

BATGAP Interview # 372 Harri Aalto - 3rd Interview

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{BATGAP theme music plays}

Rick: Welcome to Buddha at the Gas Pump. My name is Rick Archer. Buddha at the Gas Pump is an ongoing series of interviews with spiritually awakening people. There have been about 370 of them now, and so if this is new to you, you might want to go to www.batgap.com B-A-T-G-A-P, and look under the 'Past Interviews' menu, where you see all the previous ones archived and organized in several different ways.

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My guest today is Harri Aalto. I'm breaking precedent here and interviewing Harri for the third time, with apologies to those who have been hoping for a second interview, or even a first one. But I've known Harri for a long time – about 20 years – and over the course of that time we've had probably hundreds of conversations, and I think he's a very interesting guy.

Harri has just written a book, which is part of the reason why we're having this interview now, and why don't you just hold it up for a second?

Harri: There you go, and excuse these things here, they're just notes.

Rick: Yeah, you can't see it too well in this camera shot, but it's called *The Landscape of Enlightenment* right? *The Landscape of Enlightenment: With Doors and Windows to Our World*, and we'll maybe talk about why you called it that.

Um, now there's two ways of looking at Harri, or understanding him: either he's some kind of freak of nature...

Harri: I'm a freak of nature, I can buy that!

Rick: ...who has these remarkable experiences which other people probably won't ever have, and shouldn't expect to have, and if they're looking for those things as earmarks of enlightenment then they're going to wait forever, because they're not going to have those types of experiences, *or*, Harri is kind of a trailblazer. He's someone who, in his teens and twenties was having the sort of level of experiences that many of today's contemporary teachers are now having and talking about.

Harri: I like your second one better.

Rick: You like the second one?

Harri: Yeah, yeah, I like it better.

Rick: You could get a t-shirt that says, “Freak of Nature” on it and wear it around town.

Harri: Well, I don’t know.

Rick: And you know, now forty or fifty years have passed since he was having that level of experience and he’s unfolded a lot more detail. And indeed, I mean, some of the people I interview say that in their experience, so far, this just seems to be an ever-unfolding thing and they don’t know what they’re going to be experiencing ten or twenty years from now.

There are other people I’ve interviewed who say, “Well yeah, I went through a phase where I was exploring all these subtle worlds and having all this flashy stuff, and that eventually went away. And I feel like it was an interesting exploration, but I don’t consider it essential to what the awakened person experiences and I’m happy to be without it.

So we’re going to talk about these kinds of considerations in this interview, and a whole lot of other things. Maybe we should just start with that one and in the process of responding to that, maybe you could give us a definition of what you understand enlightenment to be?

Harri: Well thank you for having me again, it’s great. And you know Rick ... I’m a relatively quiet kind of guy but you won’t know that from the amount I talk, but he’s the fellow who kind of encouraged me to start talking about it and almost “come out of the closet” as it were, with this stuff – you know, because I’m just very shy about it, for years.

And I did start talking about it a few years ago ... five years ago ... and lots of people said they appreciate it; they get something *from* it. And that brings up an interesting point for me, and you asked, ‘what is enlightenment?’ – I don’t consider it ... it’s not a state; it’s more like a reality. Do you know the difference? One is a natural event; it’s just there.

You realize when you go through these stages, or when I’ve gone through these stages - many, many stages, and we can get into that a little bit – I’ve always kind of looked back on my life and said, “Well, what changed?” I had it at a lesser degree before, now I have it at a clearer degree. And there was a transformation that took place and suddenly I have a wider perspective, feel better, and things like that, and then move on! And that’s happened. I would say, 7 to ten times in my life.

Rick: Hmm, major shifts?

Harri: Major shifts, yeah, yeah. And here, if I could make a point about the *experience* of enlightenment and the “knowingness” of enlightenment, or the knowledge of enlightenment: they’re not different.

Now, you know, I was trying to think of an analogy that’s a little different, so let’s say somebody has a diamond in the closet somewhere, it’s hidden away and it’s full of dust; it’s raw, right? So they clean the closet once a week and a little bit of the dust wipes off, and eventually they see it’s kind of shining. They bring it out and they say, “What is this?” And they put it off somewhere else – it’s been hidden all these years, but it’s been in your life, in your home. And eventually somebody might come along, maybe some teacher or somebody with good experience and says, “Whoa, that’s worth a lot of money!”

And you say, “Whoa, is it? Maybe I should start thinking about this and understanding what I have.”

And so understanding has that relationship to experience – they’re very close. The awake experience, and I prefer the word ‘awake’ because ‘enlightenment’ sounds odd to me.

Rick: Grandiose or something.

Harri: Yeah, and it’s not. Flashy experiences can come, not come – doesn’t matter. What’s in-between your experiences is this field of consciousness that’s unbounded and that’s great. Some people have that and are aware of it more, some people less – everybody has consciousness. You have a little bit of it or you have a lot of it. It’s not that you don’t have a lot of it; it’s that you’re not *aware* of it, that’s the difference, but everybody has the same amount.

Rick: Ultimately.

Harri: Ultimately, yeah.

Rick: Potentially.

Harri: Yeah, so I think we can pursue this whole thing about, you know, the understanding of experience and the experience itself. I consider them equal, and eventually they join and they are one experience, one knowingness. And you know, there are many questions that come up.

Rick: So you mentioned 7 to 10 significant shifts. Was there, for you, ever a defining moment that you would say marked the transition into the awakened state, if you want to use that phrase?

Harri: Well since you asked me to, you know, let the cat out of the bag *completely* on this interview, so well, my first transition was [at age] four or five years old. And I had an experience where ... and I won’t relate it because I’ve done it at other interviews, but I suddenly realized – I was four years old – that there’s a field of consciousness! I didn’t have the ability to *think* about it, but I saw it and felt that it was separate from me – but it was everywhere, all around.

And since that time, believe it or not, I started thinking about, “Well what the heck is that?!” and that was my first one: “What the heck is this?” - this field of light, or consciousness, or knowingness, or whatever. It wasn’t knowingness at that stage; it was more like a sight – I saw something, but it was always there. And I don’t know that it ever went away.

And then in my teens I had another kind of awakening, when this ... call it a ‘field of consciousness’... kind of moved into my body, and my body and the consciousness felt similar. And so I said, “What the heck is this? What the heck is this?” It was very natural, very normal.

And as I speak about these experiences, Rick was completely right in saying, nobody has to have what I have, and I don’t have to have what other people have. There’s a similarity to the experience of the awakened mind, but we’re all totally different.

Imagine for a moment if, and this would never happen but let’s say, ten enlightened people walked into this room right now, they’re standing right ...

Rick: How about into a bar? Ten enlightened people walking into a bar...

Harri: And they all sit down and you're looking at them, and ... You reminded me of a joke. You know I was born in Finland, a Finnish joke about a bar. You want to hear it?

Rick: Sure.

Harri: This is the typical Finnish person: two middle-aged or older Finns go to a bar and they've known each other for 20 years. They've been sitting there drinking for 2 or 3 hours and one turns to the other and says, "So how is everything with you?"

And the other guy turns to him and says, "Did we come here to talk or drink?!"

Rick: That's pretty good!

Harri: You know what I mean? That's probably the first joke I've ever said publicly! But you know, there's a certain ... All my Finnish relatives, they're not my brother, they don't talk much, you know, they're very quiet.

Rick: Yeah, it's a Finnish thing.

Harri: Yeah, it's a Finnish thing. But I tend to ... I'm very outgoing.

Rick: Yeah, once you get going

Harri: I can get going! Where was I before?

Rick: We were talking about was there a defining moment for you?

Harri: Okay, so ...

Rick: Sounds like there's been a number of defining moments, there's no *one* defining moment that you could say, "That was it!"

Harri: The moment I had a defining moment at any time in my life, I was on going forward, you know, vertical.

Rick: So you would have one and you would think, "But that's not the end of it."

Harri: Yes, but I know that wasn't the end of it because – I don't want to make any claims, but let's say for instance, if [a] mind was awake, you could see a little bit where you're going, and you can see a little bit where you've come from. So there's never a wall here, or a wall here; it's all kind of in the present. And you go, "Okay, I'm going to go there, now. I'm going to move forward."

Rick: Right. So some people are going to hear that and they're going to say, "Isn't enlightenment a kind of final resting place where you just can chill, and you're no longer chasing the dangling carrot of something more?"

Harri: I'll get to that.

Rick: Okay. We've talked about that in previous interviews too.

Harri: Yes, and that's completely true, and it's true inside and then eventually with time, it's a see-through kind of experience, where you see consciousness from the inside to the outside. And

you might know you've made it, and you *know* you've made it, but that doesn't mean you don't get to know more.

And you know, talk about the ups and downs of life and transitional periods in the country or in individual lives, those continue. But they're now - if your mind is awake - they're now in relation to something much bigger, some fullness, some integration, some very quiet happiness inside, even if you've going this kind of up and down and up and down.

So round about the age of 21 I started to have an intellect and be able to think a little bit, and I still did not recognize that there was any difference between me and anybody else, and I don't feel there's any difference between me and anybody else even now - I look at Rick and Rick looks and acts and talks just no different than me - that's how I feel.

So at about age 20 this kind of pure consciousness that I had inside became very bright. I stopped sleeping, in the normal sense ...

Rick: You maintained pure awareness during sleep?

Harri: I maintained many different kinds of pure awareness, from almost dim, dark, to light, but I was always awake, always awake. And I'd know in the morning ... "Wait a minute, I didn't sleep." Even if it was dark I wasn't asleep, if it was light I wasn't asleep, if I was dreaming or in deep sleep - whatever [the state], I was always aware that the night passed and I was awake in the morning.

I *almost* felt like I fell asleep when I woke up! Because suddenly I couldn't see through that wall, whereas in the dream state you can do anything, go anywhere, you know what I mean? But in any case, that became very permanent and I'd say, if I was to say whether there was a moment that was kind of a complete transition where it never went back, I would say it was round about 20 - that's when that happened, never went away, it's always there. But my life went on and on like a teeter totter, like everybody's life, still does a little bit. But as I said, experience of the relative is in *relation* to something bigger now.

I'd like to make a comment: I consider myself *extremely* normal. I go through the all the stuff everybody goes through, and even though I'm going to get into some fancy experiences, my life is like anybody else's life. And I'd like to point out that even though I have, have had, and will continue to have, even at this moment, experiences that when I put them into words sound extremely flashy, they're not flashy to me.

Rick: Because you're accustomed... you're acclimated.

Harri: No, it's more than that I'm acclimated, I'm more than accustomed. Okay, I'm sitting in this room, I can describe, whatever is over there, the wall, the pictures, the ceiling. And I instantly know that's a ceiling that keeps the rain out. You just know that just by looking at it, because you've lived your life ...

Rick: Right, that's pretty ordinary stuff.

Harri: Pretty ordinary stuff. So when you have an inner experience like that and you have it a long time, it becomes ordinary. But not ordinary in the sense that it goes away and you don't like it; ordinary in the sense that it's quiet, and expected, and acknowledged, and known.

Rick: Yeah, so you're saying that you might be experiencing a lot more going on in this room than the average person, but it is as ordinary to you as the ordinary experience of the room is - to you or to anyone!

Harri: Yes, it's a sight and a sound and a touch and a taste just like regular life. And I'd like to say that I think that not only does everybody have this potential, I think everybody has a taste of what I'm talking about but we're conditioned not to accept it, think about it, know it, acknowledge it, or whatever. And even Divine experiences, I find exactly the same as pure unboundedness or the relative; they're *all* the same, one continuum of experience.

And I think almost everybody, if not everybody - and I don't even like the word 'potential,' because to me, I think that's what everybody experiences, but there's a lack of understanding about it. You forgot who you are, you forgot it.

So well, comment on that [Rick].

Rick: Yeah, well there's a few things I could say. One is, we'll have to elaborate on what we mean by 'Divine experiences,' we'll get into that, but what it implies is that there is a lot of potential for subtle perception that people *don't* ordinarily have. I mean, you experience angels and devas and things like that, the average person does not. Or are you saying that the average person actually *does* but doesn't even recognize that they're picking up on something of that nature?

Harri: So let's describe pure consciousness for a moment and then from that I'll describe something else. Pure consciousness is a kind of - you can call it an 'inside experience' because that's how it starts. It is kind of abstract, it's whole, it's not even an 'it'; it's more like an impersonal, unbounded consciousness that everybody has - most people don't know they have it but has it.

And over time, you're going in it through mediation or prayer or whatever technique you're using - you go inside, come out, go inside, come out. You get habituated, you begin to see a little bit. What you begin to see is, and it's different for everybody, some people see light, some people see a shimmer, some *moment* in that consciousness. Silence first and then you start seeing some shimmers, you start seeing something.

Rick: But even that, what you're referring to, is something that even that preliminary familiarity with pure consciousness is something that only a tiny fraction of humanity actually has. Most people are *completely* preoccupied with other things.

Harri: I'm generally talking to a spiritual crowd, that's what I'm saying. Those who have been seeking and wanting and knowing and meditating, and whatever anybody is doing. That's a different crowd than ...

Rick: Than your basic NASCAR audience.

Harri: That's right. Alright, I hope and I know that's true. So this shimmer or even just this sight... and you know, over the years I've talked to a bunch of people - a lot of people over the last few

years – and they all say, “Well I don’t see anything,” and then I say, “What? How do you describe it to me then? How do you describe this experience?”

And they say, “Oh, is *that* inner sight?”

And I say, “Yeah, that’s inner sight! You’re seeing pure consciousness, or you have a sense of it. And if you have a sense of it, you’re seeing it.” Now to me, if I look back on my beginning experience, that inner sight is the beginning of Divine perception. It is already Divine.

I don’t differentiate between that shimmer, that sight - however you’re experiencing pure consciousness and that little bit moment in it, or something in it – that something in it is the Divine moving, but you’re not recognizing it, saying it’s anything more than a little shimmer. That’s all.

Rick: Yeah, so what we’re saying here is that experiences of the Divine, or probably of anything, can start out in sort of a fledgling way.

Harri: They *do* start out that way.

Rick: Yeah, very preliminary, but there are subtle hints if one is attentive, that will become more clear as time goes on. And also a little while ago you eluded to the importance of understanding as important as experience. I just want to make one little comment, and that is I feel an impulse as I do this show. I feel like it has a mission and part of this mission is to help the collective spiritual community gain a better understanding of what enlightenment actually is, what awakening actually is.

And I don’t remember if we talked about this in a previous interview but I mention it in some other ones, it’s as if comparing explorers in North America. Louis and Clark had a certain vague understanding of what the territory might be, and they ventured West and they got a better understanding as they went along, it was quite unlike what they thought it was going to be.

But jump ahead to today, when we have every single square foot mapped out with GPS and everything. So as a society we have a much better understanding of the territory.

Harri: That’s right.

Rick: I think there’s something really valuable for the spiritual community, and for the world at large, in understanding what the possibilities are for spiritual unfoldment. And it almost cubby-holes it to say ‘spiritual,’ because we’re really just talking about how the world works, what the reality is. And it would be both an inspiration to people, and it would be a safeguard, because it would prevent people from mistaking something which actually was kind of off the mark from what they were looking for.

Harri: It brings up a good point, a very good point, which is that if you have an experience and it goes away, then it’s not the awakened state! So you have a flashy experience but it goes away, and then you say, “Oh, I’m enlightened now!” But if it went away, then you’re not.

So what doesn’t go away, and now this is a very subtle point, because eventually *nothing* goes away. But at first, you know, let’s say you’re meditating – you go inside, you have an experience of pure consciousness and then you wake up, or you get up from your chair, you go for a walk,

and you forget it! Remember that you just forgot it, *it* didn't go away. *You* went away! It didn't go away, consciousness didn't go anywhere; you went somewhere else!

So you go for a walk, you meditate or pray or whatever you do – go inside, have the experience again ... “Oh! There it is, whoa!”, and then you get up.

And you do that enough times, then you get up at some point and you say, “Wait a minute, wait a minute, that didn't go away! Wait a minute, *I* didn't go away, I remember it now!”

Rick: Yeah, which is not to say ... I mean you've relayed some pretty amazing experiences, and actually anybody who has been meditating for a while has had some, so it's not to say that you're always going to be having that kind of thing 24 hours a day, but rather, I think that you can extract the essence of it. And whatever lesson is meant to be learned from a particular experience, or whatever unfoldment is taking place from a particular experience, *that* becomes stable and normal in your experience.

Harri: That's exactly right.

Rick: But initially, when an experience like that dawns, it may seem like fireworks.

Harri: Exactly, and it often *can* be fireworks. And you've interviewed so many people, and some people say it is and some people say it isn't fireworks – these awakenings. I guess I would say that they're both fireworks and not fireworks.

So we're starting at pure consciousness, and you have this experience of pure consciousness. Over time it becomes permanent, you could say, it's always there. You may not be quite aware of it in activity as you are in meditation, but it's there - you kind of sense that pure consciousness has become a permanent reality. Maybe you feel separate from it or something; it's not something you really relate to but you wonder what it is.

So around about 25 I had meditated – I started around 25 or 26 I started TM, Maharishi's meditation, and I read some books and got some understanding. I already had the experience of pure consciousness; it was there 24 hours a day and had been there for a number of years. I didn't really know what it was but I knew it was there; it was clear enough, it wasn't so faint that I didn't know.

When I started meditating and then started reading about what I was experiencing, I said, “Whoa! What are they saying? This doesn't feel like enlightenment to me,” it felt like what everybody has! This is the normal state!

Rick: Or so you thought.

Harri: Or so I thought, but I haven't changed my mind, I haven't changed my mind. I think the state of wakefulness is the normal state. It's what everybody deserves, it's what everybody is inside, it is what everybody is outside but there's a lack of knowledge about it, lots of understanding missing.

Rick: Yeah, that's like saying, okay, let's say everybody in the United States has a bank account that has a million dollars in it, but only a handful of people know it and actually go to the bank and

withdraw money and get to use it. So the people who don't know it are living under bridges and begging on street corners. It doesn't really do them any good that they have this bank account.

Harri: Okay, but this reminds me of the analogy I was going to tell you about the ten people, till I got distracted with the bar joke. Okay, so let me just say it my way, it's easier for me. Let's say here we are, and for some this could never happen, but let's say ten enlightened people walked into this room and you're looking at them, they're standing in front of us right here and they all look totally different! They're dressed different, there are ladies there, there are men there, there are young people, old people – total mixture of people. Some have beards, some don't, all totally different.

You are the first one - and they know they have something and they know why they are here – “So what's your experience?” And the lady says, “Well, you know, I don't talk about it. I'm very happy,” that's all she says.

The next guy says, “Well, you know, I think about it. It looks like it's something, it looks a little bit separate from me but it seems to be a support to my life.” Third person says more, fourth person starts describing, “Yeah, it's got all kinds of qualities to it. Yes there's this silence, but there are all kinds of qualities that seem to be there too. I can't describe them, I don't know what they are but they're nice.”

Then you go on and on and on, you go to the tenth person and the tenth person starts talking nonstop, writing books, whatever, and sees all kinds of textures, sights, even Divine experiences. Now, what connects all these ten people aren't these changes that are going on; there's an underlying similarity to their experience. That's the awake state or the awake mind, and the awakened mind knows itself and says, “I'm here.”

Now if you were to meet these same ten people ten years later, twenty years later, the first person may still not be saying very much, but the person at the other end will for sure start saying, “Well, you know, I had this state and then this state and then this state.”

Rick: Well why wouldn't the first person be saying very much ten years later?

Harri: Because they're not talkative.

Rick: Just because they're not talkative, but in terms of their actual experience, would that have evolved? Would number one have evolved to the number ten's experience?

Harri: Yes, but having said that, that first person might be very heart oriented, doesn't care about the intellect and all he wants to say is, “I am so on the feeling level and that's where I want to stay. I love it, I love it. I see God, this and that, but I don't talk about it.”

This other person who has a very active intellect will describe all these layers but they'll also say that, “I love this experience, it's wonderful, that's why I talk about it.”

Rick: Alright, so some people might be more intellectual, some people might be more emotional or heart oriented, some might be more visual, some more auditory – we're all wired differently. And I guess some might question whether enlightenment or any of these higher states, or anything, even have any objective reality or whether they are just various subjective conditions.

I mean, there are people who, for instance, question the NDE experience - near-death experience – and say it's just the brain getting starved of oxygen and that actually these people aren't experiencing anything that's objectively real. I think what you and I would say is that there is a reality to the universe and we all are equipped to explore it in different ways, but we're not exploring different universes. Like in science: all the scientists are exploring the same universe, but some are chemists and some are physicists and some are biologists, and so on. They've chosen to specialize according to their particular tendencies and aptitudes, to investigate a particular aspect of it.

You can add to this, but there seems to me that there's going to be something a little different there with enlightenment or the awakened state, in that there's a common denominator among all the people, regardless of how individually their experience unfolds, there must be something essential that they all share. Would you say that?

Harri: They share this unbounded silence that's awake within itself, and that is actually very quietly delightful, that's why you go for it. Now, you don't get that in, let's call it, regular life.[For example], you buy a car and it's a Porsche or something, and you drive it for a few days and you know, now it's just a Porsche. And that guy has a Volkswagen or something, and you feel good for a moment but that's it – that moment.

Everybody is looking for more and more and more and more. Most people think it's in buying stuff, doing stuff, and to some certain degree it is. Now, if your mind and your heart has this experience of, let's call it contentment, inside, then you buy a Porsche and your feeling of enjoying the Porsche doesn't go away, as much, okay? Nor any other experience because it's in relation to something that doesn't change from moment to moment.

Okay, so a sad guy with an awake mind is sad, a non-awake guy who is sad, he's also sad. They're both sad, what's the difference? This guy who is awake also has the experience of this unbounded field of contentment inside, in relation to the sadness. And we'll get into what happens and the mechanics of that experience later. And you know, the awake man could even be *more* sad, but it's still in relation to a much bigger phenomenon.

Rick: Sure, I mean, the awake guy, his daughter might have died, and the unawake guy, he might have not won the lottery or something, so he's bummed. But what you're saying is that the depth of contentment and the fullness of contentment in the awake person mitigates whatever waves there are on the surface of life.

Harri: It mitigates it to the extent that now you can still function and you can help the situation that might need help, you're not overshadowed or burdened by the sadness. Even though it's there and you're feeling it - you know, if some tragic thing happens in your life, of course you're going to feel it, just like anybody else - but it won't nail you to the wall, let's say, that's all.

Rick: And that's a big deal.

Harri: It's a very big deal.

Rick: The various Scriptures talk about equanimity, and how that's characteristic of the awakened state. And if you don't have that anchor or that foundation, it's hard to have equanimity

because you're tossed about, all you have is your small, relative losses and gains, or big ones, you don't have anything permanent to be established in. Do you want to get into some of that stuff?

Harri: Well you know, get back to my book here, I thought I wrote – and it's yet to be proven because it's only been out for ten days, but very good response so far, it's even making some best seller lists and stuff like that – but what I tried to do in this book is not just get all my flashes in there ... every single angel I've ever seen is in there okay, however, there are also stories from my childhood and even when I was a young adult and all the - I almost said dumb things that I did, but yes.

Rick: Yeah, like riding that log in the lake.

Harri: Yes! And what I'm showing and pointing out is that *everybody* goes through this! It doesn't matter wakefulness won't make you special in the sense that you won't do those dumb things when you're young, and I'll tell you why ...

Rick: I think it might be somewhat of a protective thing, because there's a lot of young people who do *really* dumb things and end up dying as a result, or going to jail as a result.

Harri: Yeah, but I don't mean on that level; more like mischievous and taking risks. Okay, so we come to Earth - wherever we were before then, now we're on Earth – the way that I look at it is that all experiences in my life, all the little hurdles I've had to jump over - and everybody has to jump over these ups and downs – they have a reason, they have a purpose. And the purpose of jumping over these little fences, these challenges is that the next time you jump over the next fence, and the next one, that pure consciousness is more stable. So it gets challenged, goes away, gets challenged, goes away, gets challenged, until it *doesn't* go away.

Rick: Yeah, so if we lived in some kind of protective bubble, then maybe we would maintain pure consciousness, but it would be subject to the slightest...

Harri: Soon as you came out of the bubble it would go away again.

Rick: Right, in fact there are stories of yogis living in the Himalayas and growing up in ashrams, and then they decide to become gurus and come to the West! -they're hit with all these temptations and challenges that they weren't really equipped to deal with.

Harri: Okay, so I'm going to read a little thing, it's only for a moment.

Rick: Sure.

Harri: And I'll take that one out, I no longer need that one. So '*Normal Life*' - that's the head of this title – "Enlightenment is a walking, talking, everyday living kind of affair. It is known through the living of normal events. It's a delightful, lively overall space and stillness in which the mind knows, the heart feels, the sense flow, and the body moves. When gained, it is never lost. Even our body and its environment reside in the knowledge makeup of pure experience, and the pure sight of consciousness, not to mention family, friends, and society.

Every fiber of our body, every atom, every molecule, every organic structure, every feeling and every thought is a mirror image of infinite connectedness to the universe, universal values from

which they arise. This collective experience of knowingness that is first abstract and over time becomes more and more tangible, is always a harmonious addition to our daily lives, which of course continue as before on their own enhanced level.”

So that’s what I’ve been saying, you know? Everybody is moving towards the awake state, everybody is moving, *everybody*. Every single thing and every single human being on Earth is moving towards that and seeking it in different ways. Most of the people in these so-called ‘spiritual paths’ are seeking it in the right way – through meditation, through prayer, through activity, whatever they’re doing, and they gain it to whatever degree they can gain.

My particular angle on gaining enlightenment ... you know, there are lots of techniques, there are lots of programs – Buddhist programs, Hindu programs, meditation programs, all kinds of techniques that come throughout time to help us on the path. My angle is that what’s missing - because most people who do processes, do techniques, do meditation, they have some experience, maybe a little bit, maybe a lot - but often what’s really missing [is that] they don’t get it! They don’t get what they’re experiencing, even if they have a clear experience, they don’t get it, they don’t understand it.

Now, intrinsic to the experience of expanded consciousness, *inside* that experience is the knowledge or the knowingness of that experience, but you have to think about it, look at it and talk about it. Be around people who have those experiences – well, like you. You’ve been listening to people like me for what, a decade now, right?

Rick: Well, this show has been going on for 6 or 7 years, but for about 40 or 50 years before this I’ve been interested in this stuff.

Harri: Yeah! But you have to recognize what you’re doing, not just have this... “Hey, I have this inner experience,” [rather], “I have this inner experience and I want to know what it is and what’s coming forward.” This desire to go forward is part of the experience ... “I want more, I want more,” and that’s what I try to convey in my book and I think I do.

Rick: Good. Alrighty, well I don’t have any questions about that. Do you want to read another passage?

Harri: Yeah, so here I am. Let’s say I’m 25 years old, I’ve got this ...

Rick: Oh, I do have a question, before I forget it! A friend of mine who’s watched your previous interviews was wondering if you’d ever gone through any kind of dark night of the soul type of thing. And in your previous interview you talked about that thing on the course, where you lost yourself for like 15 minutes or something. But aside from that, was there ever any kind of a dark and troubled and difficult time, or has it pretty much been a smooth ride for you?

Harri: You know, I’ve never talked about that side, but I’ll give it a minute and I will. Yes, before I started meditating and I started having this experience of pure consciousness, unbounded consciousness, and it was separate from me, I was still in college, I wasn’t particularly happy because I didn’t like the experience, I didn’t know what it was. I was doing well in school and this and that.

Rick: Were you maintaining awareness during sleep at that stage?

Harri: Yeah, yeah, but you know the first experience can be dramatic, and you've heard that from people too. I went through a lot of challenges for about two years – mental challenges, not physical. It's very difficult for me to talk about that other than to say, I had a very challenging time for two years, and *then*, when I started meditating, doing TM, it disappeared overnight, all of that stuff.

So you could define the awake mind by what it's not too – what is it, what isn't it? Well, it's not asleep, we could say, because you know something, you intrinsically feel awake! Well what is that wakefulness? And you don't ever feel that deep, dark void as it were, the 'nothingness feeling' or 'where am I going?' – that's gone, all that disappears.

The seeker doesn't disappear; the seeker kind of moves into the pure consciousness and wants to know more – [at least in my case], you can say it that way.

Rick: Yeah, so what I hear you saying is that you were actually self-realized but didn't know it, and it was troubling because the knowledge wasn't there to put the thing in context.

Harri: You got it.

Rick: Kind of like Susan Seagal, who wrote that book, *Collision With the Infinite*, where she had this awakening and she didn't know what the heck it was, and she was just terrified for about ten years until the knowledge finally came, that it was a good thing that it happened.

So what that says is that even the state of liberation or some stage of enlightenment can be a source of confusion, fear, depression, discomfort if we don't have the knowledge to supplement it.

Harri: That's what I'm saying, exactly. And understanding is intrinsic, valuable and totally part of the experience of the awake mind and heart. Whether you are heart oriented and you're totally emotionally oriented, you still have to understand your experience.

Rick: Yeah, so just to reiterate the point and emphasize it, enlightenment or awakening is not just about experience; it's about experience and understanding, *both*, like you need both legs to walk.

Harri: Yes, so I'll just go on and diverge a little bit here. I'm an artist, always been an artist, and there are some pictures in the book - they're black and white so you know, you can't see much, but you can see something. But the artistic process is kind of like – and I'm not just talking about an artist; everybody has the same thing. If I'm doing a work of art...

Rick: Here's a picture.

Harri: Oh whoa, you're going to show that picture?!

Rick: We were going to put this on the wall but there was too much glare, it was too big and everything, but this is a picture that Harri did.

Harri: Well I didn't expect you to show *that* one.

Rick: Why not?

Harri: Well you know, that picture sort of shows these layers of experience which I'll talk about a little bit later. But what I was going to talk about is when I'm doing a work of art, because pure consciousness is there – it might be funny to say it this way but – I feel like I'm plagiarizing myself, or copying my own consciousness, because I can see what I'm painting. I have a picture about what I see.

Rick: I don't think that will show up really well, but we can paste it in later.

Harri: Yeah, well, when I'm having a thought about doing a painting, I have an inner vision, but I see it almost like a linear map; it's all a bunch of lines, a whole bunch of lines. And it's like an architect's blueprint of building – he draws all the lines and he says, "The plumbing is there, door there, window there." I see it just like that, a bunch of lines that tell me, "You're going to put a color there, a person there, put one level there ..."

And I look at it and I can see it, and I start tracing it on the canvas or the paper, and I'm just watching my hand doing it.

Rick: I think Michelangelo used to say that what when he carved the *David*, for instance, that he saw that in the block of marble and just chipped away everything that wasn't that, or something you know; he had that vision.

Harri: I totally relate to that but I don't compare myself to him.

Rick: No, I'm not suggesting that, right.

Harri: But the artistic process, it took me a long time from the time I started meditating until that process that I see when I'm doing art, it's just my normal process. Whether I'm moving or walking down the street, now it's the same way as seeing the body moving in this more expanded space, for now.

Okay, what do you want to talk about? Do you want to hear a poem? Nobody likes poems but I only put a limited number of them in there. One great thing about poetry, for the guy who writes it or the girl writes it, is that you don't have to think; you can just write it. It's all feeling, you're not going to analyze it because that kills it, so you just write it, it's fun!

So I'm going to read a poem, and it's a little bit abstract but you know, I like it, it's [called] a wonder to my sight:

"I saw perfection's radiant form, a central burning circle shine. Rings of creation spreading, forming, differences to hold the breath from speeding back unknown. I am this holding sound that speaks its wonder to my sight, and declares a wholeness as a point so small that eternity in flux will hide its nest inside.

And all the gods and goddesses have found their space of play. And stirring, pouring happiness so loud, that stillness can't resist but shout and mix its knowledge to a soup. So grand, that existence finds itself a causeway to creation's infinite arms. Where the Earth, body, soul, heaven, me and God, all flexing knowledge, bliss and joy, can go as oneness separate ways, forever joined as a geography of heaven's home. I alone and you alone, so close that every tiny thought, every quiet sense, tingles at God's open door."

Rick: Nice.

Harri: Yeah, you know, it kind of conveys, if only on the feeling level, what wakefulness can feel like or can reach or can go to. You know, one thing I do like about the word 'enlightenment' is that it does say "en-light-enment;" it doesn't say "en-dark-enment!" - you know what I mean? So there is that quality of wonder, and radiance, and lumination to the mature experience of awakening.

Rick: Yeah, I mean even little old me; I sometimes have this experience where I just feel lit up inside. There's that classis saying, "The brilliance of a thousand suns," or something - I haven't had anything of that nature. But there is sometimes just a very palpable sense of 'somebody turned the lights on,' there's something lit up.

Harri: That's right. Even an experience like what I read in this poem, I would have an experience like that and I would call that a flashy experience, because it can't be there all the time, because you couldn't drive a car or do anything if that kind of experience was overshadowing you. But that experience is in my mind, the knowledge structure of my mind and heart - I can describe it to you. I can tell you what every one of those lines means because I *know*!

And that's where the knowledge comes in, and that's where the understanding is such - I hate to use the word 'joy,' but I will, or 'fun' even. Let's say a person has that experience, the knowledge of that experience, the feeling of that experience, the depth of that experience all the time, you could say that's an awake mind.

I keep saying that I don't claim to be enlightened; I *don't*, because it doesn't feel like I'm in any special state. It never has felt that way. The only reason I can describe this stuff that I can describe, and I'll go into more, [is because] I'm way too dumb to make this stuff up, you can't make it up, you know? You either see it, hear it, taste it and touch it and you can describe it, or you can't.

Rick: Well I remember some story about the Buddha, where someone asked him, "What are you? Are you a god? Are you a deva?" They asked him several things like that and he just said, "I'm awake." So he implied that it was normal for him, and he might have said, "I'm not enlightened," either.

Harri: He wouldn't have said that. It's like, if I'm going for a walk, how about I describe to you that I'm walking down the street, how stupid does that sound? Do you know what I'm saying? So to me, what I do understand is that explaining the state, or explaining these experiences to people, I never thought that way. I never thought that I would start talking about this stuff. I've been writing for 30 or 40 years about it because it's fun for me to do, so I write it down.

Rick: And you've been reading. You've read hundreds of spiritual books because you've been trying to advance your own understanding, and see how it compares with what other people have experienced.

Harri: Yeah, yeah. So do you want to talk about heaven?

Rick: Sure!

Harri: Okay, let's start out by saying that all this next section of talk about heaven and the devas, or the gods, or the angels, or the archangels – all this stuff isn't something you have to have. It's not the awake state, it's not enlightenment.

Rick: It's the icing on the cake, so to speak?

Harri: It's a little bit of the icing on the cake. And I firmly believe that you can go from almost total ignorance to a state of complete wakefulness, and not have too much experience in-between. And you say, "Whoa! This is wonderful, I love it. What else is there?"

Rick: I think that's what most people do. And let me preface this part of our discussion by saying that very few contemporary spiritual teachers talk about heavenly or celestial types of things, realities, experiences; I don't think they're having them. Some are and don't want to talk about it, but I think most aren't'.

And sometimes when I have a guest on who mentions that stuff, or I make some comment on the Internet or something, a lot of people just sort of come back at me saying, "Oh, it's just maya," which is a Buddhist term for 'illusion.' It is a sort of fascination with illusory changing realms, and you're really not cutting to the quick, you're not shooting to the core of reality, you're getting hung up in fanciful fluff.

I don't feel that way. I think it's part of the territory and that a fully mature, spiritually developed person or society would include familiarity with all that. But it's definitely a little bit on the cutting edge right now, of what people experience and talk about, but I still want to talk about it.

Harri: Okay, so I'll preface before going into that by just quickly going through what I experience, and I fully agree that all those kinds of experiences are one of the layers of consciousness that can be experienced along with pure conscious, lively pure conscious, knowingness, the knowledge level of consciousness. And the sight of that level of consciousness would be the Divine levels; in India it is called the "Vaid," and there are personifications to those laws of nature.

Now, when I first started experiencing celestial perception I said, "What the heck is this?" – like I always do. I went through a period after I started meditating by 3 or 4 years, where all this stuff started flooding into my consciousness. Whether I'm walking, talking, eating, sleeping, whatever, there was this celestial perception. I felt like I was in a world of complete and total beauty, which was full of delightful experiences inside, in the physiology, and also I could see all this ... you know, you sort of want to keep this stuff a secret, because you feel like you will let something out of the bag that you shouldn't be talking about. But I saw all these devas and gods and some were traditional, some weren't, but I didn't look at them in the sense of how they were dressed; they were just there, they were wonderful.

Now the great thing I didn't notice at the time, but looking back, that lasted 3 years and my wife *did* have to look after me a little more than usual because it was kind of overpowering. *But*, those celestial perceptions *did* bring to light what's going on in my consciousness and actually, what's going on in everybody's consciousness.

And the way that it works, or the way that I see it, is that there is this pure unbounded consciousness, there's this liveliness, there's a knowledge and intelligence to that liveliness and you begin to see it. I can hear that intelligence. I say "intelligence" because it is specific. That intelligence has forms, those forms; let's call them "aspects of nature."

In some societies, I believe it's in the Veda where they talk about all the different gods, even in Christianity and in Buddhism they talk about the huge layers

Rick: Sure, most of the ancient traditions Native American, South American, they all have them ... yeah, yeah.

Harri: And these levels and these devas and these gods, they all have specific functions, and they're all connected to human beings, and I could see those connections. Now I can talk about it now because I understand it, but at that time they were all around me, over me. I was living in this tangible world *and* in this Divine world at the same time. And these beings were, not only out there; they were *inside* of me.

Rick: Let me ask you a quick question here: were you seeing them with your physical eyes, such that if you had become blind for some reason, you wouldn't be able to see them anymore, or was it sort of an inner faculty that wasn't really dependent on your physical eyes?

Harri: Well that's a really good question because it was both. They looked like they were out there, everywhere - all up, down, around, everywhere. It was like I was walking through ... I was *in* the movie, but I *did* recognize that there was a pure consciousness level at the same time; I could see that.

Rick: Sure, it didn't overshadow that.

Harri: No, and it didn't overshadow; I could still walk and drive the car. Just barely sometimes, but I could and I didn't have any accidents during those years! But what I saw was that that whole heavenly sphere or Divine sphere, they have functions just like an architect who is building a certain kind of building, or is building a city – he plans it all out.

Those laws of nature, you know, what are they? Fire, water, air, and all those things, and earth, all those things support our bodies, right? You can't see the sunlight but it reveals everything, reveals everything. You can't see the room without the sunlight coming in the windows, correct? That's like pure consciousness, it reveals it.

Now, you can actually see, if your perception is clear enough, you can see what's going on. You can see these laws of nature, those personifications that are connected to these laws of nature. Like in Indian knowledge, they have names for these, called Vishnu and you know, all these different [things]. And I didn't relate to those in the sense that I saw those things; I just saw them ... it could have been Krishna, it could have been Buddhist, it could have been *anything*, it could have been indigenous Indian, whatever.

Rick: Sure, and actually seers in many cultures may have seen the same things and given them different names and described them quite differently

Harri: That's exactly how I see it. I saw them as principles of nature that have a personification, and they're constantly active at creating light, creating air, creating earth, creating the universe, creating whatever, and my physiology was connected to that. Now, do you have any questions?

Rick: Yeah, let me try to give an explanation of what I understand to be the mechanics of this and then have you improve upon it, or expand upon it. And we can take a scientific angle, you know, science tells us that when we look at a thing, we're only seeing kind of a surface value of it. And usually science explains the deeper values in terms of smaller – molecular, atomic, and subatomic, and so on, but there are other ways of explaining it too.

The electromagnetic spectrum – visible light is only a tiny bit of it, and then there is all kinds of other stuff, and other animals might actually see other [parts of it]. Bats, for instance, or some other animals might see other phases of the electromagnetic spectrum. So human perception is locked into a certain range ordinarily.

Harri: Normally.

Rick: Normally, yeah, but that obviously, even in terms of scientific understanding, doesn't comprise the totality of what's there. And so what you're suggesting, alluding to - and here we might switch from 'large and small' to 'gross and subtle' - that at the gross level of perception, the concrete level of perception that most people operate in, we see certain things. But there are subtler strata or dimensions which are beneath or beyond our ordinary range of experience, and human beings have the capacity to incorporate those ranges, to open to those ranges of experiences.

And people of every culture have reported having done so and having experienced various things, when they open to that. And just one more point, that what you're alluding to here is that these ...

Harri: I'm not alluding!

Rick: Well, describing or referring to, is that the gross emerges from the subtle or is based upon the subtle, and that there is a subtle mechanics to the manifestation of the universe, that these impulses of intelligence that you begin to perceive are actively involved in and responsible for.

Harri: That's beautiful. You said it very clearly. You know, I write more clearly than I talk, so if anybody wants to know more about what I'm talking about, you're going to have to get this thing. It's pretty cheap, I didn't put a high price on it.

Okay, *'Heaven is Not in Heaven'* – that's the title of this chapter, and there's about five chapters on that, in here.

“So what does heaven look like? Where is it? What does it have to do with us, personally? Does awareness of its sublime radiance make it hard for us to appreciate normal life?

There is no heaven without daily life and there is no daily life without heaven. Talking about heaven is just another, more detailed way of talking about the subtle aspects of nature – earth, water, fire, air, and so forth, and how they relate to us and our planet.

Earth: even though mostly unnoticed, the elements of nature are intimately connected to our consciousness, to say nothing of the effect of their influence as they get assimilated into all aspects of our lives.

I experience pure, silent consciousness as an infinite, indescribable field of silence, of knowingness, that is radiating golden light and energy like uncountable suns. Superimposed and shimmering throughout this field is a reverberating joy. This quiet joy is the awareness of the Divine.

The heavens are glorious; it's not for nothing that they are described as "Divine" throughout the ages. Celestial heavens and their occupants are the organizers and administrators of the universal laws of nature. The process of how the material universe comes into existence can be experienced, not only on the quietest level of consciousness, but on more active levels.

Fortunately, this whole relationship and process is part and parcel of the experience, or *can* be the experience of an awakened heart and mind."

So you know, we said it in three ways there, and that's probably enough about heaven.

Rick: Well, just one thing to add about that is, so the conclusion of that is that heaven is not just something you may go to after you die, though it may be that also, but it is here, now, if you have the eyes to see it, or if your experience is open to that realm. There are people on this Earth, perhaps you among them, who are "living in heaven," fully alive, even if they are in a circumstance that may not appear so heavenly on the surface value.

Harri: Okay, so since everything is coming out of the closet, I will say ...

Rick: There was a lady, I forget her name, but she wrote a book about her experience in the Nazi concentration camp, and *she* was having celestial experience under this horrific situation. So her body was going through hell and the people around her were going through hell, but she was in this heavenly state.

Harri: Absolutely! ... So just like pure consciousness, just like the knowledge level of pure consciousness, the Divine levels of consciousness - I have it all the time; it's just there. I can see them all the time, see this process. So I'm walking through relative life, Divine life, knowledge life, and pure, unbounded silence, all at the same time.

So I can look from the top to the bottom, from the bottom to the top, one big sight. And it's so normal it's not funny.

Rick: I laugh because there's a song by the group *Talking Heads* where they say, (Rick singing) "From the bottom to the top..."

Harri: Oh yeah, those guys are brilliant. I want to meet them sometime. And you know what, when I read this book, I open it on a chapter and think; you know I have this feeling inside ... "I'd love to meet this guy!" You know what I mean? And that's how normal it is.

And that person who has habituated and had these experiences all their lives, absolutely thinks everybody has them up until the moment that person opens their mouth and says, "I don't have that experience."

Rick: And you know, a funny thing is, maybe 500 years from now ... or 5 years from now, if another civilization were to visit Earth and listen to this talk, they would think, "Well what's the big deal? This is the way everyone experiences life." It's just that you are kind of an outlier; you are experiencing something that is not the norm, but could very well become the norm, perhaps sooner than we think, hopefully, and that may very well *be* the norm on the trillions of other civilizations in this universe.

Harri: That's getting a little out there, but yes.

Rick: Well yeah, there are trillions.

Harri: Well that's what they say science is saying now.

Rick: They found at least two trillion galaxies in the *known* universe, and if there's even one spiritually advanced civilization in each of those galaxies, that's trillions, and there's probably a lot more.

Harri: And scientists, are they not even now saying – the top scientists who are the thinking scientists who think, "There's not one universe ..."

Rick: Yeah, they're saying there could be uncountable universes.

Harri: Uncountable.

Rick: So it's kind of a big show.

Harri: You asked me ...somebody asked you a question about the family in relation to heaven, before. And I was relating in one of our talks, with you ... I have a family – two daughters, a granddaughter and all that – and it's a wonderful family, I love them. And the Divine heavens and their occupants feel like an extended family, just as much as my normal family. Like brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers ...

Rick: You feel camaraderie with them or an affinity.

Harri: And totally normal and natural, and happy that there's some communication.

Rick: Is there communication in any kind of ... "Hey Harri, let me tell you about something" - and obviously this is more of a superficial way of saying it, but is there sort of an actual back and forth exchange of information going on?

Harri: Look what we're doing here: there's an exchange going on, it's natural, we're talking, we're having fun, it's like that. We're doing something specific here, right? They're doing something specific with their relationship to me; they're helping me, I'm helping them.

Rick: Yeah, because we have a mutual friend, I think I won't name him because he's shy about this, but he says he experiences celestial beings all the time around people and stuff ... angels. For the most part he doesn't know what they're doing; he just sees them. And once in a while they'll actually say something to him, like they'll tell him not to do something, or there will be some

immediate communication. But for the most part they leave him alone, he leaves them alone; he just happens to know they're there. I have a feeling that with you it is more interactive.

Harri: It's interactive but it's on the knowledge level, because the deepest level of pure consciousness, over time, permeates the Divine levels *and* your physical life, your normal life, and the knowledge level of your consciousness is now everywhere. So the *Divine* level of consciousness is the same; it permeates the knowledge level and my regular life. They are all intermingled and it's a knowledge based phenomenon, which has a sight and a sound to it.

So the Divine heavens are singing, chanting, doing stuff. They don't have time to have meetings like this! No, they have a very specific function – from God, all the way down, or if you want to call it “the Absolute,” all the way down; you don't have to talk about God. But I do have a couple of chapters on God, too.

Rick: We'll get to those. Do you have a feeling that human beings evolve into becoming those beings, or is it just a whole different line of evolution, species, that is not linear?

Harri: In the unlikely event that some years from now we have another one of these discussions, I will get into that – no.

Rick: Okay.

Harri: So a couple of years ago we took a vacation in the Bahamas, and I haven't been in that kind of environment for many, many years. And one of the things when you go to the Bahamas, you know, crystal clear water, you can see 20 feet down into the water, and we're swimming around seeing all of the coral and snorkeling, and at one point I thought, “Isn't this wonderful? You don't see the water at all!”

But that's the significant thing, because not seeing the water, you're seeing the fish and the coral. And you're seeing the relationship of the fish to the coral – they're colored the same, they look like the birds and the flowers ... you get this picture that it's all transparent. But the water is there, and these fish are swimming; they're *flying* through the water because you can't see them, you can't see the water. And it's just like celestial perception and pure consciousness. But you can *feel* the warm water, you like it, it's wonderful. It's cool or it's warm.

And it's like pure consciousness; everything is swimming in pure consciousness, moving in pure consciousness, causing little ripples. That's when you see the water, when a bigger fish goes through, or a stingray or a turtle, and suddenly you see water shaking, that's like pure consciousness becoming alive.

So I love the look of that, and the feeling of that clear water, and it just gave me that sense that it is exactly like walking through consciousness, or having pure consciousness when you're doing something, or doing a piece of art, or walking on the street – it's delightful, but in a very, very quiet kind of a way. Not behind the scenes, but throughout everything you're doing, through the eyes of every [one], it's like clear, clear water; you're seeing it make a ripple.

Rick: Nice, nice metaphor.

Harri: Yeah, yeah, and I want to remind people that even though there are some poems in here, most of them are very short, you know, only 5 lines.

Rick: Some people really like poems.

Harri: Some people do.

Rick: I tend to space out on them unless they're very literal, like Robert Frost or something.

Harri: Yes, okay. Since we're talking about Divine kinds of things, you know, lots of people are seeking God, or what they think or who they think God is. And it's not particularly scientific when you talk about God, but there is a lot of heartfelt and they're on a spiritual path.

Rick: Sure, and for a lot of people God is a matter of believing or not believing something; they don't really think of it in terms of experiencing or being able to verify the existence of God. You have a couple of God spots: there's *God There*, there's *God Too*, and *Son of God*.

Harri: I know, I know, *Son of God Too*. Well, I could start there.

"Looking at the relationship of absolute consciousness to the further unfolding of that absolute consciousness, as odd as it might seem, I experience that there are two totally simultaneously, totally related absolute one, undifferentiated pure abstraction, the other eternal, universal creation. I ask the Self: they seem so different, how do they manage to maintain the true reality of their infinite sameness?

I experience that I and all living beings, altogether and independently, are the full expression of abstract pure consciousness and its tangible manifestations. God, the almighty being spanning all realities, is the universal Divinity of all joy and understanding, and is the absolute value of all eternal possibilities for human awareness.

God structured the human heart as His drawing place on Earth. I came upon this hiding place, so close, so inseparable from creation, so inseparable from my heart that the slight difference between God and me keeps the relationship of complete, complete oneness, personal and lively.

God in my heart is a cascading tickle, the size of universal existence. God bursts all the boundaries, the silent delight, as unbounded love, lazing as a total intelligence of my realization of His, Her creation. So quiet, so generally unnoticed on the outside, completely unrecognizable, serene, yet I am, we all are wholeness personified, God personified.

We are the Divine being in a universe to personal unfolding that breathes and walks on Earth. This encompassing Divine tickle of awareness that has an exquisite form and encompasses my whole heart, my whole mind, my whole body, I experience the very structure of my body as this flow of Divine consciousness.

I see and feel this flow of consciousness as inseparable from God. It is not just a unity, which implies some small difference, but is more like a total oneness with itself,

quantifying and establishing the Creator's existence as my awareness, as everyone's awareness.

When I saw and realized that the Creator's purpose and heaven's purpose are really my purpose, and are personally and intimately connected to me, to the elements of their activity, which are the very elements of nature, enliven my awareness to my Divine family enriches."

Rick: So when I think of God, I think that – and I've often said this lately – I feel like God is hiding in plain sight .

Harri: That's a nice way to put it.

Rick: Yeah, in other words , and again I resort to science to help me understand this, but if we look at anything closely enough, things which we ordinarily take for granted - ordinary, everyday things like these little artificial flowers ... they're artificial ...

Harri: You shouldn't say that, they can't see that!

Rick: Yeah, but you know, on a molecular or atomic level we see this *marvelous* structure, you know, and it is intelligent, and it is so perfect, or a single cell in our body. Or just take a little cubic centimeter of space and all the fluctuations of electromagnetic field going through that or in that, and so wherever you look - large, small, here, far - there's intelligence operative. And so that is tantamount to saying, "God is omnipresent," that intelligence is omnipresent.

And the word God has so much baggage that people don't want to use it usually, but that's what the word really alludes to, is this sort of ubiquitous, all-pervading intelligence, you were talking earlier about devas and God, and devas and individual gods with a small 'g,' perhaps serving a function in the governance of the universe.

So I guess the question is: are all those things - since God is omnipresent or all-pervading - would we consider those, and also us, our gross forms even, to be just part and parcel of God, like different cells in God's body, so to speak?

Harri: I don't like to think of it as cells, because you know, you mentioning these petals, well this petal is not the same as this petal, or this petal. So you can't find another petal in the universe that would match this petal exactly.

Rick: Well that's true of the cells in your body as well. You have many trillions of cells, each one is slightly different.

Harri: So without these differences you don't have wholeness, without these differences you don't have God, without these differences you don't have knowledge, you don't have life, you can't breathe.

You and I will never be the same even though fundamentally we have this similar experience of pure consciousness, whether you admit it or not.

Rick: Yeah, but we're talking about God here.

Harri: Yes, but I'm making the point that God created these differences so that He, She can be God; there's no God without creation and there's no creation without God. Now, that doesn't mean we're a cell in the nature of God; we're – how could you put it? - we're God to the degree that this physiology *can* be God, like that. And that relationship is a relationship, which can be seen and lived and known.

Rick: Yeah, would it be true to say that in some way, in some sense, there is only God?

Harri: I wouldn't say that.

Rick: Because if you don't say that then you are implying that there's something *other* than God.

Harri: No no, I'm not; there's both.

Rick: Both what?

Harri: There's both – something other than God and God. *And*, 'other than God' is why God exists, but God is that other too.

Rick: Yeah, because if He weren't then He wouldn't be omnipresent.

Harri: Yes, and neither would creation itself, like atoms are omnipresent and cells are omnipresent, and they don't even have consciousness like you and I do. How do you think we're not omnipresent as well?

Now, human consciousness is capable of so much more than is generally thought of. And I don't really like to use the word 'God' that much either - just like you said, there's so much baggage to it - however, when I say the word 'God,' I feel a connection, I see a connection. But it's not outside of me, and it's not inside of me; it's both.

It's the fact that the wakefulness of the mind and heart is open to the influences of the universe and universal consciousness. There is such a thing as universal consciousness because the universe came into existence, and you came into existence, and there's a relationship.

Rick: Why?

Harri: Why is there a relationship?

Rick: No, why did the universe come into existence?

Harri: God wanted to have fun; for no other reason. You know, this is really silly, but this table is made out of wood, right? Well that table was made in a factory somewhere. Somebody's consciousness devised that table; they used machinery that had metal in it, and this and that. And these materials came from a forest in the Devonian age created by decaying dinosaurs, or whatever.

Rick: Well no, this is wood, so it probably came from the Philippines or something.

Harri: No no, at some point it's connected ...

Rick: Way back, genetically.

Harri: Well genetically it had to be there.

Rick: Those trees came from ancient trees, and so on.

Harri: And all the way back – go back and go back. And then it goes all the way back to the world, and the world came from where? From the stars, and stars came from where? They came from the rest of the universe – whether this universe or the previous. This table existed in the consciousness of *whoever* started it. Now I know, that's kind of abstract, but that's how I see it, that's how I see everything.

Rick: So one way of putting is: everything that exists or ever will exist, existed in seed form.

Harri: In seed form.

Rick: Yeah, and then eventually sprouted into what it is, what it became.

Harri: Yes, and you know, there are these sayings in spiritual or new age circles that nothing ever manifested and it's all ... I believe that and ...

Rick: It's true on some level.

Harri: It's true, but I would like to add to that the *reason* nothing ever manifested is because it is *all* been manifest forever; everything is already manifest. Now, that's the experience and it can't be described. If you have that experience, you have it, if you don't have that experience, it sounds silly, however, it doesn't sound any sillier than nothing.

Rick: Yeah, you and I have had this debate. We've even alluded to this debate in previous interviews, and I don't know if we could take the rest of the interview and me trying to understand it.

Harri: It's not an understanding, unfortunately. If your understanding and experience are one experience, then ... Let's say Venice was down the street.

Rick: Venice, Italy?

Harri: Venice, Italy, and you're seeing it from a distance ... "Oh look at it, it's beautiful, isn't it? Look at the sun shining on it." Then you go around a bend in the trees and there's nothing for a moment. And you come around the bend and you're a little closer and ... "Whoa! I see the individual spires and buildings, starting to see a little color."

And you come a little closer and closer and, "Whoa," you know, you're starting to see more and more. And that's like consciousness; you get closer and closer to this realization of the self on a cosmic level. Then you get right up to Venice and you say, "Whoa, this is beautiful! Look at that building, look at this, look at that!" ... lots of detail." It's still Venice. Some people might get lost in the beauty of Venice. A person whose mind is awake doesn't get lost as they get closer to the panorama of enlightenment.

So now you go inside Venice and maybe for a moment, for a while, you lose the whole city because you're looking at the street ... "Look at that beautiful pottery, look at those canals, look at this, look at that." For a moment you might get lost, and then you remember, "Ah, I'm in Venice," and then you see the whole show.

That's how you understand what consciousness can be. You see it at a distance first, just pure consciousness – a glimpse, a tiny little shimmer of consciousness – you're way off, as it were. Then you get closer and it isn't just a shimmer, it's ten shimmers.

And then you see it as a field, and then maybe you see something in it, maybe you start understanding that this field is somehow universal and there's some connectedness to events in your environment, and then later, events in the far distance, and so forth, like that.

Rick: Yeah, there are some people who say, "Either you're awake or you're not," it's a-b, you know, on-off. You and I have kind of covered this, but just to bring this up since I often hear that, I think that what you're saying is that there's just layer after layer after layer, degree after degree after degree of greater familiarity with consciousness. It's not just an on-off thing; it's something that one can become more and more intimately familiar with for the rest of one's life, that even if it's experienced very clearly already, the details that can emerge as that clarity continues to increase, there's no limit to that.

Harri: That's exactly right but I would add on to that that once you have it, you have it.

Rick: Yeah.

Harri: You have it, that's all, and you know it. And then that doesn't change, but the clarity of the structure and nature of your conscious gets clearer and clearer, and everything kind of moves into it, as it were. A oneness develops. Often the word 'unity' is used, and unity to me is a collection of parts, and you either see the parts or you don't; it's still unity. Quite frankly, it's more unity the more you see, not less.

Rick: Even though you're seeing more parts, so to speak, you're also seeing a larger whole.

Harri: Like in the Bahamas, when there are fifty fish swimming around you, you go, "Whoa! I see the water now because it's shimmering and it's shaking, because there are fifty fish." The fish revealed the water just as much as the water revealed the fish, like that.

Rick: There's a saying Maharishi used to say: "The world reveals Brahman," we referred to that in a previous interview.

Harri: Yes, and that's exactly right. Isn't that interesting?

Rick: Yeah.

Harri: Okay, so if we have a moment here ...

Rick: We do.

Harri: So I brought this book for a reason.

Rick: I know, otherwise we'd just be sitting here twiddling our thumbs.

Harri: Well, let me see if this other *God One* is here - you know that starts getting kind of abstract, and you do start fidgeting a little bit when I'm reading this.

Rick: I have something stuck in my tooth, but I'm not fidgeting.

Harri: Oh, okay.

Rick: I really like this stuff and I like that we're talking about God, because it's not something that I get to talk about that much with people because again, it's not something that is so lively in everyone's experience; they more talk just in terms of self-realization or awakening, but not a lot of discussion of God from an experiential place.

Harri: Okay, so this is kind of interesting, it's about as long as the last one, but I'm going to start from there.

Rick: I won't fidget.

Harri: It's okay. *Becoming conscious of the Creator*, okay? And this relates to an experience I had, so you'll hear it.

"There was an instant in time when the light of unbounded expansion flooded my entire consciousness, all other experiences dropped away. I did not feel any loss of experience or detail, but rather a shimmering kind of eternal knowingness filled universality.

The wonderful sight and presence of God that I had been wholly devoted to, as if blinked out and was replaced by an all-consuming holistic knowingness in sight. My experience now pulsed as unbounded pre-knowledge – pre-everything, as and within eternal space and time.

Then, I thought, and in this awakened, unified abstraction of my experience, surely there is a home for the presence and experience of the personal, universal God." - this happened about 25 years ago – "As self-awareness recognized more and more unboundedness, I began to perceive the play of consciousness in more and more expressed values within that awareness.

This quiet objectification within my own boundless nature, brought a clear and expanded knowledge of the universal creative process, its administrators and creators – a very different, more accessible, precise, and a more infinite side. The experience of God's universal and personal presence then became available.

I began to perceive the underlying organizational structure of nature – near, far, Divine and earth – in relation to my own activity. An expanded range of lively togetherness began to sparkly. Consciousness increased in clarity and gradually became the landscape of a totality in which all the experience - all my experience - percolates. Then the knowledge began to arise that *God* must also be found in all this expressed universality, this self-aware abstraction.

Looking out from this concentrated center that was also clearly located everywhere, a new clarity, in one grand sweep, flooded my awareness and expanded in every direction. Then, at its greatest expansion and smallest contraction, it froze. While remembering my individual body of awareness within my cosmic body of awareness, I found creation in multiple layers engulfed within this integrated oneness of my own silent, lazing heart.

From within the infinite sparkling dynamism of my unobstructed experience, God or the Absolute, as creator, was perceived as the shining togetherness of it all, central to all experience. The abstraction of God became tangible.”

It goes on and on like that, for a while.

Rick: So we were talking earlier about whether there was a time when you could say that enlightenment or self-realization dawned, and you discussed that.

Harri: Yes, well this was one of those ...

Rick: The time when “God dawned.”

Harri: Yes. This would be the time that a unified consciousness dawned, that included the experience of God, that included the experience of unboundedness, and included the experience of all-knowingness. It was all altogether; this was more the unified experience that arose out of the God-experience.

Now, it’s quite interesting, there are quite a lot of chapters in here on working everyday.

Rick: A job?

Harri: You know, I had a factory for 25 years, with noisy machinery pounding away all the time... I was a designer in a studio and all that, but I believe it certainly was for me. The louder the machine was, the quieter I was inside. I’m not saying you go out and stand beside a busy machine, but for me, all that activity helped create whatever I actually have now. I have to say that; there’s no way around it. I wasn’t in a retreat somewhere, I mean I have been, but I wasn’t during *these* years. These subtle experiences were had while I was working and walking around in a factory.

I’m still working! I’ve got two fulltime jobs, and I’m no spring chicken, you know? I like activity. My daughter says, “Are you ever going to calm down?” And I said, “Yeah, when the body can’t move anymore I’ll calm down, not before that.”

Rick: It was good to say that, because most people have jobs and some people might feel like, “Oh God, I can’t get enlightened because I’ve got this stupid job.”

Harri: Well you started right, you said, “Oh God!”

Rick: Yeah right ... so it’s not an obstacle.

Harri: No! There are just things that push you towards the awakened state. Everything in life pushes you [towards it], that’s what it’s for. Every obstacle you have, every good experience you have, every so-called “bad” experience you have, they all push you where? To a better place, and you want to get there. And knowledge is one of the ways, after you have some experience, or even a little bit of experience, understanding and knowledge helps you get to the goal.

Rick: Would you say that in both the individual and collective societal life, there really are no mistakes, like everything that happens can sort of be seen as what needed to happen in order to further evolution?

Harri: Yes and no. You'll find that whenever I'm talking or writing, I'm always looking at both sides – the absolute and the relative. They seem so different from each other, right? So when you said that they sound so different, that there's a bad experience and a good experience; the bad experience *sounds* bad, understanding puts that so-called "bad" experience into perspective and realizes, "Maybe it wasn't so bad, because time made it go away and look what I got out of it!"

So I agree with you, and also disagree that good and bad in that so-called "bad" experiences don't go anywhere, you know? Waking, dreaming, sleeping – the three normal states of consciousness – let's say you, boom!, woke up right now, where do you think they would go? That they have a place to go that isn't you? You still have them!

You're going to go to sleep but you'll be awake inside, and you're going to walk around and you're going to dream and witness it, or you'll be part of the dream and you'll know what's going on. So all these experiences of clear consciousness are *additions*, they're *additions* to your normal life; they don't eliminate the waking state of consciousness.

The normal waking state of consciousness is that your eyes still see the cars and the trees. You're not going to suddenly walk into that tree out there.

Rick: No, I know you're not suggesting that.

Harri: No, but I'm just making that point, that there are more states of consciousness than the normal states that you have. Say the five senses, they function together, they cooperate. So let's add a sixth sense and call it "a state of consciousness," and let's add a seventh one and call it "a state of consciousness," and that's all they are. They are additions.

Now, they happen to be really nice and really good, and you *want* them, and you realize that once you have a stabilized, expanded experience, you pray it never goes away, but then you know it won't! There is nowhere for it to go. And there's nowhere for the regular waking state to go, your dream state, sleeping state, TC state, witnessing state, God-consciousness state – none of these states will ever go away. You already have seven states, you're only aware of three or four of them. That's kind of one way of looking at it, right?

Rick: Yeah, there's this friend of mine, Timothy Conway, whom I've interviewed a couple of times, who has this nice article where he talks about the three simultaneously, but paradoxically different levels of reality. Where you know, you have the ordinary level where you have the problems of the world – diseases and all the environmental things – we have to deal with all that. We can't just say it's an illusion; it has to be dealt with. And there's a more Divine level where you can say, everything is well and wisely put, everything is Divinely orchestrated, everything is perfect as it is. And then you can say that there is an even more fundamental level where nothing ever happened, so there is nothing to consider.

And each one of those is true in its own dimension, but you can't take refuge in one or the other and say that that's the whole story; you have to sort of take them all into account and function on all of those levels, simultaneously.

Harri: Well you used the word "illusion," and that's a good jumping-off point. There's a chapter in my book that says, "The illusion is the illusion." And illusion *is* a reality in the state of mind that isn't

awake, a heart that isn't expanded. And the reason it is an illusion is because you're not seeing the whole show; you're only seeing part of the show, that's why it's an illusion. Once you have pure consciousness established, the illusion goes away. It doesn't disappear, but the knowledge of what you're looking at is no longer limited; you know what it is now. So it's not an illusionary experience because the relationship between you and your environment – what you're looking at, seeing, tasting and touching, is suddenly real. It's all *more* real, which is kind of interesting – not less real.

Many people, at least I've heard this from a number of people, they think enlightenment is this fluff ball of pink foam, you know, and that suddenly the relative will look hunky dory. And it *is*, but on the knowledge level, because it also is [now] more concrete. You see it more clearly because you see it in relation to your subtle experience, your Divine experience and your knowledge experience, and you expand. That's all clear, once seen through wholeness.

Rick: Good. What else you got here?

Harri: You know, you ought to read this book!

Rick: Yeah, well I did [read it] cover to cover, plus you have all those notes...

Harri: Oh yeah, there's plenty! I spent this morning taking these off. I had sixty of them and I said, "Harri, that's ridiculous!" Okay, so the name of this chapter is '*Surprise.*'

"After going through various phases of developing consciousness, from the silent witness that was experienced as separate from daily life, to a more intimate and constant celestial awareness, and finally to a comprehensive and unified awareness, I did not expect much else to happen. I was wrong.

I began to notice the unified aspect of knowledge that I was experiencing previously so abstract, not began to have a tangible definition, sound, and texture. How could this be? I had always thought the transcendental consciousness would be the field of a blissful, wakeful, shimmering, abstraction, pervaded by a vast sense of contentment and all-knowingness with very few details. Yet within the unity of my consciousness, a tiny intuition began whispering to me, "Look closer, look closer."

I gradually realized that the ability to look, to see within the unity of self-awareness, helped me to develop still further levels of understanding. It was then that I recognized the silence of consciousness is really the reverberations of universal intelligence, which is the fundamental value of *my* intelligence, everybody's intelligence.

I saw that universal events and personal events are the same phenomena. I began to hear the reverberations of my own consciousness as the seed values of the fundamental structures that are the building blocks of universal to personal consciousness. From the huge expansion to the tiniest point, I am, we all are, the sum total of it all.

I now see that not only is my inner life the expression of a universality - universally conscious intelligence - but also that my heart, body, senses and environment are also smack in the middle of Divine unfoldment."

You're supposed to keep reminding me to be practical, are you doing that?

Rick: I think so.

Harri: Okay. So you know, I make all these high-fluting statements, and here I sit looking like a completely normal fellow. Lots of people look much better than me and much younger, can jump higher, run faster, have more brains, think clearly, are scientific, but that's life!

Rick: That's their specialty.

Harri: That's their specialty, yeah. Like you have all this knowledge of all these people that you've interviewed, so you have this overview from little consciousness, to middle-size consciousness, to big consciousness – you see that and you understand it. So have you integrated that in your life?

Rick: To some extent.

Harri: I'm interviewing you now.

Rick: Well first of all I don't claim to be able to evaluate anybody's level of consciousness. There are people I resonate with more than others, but who am I to say? But I also feel like that each week when I do an interview and prepare for one, there's just another sort of facet of enrichment that some new thing gets enlivened in me, you know, some little angle that hadn't been enlivened. Very seldom do I interview somebody who I feel like, "Oh, I've already done this type of person a dozen times," because each one is fresh, and each one enlivens something in my consciousness or in my brain, or whatever, so it is a very evolutionary process for me.

Harri: No that's great, and that brings up a point I think we touched on the other day. You know, there's that old saying, "The teacher always gets more than the student?" But I used to think, "What is this more that I'm getting from talking to people who know less than I do?" Well what you're really getting is more on the heart level, that you're doing something practical, and the abstract nature of life will support you more now, because you're actually more *useful* to your environment! You know what I mean?

Rick: Yeah, we took a walk in the woods a couple of days ago, and that's one of the points we both concurred on, is that when you put yourself in the position of in some way facilitating collective evolution or spiritual evolution for other people, then the 'powers that be,' so to speak, of the Divine, gives you more juice; it sort of helps to support your activities because you are serving a useful function.

Harri: And I really like your point about: does growth ever stop? How can it? And I think everybody has to think about this, you know, even though your body is growing older and you can jump less, but in your mind you can jump farther, fuller, richer, at least that's been my experience. I couldn't have opened my mouth 20 years ago and said half the things I'm saying, even though I had all the experience.

Rick: Yeah, you and I had talks 20 years ago.

Harri: Yeah, and remember, all I basically said was, "Yeah." I remember you came to my studio at my business and you said something like, "I'm interviewing all these enlightened people ... some are

in unity,” you said something like that. And I knew some of these people and I thought, “If those people are somewhere, where the heck am I?!” You know, because I knew some of these people. And you encouraged me to come out and talk about this. So I came out, I started.

Rick: Took a while.

Harri: Yeah, it’s been really a lot of fun, and I’ve learned a lot.

Rick: Yeah, well I have this friend, Susanna Marie, that I interviewed with Adyashanti a few weeks ago. And she has this thing which she calls “the 5 minute Buddha.” Where she would give a meeting, and rather than her just talking to people the whole time, she everybody break up into little groups and then speak what they know, so they kind of assume the teacher role. Because I think she feels what we were just saying, that it enlivens something in you and builds your own confidence, and kind of clears the channels for the flow of knowledge when you are not just in a submissive or subservient role, but actually expressing knowledge.

Harri: Yes. So there’s another chapter in this book, it says, “Death is the Death of Death.”

Rick: Sounds like a redundant one.

Harri: It *is* redundant, but don’t most people think that death is ... you know, you pass on. And even if you’re religious you think, “It goes somewhere.”

Rick: So do you want to read that one, or do you just want to talk about where you’re saying it? You don’t have it handy. What do you say in that chapter?

Harri: Basically you know, when a loved passes we’ll always feel sadness and so forth, everybody will. And it seems to be inevitable – whether you’re awake, you’re not awake, whatever you are – the body grows old and you move away; it looks like you’ve disappeared.

Rick: Yeah, you know, when both my parents died, in both cases I felt kind of glad for them, in a way.

Harri: And a little relief too, somehow.

Rick: Yeah! It was like, they were suffering, they were really going through it. And I didn’t feel that their existence had ended; but that they must themselves be rejoicing in a newfound freedom.

Harri: But you had that understanding, that life doesn’t end. And the chapter is just about that, that life is eternal; it keeps going on and on. And these things that I’m talking about are my experience.

And the future and the past, they exist in a transition point in human consciousness, and you are the transition point, and you will always be the transition point. And the physical body dropping away is an expansion of consciousness too, at least that’s how I see it.

Rick: Do you say anything about freewill in this book?

Harri: Oh yeah, I’ve covered everything!

Rick: It’s a perennial debate, you know, people saying there is no freewill, people saying there is, people saying it depends on your perspective ...

Harri: Here again, I love saying this: it's both, it's always both. Okay, so here's a wheel and God's in the center. Out here in the wheel you're only connected to the guys beside you, and when you go in there, getting closer to the wheel – and analogies you know, they don't say everything - but let's say that as you're going closer, you have a little more connectedness to the center of the wheel. As a consequence, you see this point, this point – so you're seeing more and more and more, so it *feels* like freewill, more and more.

Okay, so you go further and further, and at some point you get very close to, or in the center, the hub of the wheel. Now, [at] the hub of the wheel you have infinite choices; you can go on this one, this one, this one, this one. It feels like, looks like, tastes like ...

Rick: Yeah, so you're not just stuck on one of the spokes with only that *one* possibility; you have all possibilities.

Harri: You're not stuck on the spokes, you have all possibilities. So that *is* freewill, but freewill does not mean you can change the laws of nature or God's creation, because everybody has a karma-dharma, and so they're doing what they should be doing. You can't create a miracle and suddenly ... "Oh, you're awake now man!"

Rick: Even God seems to need to abide by His own laws.

Harri: Well of course He has to, He made them.

Rick: So at that point though, if you're at the hub, aren't you one with God? And so is there any freewill, or is it just the Divine will that's always really been running the show? I mean, is there still any individuality to be free, to any degree, from the Divine will?

Harri: This is the crux of everything: you're never God.

Rick: There's always some separation?

Harri: Yeah! You heard what I said? You weren't listening completely but you were trying to! There's *always* separation and there's always unity; that's what makes infinity and eternity a *living* reality. If you were *totally* unified, there's nothing! It's zero, okay? But you're not.

You're not going to be God-God; you're going to be close to God and Its domain, you're going to understand, you're going to see, you're going to ta da da da da... all this stuff. You're going to have a relationship. Relationship means her, and here. Unity means here, and here.

All the different expressions in the Vedas and Christian writings and Buddhist writings, they say you will become one with God, but they don't mean you will become *God*; it means you will know your relationship, you'll see it, and maybe all your senses will be...

Rick: But there will still be a 'you' that has some distinction, however subtle, from God Itself, and that you will have some volition.

Harri: Absolutely, you know, the tree is always going to be over there and I'm going to be here. Now, there's this whole thing about silence. I'm for silence, silence is a good thing, I don't have a problem with silence. I have a level of my consciousness that is so silent I can't see into it; it's silent, there's nothing there. It's silent, silent, silent, nothing there.

There's a layer – that's one way of putting it – there's a layer of my experience that vibrates. It's *almost* silent, but it vibrates, it has a shimmer to it, it has a sound to it, kind of a hum, or a roar, or a something, and *that's* where my experience starts. The silence is there, I can *intuit* it as being under that, and it's universal, it's everywhere.

Rick: Could you say the silence is actually prior to consciousness? That it's not even consciousness, but it's some kind of ...

Harri: If it's pure unbounded silence then it is prior to consciousness.

Rick: Yeah, Nisargadatta talked about that too.

Harri: Yeah, there's nothing there, it's zero. It doesn't mean it's nonexistent, but it's not an experience. As soon as you have an experiencer or something within that silence that knows itself, that's something. It's *very* subtle, but it's there, I can see it. At first I could only intuit it, but I can now see this vibration and consciousness. It's very low-level frequency and it's like a hum.

Now, you talk about the "hum of creation," it's not one hum; everything is part of that hum. There's this layer, this layer, everything all the way to our physical bodies, and it's all part of this hum of consciousness.

Rick: Yes, but the frequencies get more complex and diverse.

Harri: Yes, and the frequencies get more complex and diverse until they *don't*. Once you see the connectedness of your physical body in relation to the subtler levels of creation, then the vibrations look the same, they're similar.

One's a higher pitch and [one's] a lower pitch, but there's the other pitch that's under it that's less, and there's another pitch that's under it that's less, until you're at the primal pitch that's almost silent.

Rick: Aum-most silent.

Harri: Aum-most, like that, yeah! And you know there's this whole Advaita movement and nondualism, and I love them, there's nothing wrong with it; I think it's great that they're part of the process. If they didn't exist, if that movement didn't exist, millions of people wouldn't get anything, they wouldn't understand where they're going.

And all I say, and Advaites might look at it and say, "Well that's all frou-frou, the stuff that you're talking about," and in some ways I agree with them because fundamental consciousness is fundamental. But my fundamental consciousness is not fundamental; it's gone, it's everywhere, and it's a great, big, massive oneness with a lot of pieces interconnected.

Rick: A lot of stuff going on.

Harri: A lot of stuff going on, right, doesn't that make sense to you?

Rick: Yeah. Here's something: I just came back from the Science & Nonduality Conference (SAND), and Deepak Chopra gave a talk there in which he recounted a conversation that Albert Einstein had had with Rabindranath Tagore. And Tagore was arguing that we create the universe by perceiving it, in other words, that the moon isn't there until we perceive it. And Einstein didn't

like that idea and he had trouble with quantum mechanics too. He said, "No, the moon has got to be there whether or not someone is perceiving it."

So it was this sort of philosophical conundrum that to this day people are arguing about. It seems to me, I'm kind of with Einstein on this – and you weren't comparing yourself to Michelangelo, I'm not comparing myself to Einstein – but it seems to me that there are so many arguments in favor of things existing whether or not there is anyone to perceive them.

For instance, the universe had to evolve over billions of years to the point where there even *could* be anyone to perceive anything, because in the beginning it was all just gases and stars burning brightly, and so on. And also, even if everybody in the world agreed that we're not going to look at the moon, we'd still have tides that are caused by the moon. And it's been decades since astronauts flew around the dark side of the moon, but if they did so today, they'd see the same craters that they saw 30, 40 years ago.

So it seems to me that even if individual perception in some sense brings things into being, there [must be] some kind of template of reality that exists, irrespective of anybody experiencing or not, that brings a kind of shared reality to our experience.

Harri: Yes, and we can get even more abstract here for a moment, and this will sound philosophical. Remember that I said that it's not that nothing exists; everything is eternal. So if everything is eternal, then the moon has always been there. But, there's a little bit of truth on both sides of that, again, there always is.

You go into the physical sciences, and they're saying that universe after universe after universe, you know, 12 billion years is only a fleck in time compared to other universes. So there never was a starting point and there's never an ending point. It's a little bit philosophical here but on the deepest level of my experience, I experience infinity and the absolute, and both of those terms tell me that everything exists and has always existed. What's missing is the ability to perceive that existence, or what part of that existence are you perceiving.

Not that you're creating the moon, but you may not be seeing the moon, so for *you* it doesn't exist. For *you*, as a person, it doesn't exist. For somebody else, a scientist with a telescope looking at that, at the same time you are saying that it doesn't exist.

Rick: Now there will be a time when the sun becomes a red giant, expands, and the moon gets melted into it.

Harri: No, no, no, no, no, no! That's where you're missing it.

Rick: Okay.

Harri: You can't have an absolute or an infinity or eternity if that happens. Okay, I'll say this once and nobody will get it, and maybe I don't get it either but, with all these universes coming and going, the sun was there 20 billion years ago? 24 billion years ago? A thousand billion years ago it was there - a billion, million times, coming and going. You're thinking of it on a human timescale but no, no; it's like a movie. Sun, sun, sun, sun, sun, sun, sun, sun, sun ... a million times over. Eternity is not a length of time; it's eternity. Okay, we're not going to go anymore into this because you ain't gonna get it!

Rick: Okay, this will be for our repeat interview 20 years from now.

Harri: That's exactly right.

Rick: If we're still alive.

Harri: Well, we'll have to do that. But yes, we'll get out of that now; that's enough.

Rick: There's a lot of raised eyebrows out there right now, but something to think about.

Harri: While we're on these slightly more far out experiences, this one is a wonderful panorama (showing a picture).

Rick: Yeah, there was one, and I forget, maybe it was one of the ones you marked, about celestial perception and God consciousness and all that. Maybe that's what this is.

Harri: There's something like that here. You know, I'm reading all the experiences but there's a ton of stories, and I should have marked one or two of them.

Rick: That's okay. There are funny stories from when you were a kid, crazy things you did...

Harri: Yeah ... and pictures my wife [has taken].

Rick: We could put that up on the video section, spot.

Harri: We should, let's do that. "

So my experience is like looking at a wonderful panorama that goes on and on and on, one that I can appreciate and describe in the greatest details, while my senses are simply delivering the information. I can describe the landscape of the absolute in this simple way. I am the same absolute experiencer in the individual and in the universe – the same one who is doing the knowing, looking, enjoying and processing, with a clarified range in my heart, mind, and body.

The landscape of the Absolute is awash with the heaven of my own awareness, my own bliss. I live and breathe in the landscape of the effulgent Absolute, an environment of conscious knowledge, where even all empty space and differences are acknowledged and loved for the unity and wholeness that they are."

So that's about it, you know, you can't take relative life – the physical universe – and separate it from the Divine universe, or from the knowledge level of your own consciousness, or from the absolute; they're all one interrelated, connected phenomenon of universal consciousness, and how it percolates as individual consciousness, and how they're joined together.

Rick: Yeah, where would the dividing line be? Where could you draw it?

Harri: You can't draw it anywhere.

Rick: It's like the depth of the ocean, where is the line where it goes from shallow to deep?

Harri: Yeah, you could never find it, it's kind of falling and moving, yes, that's beautiful.

“I experience the movements of my mind and body as all-pervading from within an encompassing clarity” – just what you said. “Everything is contained in this wonder that is absolute understanding, absolute hearing, and absolute sight. Wide-open is this experience. I can discern the self, shimmering absolute in the relative and the relationship between them. This relationship renders all differences unified. It closes all gaps.

All of my self and the environment are characteristics of the Absolute functioning as my consciousness. This awareness that contains both the unbounded absolute and the universal relative is the unbounded *knower*; it is my own awareness, potentially everybody’s awareness.

This is not just a feeling or an abstract knowing, it is so tangible that even walking outside I can hear and see the interconnected structuring thickness of my own unified consciousness. My understanding wakes up. Abstract experience, which is organized as sequentially perfect information, becomes real and practical. This entirety, this absolute space, my space, is so subtle and also so obvious, that it is certainly not just space, neither all relative, nor all absolute. This lively effulgence, this all-encompassing awareness contains at least, or at least defines the Absolute, as part and parcel of my own experience.”

I’m going to skip a little bit here. “I experience the gloriously occupied heaven all around me, a heaven within heaven, right here, right now, in my heart. I say ‘heaven within heaven’ because I can always locate this heaven within my heart, within my body. Yet when I look closer, the boundaries of my heart and body also extend all the way to encompass universal existence itself – the heaven of all heavens. This memory sight of unboundedness is so clear, that all memories partake of this one supreme memory that has always been present.” I’m going to skip a little bit still.

“Pure stillness isn’t there because I have wonderful thoughts or wonderful sights,; it is there because within these experiences, I am the reflected glory of infinity, my own unbounded self, an awake, eternal abstraction spilling its totality into smaller and smaller, and larger and larger aspects myself. The happiness isn’t there because I experience only transcendent stillness; it is there because the togetherness and the sublime intimacy and beauty of all the workings of my consciousness.”

So how does a person relate all this kind of stuff to daily life, you know, going to work?

Rick: Well that’s a good question, because when you read this, and actually when I read your book, it’s like, “Hoot! It’s kind of thick!” and every little phrase needs unpacking. It does seem a far cry from most peoples’ daily lives.

Harri: So should I read this thing about going on this log down into the water?

Rick: Well, you could just tell the story; you know what you said.

Harri: Yeah!

Rick: And how does that relate to what we're talking about? I think you might have told it in a previous interview, I'm not sure.

Harri: Well, okay, maybe I did. So we're in this great big park in Canada and I'm 17 years old, I'm in high school. And a bunch of buddies were camping *way* back, on a lake – a bunch of series of lakes. So we're sitting on a rock that slopes into the water - oh, 50, 60 feet down there – and it's a 60 degree slant. And we're sitting on this log around the fire, it's not dark yet; it's still light. And of course being who I am, I have the thought, "This is like a great toboggan. I could slide down this hill on this log and into the water!" And of course it was me that had that thought and the other guys said, "Yeah, yeah! You do it, do it!"

And there were four of us, so we haul this log – it's a heavy log, but it's not so heavy; about this thick, 8 feet long. So I'm sitting on the log and so these guys push it off there and it shoots so fast down this angle and first thing I know is ... "This is stupid. What am I doing?" And within seconds I hit the water, freezing cold water. The log keeps going, I go into a daze, probably unconscious for a moment, and I'm floating under the water. The log has gone *way* down into the deep and I open my eyes and I see all these silver stars past, and this slow motion kind of thing.

And I realized my coins are falling out of my pockets and I and then I realized, "Wait a minute, I can't breathe, I gotta get out of here. I'm under" And so I scrambled to the surface and as I'm doing that the log shoots by me from the depths. Because it was heavy it went much deeper and then came back up. It misses me by what?... this much, and I stagger out from the water and I look at the guys up there and they're all, "Yey, yey, yey, yey!" And I go back up.

But my point is that, first of all, after that I never did that again, ever, but I did get something out of it. You know, when I was under the water – and I didn't even write this in it – but when I was under the water I wasn't unconscious; I was conscious. And I was still so young that I didn't know, but I knew that something had transformed.

I'm not suggesting *anybody* in their right mind do that! The reason I put a lot of stories like that in there is to show that any fool can have these experiences I'm talking about; I'm not special that way. So here I am, 17 years old, having these crazy experiences and starting to have celestial perception as well; they go almost hand in hand.

And here's this crazy experience, here's this celestial experience, or unity experience or whatever - they're this far apart ... I may have been even younger. I'm a kid, I have pure consciousness and here I am today, I have this same pure consciousness there, the same pure consciousness there, but all these layers are in there. So the consciousness and understanding I have now are so much bigger. That log experience is one of those experiences in there.

Rick: So are you saying that one can have an inner wisdom dawn, but it doesn't necessarily prevent you from acting like an idiot if you're 17 years old and your judgment is poor, because you're not that mature?

Harri: Yes.

Rick: Is that the main point of the story?

Harri: That's the main point of the story. And the other point is that you are on this Earth to go through experiences, and some people go through dramatic experiences, some people don't go through such [dramatic experiences]. But all of us have ups and downs and those ups and downs are kind of "rubbing us the right way."

Rick: Yeah, and what I would also conclude from that experience, and I've had some experiences like that in my own life too, is that life is a precious gift. And there have been a number of times when I've been in some kind of a dangerous situation, up on some cliff or something and not knowing what I'm doing, and it's almost like a voice comes to me that says, "This is not what you're meant to be doing with your body," it's like, "be careful." Life is really precious and the opportunity for evolution in life is really so grand, and you really don't want to maim or cripple or kill yourself doing something.

Harri: I kept doing those kinds of things but I survived, and I never advocate that kind of stuff. But the main reason I put those stories [in there] is that some of them are fun, but it's to show that I'm just a normal person, you know?

Rick: Yeah, I think it goes for drugs too, you know, the moral of the situation is: be careful. There are a lot of people who are experimenting with Ahayauasca and so on, and some people are getting good results from it, and I'm not saying that nobody should do that, but 'safety first' would be a good motto to live by.

Harri: I think so, for sure.

Rick: "Read last," it says. Is that what your little note says?

Harri: That's what it says.

Rick: Yeah, we've been going on for a while, we should probably ...

Harri: Are we getting close?

Rick: Get close to wrapping it up

Harri: Okay, so yeah, let's do a summary, but let me read this. You know, I'm naturally attracted to the bigger experiences and that's why, I must say, my wife had a influence on me putting in some of my smaller experiences. That's a nice experience (Referring to the book) ... the 'parlor stove experience' ... and the 'gap through the trees.' I keep changing my glasses here folks, sorry

"Awareness is a cosmic map. I experience my basic consciousness very much like a map, or a detailed organizational chart that shows, even at a glance, the structure of inside to outside experience. This map of consciousness looks just like a printed map in that the sections define just one separate expanse of a perfectly interconnected continuum of information.

When looking at even one section of the map of awareness, within the wholeness of consciousness, it is perfectly clear that *nothing* can be taken away without affecting the whole. My physical sense has this wonderful quality, that it is uninterruptedly pure consciousness, that *nothing* has been left out of the natural, layered connectedness of my unified experience.

This map of consciousness is what I have been describing over the years and in this book, the unbounded knowingness component of my awareness is the ground state of all the subsequent concrete values of expressed, naturally arising within my infinity of consciousness.

My experience is not just intellectual; I'm just not that smart. My experience is based solely on my ability to absorb. When I can actually see the knowledge component of my own consciousness reverberating within my heart and mind as the gloriously occupied heavens, every bit is universe, the universal is underlying [more] pure knowledge than I can describe.

All around me in daily life, I can observe and I can hear a vast space full of Divine activity, and the unity of cosmic configurations displayed as my own experience. The experience of pure consciousness is so subtle and so natural as to be almost indescribable, and yet it becomes so clear as to be obvious. So knowledge-filled, bliss-filled, body-filled, Divinity-filled, that one could not possibly mix it. Wholeness has the absolute as its nature. My mind is its lively knowledge, my heart is its bliss, my senses as its expanded nature, and my body as its eternal existence."

Now that goes on for a while, but I thought I'd stop because it's kind of abstract, you know, I'm trying really hard to be practical about this stuff. But to me, all these experiences that I've read and related they're within my normal life, they're within my normal sight, they're within my normal touch, within my normal understanding, and *everybody* can have that kind of normal experience.

No, even a small glimmer of experience can have an understanding component to it. And understanding enlivens the glimmer to many glimmers. Many glimmers join together to be a sight. A sight expands to become your daily life, like that. Do you have anything to add?

Rick: Yeah ... just that understanding and experience both enhance one another and one should pursue both simultaneously, I think, through whatever means one can. This whole show is something about gaining greater understanding and getting everybody's perspective on this broad, general topic of spiritual unfoldment. And I'm probably the prime beneficiary in terms of being able to talk to these people every week. But a lot of people write in to say that it's really had a profound impact on them – listening to this, that, or the other person.

So you know, it's like the old saying, "That to which you give your attention to grows stronger in your life." And I think if a person feels called to spirituality, to develop consciousness, to develop enlightenment, awakening, whatever, just keep on truckin', keep your attention there, and one thing after the other will unfold.

There's a verse in the Gita that says, "No effort is lost and no obstacle exists; even a little of this dharma removes great fear." So I really don't think there are any obstacles, and by effort, if we mean by 'effort' just attention – giving your attention to this – then one thing will lead to the next and it will just keep unfolding.

Harri: You know, the closest that a man can get to having a baby, which I don't mean to compare to *really* having a baby, but the closest a guy can get to that, to me, is writing a book, because

you've made this entity, and it's got all these things that were somewhat secret and whatever. Guys cannot understand in any way or in any style what having a baby is like; that's a ladies domain. Now, writing a book felt to me, as close as a guy might get to that experience, because in a sense, you've made this entity.

And incidentally, I've just had a grandchild, and I can't compare the two, of course, but there are similarities. And one of the similarities is that you've kind of got this thing that's now growing – people are reading it, they're calling you and they're saying, "This is good," or "Hey, you're a crazy man," or whatever they're saying! And it has a life of its own. You're no longer "doing" the book; the book is now doing you, in a sense.

And so, I think that's my conclusion, and I'm going to say that the book is available on Amazon, Kindle, Nook, wherever you want, and I hope you enjoy it. I enjoyed writing it. And thank you for having me. It's been great.

Rick: And you're already several months pregnant with a new one.

Harri: I've written a new book, almost.

Rick: It's beginning to show!

Harri: Oh yeah, it does, prosperity shows all over the place! Thank you folks, I've had a good time

Rick: Yeah, and I thank you all for listening or watching. This has gone a little longer, but Harri and I are obviously enjoying ourselves. Let me just make my usual concluding remarks, which are that this is an ongoing series. It exists as an audio podcast as well as video. If you want to be notified of new ones, sign up for the email thing on www.batgap.com. There's the 'Donate' button, which we appreciate, and explore the menus, you'll find a few other things.

So we will probably be seeing more of Harri one of these days, but in any case, I'll be linking to his website and to his book and so on. And you are fairly accessible if people want to write you, you read it?

Harri: Oh yeah, I started answering in the last six months, and I have a blog, I have a website, and a Facebook page, and all that stuff. And I'm learning it, so excuse me if I push the wrong button every once in a while!

Rick: Yeah, so anyway, thanks for listening or watching. Hope you've enjoyed this and we'll see you next time.

Harri: Thank you.

{BATGAP theme music plays}