No, you don't need any of that. Stop that right away. You don't need to be doing that."

And you see it when you read through them that they had no rigid adherence to their own, to a particular realization. Their adherence was: what does this person need at this particular moment, and I'll give them that. If they need to practice, and they need to do Joppa or sing to God, or meditate, or whatever, they would [give them that practice]. So no hesitancy in giving that to them.

And I think in the West we tend to homogenize and dummy-down almost everything we get. As soon as culture gets a hold of it, it's kind of ruined. Because what we do is we take what is self-serving, basically, and then we eliminate, unconsciously, everything that doesn't conform to what we want to hear. And I think that's what happens in all kinds of - it's not just the non-duality thing - all kinds of religions.

We tend to take what we like and what feels comfortable, and reduce or eliminate the parts that are more challenging to us, that would actually call us to task for some way we're holding on or discounting.

Francis: Well, there's a time to hold on and there's a time to let go.

Adya: That's right.

Francis: The Buddha has this great analogy in the Poly-Canon, can't remember what Sutra but it's this analogy of the boat crossing a stream. And he says, "The person carries the boat to the stream, they get in the boat, they cross the stream. And then they get to the other shore, and then they leave the boat behind and they walk on land, they continue their journey. But they don't give up their boat in the middle of the stream, they don't give up the boat before they enter the stream. They keep the boat when it's appropriate to use the boat, and then when the boat's job is done, they let the boat go and they move on."

But it's really crucial to know when to hold on to the boat and keep it and use it, and when to let go of it. It's totally appropriate when they cross the stream to say, "Okay, let go of that and continue on foot." But if you say that at the beginning, you'd be doing them a disservice.

So I think it's the same with spiritual teaching. A lot of people have this idea, and you hear a lot of teaching that seems to have, like you said, it's kind of like a one-trick pony. It's like, "Okay, do this and do this, do this or don't do this, or don't do anything, or whatever," and you think, okay, well that's a perfectly good teaching for somebody at a certain point. It's like a doctor giving penicillin to everybody, there'll be a few people who that will help, but there will be some people who it won't serve so well.

Adya: Might even hurt.

Francis: Could even hurt, so you have to really be very, very careful, and very, very individual, in a certain sense.

Adya: Undogmatic.

Francis: Undogmatic and open to ... "Okay, what's going to work in this situation, with this particular person, at this particular time, at this point in their journey?" And that's a very, very individual point of discernment, really, on both the part of the student and the teacher, both.

Adya: Yeah, because I can kinda look back and go, once, in some absolute sense, the thing I was seeking was really obscured by all my seeking. I can see that. It really obscured my seeking, all the seeking which, boy did I seek, the seeking wore something out in me which had to be worn out. Apparently I couldn't see it at that time, so I had to, as my teacher said, everybody has a dance to dance.

You gotta dance your dance all the way out. Don't be trying to dance everybody else's dance. Just dance it all the way out. And so, from some absolute view I can go, "Oh, this is, in some abstract sense, totally unnecessary." Except that for me it appeared to be quite necessary. In actual, daily living-out of my life.

Rick: I heard this great story the other day. This spiritual aspirant went to a master and he said, "Master, give me the highest teaching. I want the highest spiritual teaching." And the master said, "Okay, thou art that."

And he thought, "Hun? Is that all there is to it? I think I'll go find another teacher." So he went and he found himself another teacher, and he said, "Master, give me the highest teaching. I really want it." And the master said, "Okay, take this shovel and start shoveling this cow manure, and I'll be right back.

So the master took off, and for 12 years the guy shoveled the cow manure, took care of the cows, and really did it with absolute sincerity and dedication, and all that. And finally the master came back and he said, "Oh master, you're back. Please give me the highest spiritual teaching." And the master said, "Thou art that." And he got it.

Adya: He got it. That's a great story. That's a great story. And I think of how we often run into that other paradox – [that] even when you realize the absolute nature of reality, it doesn't mean that you necessarily have emotional maturity. It doesn't mean that you know how to be in relationship - whether it's intimate, friends, work. It doesn't convey a lot of these other functions anymore than, you wake up and all of a sudden you understand physics, you know?

And so I think there's often that kind of honesty that has to go, "Well, okay, there might be real clarity, but that clarity is having a really tough time operating here, and here." And it takes a kind of humility to take a little step down off the top of your mountain, and to go, "Okay, I gotta have the top of the mountain be able to function here, and that's gonna take some work! That's gonna take some intention. I'm going to have to do something."

Francis: It's much more of guidance of some[one's] objective view, of somebody else that's not in it, that can look at it, and who has been there and who has had that happen. And they can say, "Okay, I get this. I did that too. I remember that."

Adya: "Been through this." Yes, I think so. That goes back to humility because we all know the places in life which we function from a much more aware conscious, awake place, and we all know the places that we don't. And it's not like - if we were all completely honest - we wouldn't even need to be told, because you just find it, just go through... take one given day, keep your eyes open, you'll see it. It'll be there for you.

Rick: Yeah, that brings up an interesting point, which is that, it would seem that the Shakti, or the spiritual energy that awakens, it wants to clear the channels. It wants to enrich, shed light on, the dark areas, or whatever metaphors we want to use. And you went through this thing recently with the pain. And after you came back from Europe, I think I heard you say in some place that when you teach, the energy wells up, even more, and that that can exacerbate the situation.

Adya: Sure, there are all sorts of illness. Some illnesses, the energy can be great for, can just dispel them, and some things...

Francis: ... can aggravate them.

Adya: Especially if you have something like I did, that tied very much into the central nervous system. Well, you run a lot of Shakti through the central nervous system, that's already screaming out in pain. It's very uncomfortable.

Rick: Yeah, yeah. So what was your conclusion about that? Was it that somehow the spiritual energy is trying to revamp your nervous system even more, to make it a more effective conduit, or do you have some condition?

Adya: That's a good question.

Rick: ... that's being aggravated by...?

Adya: Yeah, at least at this point, at this point - I've had this on and off for 10 years, this isn't a new thing - so at this point...it all started with some terrible infection that I had. And I'm convinced, pretty much, that the infection actually did some actual damage to some things. It was there for a long time. So I look at it with pretty practical eyes.

As you can imagine, I've looked at it in every which way you can imagine - spiritual, psychological, blockages, not-blockages, you know? And I usually have a pretty good intuitive sense of these kind of things, but this particular thing, at least right now, could be different tomorrow, but it just seems like, yeah, something was really damaged through this terrible infection. And it ties into the nervous system, and it's a weak point.

And yeah, maybe someday it'll heal - of course, I still work on that a lot - but beyond that, I have no more esoteric understandings...like, "Life's trying to accomplish something." Talk to me in 5 years, I might have a different view. But that's the way it seems.

Rick: It's a date, we'll do that.

Adya: But certainly, I have been through, in my twenties, some very, quite long, couple of six-month illnesses that laid me out. Those were absolutely directly tied to identities that life was bound and determined to just crush.

Rick: Pounding out of you...

Adya: Yeah, and since they had to do with being a very physically strong athlete, how better to crush those than to make you sick until you're weak as a puppy? It's hard to be not physically full-of-yourself when you...

Francis: When you can't get up and out of bed, or something.

Adya: That's right, yeah, and then it crushes it out. And then in my case I remember, afterwards, it felt extraordinary not have that persona anymore. Absolutely so liberating, so freeing. So that's a case where illness really is directly related to spiritual growth process.

Rick: And there are other examples of that. Didn't Saint Francis go through something that almost killed him? And then, at least in the movie *Brother Sun, Sister Moon*, when he came out of it, it was like a whole new world? Somehow there had been this purging that took place.

Francis: Well, and you've got the stigmata of Saint Francis, which is the wounds of Christ appearing on his body, which I think is interesting. And there has been all kinds of studies on stigmata, and there was Padre Pio and Brother Angelo, and different stigmatists that were post-modern people, or at least modern characters.

And they've determined that a lot of it is, certainly psycho-somatic, but I think it's significant. It points to that reality of that union of relative and absolute; that the body is just connected to the whole deal. We're not somehow disembodied spirits; we're very embodied, and what happens on a spiritual level has ramifications on the physical level.

Adya: And vice versa.

Francis: And vice versa! And there's just no doubt about it, and it's just clear from these experiences. And you got the story of Jesus too, like when you were describing your experience with sickness when you were in your twenties, and so on. And then more recently, and how that's like living a teaching, like you're living an actual spiritual path *in* your body, it's manifesting *in* your body.

And you look at the story of the Crucifixion and then the Resurrection, whatever the heck that is? I don't know. But that's like this very bodily thing, and it's this great spiritual teaching that has all kinds of levels of meaning, all kinds of ramifications, all kinds of applications. And if anything, [it] shows that there's absolutely no separation between the absolute and relative levels.

Adya: And one of the amazing things about this story is, you talk to 20 different people that have read the story enough to really know it, and they'll have very different ways of relating to it. Someone says, "I don't love you anymore," and they feel like, "I know now what it's like to be crucified by Christ," you know?

A mystic will feel like their ego is being nailed to the cross, and they really feel like they're being "died" in a much more essential way, and they'll identify with that, and everything in-between!

And I think that's the power of stories - [there's] not a right, a correct way to look at it. You can find what you're experiencing and you can make a correspondence out of the story. And maybe through that, sometimes they will have a way of talking to you, communicating to you.

Francis: That's what makes a story archetypal, in the sense that it is a type, but it's an "arche"-type; it's a type that just covers so much territory, and so many people can relate to it on so many different levels. That's like the crucifixion of Jesus, or the Buddha's enlightenment under the tree, and the temptations of Mara and all the stuff he went through. And we all can look at those stories and we can all feel into that, like in our own experience somehow.

And my sense is that's what these stories are meant [for], whether or not they literally happened, are historical, and all that is, to me... I don't like. Some people will ask me things like that and I think, well, that's interesting on one level, if you want to look at a special on The History Channel or something, okay. But as far as their spiritual significance, I think it's almost irrelevant, because that's not the point of it. The point of it is: how do you live into this story? How do you embody this story? What's your experience of it?

Adya: And in the ancient worlds, they very much felt stories were the means that you conveyed massive truths. You don't convey massive truths through facts. And I think that's one of the things that we've forgotten, to a large extent. We think, "Okay, if it's a story, if we call it a myth, that means it's not true." And that's not what it means; it means, myths are conveying huge truths about human existence that you can't conveniently put in facts, or even a theology. It's like, you paint the picture and then you throw yourself into that story, and you find the truth of it.

Francis: It's bigger than any explanation of it or theology that comes out of it. I've often thought about how you've got the estate of Elvis Presley, where only certain people can use his image, or a song, or whatever. And I think we've thought a lot about the Jesus myth and the Jesus story a lot like that. Like, "Well, only Christians can use that." Like nobody else can use it.

And my sense is, no, it's bigger than that. It's not limited to people who interpret it theologically; it's a universal archetype. It could speak to anybody. It could speak to a Buddhist, or a Hindu, or a Jewish person, or anybody. It's not just confined to its traditional component.

Adya: And I think sometimes, peoples', individuals' lives will actually contain a lot of archetypal elements, and I think those are the kind of lives that tend to live over the centuries. People refer back to them because there was something about their life that actually embodied a huge amount of archetypal material. And some of those are really, historically accurate, some of them may be a real mixture.

But I think there are people's lives that even today, you get the feeling they're living on a very large archetypal level. That's just what's being brought in through their existence, and that something speaks to us.

Francis: The Joseph Campbell work, *Opus*, is really good on all this. He's very good about seeing that myth has a truth. We think, like you say, when we think of myth, we think, "Oh, it's not true if it's a myth." He's saying, "No, it's really, really true if it's a myth. It's so true that it doesn't even matter if it's literally true."

So, it is truth on a completely different level than a newsreel truth.

Adya: Because facts don't convey truth, you know? We can talk forever; we can describe what an orange tastes like forever, and it'll never have *any* taste, much less the taste of an orange. But you could have all your facts straight, your scientific facts straight, everything can be really

perfectly done, really nicely, but it won't convey it. If you told a story, the story isn't going to give you the taste either, but it can convey something with much more...

Francis: Nuance.

Adya: ... 'cause I think it captures your imagination. It sort of brings it and pulls you through your imagination into an experience, like a poem does.

Francis: Or a song.

Adya: You read a poem, you listen to a song, and sometimes at the end of the poem, all of a sudden you just get it. Got it! Or a song you're listening to, and all of a sudden it changes your state, and you get it.

If someone said, "Now what exactly did you get?" You might not even be able to say, "This, this, and this, and this," but that doesn't mean you're not perfectly clear about what you got. You just might not be able to reflect.

Francis: It's like falling in love. People say, "Well why do you love this person?" And you could say, "Well, they have beautiful eyes," or this, that or the other, but you can't really say, you can't really give a description, or you can't list a group of facts that somehow convey your love for this person. You love them because you love them. It's a mystery. It's just bigger than facts, it's bigger than any kind of description.

Adya: In fact, I think there's a direct equation, that the more clearly you experience the truth of something, the less you can say about it. Even though we're in the business, in some way, of talking endlessly about it - disreputable occupation, if there ever was one! But even then, I think if, at least for me, when I go into my direct experience of truth, or what I am, or who we are, or however we put that, that is literally the one thing that not only can I not say to somebody what it is, but I can't even talk about it in my mind, because I talk away from it, not towards it.

I've always found that to be so curious, that truth is the one thing that you can have such clarity about, but you can't talk, even to yourself about it. I mean you can, but whatever you say to yourself isn't it. I can say, "Okay, well yeah, I am consciousness." But if I'm really rigidly being honest with what I'm actually experiencing, it's like, no, that's not even close.

That might be as close as you can come with words. No, but that's not it. And then you look for – okay, what is it? Nothing's it. Not only to describe it to you or to you, but even to talk to myself. It's like... nothing's it! I can't even talk to myself about it - if I stay really, really directly true, you know?

Of course then you try to use words skillfully to try to help direct somebody, or sometimes you're even directing yourself, but you're trying to drop into something that's wordless.

Francis: There was a great saying attributed to Saint Francis. I'm not sure whether he historically said it or not, but it's great anyway, and it's that, "Preach the Gospel wherever you go; if necessary, use words."

So, it's like, the preaching of the Gospel - and the Gospel is good news, [on] the deepest level

it is good news, but the only way you can teach it... I had a chapter in a book I wrote, it was called *The Deepest Teaching Is Silence*, and you have a book, isn't it, *There's Something About Silence*?

Adya: *My Secret Is Silence*.

Francis: *My Secret Is Silence* - that unless you can really live in that silence, and embody that and radiate that into the world, you can say all the right words, you can say the most eloquent, articulate, non-dual, up-the-wazoo, and it won't do anything. If you're not living in that, if you're not somehow living and breathing that, then you won't ever be a teacher. You have to embody it, you have to, like you said, "Preach the gospel; if necessary, use words." You have to be it. You have to be the Gospel, in order to convey it somehow.

Adya: And then, almost everything you say will convey it.

Francis: And even the words might suck, they might be the worst words, and sometimes that's the case. You read about different lives of different saints and mystics and sages, and so on, and sometimes you read some of the words and you think, "Well big deal? That doesn't sound so hot." And yet you think, "Well it wasn't their words; there was something else there. There was a presence there."

There was a reality there that was just pulling people, speaking to people, radiating into the world something, kind of, ineffable. And people felt it, and people awakened around that.

Adya: You know Francis, I wonder if you've ever had this experience, how you can pick up a book and you can feel the consciousness of the book?

Francis: Oh yeah.

Adya: You read through it, and you can feel where they're at - when you're sensitive. And like you were saying, I've had the experience of reading through a book and feeling a tremendous presence. You're actually feeling the author; the words are completely uninteresting. You're like, "Oh God, I can't read another page, but man, whoever wrote this, I would love to meet that person, because something that's really powerful is going on in this book." And then sometimes they match up, you know, you get someone that's extraordinarily realized and you feel that presence, and their words are eloquent and beautiful and amazing.

Francis: And that's great when that happens, but it's not the crucial thing.

Adya: It's not the crucial thing.

Francis: The presence is more important than the words, definitely.

Rick: In India they have what are called "babbling saints", who are realized saints, but they're completely inept as far as any description. So they just babble, make nonsense, and yet people regard them as saints.

Adya: I met some, here I met some.

Rick: Here in the house?

Adya: Yeah, ask Mukti that.

Francis: Do you have some cats around?

Adya: No, but sometimes people are in such a deep state, that they're speaking becomes completely nonlinear, like, completely. And if you can't follow underneath their words, it sounds like complete nonsense; like you might just carry them off to the mental ward.

But if sometimes people are speaking and you just realize, they're just in such a nonlinear place that their communication isn't linked up. And actually, they're quite fine. They can be very, very clear, but they just can't articulate it. Because it's so nonlinear, they can't force themselves to be linear.

Francis: When I went through a period in 2010, when that happened to me in church that day - and I did preaching, I did reading and things like that in the liturgy, I was in a monastery - and I had to get up and do readings quite frequently, like every week, many times. And I remember getting up to do a reading and looking at the lectionary, and it literally looked like a page with just scratches on it.

And for about probably, I don't know, maybe as long as 30 seconds, and I got up there and I was like... (shakes a bit). And I think it's like a natural phase of awakening, where the mind - at the beginning of this really profound stable shift, which really just never leaves after that - when that happens, the mind just really turns off for a while. Pretty literally, it just turns off.

And even everything you say... I remember just trying to say something about working in the kitchen, and I said, "Can you get that paring knife," or any words I said, always felt like they were out of sync with reality. It just felt like - oh, that doesn't say it: "Can you get that paring knife."

Let alone spiritual words, my spiritual director was saying, "Well can you describe what happened to you?" And that's how I wrote that book, he had me do journals. I didn't intend to write a book, I just wrote these journals. Because I could not, at first, for a good several months, I could not put into words what had happened. Every time I tried to do it, I would just go into this blissful state, and I would start crying and then I couldn't speak anymore. So, it's a phase, but you don't want to stay there forever.

Adya: Neither do you want to jump out too quickly.

Francis: No. It's not a bad place.

Adya: That's not a bad place, no.

Rick: Well, we have maybe a few minutes left. We were talking about something, about an hour ago, and I'm still curious about it. And I'm wondering if you guys can even speak about it without becoming speculative. But you were talking about how you had to be careful what you wished for, because you keep getting it. I imagine you're probably donating rhinoceroses to the zoo, or something, or whatever you were wishing.

Adya: Not quite to that point.

Francis: If I had a rhinoceros I would never give it up.

Rick: So I'm reminded of a story in the Bible, which you can tell better, about, was it the Roman centurion who came and said, "My soldier is sick, Jesus would you come here and help him?"

Francis: Well his son was sick...

Rick: Tell the story.

Francis: And he was not present to Jesus. And he said, "My son is sick, I want you to heal him." And Jesus said, "Well, bring him here." And the man said, "He's too sick, I can't bring him here. But I'm a man with people under me, under my authority, and I say to this one, "You go there," and I say to that one, "You go there," and they go. And I know that you are a man of authority, so you can say, "You be healed," even though he's not here he will be healed."

And then Jesus said, "Your faith has healed him." And it is said, in that moment the son was healed.

Rick: Yeah, well the reason I wanted you to tell that story, is that I'm interested in the mechanics. It fascinates me what the mechanics might be. And you were talking earlier about subtle perceptions and all sorts of angels, and stuff that might be existing on subtler levels.

What are the mechanics through which one desires something and - I mean, I had this weird experience once, where I was living in this monastery-type of place in upstate New York, and we couldn't get into town or anything. And I had a bunch of strange desires for different things I needed. I won't go through them all but, one of them happened to be decorative shoe buckles for these Florsheim shoes that I owned, that I had gotten wet, and when they dried out, the buckles broke.

And so I was reassigned to a different room, and there in that room, were pretty much everything on the list that I had wanted, except for the shoe buckles.

Francis: There's a reality to that.

Rick: But I went to dinner that night, and as I was walking down the hallway, I noticed there was an air conditioner in the hallway. I noticed there was something on the top of it. I looked up there, there was a pair of decorative shoe buckles that fit my shoes, and they weren't the ones I had lost, or broken, or any such thing.

How does that happen? What are the mechanics through which very specific desires can be fulfilled? Who's pulling the strings? You guys have any idea?

Francis: I don't. I know that things like that do happen. And a parallel that I find really interesting, and I know this is a topic you like to talk about, is this idea of witnessing sleep, and so on. And ever since this shift happened, with me anyway, my dreaming is just all lucid. I don't ever have a non-lucid dream. All my dreams are lucid.

And one thing you discover about lucid dreaming is you can control your dreams. If you're in a lucid dream and you know you're dreaming while you're dreaming, you can just manifest things in the dream. And I've often thought there's a parallel reality there: in the dream of *this* life, things can be manifested.

And a lot of people poo-poo *The Secret* and all that, and they say, "Well that's not a very high teaching," and it's so on and so forth. And it's like, yeah, it's not a high teaching, it's not going to lead to enlightenment, but after a kind of awakening, there is a reality of that.

Like Adya was talking about - that manifesting [of] things. I've seen it in my own life too, where you just ... a passing thought like, "Oh, it would be nice to have some lasagna," and then it just shows up! Like somebody takes you out to dinner and you get lasagna.

That sounds trite and silly, and the mechanics of it? - I don't know. But I think it is a natural byproduct, you can say, almost. It's not perfect. I'm not saying that an awakened person can't be diagnosed with some incurable cancer, or lose all their money, or whatever; surely they can. But there's a reality there, I think. Mechanics though?

Rick: There's this verse in the Vedas which goes: "The riches seek out him who is awake." And "the riches" are understood to be impulses of intelligence that are responsible for manifestation and governance of the physical universe. And so I get this impression of this orchestrated arrangement, whereby, like with the soldier - if he wants something done, he sends his underlings to do the thing - this orchestrated arrangement, whereby some laws of nature, impulses of intelligence, or something, are at the back and call of someone who is awake. And it's something that interests me, or now I wish to understand.

Francis: Or not.

Rick: Or not, because it may not be in your best interest?

Adya: Well no, because you can develop this. I met people who have very highly-developed skills like we're talking about, that aren't awake. You can be awake, and sometimes they come, some of them as "the package," but there are people that have them in spades and aren't awake, and sometimes they're not even very nice human beings to be around! So, they're kind of connected, but that's also a different line of development.

Rick: But they may have managed to capture a diamond mine without having captured the fort.

Adya: Right, exactly!

Francis: There are some awakened people who don't have much of that manifesting in their life, for some reason. And I think it's just a very individual reality.

Rick: Well, they may have captured the fort and not begun to explore the territory.

Francis: Or maybe that's just not their territory?

Adya: Like I don't really, consciously utilize it; it's very rarely that I consciously utilize it.

Rick: It happens spontaneously, probably.

Adya: It does happen spontaneously, but what I find is that life always has better plans than I come up with, and I mean that very, very literally. Like, "I would like this," but it doesn't actually mean that if you get that that you're gonna like it or that it's gonna be good for you. There's something else, I think. There's a better orchestrator than our own minds, you know what I mean?

Rick: Yeah.

Francis: And that's that surrender again. And in that sense, I think, a devotional sense of God, of surrender to God, if you want to even put it in those words, can be really helpful in keeping a person humble, and keeping a person not thinking that they're running the whole show, and just that life is 'bigger than me and what I want,' you know?

Adya: And it so easily becomes the whole spiritual-materialism thing. I think that's why there are the warnings about it. Let's say you can manifest things, the only difference between manifesting and what most people do - most people go to work, earn money, and buy what they want.

You can manifest some of the things you want, but the underlying motivations can be exactly the same. The ego motivation [is], "If I get what I want, that's what will make me happy," and it just doesn't end up to be true. Whether you can manifest it, or you gotta go out and buy it with cash, doesn't matter which way you get it. It's still the underlying truth, at least as I've seen it, is, that's not what's gonna make you happy. That's not what's gonna make you satisfied. It's not what's going to lead to a meaningful, rich existence.

Francis: There's that great Marilyn Monroe thing, remember? - I've used many times.

Rick: What was that?

Francis: Marilyn Monroe reportedly said, "Once you get what you want, you don't want it," which I would imagine, she would know about.

Rick: Well, you know, you were talking earlier about Jesus being tempted by the devil, and this whole balancing act that one has to perform, which you have to continually perform, no matter how spiritually advanced you are, where individual intentions can take the reins and cause all kinds of trouble.

So it seems to me that we have desires, we have intentions, we have motivations, and that's natural. And you have to temper those with a simultaneous surrender and innocence, so as not to be heavy-handed about the pursuit of them. So as to let - what is that bumper sticker? - "Let go and let God" - so as to let God actually fulfill these motivations, but still you have them. You have initiatives, you have aspirations.

Francis: It's important too to acknowledge that human beings have desires. Even awakened human beings have desires. There's a beautiful story in the life of Saint Francis where it says, when he was dying, he had this woman who was a devotee of his, he called her "Brother Jacobee."

Rick: A "brother" he called her?

Francis: He called her "brother" because she was so devoted to the brothers, that he gave her this honorific title of "brother." And she knew that he liked these particular raisin-cakes that he was very fond of.

And when he was in the process of dying, she baked these cakes and brought them to him. And I was always really touched by the humanity and the vulnerability of that. That here is this great Saint and he says, "I really would love to have these raisin-cakes that my mom used to make for me," and she makes them and brings them. Because I think a lot of times there are these myths

about awakening, that once a person is awakened they have absolutely no human desire left, and all that.

And you know, no. Maybe they see their human desires with a greater perspective; they see that they're not all-important, they're not absolutely important, but they can still have a relative importance. You could still prefer one thing to another thing, as an outcome.

Rick: Jackets over the Royals, right?

Francis: Right, right.

Adya: And I think desire is also something that can be operating from lots of different levels of being. Like even when we talk about "to serve," that's a desire, in some way. And it's a ...

Francis: That's a noble desire.

Adya: It's a noble desire, right. We could call it a selfless desire, but nonetheless, in a certain sense, it's a desire – you want to do it - to go help somebody. You want to actually do that. You need some impetus that's fueling you. And so I think our desires - it's not so much of having no desires; the desires become more conscious as well.

Like I said, when you get really clear that having everything you want has very little to do with what makes you happy... Sure, if you don't have enough to feed yourself and your kids, and you're living in some little shanty shack that's freezing, of course those desires... that's going to make you a lot happier if you're in a place that's warm and you have enough food and clothing, it is going to contribute a lot to your happiness. But at a certain point, I think we realize, beyond this base level of comfortable existence, all of a sudden it shifts, and you realize, "That doesn't actually make me happy."

Francis: And it's pointing out the difference between a relative happiness and an absolute happiness. That there is an absolute happiness that is unconditional happiness, and that's what awakening is all about. It's discovering that within one's self, that there is this absolute, unconditional happiness there. And yet that doesn't mean that on a relative level you wouldn't prefer to not have your hand cut off, you know?

Or like, when I had my foot... my foot was possibly going to have to be amputated, because it was really infected. They weren't sure if I was going to get the infection gone to the bone. He said, "I'm just telling you, if it's gone to the bone, chances are, at least part of your foot is going to have to come off, and I just want to be really honest with you about that."

And for a while, well honestly, I went through 15 minutes... I cried, I felt sad about it, and I thought, "Gosh, I won't be able to run anymore, I'll probably get a prosthetic," all these things flood your mind. And then it was kind of done, and I realized: well, even that sadness, even that pain, even that anxiety, in a certain sense, was arising in this unconditional place of peace!

As odd as it sounds, yeah, it sounds like those two things would be mutually exclusive, but my experience was that, no; that's still there. It doesn't obliterate the pain or the anxiety, or the human vulnerability, but even that arises and ceases in this space of peace.

Rick: Yeah, drop mud in a glass of water, drop mud in an ocean, very different reaction, but it's still the same amount of mud.

Francis: Right.

Adya: That's a great metaphor.

Francis: That's a "Rick-Sutra".

Rick: Well, we've been going on for almost 2 hours, we should probably wrap it up. So, this has really been great. I'm sure that we could go on for another 2 hours and keep thinking of things to say, but I really appreciate you having invited, allowed us to come to do this.

Adya: Oh, my pleasure, fantastic.

Rick: I've been wanting to do it for a long time, so I'm really happy to be able to do it, and maybe we'll do some more things in the future. I'm out here for the Science & Nonduality Conference and I'll be taping 4 or 5 more things over the next couple of days.

So if you're tuning into this for the first time, well there's already 250 other ones to watch. So if this is the first time, there'll be plenty of things to explore, if you care to do so. BATGAP.com is the website, and just explore the menus there and you'll see past interviews categorized and organized in different ways.

You'll see a donate button, you'll see a place to sign up for notification by email, of new interviews. There's a link to an audio podcast with every interview so you can listen on I-tunes, if you don't feel like sitting in front of your computer for 2 hours.

So that's it, basically. Thanks for listening or watching. You guys have any final words?

Adya: Lots of fun Rick. Glad to have you both here. Thanks for coming.

Rick: Thank you very much. Thank you all for listening and watching. See you for the next one, whichever that one might be.

{BATGAP theme music plays.}