

ShantiMayi

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. I have conducted nearly 385 of them now and if this is new to you, go to batgap.com and look under the past interviews menu where you will see all the previous ones organized in about 4-5 different ways.

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My guest today is ShantiMayi. I often say this when I am starting out interviews but I really feel it today-I really enjoyed preparing for this interview. ShantiMayi has really lived an exemplary life, spiritually speaking, and has imbibed or uncovered a lot of wisdom within herself and it is very evident in reading her book which is called 'In Our Hearts We Know'. And listening to her online Audios.

In fact I had a funny experience, ShantiMayi. I was listening to a bunch of your audios and you do most of them out in Nature near some cliff. And you were saying, 'I am here today with Devi and sitting near the cliff.' And I kind of... I was sort of assuming that Devi was like a human being who was like your personal assistant or doing the recording or something like that. And at one point after I listened to a number of these you said, 'Oh, Devi has run off to chase a wild pig.' (LAUGHS)

And so I realized that Devi was a dog.

ShantiMayi:-Yaa. That's Right (Laughs). Yaa. I can see the confusion.

Rick:-Yaa. So anyway, let me read your bio a little bit here. ShantiMayi has been, what she calls 'mirroring' ... for well over two decades. She was born in the US, lives in France and India mostly. She has traveled the world to remind those who are remembering, who wonder and are drawn by their heart to the ancient wisdom of Self Realization.

She had the rare and unusual opportunity to sequester herself for many years in India at the feet of her Master. There she learned, unlearned and experienced directly, her Master's directives. In that awe inspiring atmosphere, her work had its inception and has gone full throttle ever since. She carries the Sacha Linage to the world and does not consider herself a Hindu. Yet, she grew in awareness, love and wisdom in the rich and fertile furrows of India's venerable spiritual heritage.

Well, I think I will ...I usually don't ask people's questions until later on. But somebody sent in a question that perfectly relates to what I just read and I will ask it of you. This is a fellow named...a person named KP from Mumbai. He or She asks:-

'Can ShantiMayi clarify what exactly is a lineage? Is it just some formal outward institution (such as I went to Harvard etc.) or Guru that we follow? Or are there some subtle energy connections between people in a lineage? Do they see the world differently from people not in that lineage?

Also, can a person belong to two or three lineages or does it strictly imply only following one Guru? Who decides what lineage a person belongs to? And is every lineage open to all?'

There's a good question to start with.

ShantiMayi:-Well, that's five questions.

Rick:-Yaa. It is. Your right.

ShantiMayi:-Ok. So let's approach that. I can only speak about my experience I cannot say that this a rule for all lineages and the way they are with their students and disciples. So I can only speak about my own experience. And my experience with my Guru and the Linage-Lineage means, there's a line of masters that have emerged from ...Let's say, well you have a Guru and he has a disciple who is prepared to realize or whatever depth of spirituality he may discover or acquire and he may or she may carry on the lineage. So that's a lineage. I mean, it's like a family. You know, I have a Grandmother and I have a great grandmother. I am a great grandmother myself. My daughter is a grandmother. SO that is a lineage.

And, yeah. So, are lineages open to all? I don't know. We honor or I honor my master and that's my lineage. And I learned ...as I said, I learned and unlearned a great deal from him. But that's all I can really say. I cannot speak for other lineages or how people enter those stories. Or give their lives to that spirituality or teacher. I have one and one Guru only. But I am not a person to say that other people should do it that way. I am not going to do that.

Rick:-Yeah.

One part of his question was is there some kind of subtle energy connection between people in a lineage. So...

ShantiMayi:-There is. Absolutely there is. Absolutely there is. At least that's my experience. I don't know for other people like that master sees something like the story of Huineng. You know, he went to a master. He was totally enlightened. And the master sent him to the kitchen to do menial work. For 13 years. Yeah. There is something that passes between them. But it is not really that it passes between them. It's that it wakes up in you. It's like the wick of a candle. You lean the fire into the candle and the fire is always in the wick. Is that not true?

Rick:-Hmm

ShantiMayi:-The possibility for the fire is always in the wick. So the fire comes (bends towards the other hand to illustrate)...like that....and because it is dry and capable it ignites. And I would say that it is an analogy of the subtle energies that move between master and disciple.

Rick:-Hmm. I have a friend. He told me this in private conversation so I guess I won't reveal his name. But he has a long and dedicated spiritual practice. He recently in recent years became good friends with Adyashanti. He (Adyashanti) I think last summer kind of did that official investiture ceremony where he made him kind of part of his lineage or part of his group. And my friend said that he was teaching not long thereafter and all of a sudden he got the uncanny feeling that Adya was standing behind him and it was so vivid that he turned around to look-To see if Adya was standing there, you know. And he wasn't in the flesh. But it almost implied in his experience – and he does tend to have subtle experience- that there is some kind of energetic connection that gets established.

ShantiMayi:-Absolutely. Absolutely. For sure. I have had that experience myself. Where I have thought my Guru...Where I have thought my face is HIS face.

Rick:-Hmmm

ShantiMayi:-So I also hesitate to tell these kind of experiences because I don't know that I am setting an expectation for others to have that kind of experience. 'Well, why I am I not having that. Am I not worthy?' You know where it goes.

Rick:-I think that is a good point to make in general. You can get envious of other peoples experiences. Of all sorts of experiences. And it is good to remember that your experiences are yours and theirs are theirs and the twain may not meet.

ShantiMayi:-That's right. I mean, some people when they have some Satori they know it's like fireworks. And in Zen there is a statement ...maybe you have heard this on my transmission...where the master walks through a portal and he doesn't realize he is wet until on the other side. I like that very much, this kind of diversity in realization. I think it is really important to people.

Rick:-Yeah. I like that too. And I have used that story also in interviews. Like you kind of are walking in a drizzle and it doesn't seem to be raining but you end up just as wet as if it were a downpour. You know.

ShantiMayi:-That's right. That's beautiful. Huh.

Rick:-Yeah.

Then there is the whole thing about people claiming that they are in a lineage. You see a lot of people with pictures of Ramana Maharshi behind them. And then people like David Godman who you know is a biographer of Ramana and Papaji and so on say, 'He didn't establish a lineage. These people who say that they are in his lineage are just kind of making that up.' I don't what...

ShantiMayi:-I think...

Rick:-Go ahead.

ShantiMayi:-I'm sorry.

Rick:-No please.

ShantiMayi:-I'm sorry. I don't mean to interrupt you. That is personal. David Godman doesn't know what is going on in the heart of someone else. And he doesn't know whether Ramana has or has not; he never met Ramana in his life. And Papaji seems to have a lineage! I mean, if you look down the line there's a lot of people who you know...

Rick:-Yeah. Good.

ShantiMayi:-I don't know if we can say that for other people. That's what I am trying to say. I am not attempting to say that Godman is right or wrong. What I am attempting to say is that it is an intimate interior kind of experience that I don't think one can guess for another person.

Rick:-Yeah. One thing I like about the way you teach and write is that you are very reluctantly to say you know anything with any adamant certainty. People will ask you a question like what is reality? And you will say I don't know! (Laughs)

ShantiMayi:-Right! Reality is a very deep topic. We would have to just dig in for months on that one. You know.

Rick:-Yeah. Incidentally you've mentioned your master a couple of times. Why don't you tell us who he is or was? Is he still alive?

ShantiMayi:-No he passed away in 2011. And he was a really really simple man. He was almost six foot tall and he weighed about 115 pounds.

Rick:-Wow

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. He was sick all of his life in his stomach. He was of the Bodhi-sattva line. He would not say so. But his Guru told him to always keep his awareness to benefit humanity with a certain mantra to do so. And he did that. For 50 years. That's what he was about. Very quiet. And very delicate kind of human being. Almost as if he wasn't present. You know. Not in the physical. Very sweet. Very wonderful.

Rick:-When you say He was of the Bodhisattva line and he did that, you are implying that had he chosen to- or had his master not told him to sort of stay connected with the world and benefit humanity -he would have just sort of ascended or just been off in a cave or something ...not really interacted with people very much. Is that what you are saying?

ShantiMayi:-He was like that anyhow. But what I mean by Bodhisattva was his world or his life was to pray for the enlightenment of all beings. That's what it was about.

Rick:-Hmm.

ShantiMayi:-So that's what he did. And he just followed his master's directive.

Rick:-Yeah. Ok

While we are talking of Gurus and masters – At one point you say in your book, 99% of people need a Guru. 90% of people think they are among the 1% who don't.

ShantiMayi: - (Both Laugh)

Yeah. I feel that's true. But the statement about, 'When you mature and when you are ready that will happen', I feel that's a very good guideline. So if somebody feels that they don't need that, could they get it if they were resisting it anyhow? Nothing will come to them. Like water ducts back. Right? But I again feel that this is a very human story. And everyone is going to transcend this world eventually. And how they transcend this world is a very intimate and individual story. Some people, maybe they will never ever ever really need a Guru. Pretty unusual if that would be true.

Rick:-If they never needed one?

ShantiMayi:-Yeah.

Rick:-Just this morning I was listening to your Recording in which you were saying that you felt that you were transcending or leaving this world. And I think what you meant was that you've pretty much gleaned what this planet had to offer you in terms of spiritual opportunities and that you probably would be moving elsewhere after this. I'd like you to elaborate on that.

ShantiMayi:-Maybe. (Laughs)

Rick:-Yeah. You don't know right?

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. I feel like that. Yeah. And I don't feel that it's a level or an accomplishment or anything special. Yeah maybe I will take a thousand thousand more life times. But my sense is regardless of how long time takes I am headed out. Aren't you?

Rick:-Yeah. I once saw a YouTube video of some Yogi in India and he spoke good English. And he was asked about re-incarnation. And he said, 'I really don't care.' He said, 'Whatever god wants. I'll come back any number of times if I can be of service. I will do whatever. And If I can be of service elsewhere or nowhere, or whatever, I mean, it's just in God's hands.'

ShantiMayi:-I agree. And I imagine that I say that sometimes because I feel so not-repulsed. But neutrally un-attracted to what goes on, on the planet. The politics that's come up lately – that caught me a little bit.

Rick:-Yeah.

ShantiMayi:-But, nature. To sit with Nature really feels like I am whoever I am or whatever I am has already departed from this planet.

Rick:-Hmm. You are a being without the three *Gunas*.

ShantiMayi:-Maybe. I don't know. I don't know. I can't say anything about it except for- It feels like when you are going out a door and the door is almost closed. I can't say any kind of accomplishment or any kind of thing is special at all. Just Ah ha.

Rick:-Well, you often quote the bible you know. Be in the world but not of it.

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. I like that one very much. Huh. I think this is a Bodhisattva creed. Because Bodhisattva's are on this planet as well.

Rick:-Sure. You know and I would suspect, not to put words in your mouth, but I would suspect you were motivated out of compassion. I was getting into a little bit of a debate about climate change the other day. He said, 'Why do you care about it?' And I said, 'Well because the implications of it are that hundreds of millions of people could suffer really don't care about sports. I don't care about celebrities- the things that people put a lot of attention on. But there's certain things like that- like climate change- and other such issues that are important because they have serious implications for human suffering.'

ShantiMayi:-Umm. I think humans suffer the moment they are bored!

Rick:-Laughs

ShantiMayi:-And my feeling or my sense- I don't think it is a feeling so much- but my sense is that, That which is in control of all things just by being Is always in control of all things just by being and if we take

care of ourselves really well- kind to each other, compassionate to each other, respecting each other, respecting ourselves- you've probably heard me say this on the transmission many times then everything takes care of itself round us. So my view is, at least today, when we will change ourselves (I think Gandhi said the same) – when we will change ourselves the world will change. But we are not going to be able to change it until human beings actually change their consciousness. Is that true?

Rick:-Yeah. There's another saying. I think this one if from the bible. God helps those who help themselves.

ShantiMayi:-There you go. Yeah. It's full of really beautiful beautiful guidance.

Rick:-Yeah. Just to look back for a moment to the point about Gurus and Teachers. You know there are a lot of spiritual teachers out there these days. And sometimes people get with a teacher and kind of stick with that teacher. And other times they kind of hop scotch from one teacher to the next. And maybe that's a good thing. And maybe certain teachers can't take them as far as they need to go.

ShantiMayi:-Sure

Rick:-It's kind of like you travel from India to Cleveland or something you are probably going to go on several planes to get there. You cannot take the 747 from New Delhi all the way to Cleveland. What are your comments on that whole thought?

ShantiMayi:-Again, I feel that this is some intimate intimate relationship that one has with one's own heart and soul so to speak. And they will do what they will do. And they will acquire and discover what they acquire and discover. I would prefer that my students would not go elsewhere. But if they do then it is as you say. Sometimes people actually go elsewhere and maybe it is just that we just did not have that resonance deep enough where the person felt that they were moving along well. You know. Or they had some arrogance or they were resistant. Or they didn't want to. Or Whatever. But you know what? Wherever they go, may they be blessed and find their way perfectly, in every way shape and form. And that's what I wish in the deepest recesses of my heart is that it really really works out for them.

Rick:-One thing that comes up a number of times in your book is that spiritual enlightenment is not an end to anything. You say from my estimation it is hardly a beginning. And here's a bit more that you said. You said

There is no end to this discovery. There is a Buddhist term- enlightening being. We do not become enlightened. We are actively enlightening. It is better to avoid the term- enlightened/Finished. It is likely that you will not cease to explore and discover. You are never finished. And then you quote that Sutra

Gate Gate Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi swaha

Which you translate as

Go! Go! Go beyond! Go beyond the highest of the very highest. Beyond Enlightenment. Go! All the way and beyond!

ShantiMayi:-Hmm.

Rick:-Let's talk for a bit about this notion of whether there is an end point; whether we see it looming on the horizon or whether there's always going to be a next horizon.

ShantiMayi:-Hmm. The way you put it is very interesting. Because I am not sure that it's out in front of us. I am not sure that it is a sign post. I am not sure that there's levels or even a continuum. It's just this idea of arrival that seems to me to be off. Do you understand what I am saying?

Rick:-Hmm

ShantiMayi:-It's not really like we are going down a road and we get brighter and brighter and brighter and lighter and lighter and lighter and clearer and clearer. All though that may apply. It's more of, there's not a stopping point. Like you know- 'In the Beginning' - there was no Beginning. There is no end. These are ideas that are confined to the planet and to language. And as soon as we get over this language that bind the planet ideas and lay them aside, I would just say that the notion that I am finished, well, I can imagine it is incredibly premature most of the times.

Rick:-Laughs. Yeah. And yet there is something about the nature of awakenings or some awakenings in some way. It gives one the feeling that this is it. And I have heard number of teachers speak about this. Such as again Adyashanti. He said there is something intoxicating about certain qualities of certain awakenings that make you feel what more could there be. I am done.

ShantiMayi:-Hmmm. Hmmm. But then we are again confined to the idea and we have to be confined ...Let me back up. We are confined to the idea of language and pronouncements. And I would say that none of that applies. I would say that none of it applies. I have never felt intoxicated myself.

Rick:-That may have been the wrong word. Because that implies drunken or something. But I meant a sort of a deep sense of resolution or completeness or coming home or some sort of quality of Finality that seems to be characteristic of some awakenings.

ShantiMayi:-I don't mean to slither and slide. But I can't imagine any point that says there is something greater or lessor. Or done or finished or this must be it. That's a very ...This must be it...that kind of idea no matter what way it is put into is very objective.

THIS MUST BE IT!

Rick:-Laughs

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. I have a strong draw to old masters. Really really ancient masters.

Rick:-Hmm

ShantiMayi:-And pretty much it has worked to date. And they never ever go to these places. They just never go to ...they rarely talk about enlightenment. They just point to the actuality of the situation, you know. When you will drop your thoughts you will learn to just put them aside – release, release, release every idea you ever had – anything that begins to measure you or confine you just let it go by. And...yeah. You have to see what that means! Or not!

Am I being difficult?

Rick:-No No. You are being thought provoking.

ShantiMayi:-I don't mean to be difficult and I don't mean to be evasive.

Rick:-I don't think you are in the least difficult or evasive.

ShantiMayi:-Ok. I suppose it looks like, 'Oh my Gosh. Can you answer a straight question?'

Rick:-No no. It's very Zen like in a way. Because I am asking questions that would tempt one to get into a very rational linear box. And the topic that we are talking about doesn't fit in such a box.

ShantiMayi:-No.

Rick:-And your answers are perfect

ShantiMayi:-Whether they are or not I don't want to evade for you and I just don't want to like avoid. I really really feel that when you learn to observe your thoughts, you learn to pass them by, there's something incredible. And this is even very shifty conversation right here. Something very incredible, very subtle is revealed. And people do find out. They find out, 'Oh my god I have created this dizziness around me, these opinions around me. This measurement of myself. I had created all of this with my thoughts.' And to just drop little by little-Do you think Ramana ever thought a thing? Papaji never did, you know.

So just drop the thoughts, drop it, drop it and learn how to do that and learn how to be free and open in the cosmic mind. In my view there is only a cosmic mind. In my view there is no such thing as a personal mind. I always get a kick out of this-'Your mind is your enemy'. I don't have any enemy called mind. I create these ideas, I am confined by them and so I learn very well not to be confined by them. And Beyond that language is very shifty. That's why when you say I don't know anything you are so spot on really and truly.

Rick:-Yeah. Language is very shifty. And you know even know as I formulate questions in my mind, I think that is too limiting. But it is something in the nature of words and language that continually leads us into those little cul-de-sacs.

ShantiMayi:-And so important are those words. So important are they. At the very same time look at the volumes. Hah. Look at the volumes of libraries of Buddhist texts, of Hindu texts, of Christian texts or Muslim texts. These words must be...I am getting cold chills really. These words are very important. We don't just thrown the baby out with the bath water. On the other hand I am very careful to not create an idea in people to where they...coz people are very self-defacing. Self-doubting. And they will... 'Oh!! Then why I am not having this. What's wrong with me?' Drop those ideas. And go sit on a cliff. Or go sit next to a river. Or just watch a cloud pass by. And you will have ...I cannot say.

Rick:-Yeah you know. I was up at the Gym yesterday and I was talking to a friend whom I have known for decades. And he's been kind of a spiritual seeker for decades. And he was all grumbly. He was saying, 'You know, I have been doing this and doing that and all this meditating. And I have signed up for all these online courser with this person and that person. And I am just frustrated. I am sick of it.' I said, 'Are you actually expecting to reach some kind of glorious, big explosive experience. Ah Ha moment. Don't you recognize that over all these years there has been a steady maturation and clarification and deeper understanding and all that and that is just going to go on forever? If you are expecting to reach some big bang moment you are probably always going to be frustrated.'

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. Can I give you another view on that, Rick? It is a very interesting thing that you say.

One time I was out on the Sinai desert with some people and one woman said, 'I have been meditating forever and I have just never (voice cuts).And I said, 'You're maybe making a deal aren't you?'

Rick: - ShantiMayi, say that again. Your voice broke up during the important part. What did the woman say?

ShantiMayi:-Ok. 'I am not enlightened and I have been doing this for ever.' And I said, 'You're maybe making a deal aren't you. You will do this if you get that.' The beauty of meditation is to meditate. Nothing else. You are not going to get anything out of it. You are not putting a dollar down and getting an item. You are there because you love to sit in silence. What more do you want? You think all this stuff is going to produce something. It is already within you. You are what you are looking for. You are what you are seeking. So what kind of a deal can you make with the practice? The practice is to emerge this from you because you love to practice. Not because you are arduously getting up at 7 o'clock in the morning and having an hour of meditation and afterwards something is going to come. Because you love to meditate. There is no deal here.

Rick: - Yeah. I can relate to that. It's intrinsically gratifying and edifying.

ShantiMayi:-But Rick, what if you are doing that to get something else that is not gratifying. It's a struggle. It's like your friend. 'I have done this all my life and I am not getting anywhere.' Of course you don't have to get anywhere. GO inside your heart and see who you are.

Rick: - In your book you quote a great Zen master as having said 100% relaxation is 100% enlightenment.

ShantiMayi:-There you go!

Rick: - And when you say what if it is a struggle. I would say if it is a struggle then you are not doing it right. There is too much inception of individual effort perhaps.

ShantiMayi:-You know that is a very good topic too, Rick. I was talking to a woman because I felt that if she had just the experience of gratitude it would be very very good for her. So I have been encouraging her to have this sense of gratitude. Because she feels entitled and nothing is happening and that's fine. Ok. That where we were at. And she says, 'I think I did it wrong.' And I said, 'You cannot do it wrong. It's impossible to do it wrong. It's impossible. You cannot do anything wrong.'

Rick: - But I have heard descriptions of meditations in some circles saying. Ok... (Clenches teeth) You have to sit there... You have to clench your teeth... You have to prevent any thought from coming into your mind. And I think, God, if I tried to do that my head would explode.

ShantiMayi:-My head would explode just hearing

Rick: - Laughs.

ShantiMayi:-Yah. SO what do you do with that? I don't know what kind of personality wants to go for that kind of an arduous difficult...You know what I like a lot. You know in Daoism they really go for- to have the experience of kindness, to have the experience of compassion, to have the experience of generosity, to have the experience of dignity. Because there you discover what is already within you. That you have these qualities that you don't have to work out here for them and bring them into you. Do you understand what I am saying? Because often times people talk about cultivating this. Well, maybe that's the correct term. But you are inborn as an enlightened soul. Mary Magdalene said in the Gospel of Magdalen (I think she said), 'And forgetfulness is only temporary.'

Rick: - That's nice

ShantiMayi:-Isn't that beautiful.

Rick: - And a lot of people say when they do have a profound awakening, I have always know this. It was always like this. Somehow I temporarily forget. In fact it says that at the very end of the Bhagwat Geeta Arjuna says, 'I have regained my memory.'

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. Arjuna had to work a little further though. He ...Do you know that? That he did not wake up. I am glad that he regained his memory. Because he did not wake up and all of that ...

Rick: - In the course of the Geeta he didn't wake up?

ShantiMayi:-No. As a matter of fact, he went to hell to visit his relatives.

Rick: - Well, yeah. There's a whole story about that which we probably need to ...It was a very temporary visit. Because he went to heaven and he saw Duryodhana there. And he said, 'What's he doing here? I want to be with my relatives.' And they were in hell. And he said, 'I will go there then.' And so he went there. But it turned out that Duryodhana had a little bit of heavenly Karma to work off and the Pandavas had a little bit of hellish karma to work off and after that they swapped places according to the story.

ShantiMayi:-I love the way you just said that. Beautiful. You know it well. Very well. Very good.

Rick: - Yeah

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. That's the thing. You know what I feel. What I feel, a very powerful possibility exists when one ceases to doubt that all is totality in its undividable essence and there could not possibly be anything without THAT. When you will go there – language is so slippery- When you will go there and cease to doubt that the essence of you is the essence of God is the essence of the stars, is the essence of what is beyond anything that we can comprehend and all that we can comprehend and hold to THAT and THAT only, I feel that is like a shovel of discovery. Really. It just like digs in and digs in.

Rick: - Yeah. I like that theme. You often bring it up. And you talk about wonder which I also like. To me that's related to what you just said. I don't want to get too wordy here because I want you to do most of the talking but I just wanted to add something. As I was listening to your talks it reminded me of something that I think about often. You know, these days science has told us so much about the way the world works and if we just sit and ponder a blade of grass and consider what science had told us about it- I mean how many cells there are in it and how each of those cells is such a fantastic, marvelous intricate little thing. And then consider the intelligence which could fabricate such a thing and which could orchestrate it. And not only that blade of grass but the whole universe simultaneously. It puts you in a state of awe right away.

ShantiMayi:-It does.

Rick: - Yeah

ShantiMayi:-And some of the great old masters would say when you are in a state of awe and wonder you have had an experience of an enlightened mind and heart. Yeah. ..Because there is nothing you can say. There is nothing that you can figure. It's like you say. You take all of these elements and look into it and all of a sudden even those elements are gone. But they are like a stairway into that discovery. And you are just like without a word, without an explanation. It's like the total release you know. It like what I am talking about ...release, release, release, release, release. And the importance of words. Because

you brought first off in this gross story the elements, the molecules, and the cells and its intelligence. And that brings a sense of wonder. And a sense of wonder brings the experience of what it is to be free of any definition whatsoever.

Rick: - There is a beautiful quote from Einstein which I can't do verbatim and I don't have in front of me. Where he talks about, if we are not in a continual state of wonder then considering what is going on in front of our very eyes then we are as good as dead.

ShantiMayi:-Ok. Yeah. Einstein was good for that. He made some beautiful beautiful quotes. And I think it was his experience that he was talking about. Yeah...you know that happens to me a lot. Just like...HAAH....I say to people, 'How in God's name or any name did any of this happen?'

Rick: - Yeah.

ShantiMayi:-And often times they don't get it. They just look at me like, 'Are you crazy?' Ok. Maybe!

Rick: - Yeah. You know we have a tendency to take things for granted I suppose and become acclimated to things. But if we pause for a moment and contemplate what it actually is that we behold before us and within us that is the totality of all this. It's like I've been saying. Its mind boggling. I dunno. You can kind of remind yourself of that more and more often and it begins to become a constant condition of inspiration and awe at the kind of the miracle that we are participating in.

ShantiMayi:-And often times people don't see it. And I am often surprised that ...that little bit of click doesn't occur because...again, I have the experience a lot in spiritual circles and I feel that spiritually ignited people are very sincere. And really really deeply considerate. And profoundly moving. And still refuse to let go of some of those notions that, 'Oh, you know I am not getting it.' Like that. I wonder about that. What do you think?

Rick: - Well I think on the one hand, I prefer to err on the side of considering myself less enlightened than I may actually be rather than more. I think it is a safe way to go about it. And so maybe they are just being sort of humble and you know it's like, 'In contrast to the depth and clarity of realization that is possible maybe they are just saying that I am good beginner. I have ways to go.' But on the other hand you can sort of undercut yourself with unnecessary doubts.

ShantiMayi:-Exactly.

And when you in that state of wonder that you are speaking about, Rick doesn't it reveal to you that when you are free of thought and definition and necessity to analyze ...that I don't know...people are afraid to disappear in that. What do you think?

Rick: - I don't know I tend to be probably a very analytical person and think a bit too much. Also that thing I was saying about a blade of grass and the intelligence permeating and orchestrating everything. If we could really fathom that in its totality -as it fathoms itself, to that degree; as it appreciates itself to that degree -it would be kind of like that situation in the 11th chapter of the Bhagwat Geeta where Lord Krishna shows Arjuna his form and he's like, 'Holy MACRO. Take this away. It's too much.'

ShantiMayi:-I love that spot. I love it. I speak about it a lot. WHAO. WHAO. But what about that blade of grass you were speaking about. This is ...I suppose when you are spiritually prepared then you have really to give up a lot. You have to give us self-defacing. You have to give up the fear of anything- which

is really wonderful. Huh. And you have to give up resistance to your heart and soul. I say your heart and soul because – here we go with language- there's something that emerges in a very overwhelming manner in a very subtle way. Like when you see a baby being born or you see the sun come up in the morning- there is this subtlety, right? But it's like, Oh. And we don't want to fear ANYTHING. EVER. And we don't want to lie about it either. And that's why I say, take it little bit. Step by Step. But know that you are going into fearlessness. You are living on the edge of the unknown all the time. There's no such thing as security. Get it straight here. These are all ideas that contain you. They don't benefit you in any shape or form. So my view is that spiritually ignited people really have to give up all sense of fear and frustration little by little by little. Entitlement and identity and yes and no's and resistance. Like you said, the Zen master says, 'Just relax. Just relax.'

Rick: - I think there is a balance to be found. We have all seen egregious examples of people who got really full of themselves and thought they were God's gift to humanity, and they were perfect and beyond reproach and could do anything. You know. Untouched by the Karma because they were high and mighty...blah blah blah...there are all kinds of crazy examples. And we have also seen people who were like, 'Oh! I am such a poor schmuck. I will never get anywhere. I am no good. Blah Blah.' You know. And just indulging at that end of the spectrum. I think there is some kind of balance to be found that mixes together some nice qualities of confidence but humility, you know. Wisdom, but at the same time realizing that you really don't know anything for certain. Somehow it's a paradoxical thing that you learn to embrace.

ShantiMayi:-Right. Yes, absolutely. Let's just speak about one thing. Being wrong. People are fearful of being wrong. So this is one of those little tiny fears that you can let loose of but it is really really a leap to the moon. Because who cares if you are wrong or right. Because to be wrong is also on the road to be right because you have to turn around to be aware of what's beneficial or not beneficial. Anyhow...these to me, I don't know if we are going off topic or not, but to me these are very important spiritual willingness's. Lay down anything that encumbers you, you know. What do you think?

Rick: - I am never wrong, right Irene? 😊

ShantiMayi:-Oh, can I see Irene?

Rick: - She's sitting over here. Oh, she's in her bathrobe. She wouldn't want to get on- later you can see her?

ShantiMayi:-Laughs.

Rick: - She was saying, willingness to admit you are wrong. And I said, I am never wrong, right?

Irene: - Don't even get me started

ShantiMayi:-Laughs

I would say that if you want to go north and somebody is telling you that you are heading south, you'd be OK with that. You would turn around without question. It's like, 'Thank you.'

Rick: - Yeah

ShantiMayi:-So, that's the kind of thing I am talking about that. We clear these encumbrances of ideas that we have about ourselves.

Rick: - Yaa, you tell the story in one of your talks about this Zen Master who was confronted by somebody in the audience who said, 'You are wrong about that.' And he said, 'Ok.' And he went off and learnt what he had to learn, you know.

ShantiMayi:-Yeah.

Rick: - You want to tell that story?

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. It goes...He said something negated actuality and he defined something. I don't know what it was. And he defined something. And he said, 'Enlightenment is like this.' And the man in the assembly stood up and said you are wrong. And so the master went to him and said, 'Chan Man tell me where I am wrong. I want to know.' You see how wonderful that is?

Rick: - Rather than being defensive about it?

ShantiMayi:-So the Chan man says, 'You go sit, until you find out for yourself.' And he did. He sat until he found out for himself that he made an error in definition. You see. And he never did that again for people. Here's one more. Can I share one more?

Rick: - Of course.

ShantiMayi:-'But I am conditioned'. No! You are not conditioned. You are not conditioned; don't say you are conditioned. It's so that you have learnt things and you have learnt them well but be careful not to make excuses.

Rick: - I was just going to say. Well, you aren't conditioned but there is conditioning. And the conditioning can tend to kind of hide the 'You' that isn't conditioned. And so there does need to be some unravelling of that, right?

ShantiMayi:-Right. But the more excuses that you make, the more compounded that idea becomes. Yaa, I have learned...But I CANNOT be conditioned. It's impossible to condition me. That which I am seeking within myself is beyond any idea of conditioning and so I just drop that notion away. And even though I have learned something very strongly...I have learnt that my name is ShantiMayi; that my name was Mary Holland at one time huh...long time ago. And if anybody says ShantiMayi, I turn around like that. That's what we are talking about- Conditioning

Rick: - And that's a useful condition.

ShantiMayi:-It is a useful Conditioning. Exactly. There we go again. There's so much usefulness, but when we compound on top of our selves fears and concerns about always being right, I am conditioned and I am not capable- those are ideas that don't benefit you at all. And they are not true.

Rick: - Yeah, It's useful to be conditioned in the sense of knowing how to drive a car. And my wife had a fender bender at a certain intersection here in town some years ago and every time we get to that intersection it is like, 'Be careful this intersection scares me', you know. There is nothing more dangerous about that intersection than any other. But there's some impression that was made at that intersection, you know.

ShantiMayi:-No, I get that. Let's go to meditation again. What do we do in meditation? We breathe and we just observe. And we sit in stillness. Why? So that all of those ideas that we have can be laid to rest

for a moment. So that we can see beyond them. And that's all I am saying. That we perhaps have to give up some ideas about ourselves that aren't very beneficial.

Rick: - Sure. Did you ever hear the story about the lion in stone, the lion in Sand, and the lion in air...that whole thing?

ShantiMayi:-No. I'd love it.

Rick: - I'll tell it. I am opening myself up for criticism. People always say, 'Why don't you just shut up and let the person talk?' But anyway I am going to tell you this.

ShantiMayi:-We are having a conversation.

Rick: - Anyway it's one of those Vedic stories. It's about impressions and conditioning. That

If you make a line in stone, it's hard to make but if you make it, it stays there a long time.

If you make a line in sand, it is easier to make and it doesn't stay as long.

If you make a line in water, it is ever easier to make and it stays there even less long.

If you make a line in air, it's very easy make and it disappears the minute you make it.

So it's said to be that way with conditioning. If our nervous system is such that it's like stone then, new impressions that we accumulate are etched in it and kind of last and last and last. And we want the whole nervous system and the whole make-up to be more air-like in the sense that we can experience very deeply and profoundly without limitation and yet the impression is gone the minute it is experienced

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. That's really good. That's like Ramakrishna's point. We are having a conversation. I wouldn't want the whole conversation resting on my shoulders, I tell you. I am glad you are on your side.

Rick: - Ok

ShantiMayi:-It's like Ramakrishna said, 'It's like a line drawn on water. It's there but it's gone.'

Yeah. And often times I talk about that too. Limitations are very important like you say - You will NOT do this to me. I will not permit it. This is my line.

But as you say, if it is drawn in air then the line can be drawn anywhere at any time but it is useful. And not in cement. Like when it is not useful.

Rick: - And the metaphor isn't meant to imply that we are just permissive and 'Hell, whatever happens I will just be open to it?' So, I am glad you followed up with that point.

ShantiMayi:-No we don't do that. No, no. It's a very fine line. You know in the Vedas it is said that the pathway or the road to enlightenment is narrow and is difficult to walk as a razor's edge.

Rick: - Hmm.

ShantiMayi:-And I feel that that's true. I feel that it is really, really, really true. There's a constant release. I would say that. Release, release, release, release and then it's just like we were just saying. On

the other hand, you can't release everything, because you cannot let somebody treat you like a doormat. It's such a fine and beautiful skill to navigate your way through life, to realize the depths of your beauty, your intrinsic intelligence, your dignity, a wide-open mind, a wide-open heart. It's just the most exquisite walk.

Yeah. You know the Geeta comes to our aid here again. At one point in the story Arjuna sits down in the chariot and says, I give up. I don't care what happens. I'd rather live on alms in this world than fight this battle. I don't want to take any sort of action.

And Krishna says, No you have to take action. But first you have to be established in Yoga. You know... What is it? Chapter 2, verse 48. Yogastah Kuru Karmani. Be established in Yoga and then perform action. Then you're gonna do it without attachment and without the sort of individual narrowness that results in mistakes. You were saying earlier that there's only Cosmic Mind and not individual mind. You're going to be operating from Cosmic mind and then whatever happens will turn out, will be done in the proper manner.

ShantiMayi:-Right. Right. And will be done just because it is done. Yeah, yeah. I love that. Though I feel that my observation could be wrong, could be right. But that's the way I see it. That there is only one mind and that's the same mind that is turning the seasons, right. That has brought all this into being. There is intimate and personal experience of that. So that's where we think that we have a personal mind. But nobody has ever found mind. Right?

Hmm.

ShantiMayi:-I don't know what mind is. I have no idea what mind is. When you said that the first time about half an hour ago, I was thinking, Well, yeah. There is only one ocean. But then we see these waves on the ocean. And of course, the waves are nothing but ocean. But you can still define this wave and you can distinguish it from that wave.

Absolutely. So you have a personal experience of the Cosmic Mind. But you don't have ...Bodhidharma. I remember one story about Bodhidharma. You want to hear it?

Rick: Yeah. Of course.

ShantiMayi:-Ok. I think it was Emperor Wu who went to Bodhidharma and he said, 'Bodhidharma, please appease my mind'. And Bodhidharma said, 'Well, bring me your mind?' And he said, 'It's impossible, I don't know where it's at.' And Bodhidharma said, 'I have appeased your mind'.

Rick: That's great.

ShantiMayi:-So. Yeah. Often times in spirituality I like to bring this up. Particularly in an interview. People will say your mind is your enemy. Or that you have to do something with your mind. I don't know what that means. I say that the way you think creates enemies. There is nothing that you can do with Mind at all. Yeah.

Rick: I mean, I haven't found mind either. And there are people who can define it much better than I. But I just understand it like a faculty. Like there are many other faculties. You know we have arms and legs and senses and this and that. That whole thing that Christ said about if your eye offends thee, pluck

it out or something like that, I don't know exactly what he was referring to – but it seems to me that being at war with any of our faculties is self-defeating and we just need to learn to harmonize them all.

ShantiMayi:-Exactly

Rick: There's the whole master servant thing here. If we try to make something a master which is meant to be a servant then we get into trouble. But if everything is properly apportioned and placed and prioritized in our experiential matrix then everything functions harmoniously.

ShantiMayi:-Perfectly. As it is anyhow? Right?

Rick: Good Point.

ShantiMayi:-As it is anyhow.

This is perfect. That is perfect. From the perfect springs the perfect. Take the perfect from the perfect and only the perfect remains.

I was telling in satsang yesterday that this is not a convenient term like when you feel very spiritual and high and bright an open. This is a statement that the Rishis made for every moment of every day. You know, whether you feel like Washington's gone to hell in a hand basket or You know whatever it could be. This totality is total and perfect as it is. Isn't that beautiful?

Rick: Yeah. I don't know if you know who Timothy Conway is. He is a friend of mine that I have interviewed a couple of times. But he has this really nice article where he addresses this point. He says, Ok there is three levels of consideration. There is the superficial level or the most obvious surface level in which there are problems. You know people are starving and you have to deal with that stuff. You can't say oh it is all perfect. And there is the more divine level of consideration in which everything is perfect. How could it be otherwise. All is well and wisely put. And then you could say at an even more fundamental level where nothing ever happened to begin with. And if you try to take a fixed stand in any one of these three levels according to this model it is lop-sided. You don't embrace the totality.

ShantiMayi:-Maybe.

Laughter

Rick: Well. Like try it. Try taking a fixed stand in one of those levels and see what happens.

ShantiMayi:-I feel that I would take a fixed stand in "This is perfect. That is perfect. From the perfect springs the perfect. Take the perfect from the perfect and only the perfect remains." And that would include everything. All three as well.

Rick: Yeah. As long as we interpret it properly and don't jump to conclusions. Like if we say Ok, everything is perfect and therefore we don't need to feed the starving children or something then you know, maybe we are not interpreting the verse the way the Rishis stated it.

ShantiMayi:-It's very good what you say but maybe its three different levels of – I don't like the word level- maybe its three different views. And positions so to speak. Ways of living. Because I feel that at some point you won't do anything for or against the earth at all. You'd just be ready to let it all take its own course and work it out. It will. It will work it out.

And I am totally not against Mother Teresa or those people who have really given themselves for others. I don't think that that's wrong. I am not evaluating anything. I am just saying that there's something- well again language is very difficult- there is a quality or an intelligence that it truly governing everything. And that would be the person who feeds, that would be the person who does not feed, it would be the Bodhisattva, that would be the violent person. It would be everything.

Rick: Yeah. I agree. I think it's kind of a matter of Dharma also. Where are you meant to serve and what your situation is. You know, the world is ...Obviously God loves variety. Look at the world. Look at the universe. Look at the Amazon rain forest. We all have our different streams of destiny to fulfill.

ShantiMayi:-Absolutely. So those streams of destiny would ...perfect is a slippery little term. But everything is total as it is.

Rick: Yeah. The verse you quoted is actually Poorna...which means full also. I mean, perfect is another translation.

"This is full. That is full. Taking Fulness from fullness, fullness remains."

ShantiMayi:-And absolute. It also means absolute and complete. So, this translation that I gave you is from Swami Muktananda. I always liked it because it is very confronting for people. And I really love confronting people. This is one of my favorite things to do. Because I feel that spirituality should be very confronting. Because you're gonna have to change your mind about something. You have to look at it in a different way maybe. And that's very confronting, is it not.

Rick: Speaking of confronting and speaking of Swami Muktananda – and I don't know if you want to go there. I have been pondering lately sort of the correlation- I have been pondering this for a long time- the correlation between enlightenment and behavior. Particularly ethics and morality and stuff like that which of course can be a very relative thing and can be determined by cultural mores and so on. Some people say there really is no correlation, you can be an absolute scoundrel- and I am not implying that Muktananda was one- but you know you can really an SOB and you can be enlightened. Others say, No that's not enlightenment. That's some kind of half-baked condition and if you are really enlightened as we are going to use the term then that is going to percolate into your behavior and there are going to be qualities of saintliness. Have you given much thought to that conundrum?

ShantiMayi:-Absolutely.

Rick: What do you think about it?

ShantiMayi:-I like the Zen masters. At one time, it was agreed when a person went into a Zendo, it was agreed and signed that they may die in that Zendo. They may die there. And the master at just the right moment would WHACK! And that guy would go ...Haah...and everything would be gone. But it was a divine action. TO take advantage of anyone for any reason for one's own aggrandizement is NOT enlightenment. You wouldn't even want to; you may be stern about your direction. You may even ask somebody to go away- I mean, I have three people in the last three years – because we didn't do it right together you know. There is somebody waiting for you who can do it right for you. But to take money – I take money because it is a livelihood. But we ASK.

Rick: We are not telling people to give them your life's savings or their grandmother's inheritance or something like that.

NEVER. Never have I needed to ask anyone for money personally whatsoever. Not once. So that's my good fortune. I'd never had to go there, right. But to sexually exploit, to need somebody to aggrandize you as Oh you are so great. And you are so wonderful. I have had some of that in my past too. I can't stay there long. And I would ask also the people who are listening who may be caught in such a place, don't be there long either. Because you have a certain responsibility to that as well. Huh. Even a really rotten teacher is showing you how not to be. Isn't that true?

Rick: Hmm

So, it's not that you stay there. You have to – you have a responsibility to that experience too. You have to go as quick as you can. Well, nobody can say what a person needs to go through. But absolutely not. Absolutely Not. They may be strange, they may be weird, they maybe upside down – those enlightened souls- but they could not harm anyone.

Rick: Yeah. Just last night somebody sent me a quote from the Dalai Lama. It will take me a minute to read but I think it is worth reading here.

ShantiMayi:-Please

He said:

(Rick Reads) A teacher who behaves unethically or asks students to do so can be judged as lacking in ultimate insight, His Holiness said. 'As far as my own understanding goes, the two claims—that you are not subject to precepts and you are free—these are the result of incorrect understanding.' No behavior is free from consequences. For this reason, true wisdom always includes compassion, the understanding that all things and beings are interconnected with (and vulnerable to) each other."

"Even though one's realization may be higher than the high beings,' His Holiness said, 'one's behavior should conform to the human way of life.'

"When teachers break the precepts, behaving in ways that are clearly damaging to themselves and others, students must face the situation, even though this can be challenging. 'Criticize openly,' His Holiness declared. 'That's the only way.' If there is incontrovertible evidence of wrongdoing, teachers should be confronted with it. They should be allowed to admit their wrongs, make amends, and undergo a rehabilitation process. If a teacher won't respond, students should publish the situation in a newspaper, not omitting the teacher's name," His Holiness said. "The fact that the teacher may have done many other good things should not keep us silent."

ShantiMayi:-No No No. That's a perfect perfect perfect response. You know what would you do if you sent a sincere person away from their spiritual journey because they were so frightened or so disillusioned.

Exactly. You have a big responsibility. Somebody approached me recently and said, Well I don't care how they take it. In a way, I understand when you say you don't care how they take what you say. I am just free to say whatever I want. And I wanted to ask him, Shall I respond to you. And he said, if you want to. And I didn't respond. Because I want him to want to. I don't really want to. But that's exactly what I brought up to him. The Dharma Seat is a responsibility. It's a privilege and a responsibility. You have to take the both to heart. And be really fine to people. As fine as you can possibly be.

Rick: Yeah, I agree.

ShantiMayi:-Yeah. Anyhow.

Rick: So I have a few more notes here. And you have to leave in about fifteen minutes because you have a satsang tonight. I want to make sure that we get in anything that is dear to your heart, anything that you would like to talk about. Is there anything on your mind that we haven't brought up that you want to be sure to cover.

ShantiMayi:-Not at all, Rick. I don't know, I think I went off topic a lot and covered just about everything. I just feel that it is really important that people have confidence in themselves and THAT is already inside a person. Whatever they discover- like if they discover they are courageous or they do have confidence, or there is a dignity within them, or that they do have an ability to be kind and compassionate, that really what they are finding out is that those qualities are already there, and they can have a lot of faith in those qualities in their lives.

And to watch and see how one thinks is of utmost importance because that's the bars to the prison right there, that is the world we create and that how we think about things will ... I would say that breath is very important to getting a great stillness. Meditation is important. Practice is of *utmost* importance, but you practice because you love it and you practice because you see the results, not because you're wanting something way down the road and think that you're pulling that toward yourself; what you are seeking is always within you – very important.

Rick: Yeah, I would say that if you don't love it and you're not seeing results, you're probably not going to stick with the practice. I have very rarely seen somebody stick with a practice that they couldn't stand to do.

ShantiMayi:-Right, but there are some people who will trudge along and do it because they need the discipline, But as we said, you can't actually do anything totally wrong, you can only discover what is more beneficial and more at ease than any other way.

I've seen people who get off very much on being a disciplinarian, it begins to define them. I think that maybe a stage for a few, I've only seen a few of those by the way.

Rick: Yeah, mostly in Germany 😊

ShantiMayi:-Yeah, there you go!

It is really nice to talk to you. I really, really enjoy speaking with you. I wish we were speaking in your living room or in mine rather than the computer, but I don't know, it's really joy to speak with you.

Rick: Well thanks, I enjoy it too and perhaps we'll have a chance to do that. And by the way, before I forget, if you run into Prajnaparamita say hi to her for me, I enjoyed speaking with her too.

ShantiMayi:-Oh yeah, yeah, she's so sweet.

Rick: Yeah, for those listening, she is a student of ShantiMayi who I interviewed about a year or so ago.

So when I was reading a bio of you, maybe it was in your book, the bio said that you came to your teacher's ashram and you were there about three years. And then after about three years you realized

the Self, or however the terminology was, I don't remember exactly how it was phrased, but you sort of realized your true nature.

And I'm just curious if you could describe that shift, or if you could describe that experience. I know it's a tall order but maybe take a shot at it.

ShantiMayi:-Sure. You know, my guru told me that ... okay, I want to put this in, this is *really* important: I neither believe nor disbelieve anything. I've made that a very important and powerful practice and it has benefited me tremendously. So just to listen, and everything falls into its rightful place, you don't have to reject anything, you don't have to disbelieve anything, you don't have to accept anything, and you don't have to adhere to anything; just open your listening capacity.

Okay, so I never believed nor disbelieved my guru. So he told me that I had lived lifetimes as a yogi before ... okay. Did you know that I had this satori in a factory?

Rick: No, I didn't.

ShantiMayi:-Yes, I did. I was in Eugene, Oregon and I was working at Diamond-A Canning factory – canning summer food for the winter - and I had on a hardhat and a yellow rubber suit, and blue rubber gloves, and boots up to my knees. And they put me, strangely, in a place that I'd never been to before. It was a place where I was totally alone, *way* back in the back of the factory. And I just ... I know it was an hour because I was at work, and I just disappeared.

And I remember some words that I was told but they were very few words, it was like, "All that you know is not so, and all that you know is so. But you don't know." And I just disappeared. I just disappeared and it was all like a deep blackness, like in the pupils of your eyes – the blackest of the black I've ever seen. And it was fearless. And all these definitions really are attempting to describe what it would be like being in the blackness of the pupils of your eyes.

And what was really interesting is an hour later I was just standing there, I don't think I ever moved for an hour! And I knew it was an hour because it was time to clock out. And I just took my timecard and I clocked out, and I called a friend and said, "I want to talk to you." And he said, "Okay."

So we went over for a coffee and I said, "I had an enlightened experience." And he said to me, "Who the hell do you think you are?!"

Rick: That's funny!

ShantiMayi: Yeah! And I thought he was sent from heaven! Because there was no need to defend, there was no need to *offend*; he couldn't push me over, I didn't have to hold anything up! And I just let it be, and I thought, "You are sent from heaven."

He later told me, "I was always sorry for saying that." I said, "Never, it was absolutely the most important thing that could have been said to me at that moment."

Rick: Hmm, you know, that's one of the reasons I started this show. I was meeting people around town here who had been meditating for decades and who were having these profound awakenings, and they would tell friends and the friends would say, "Are you crazy? You're just Joe Schmo, you couldn't have had an awakening, you don't glow in the dark, you can't levitate," or whatever.

And so I thought, “I’ve got to start hooking these people together, talking to these people who are having awakenings and let the people who don’t think that they’ve had one see that their peers are having them, and I think it will have a good effect.” So that was one of my initial motivations.

ShantiMayi: Great, great. I thought it was one of the most important things that could have happened directly akin to that situation – that experience that I had, you know, somebody saying ... “Thank you!”

Rick: And so how have things matured *since* then, if you could describe your inner experience?

ShantiMayi: Tremendously. Simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler, simpler. Less involved, less involved, less involved, and sometimes caught. Like the Washington story – *definitely* caught in that for a moment.

But it’s still like that point I was telling you, where you neither believe nor disbelieve; it still is a great service because it just keeps everything even. You just don’t have to have anything for this or anything for that, but you watch and observe. And observing has become a way of life. Yes, we get caught once in a while, it’s okay.

Rick: Nisargadatta said something like that too, when somebody asked him a similar question he said, “Yeah, I get caught up once in a while but it just lasts a moment.”

ShantiMayi: Yeah, it’s transparent, easy to be done with, because your heart is so – I like to speak about it in these terms – because your heart is so light and *cannot carry anything*. It’s like putting a weight in space; you can’t encumber yourself with these things so you learn not to do that anymore.

Rick: Yeah, I thought of another question I want to squeak in before we run out of time. In your book you said that your master, Hans Raj Maharajji, has met Christ, Buddha, and many Divine forms that he has had direct communication with. And the reason that I find that interesting is that I have this sort of ongoing debate with some friends about their experiences, that there seems to have been a total loss of a sense of personal self, and yet you keep hearing these stories of ascended masters and whatnot, who seem to be hanging around in some way, shape, or form, and interacting with people.

And so certainly if total loss of a sense of self is a hallmark of a certain stage of development and yet there still seems to be some kind of entity which is functioning, so I ‘m just curious about your thoughts on that.

ShantiMayi: Yes.

Rick: Yes what? I’m not going to let you off that easy!

ShantiMayi: Yes, that you actually walk in two worlds at once, and you just accept your experience as it is and not try to shove it away because you “should” look like this, you “should” look like that, or this “should” be the way you are. You are the way you are, and if you have those experiences why would you hide them? And I would also say, why would you bring them out? For myself it would be ... hmm, you know? But if you wanted to bring them out ... okay.

Rick: Well let me ask you for instance, you said earlier that there’s only Cosmic Mind not individual mind, do you have a sense of individuality, of personal self, a “somebody home?”

ShantiMayi: It's a really good question because ... it's a *really* good question. Because if somebody says, "Hey ShantiMayi," this person turns around. If this body is hungry, it eats.

Rick: If it puts its hand on the stove then the pain is felt there, I don't feel it over here in Iowa.

ShantiMayi: Exactly, and yet you'll also have your own individual experience of the Cosmic Mind, like every blade of grass. But I ask myself after that experience and some longtime in silence in India with my master - because Maharajji had said, "You'll do this and you'll do that" – and I thought, "How does a guru act? And I thought, "Wow, what a cage! Whoa! Ooh, stay away from that one!"

So for myself I just report as much as I can to people that would help them, but I really don't know about being here or absent or any of that; I'm not quite sure.

Rick: Hmm, that's good, that's a good answer.

ShantiMayi: Yeah, I'm not really quite sure. I know that all through the day something is occurring, but I'm not quite sure if there is an entity individual or not. Somebody is hungry here! I don't find ShantiMayi all that interesting and I don't demean her. You know, the thing is I don't find myself very important, what I find important are the teachings.

Rick: Yeah, my sense is it is just like how physics tells us that a body exists but if we go deep enough there is no body found, that in the same sense we could say there is a relative self but if you go deep enough, sure, it has no ultimate reality, but it is just one of those relative things. What is that word in Sanskrit? - 'mithya' – conditional reality.

You know there's that old saying of the pot – it's really only clay. There's no pot, it's just clay, yet you have a pot and you can put beans in it or whatever; there's a relative function.

ShantiMayi: That's a beautiful way of saying it because yeah, I absolutely just don't have an answer for that really. Except for my view is that you do live in two worlds at once – you live in the world of ... again, I would use the term 'release,' where everything is released, and then you live in the world of particulars. To me they are not different, or they are different but not separate, you understand?

Rick: Yeah.

ShantiMayi: There's a lot of difference but I don't find any separation, and that's the only thing I can say about myself, whatever that is, in terms of a reality or a dispensation of anything.

Rick: Good. Okay, well that's a good note to end on. As P.T. Barnum said, "Always leave 'em wanting more."

ShantiMayi: Oh I *love* P.T. Barnum! This *has* been a circus, a spiritual circus. ☺

Rick: Yeah. So I've thoroughly enjoyed this conversation, you're a really wonderful person, even though you're not a person, and it's a joy to talk to you. ☺

ShantiMayi: Are you Norwegian?

Rick: No, I'm English, Irish, and Scottish by ancestry, although I was born in Connecticut. Why do you ask?

ShantiMayi: Because you remind me of a Norwegian person.

Rick: Oh, okay, nope, not Norwegian. Although I like that song.

ShantiMayi: Which one?

Rick: Norwegian wood.

ShantiMayi: Oh, me too.

Rick: Yeah, great song.

Let me just make some wrap up points. I've been speaking with ShantiMayi and I will be creating a page on www.batgap.com linking to her websites, she's got two of them, also to her book, which I am about three-quarters the way through and really enjoying it. You know, I have a relatively small bookcase behind me here and I don't keep all the books that I get, but there are certain books that I keep and I'm going to keep this one because it's really nice. Books that I don't keep I send out to a women's prison in California.

ShantiMayi: Oh, lovely.

Rick: And so, as I mentioned in the beginning, most of you know that this is an ongoing series of interviews. There have been lots of them so far and there'll be many more. Go to www.batgap.com and there is a new menu we put up called 'At a Glance,' and if you go there it sort of summarizes everything that's on the site, so you can check it out.

Thanks for listening or watching and there will be another one in a week, and just about every week going forward. Talk to you later.

ShantiMayi: Okay, bye-bye, thank you.

Rick: Bye, thanks.

ShantiMayi: Thank you very, very much.

Rick: Oh, you're welcome.

{BATGAP theme music plays}