

## Culadasa (John Yates) - BATGAP 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. I have conducted 394 of them as of today, and if this is new to you and you would like to check out more of these, go to [www.batgap.com](http://www.batgap.com) and look under the 'Past Interviews' menu and you'll find all the previous ones organized and categorized in 4 or 5 different ways. This program is made possible by the support of appreciative listeners and viewers. If you appreciate it and feel like supporting it, there's a 'Donate' button on every page of the site.

My guest today is **Culadasa** - John Yates PhD is his original name. He is the director of Dharma Treasure Buddha Sangha outside Tucson, Arizona, and he is the author of the book *The Mind Illuminated: A Complete Meditation Guide Integrating Buddhist Wisdom and Brain Science for Greater Mindfulness*. He is a meditation master with over 4 decades of experience in Tibetan and Theravadan Buddhist traditions.

**Culadasa** also taught physiology and neuroscience for many years. He combines the original teachings of the Buddha with an emerging scientific understanding of the mind to give students a rich and rare opportunity for rapid progress and profound insight. So welcome, good to see you.

**Culadasa:** Good to see *you*, thank you for having me here.

**Rick:** Yeah, you know, probably 100 times while doing these interviews I've quoted the quote: "Awakening is an accident but continued practice will make you accident prone," and I always just said, "Some Zen guy said that but I don't know who it was," but I discovered it was you!

**Culadasa:** Yeah, and I'm not sure I'm the first person that ever said that or the only person, but yeah.

**Rick:** Yeah, it's a great little quote, very handy. Much to the ire of the nonpractice folks who say that you're already enlightened and you don't need to do anything.

**Culadasa:** Well it kind of allows room for them too, they can have accidents too.

**Rick:** It's true, yeah. Like a friend of mine said, "You might win the lottery, but don't make it your retirement plan."

**Culadasa:** Exactly, yeah.

**Rick:** So you have a long and extensive background in meditation. I know you learned TM and did that for a couple of years back in 1970 and you've studied a lot of other things. It's usually useful and interesting before we get into the meat of what you're doing and teaching now, to just get a little of a

chronological sketch of the significant highlights of your path. People always find that they can tune into the person better if they have a sense of what he's been through, and in many cases they can relate to a lot of the same things.

**Culadasa:** That's a good point. It's kind of hard to know how far to go back but I did have a rather major experience when I was in my teens, around 15 years old, that made me realize that the conventional truth and reality that I had grown up believing was truth and reality really wasn't, and that pretty much everybody had their own view of what was real and what wasn't. And so that set me on my path as a truth-seeker. I've been a truth-seeker all my life.

**Rick:** What triggered that experience? I mean, what was the nature of it?

**Culadasa:** Well that gets into a lot of personal detail; I'll give you a rough sketch. I grew up in a very difficult household, my mother had some psychological problems and my father had severe PTSD, or that's what they call it now, from World War 2.

**Rick:** Sounds like you're describing *my* life.

**Culadasa:** Oh is that right?

**Rick:** Yeah, same thing.

**Culadasa:** So it was a very traumatic childhood with physical abuse on one side and a way-overprotective mother who was also not entirely in touch with conventional reality. And so as an adolescent I discovered that the views I'd absorbed from her weren't really in sync with the more commonly shared views of my peers, and that was extremely traumatic and it led to my essentially letting go of *all* views, trying to discover what was true and then coming to an almost *equally* upsetting realization that everybody was living in their own private reality; it wasn't just my mother, she was just in a more extreme case of it.

And so it was a very emotionally traumatic period. The result was that I left home, I dropped out of school, I never even went to high school even though I ended up eventually getting a PhD, and I left home when I was 15. So I had something of an unusual [time of] early years of my life.

**Rick:** Yeah, you're still describing my life – leaving home, dropping out of high school.

**Culadasa:** *Really!?*

**Rick:** Brothers from another mother, they say.

**Culadasa:** Wow! That is totally amazing, yes.

**Rick:** And the whole thing about perspective – realizing that everybody sees the world differently – or me that was triggered by my first LSD experience, and especially going into a Dunkin Donuts in the morning and seeing the lady selling the donuts and realizing, “*Wow*, what they're actually perceiving in

this situation is so *different* than what I'm perceiving!" It was the first time I realized that the world is not just the same for everybody.

**Culadasa:** Yes, the means by which you reached it were different but you had the same experience. Well, my father was a research scientist, he was a chemist and he was also person who was interested in a lot of other things. He was an amateur astronomer and he dabbled in physics in his spare time and things like that, so I was exposed to a lot of science.

So the two directions that appeared to me in my adolescence as possible avenues for truth-seeking were science and philosophy. And I'm probably a bit unusual in that I read a lot of Kant and Kierkegaard and Husserl and people like that, and I was drawn to phenomenology since phenomenology was basically saying what I'd already discovered in my teens.

But anyway, then spirituality and religion - and the only religion I knew because of where I grew up was Christianity, and from what I knew about Christianity is that the Catholic Church was the mother church. And so I ended up becoming a Catholic and spending a couple of years as a seminarian thinking that this is one source of ... and at the same time I was at a Catholic university and I was studying sciences - I was studying physics, chemistry, biology - and so it was like I was trying to cover all the bases.

**Rick:** Right, hedging your bets.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, hedging my bets ... and philosophy as well. And I became extremely disillusioned with Catholicism and the more I learned about Church history and Church theology the more I realized ... well I have to say, I had become acquainted with Meister Eckhart and Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross and the *Cloud of Unknowing*, and I thought that's what I was going to find. You know, you become a seminarian and you're going to *really* get into ... and no wait ... that just wasn't part of it.

I was very disillusioned and that happened in the 60s. And so I dropped out of the seminary and dropped into the world of [inaudible] and LSD and mescaline and all those kinds of things. And so that really broke me out of the box that I had been in and really expanded the scope of my search, which then became ... I still felt science had some great promise but spirituality now appeared to be a very appealing avenue to follow.

And I became acquainted with Eastern religions and I actually discovered the Advaita Vedanta Society in Chicago and I ordered a bunch of books from them. And I tried to teach myself meditation from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras ... I mixed up my Sanskrit, I do that all the time. Yeah, and that didn't work out too well and I ended up getting into university through some amazing good fortune and doing my PhD, and that's when I encountered a Buddhist teacher.

And I had been, as you mentioned, doing TM for a couple of years and I hadn't had a lot of luck teaching myself meditation using the material from the Vedanta Society, which is really no surprise - I had no teacher, no idea where to find one. And then when the Beatles brought Maharishi and TM became available and I started meditating, and all of a sudden I did something that *worked*, and I was excited about that.

So I was going to become a TM teacher, and back in those days the first step was you became a TM checker and then there was a whole series of things. I was on my way in the particular path when I happened upon Buddhism, and my first teacher was Kamananda. He was a lay teacher at that point, although he had spent a number of years in monasteries in Southeast Asia, and he was student of Namgyal Rinpoche.

And this is an interesting part of the story because this is my lineage. Namgyal Rinpoche was born 'George Dawson' in Canada, and I was living in Canada at the time. He had gone to Southeast Asia and was ordained as Ananda Bodhi, and he became quite advanced and was recognized within the Theravada tradition. He was sent to Britain to establish meditation centers there and if you recall, this was the early 60s when he was sent, and Buddhism was pretty new to all Western culture – Britain, Europe, USA, and in the U.S., people who knew about Buddhism at all mostly knew Zen and Alan Watts and things like that.

Anyway, Ananda Bodhi set a meditation center first in London and then one in Scotland, which later became Samye Ling, a Tibetan center. But then he returned to Canada and part of his teaching style was he would take his students on these journeys, and one of their journeys took him to Sikkim and to the residence of the Karmapa, where the Karmapa recognized Ananda Bodhi as the tulku of Namgyal Rinpoche.

**Rick:** What does that mean?

**Culadasa:** A tulku is a reincarnation, so he was the reincarnation of the Namgyal Rinpoche. And so Ananda Bodhi re-ordained with the Karmapa and took up the study of Tibetan Buddhism and teaching it. And so that particular lineage is one that has combined both Tibetan and Theravadan teachings and then ultimately, through my teachers, it expanded beyond that so that pretty much every branch of Buddhism has been explored by one of my teachers.

Jotidhamma, who I met when he was a bhikkhu, he has since disrobed and lives in Vancouver ... a wonderful person. Anyway, I met Kamananda, he was my first teacher and actually, I had a sitar that I had bought from another graduate student, he was East Indian and gone back to India, got married, and his wife received an expensive sitar for a wedding present. The main core got smashed on the airplane on the trip back to Winnipeg. I bought it from him for \$20, which was a fortune for a graduate student in those days, and had no idea what I was going to do with it.

Kamananda played a musical instrument called the surbahar, which is basically a larger version of a sitar. And he was performing one night in Winnipeg's first vegetarian restaurant – this would have been about 1971, I think – and I recognized the similarity. I didn't know anything about the robes he was wearing but I recognized the instrument he was playing, and so on the break I said, "I have a sitar that's broken and can you teach me how to repair it and learn to ... can you look at it and tell me if it's repairable and then teach me how to play it?" And it turned out that he had a center that he had set up on the Cenaboy River in Winnipeg, it was in this beautiful old mansion, and this whole community lived with him.

So he gave me the address and he said, "Come next Thursday and bring your sitar." So I brought my sitar with the pieces in the bag, and over a series of weeks where I went there and we painstakingly reconstructed this sitar, he sat and talked to me about Buddhism and I found it extremely interesting. And one thing in particular he said to me was that the Buddha had said, "Don't believe anything, don't take it on any authority, including my authority. Don't take anything that I teach you." And I was like, "Okay!"

I mean, at this point I'm a scientist, at this point I'm a graduate PhD student doing science, writing papers, so it's like, "Okay, this is the spirituality that's for me when some teacher says *that*." And so I became involved in Buddhism and as they say, Kamananda was a student of Namgyal and so he was teaching the Mahasi style Vipassana at the same time that he was doing the Kagyu teachings, and then I started doing meditation retreats with him.

**Rick:** Did you find it difficult to transition from TM to the Buddhist meditation was it actually better suited to your nature and easy to shift?

**Culadasa:** Well actually I found the Mahasi style Vipassana *extremely* difficult but I stuck with it for a little over a year, and that's when my second teacher, Jodi Dama, returned from Southeast Asia and he was still ordained as a bhikkhu. He was also Canadian-born but he spent many, many years and he was quite an accomplished practitioner.

And I discussed with him my problems with the Vipassana meditation that Kama was teaching me and he said, "Well, do you realize that that's a new method; that was just invented in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Why don't you try a much more traditional method?" and so he taught me Samatha Vipassana and that was it, that was it.

**Rick:** Is it appropriate to ask at this point what the mechanics of *that* were, or would you rather move on and you'll have your own explanation of how you teach meditation and everything?

**Culadasa:** I'm not sure what your question is.

**Rick:** The Samatha Vipassana that you just mentioned, is it worth discussing how that worked and why it was easier for you or is that just a side note?

**Culadasa:** No, actually I think it's quite relevant because with the Samatha training, you're training stability of attention at the same time you're developing mindfulness. And in the dry Vipassana tradition, in the Mahasi tradition, there is a tendency for all the tendency to poo-poo anything to do with concentration, attentional stability ... "You don't need stable attention, all you need is momentary concentration" – *kanika Samadhi* it's called. And the method itself, you're probably familiar with that particular method.

**Rick:** I don't know Buddhism as well as I would like to so don't assume that I know anything, and who knows whose listening to this and what *they* know?

**Culadasa:** Right, yeah. Well the much more traditional approach was to develop Samatha, which usually gets translated as serenity or a calm abiding or things like that - Samatha and pali-Samatha in Sanskrit - and it's that you are basically training the mind as an instrument for insight and awakening. And the Vipassana or insight comes along with it, that's why it's called Samatha Vipassana. And the reason that the Mahasi noting method is referred to as 'dry insight' is that it totally eschews the Samatha component and the attentional stability.

Whether it was because I had started out with TM or whether it's just inherently ... and this is my opinion and of course my friends Daniel Ingram and Daniel Boutemy and a few other people, and I think Joseph Goldstein would agree but there's a few others who might not - that it is much more powerful to do it this way, to develop these various mental skills before you dive in to try and trigger insight experiences. But anyways, it worked for me.

**Rick:** Okay, and as we go along hopefully we will define some of these terms a little bit more clearly, like 'insight' - exactly what that means, and so on. Because we shouldn't assume that I for one understand fully what you mean by these terms, and listeners may not either.

**Culadasa:** Alright, I'm sorry. I'll try to stay on track here for the audience.

**Rick:** Let's just define our terms as we go along so people can stay with us. So now ... I guess I haven't told you this, I not only practiced TM but I'm also a TM teacher for over 25 years. And although I no longer do that, there is a sort of mechanics that I keep comparing with the mechanics of other things I hear which seem very effective to me, and that is the logic that the mind has a natural tendency to seek a field of greater happiness, and you yourself say that someplace ... I have some quote from it here ... oh, here you go, "If an object is important or interesting enough, attention remains stable. If something else is judged more important or interesting then the balance tips, attention moves elsewhere."

So Maharishi used the same kind of example, that if we're sitting here and some beautiful music starts playing, our attention will shift to it. And his logic was that the deeper levels of awareness, pure consciousness if you will, are inherently blissful - Ananda - and if the mind can be given an opportunity to move in that direction it will do so effortlessly. And so it sounds like there's a whole spectrum of Buddhist practices, from something similar to that - very effortless, natural, no concentration or control - to things which are quite arduous and use a lot of concentration and which seem to contradict that logic of 'the mind has a natural tendency and we should cooperate with it rather than fight it.'

So perhaps - it would help me anyway and perhaps be useful for other people to just - explain the mechanics of meditation as you practiced it, and practice it and teach it, and the logic of why you do so, why it's done that way.

**Culadasa:** Yes, I think here is where the term 'the middle way' applies, as it does to so many different sayings, because there are meditation practices which involve what I would consider to be an excessive degree of concentration. And here we come to a very important distinction, maybe I can creep up on this idea a little bit.

Okay, so somebody tells you, “Here is your meditation object” - whether it’s a candle, or breath to nose, or kasina, or Buddha image, or whatever it is – “here is your object” - let’s say it’s breath to nose – “I want you to focus on breath through the nose to the exclusion of everything else.” And so you feel from that instruction, you have the impression that your goal is to achieve a state where there is nothing else in your consciousness except that, and that you’re making progress to the degree that there’s very, very little else in your consciousness. There may be things in the background that intrude, there may be thoughts that come up, but if you can keep them as far away as possible until they disappear, until there’s just nothing there but your meditation object, that you’ve achieved the practice.

Now, if you enter into that state it *is* very pleasant, it is very blissful, but as I’ve discovered, it’s a dead end. You can sit there in this blissful state and when you come out of it you carry that pleasant, peaceful, tranquil state with you. You’re also a bit fuzzy minded for a while, but after a little while you come back to “normal” and it was a really nice experience, and when the time comes around to meditate again, if you achieve a skill in doing this, you can enter into it again, but that’s excessive concentration and it’s not going to lead you anywhere.

Now the other side of this is to develop this *hyper*-alert kind of awareness so that you really notice every little thing that ... when a thought comes up, you notice the thought comes up and you notice the thought passes away, and there’s a sound, there’s sensation – you just notice it coming, you notice it going.

Now that, that’s not so much a dead end but it leaves you with ... you haven’t really developed all your mental faculties to the degree that you can. And both of these things are very difficult to achieve, people practice for years and years in either one of these methods without succeeding. So the method that I’m talking about is one that takes a completely different approach and says that we have two ways of knowing things: we have attention, which focuses in. And we’re very used to using attention and we can choose what we pay attention to, but as you quoted from my book, our attention also is going to move independently because it is always looking for something interesting or important, a potential source of pleasure or pain to avoid. And whatever it focuses on it wants to analyze and it does so at the expense of everything else; you become very preoccupied.

The other thing, the other way we have of knowing is we have this expansive field of conscious awareness that we *live* in, and attention is really like ... if you could compare that to a floodlight that’s illuminating. Like you’re in this pitch dark night and you have this powerful floodlight that’s illuminating this large area in front of you, and then you have this spotlight that you can shine on anything in the floodlit area.

So you see something in the floodlit area that looks interesting and so you shine your spotlight. It’s like those things they sell ... the gazillion gigawatt lights that you can see things a mile away, that’s what attention is like. It shines on one thing in particular and then you notice something else in the field of your conscious awareness and you can move your attention to that, or something else happens in the field of your conscious awareness and so your attention goes to that. But we have these two different ways of knowing that are operating simultaneously.

Now I didn't know this during most of the time that I was learning to meditate, and so I never quite knew, was I *supposed* to be aware of all this stuff while I was practicing concentration on my breath, or was I supposed to make that go *away*? Or conversely, was I supposed to just mostly be in this place of awareness and the spotlight of attention was problematic?

Well what happened was that I sort of intuitively realized that both of these things should be there and that they actually work together, and that I was a much more fully present person. This is one of those things that my teachers and the books I'd read – and Kaman and Jodi weren't my only teachers, I also attended retreats with other teachers – and everybody was always stressing "being present." And it became really obvious to me that when I was *most* present was when I was using both attention and awareness, although at that time I didn't have the words to articulate it the way I do now.

I realized that when I have this more full experience of the present, including what was going on inside my own mind, that that was when things seemed most right. And we haven't talked about what insight is or awakening, but I had already learned at a very thorough level that this is really what I was looking for, and this seemed to me the place that I was going to find insight, was fully developing my conscious powers, not one aspect of them at the expense of the other.

**Rick:** Okay, let me interject a couple of questions here or would I interrupt your train of thought?.

**Culadasa:** No, go right ahead.

**Rick:** So one thing with regard to focusing during meditation. Let's say you take two 5-year old kids and you sit them down in two separate rooms in front of televisions, and you make one of them watch *Meet the Press*, but maybe you promise cake if they'll watch it for an hour, and the other gets to watch *SpongeBob Squarepants* – which one is going to be focused on the TV most effortlessly?

**Culadasa:** The kid watching CNN, of course!

**Rick:** Yeah, right. And so the implication here is that different objects of attention may have different abilities to spontaneously and naturally enable our attention to be focused on them. Maybe a candle isn't the most alluring thing to give one's attention to, maybe even the *breath* isn't the most alluring thing. Could it be that there's an object of attention that one could use in meditation that would be more conducive to the mind naturally focusing in an effortless way, and becoming more and more and more settled?

That's one question, hold that one in your awareness. I just also wanted to say, you mentioned that Samadhi is often translated as concentration in reference to the unique concentration developed in meditation, but it literally means 'a gathering together of the mind.' And there's that quote in the Gita which says, "Many-branched and endlessly diverse are the intellects of the irresolute, but the resolute intellect is one-pointed," and there are several other references - tortoises drawing in their limbs and so on, that indicate that what's being aimed at is a gathering together or a *convergence* of all the fragmented streams of awareness into a naturally focused, almost laser-like condition ... well, I wouldn't

say laser-like because a laser is isolated, whereas Samadhi is said to be a 'settling into unboundedness awareness.'

But in any case, concentration in that sense becomes a symptom or an end result of Samadhi rather than a means to it, a cart-and-horse kind of situation. So let me leave you with those ... there's more things I could say but let me leave you with those two: the idea that certain objects of attention as a means of meditation being naturally more *alluring* to the mind and therefore more conducive to effortlessness, and the second one being Samadhi not being attained *through* concentration but being a concentrated state through whatever means it's attained.

**Culadasa:** We'll deal with the first. Obviously, your environment, your life is full of a lot of things that are interesting to a relative degree, compared to each other, and so the normal way that the untrained mind works is that it is always looking for what is most interesting, entertaining, important, and so of course, the 5-year old wants to watch SpongeBob! But what we're really trying to do in mediation is to train the mind.

We have control over our attention – right now you can *choose* to pay attention to something else, you can choose to pay attention to one thing and then another and another, but how long your attention is going to remain on any one thing does depend on how intrinsically interesting it is. Now in meditation we want to train our mind so that our attention does whatever we intend it to do, and if we want it to stay on something even though that something is not very interesting, it will.

So if you take a candle flame or breath or something like that, your breath at first - if you first learn to meditate on the breath - the first couple of times you do this it's kind of interesting, but it quickly loses its interest.

**Rick:** It gets old.

**Culadasa:** Right. But the whole point is that you want to train your mind so that your attention will do whatever you want it to; it will move when you want it to and it will stay still when you want it to. And so one of the things that you could do is look for what's the most interesting thing. I actually had this come up in one of my meditation classes, a fellow raised his hand and he says, "I noticed that when I'm sitting and practicing, that when I start having sexual fantasies it is *really* easy to stay concentrated. So would it be okay to use that as a mediation object?" And I pointed out that actually, that's not going to achieve your meditation goal because your goal is to have the skill that allows you to have your attention on whatever you *choose* to have it on, not something that is naturally appealing.

And so that's why ... if you use the breath, for example, there is enough variation in the breath that you can make a game of exploring the things with the breath. You're going to exhaust that at some point, but when you're first learning it can help you stay stable on it. But your objective really is a stability of attention that is as is determined by your *intentions* and is a reflection of a skill that you develop, *not* to go find the easiest thing around to focus your attention on.

**Rick:** Yeah, would you say that Samadhi or whatever term you would use to represent something like that, is the ideal outcome of meditation? Because there are so many things we can put our attention on and we can be dabbling around endlessly in all kinds of turbulent states of mind, but it's not that settled, focused attention that Samadhi is defined as.

**Culadasa:** Yes, well see, that's exactly what happens. You sit down to meditate and if I tell you ... I won't tell you to focus your attention on your breath, I'll tell you to focus your attention on *sensations* produced by the breath moving in and out of your nose. The reason is I don't want you creating a fantasy of breath coming in – you can't feel the breath moving in through your pathways and things like that; I want you to focus on something real. So I tell you to focus on sensations of the breath at the nose.

And what happens is you sit there. With some other part of your mind you have this pet project that you've been working on, it says, "Why don't we think about our pet project? That would be fun." Or you have this worry and some other part of your mind keeps bringing up this concern that you have of this potential problem, maybe you can solve it. And some other part of your mind is saying, "Man, this is a waste of time. I could be out having a beer with my buddies, I could be watching TV." Different parts of your mind, and they all have the same ultimate objective ...

**Rick:** Greater happiness, greater fulfillment.

**Culadasa:** "Let's do something that feels good and makes us happy" – and the different parts of your mind have different ideas about what's going to make you feel good and be happy. Well for some reason or another, somehow along the way one part of your mind got the idea that learning to meditate is going to be a way to make yourself really happy, and it's in competition with all these others.

So the gathering together that we're talking about, and this is exactly what you quoted there, the gathering together are these different mental processes with these different ideas of what's the best thing that we can do to make ourselves happy. And the gathering together is where they all get on track with the same idea that, "Hey, when I meditate" – and let's use the word 'unify' – "when I meditate my mind does get unified around that process of following the sensations of the breath. It feels *really* peaceful, it feels *really* good." And so gradually the other parts of your mind will say, "Okay, I'm willing to go along with this."

Eventually, the more unified your mind becomes about this, the more the different parts of your mind become unified around the idea that meditation is ultimately going to make me feel at *least* as good, if not better, than any of these other possible pursuits. Then you go into this place of ... it's easy to focus, it's almost effortless, and actually at one point, eventually it does become completely effortless, because you don't have different parts of your mind in conflict about "what's the best thing for us to be doing."

**Rick:** Yeah, and obviously it will have to be the experience that convinces you of that, not just some brow-beating where you convince yourself that meditation is going to bring happiness; the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

**Culadasa:** It really helps that you can see somebody else that's already experienced it.

**Rick:** Yeah, yeah, although that only goes so far because you have to experience it too, really.

**Culadasa:** Absolutely, yes.

**Rick:** Let me ask you a question about happiness. Some people use the model ... well, this question may go even deeper. From the way I'm accustomed to thinking, there is a ground of being, which is Sat-chit-anand - it's bliss, it's pure awareness, it's consciousness – and it's not isolated; it's universal. And so anand or bliss being one of its qualities, if we can be in tune with that, we'll experience happiness. And in fact, some would say that all external happiness is a sort of pale reflection of that inner happiness, the way the moon is a reflection of the light of the sun.

And the idea is ... I think that you referred to the Yoga Sutras earlier, that second verse, "Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind." If the mind can settle down then it will achieve union or yoga with that pure consciousness, or *as* that pure consciousness. And that just as turbulent water doesn't reflect the sun very clearly and yet still water does, a still mind will reflect or attune one to that inner bliss. Does that model translate into Buddhist philosophy?

**Culadasa:** It certainly does, yes. That's essentially what Samatha is. So Samadhi is the gathering together of the mind and when it reaches a certain degree of maturity, which includes more than just the concentration aspect, so when the mind becomes highly unified and in its totality so that it's not *just* the focus of attention, which as I said can be a kind of blissful experience but it doesn't go anywhere.

At the same time there's this ... you spoke of the clear light of the mind, this very expansive awareness and consciousness that includes attention but goes way, way beyond it, and that is associated with a very strong state of bliss. Samatha is described as being characterized by 5 different things: one is the stability of attention - your attention is not running around creating these disturbances Patanjali was talking about. The second is powerful mindfulness. Now mindfulness means that this other faculty of awareness is very well-developed, *and* your attention and your awareness are working together in an optimal way.

Your mind has to be unified for this to happen. When your mind is unified ... another thing you'll find that I say in my book is that the natural state of the unified mind is a state of joy. And in Buddhist philosophy, at least in certain branches of it ... I just lost my train of thought.

**Rick:** I throw in a quote for you while you're thinking. You reminded me of something, I think it's from the Brahma Sutras, "Contact with Brahma is infinite joy."

**Culadasa:** Yes, great, and that's the sort of thing that we're talking about, the complete unification of the mind. As the mind becomes very unified, which it has to in order to have this stable attention and this powerful mindfulness as I have described, that's a mental state. So in certain schools of Buddhist philosophy and in pali we would refer to joy not as a *feeling*; *pleasure* is a feeling, *bliss* is a feeling - the pali word is 'vedana', but it's pleasant, unpleasant, or neither. So you have a *mental* state that

corresponds to joy and that's a unified state, and that gives rise to pleasure, that gives rise to happiness, that gives rise to bliss.

And so we now have four qualities associated with samatha – we have stable attention, we have powerful mindfulness, and both of these reflect a unification of mind that is giving rise to a mental state of joy, accompanied by a very powerful state of blissful happiness, and as that matures there develops this profound equanimity - by equanimity I mean a non-reactivity.

In a sense, what is the ultimate happiness but to be content, to *need* or want nothing, to lack nothing at all, and this is really what that equanimity is born of. You have an internally generated state of joy and happiness, and so something may come along that's pleasant and you can enjoy it, but you don't need it; there's no need to grasp onto it. In other words, you respond to it equanimously – it can come and it can go. Something unpleasant happens – the same thing. You're in this internal state of joy and happiness and you don't need to react to that unpleasantness, you can let it come and you can let it go. And so this is the equanimity that arises, this is the fifth quality. So this is what we're talking about when you have samatha.

**Rick:** And I get the sense that everything you've just said is primarily de-scriptive, not so much pre-scriptive. In other words, you're describing a state of being, a state of functioning that is attainable and that this is the way your life is going to operate if it is attained.

**Culadasa:** Yes, that's right, exactly, yes. And at first you attain it *in* meditation, and the more frequently and the longer you're able to do that, the more when you get up from your meditation it carries over and you're dwelling in this state in your daily life.

**Rick:** Yeah, and I think this plays right into the fact that you are a neuroscientist and most people are familiar with the term 'neuroplasticity' and that the brain can be sculpted over time. And so when you're talking about these states I presume that you're talking about not only a unique state, or a desirable or extraordinary state subjectively, but neurophysiologically it would be as distinct from ordinary waking consciousness as waking consciousness is from sleeping or sleeping is from dreaming; it's its own unique neurophysiological condition, correct?

**Culadasa:** Yes, although it is completely awake, but yes. And that's really what you're doing with the training and that's part of the reason that the training takes times and why consistency is really important, is because what you're doing is you are systematically practicing in a way that is rewiring your brain.

**Rick:** Yeah, I know. Did you study that sort of thing when you were in university? Did you do research on meditators and so on?

**Culadasa:** No. I would like to have but that came much later, I came too soon for the opportunity to be there. If I had been younger I would have had a chance to work in some of the labs that are doing that, I would have joined Richard Davidson and some of these other people, but I didn't. And not only that, as a part of my Buddhist training but also as part of a state of mind that I came to dwell in as a result of my

practice, the things that were required to be done in the laboratory research were things that I did not feel comfortable doing, and so I made a rather difficult decision ... there's a certain point in my career where I had an offer from University of California in San Diego and I had another offer from University in ... what's the capital of Argentina?

**Rick:** Buenos Aires.

**Culadasa:** No, Rio ... Rio de Janeiro. The question was, I didn't feel comfortable taking up these research positions and continuing to do what I was doing. So instead, I made a very difficult decision, I said, "I will teach, I will study, I will write, but I will not do laboratory research."

**Rick:** Okay, well, I don't think you did too bad. Now feel free ... as I said before we started, I don't mean to sidetrack you. I have many questions here but if you feel like I'm disrupting the flow of your thought, feel free to stay on track and tell me you want to talk about something else later, but I just want to come back to definitions a little bit.

You said in one quote from your book, "Consciousness is a process of information exchange taking place within a mind." Would you agree that that's *one* definition of consciousness? I mean, there are things we are conscious *of* – I'm conscious of the cat, I'm conscious of the tree – but then consciousness itself, do you regard that as a fundamental field by *means* of which we're conscious, the way the electromagnetic field is a field which carries radio waves, by *means* of which a particular radio can broadcast music? Do you see consciousness as an epiphenomenon of brain functioning, or do you feel that consciousness is fundamental to matter and somehow matter appears to rise out of it, or do you feel like it's the other way around?

**Culadasa:** What I stated there about consciousness is really a very radical and revolutionary view of consciousness. People are wanting to make consciousness into this thing in and of itself, and what I have discovered in the exploration of my own mind and observations of others and things that are happening in the universe, is that my conscious experience is when various unconscious mental processes exchange information with each other. So my subjective experience of consciousness is nothing more than many different unconscious sub-minds exchanging information.

I don't have a thought; thoughts arise and I'm conscious of the fact that the thought arose. And then I'm conscious of another thought that comes up that either reinforces that or perhaps opposes it or perhaps leads to something else. I can hear myself talking to you and expressing these ideas, I can tell myself the story that *I'm* deciding what to tell you, but I know that's a lie; I'm listening to it. When I'm thinking, I'm observing the ideas arising and passing away.

When I'm sitting in a restaurant deciding, will I have this rich meal or will I have this healthy meal, or this one that costs \$45 or this one that's a nice conservative \$20 meal, and things like that – I can observe the different thoughts arise about what I should pick on the menu, and then I'll notice that a decision arises. And I'll tell myself – and I don't do this anymore but at the time I was – I would tell myself the story that, "Oh, I've decided I'll have the filet mignon." And then by the time the waiter has come over and said, "I'll take your order now," instead, the other thought comes, "No, I'm going to have the

chicken salad instead,” and I watch it happen and I no longer tell myself the story that this is happening in consciousness; it’s *not* happening in consciousness.

Consciousness is this place where ... whatever shows up in consciousness ... think of consciousness more of a bulletin board, a display screen, a conference table where different unconscious parts of your mind present information. Once they present it it’s available to everything else, and the other parts of your mind can respond to it. So consciousness is a process of information exchange by unconscious processes.

I look at the universe and information is being exchanged constantly. A rock falls down the mountain and it hits another rock and information gets exchanged, now one rock has a crack in it and another has a chip in it. Information exchange is happening everywhere in the universe. Information exchange is happening at an unconscious level in *many*, many different levels in the hierarchy of my mind that information exchange is taking place.

The only aspect of information exchange that the person is speaking to you knows about is what’s happening at the highest level of information exchange in my mind, and that’s the one we give the label ‘consciousness’ to.

So all these people that are looking for consciousness, you’re barking up the wrong tree. Consciousness is simply information exchange in the general sense, and it’s universal, it’s happening everywhere. But what’s unique about the information exchange that’s happening in a human mind, and also what’s unique about the information exchange that’s happening at the highest level in your dog that was barking a little while ago, is that it just happens to be at the level, at the high-enough level in the mental hierarchy of my mind and your dog’s mind, that it gets stored and it gets part of the narrative, and me as a human being, I can record it and I can report it to you, and I’m telling myself the story of who I am and that I was conscious.

“**Culadasa**, were you conscious five minutes ago?” Yeah, I remember being conscious five minutes ago. What I *remember* though is just like the events that I was describing to you – I stored the story about you asking me a question and the thoughts that arose and the words I spoke in response to that. *That’s* what consciousness is.

**Rick:** Okay, let me respond to that. You just described your subjective experience and you gave some indication of the really sophisticated understanding of the mechanics of the mind that you lay out in your book, I think it’s pretty brilliant. But to use my analogy of the radio again for a minute, let’s say we have a room in which we have a radio, a television, a cell phone, a gamma ray detector, infrared detector, and various other instruments – all of those instruments, they’re designed to detect and in some way interpret or express certain frequencies of the electromagnetic field, but the electromagnetic field is just one field, it’s not a different field by virtue of the fact that each instrument reads it differently; it’s just one field.

And so the whole idea, as I understand it, of enlightenment or awakening, is to realize oneself as the field of consciousness. Electromagnetism here is just an analogy; the field of consciousness which is

independent of and irrespective of how it's reflected through various nervous systems – it's reflected one way through a dog, one way through a bat, one way through this person, that person, and each reflection doesn't really do justice to the full, deepest nature or quality of that field. But enlightenment or realization does tune one in to the deepest nature of that field, one realizes that one *is* that, you know, [that] I'm not just a man or a woman or a cat or a dog, I am that field of consciousness which is fundamental to all things and which is actually the substance of all things, if you will. Do you resonate with that?

**Culadasa:** Totally, you've expressed it brilliantly. Yes, that's exactly what it is. You see, and you can ask yourself this interesting question: "Why then in my mind is there this one level of information exchange that we put the label of 'consciousness' to? And how come all of these other levels aren't accessible in the same way?" Well at their own level they are accessible, and if somehow I could go down the next level of the hierarchy of my mind I would find that these sub-minds, they're each conscious in their own way, but they're not conscious of the level that I am. And likewise, a group of people can have a shared consciousness at the level of individual mind that we're not aware of.

So what does your mind do? Why is one part conscious and the others not? Or, we'll extend the question beyond that. If, as you describe it, there is this field of consciousness, this *vast* field of information exchange that's taking place on *many*, many different levels, and the world is populated with human beings and so there are many human minds just like mine ....

**Rick:** The *universe* is populated with ... I mean the whole thing is just unbelievably vast.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, so how come I can't tune in to what's happening to your mind and his mind and her mind and everybody else's? Well, it's necessary that I don't, otherwise I'd walk out the door and I wouldn't know which place to go to work.

**Rick:** Wouldn't be able to function, you'd be totally overwhelmed.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, so our mind is designed to ... it sticks to the story that's appropriate to this particular collection of stuff, this particular five aggregates, so that it can take care of itself, survive and do what it needs to do. But you *can* go beyond that in the field of consciousness, and we do experience that. And the more meditation and the more practice you do, the more you experience that, and it takes a whole variety of forms.

When I'm doing meditation interviews with my students, I sometimes enter into a place where I know what they're experiencing, not in the sense that I'm reading your mind like you might imagine in a science fiction story, but in the sense that I know it so that I know exactly what I need to tell them so that they can overcome their particular problem. Another thing that happened to me is that a lot of popular Buddhism has adopted a pre-Buddhist idea of reincarnation, and there are particular practices you can do that allow you to "recall" past lives. And I've done those practices and I've discovered that I can have detailed experiences that belong to a life and a person that was definitely not me, and of course it's like, "Oh, in a previous lifetime I was such and such, I can tell you the details of some of these experiences I had."

But then it suddenly dawned on me that this was really no different than I watching a movie, like *Dances With Wolves*, and I really get into the main character enough that I *feel* like I'm that person.

**Rick:** Kevin Costner.

**Culadasa:** Kevin Costner, yes. And I don't remember what his name was in the movie but ...

**Rick:** Dances With Wolves was his name.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, that's what his name was! But I realized, why should I assume that what I'm tapping into is a string of beings? What I'm doing is I'm accessing mental contents of other minds, especially that's when I realized that I could access the contents of minds that were contemporaneous with each other or with me. And then I realized, "Okay, we can lower the barriers that separate our consciousness from other similar consciousnesses." And the way I would explain this is that it's a kind of resonance - if you can enter into a particular resonance with another mind, then you can access that information, and that's what we do in these practices. So you might be recalling past lives, but to assume that they're *your* past lives in some kind of linear series, that's total illusion, right?

**Rick:** Let's dwell on that for a second, let me just play devil's advocate. I heard you say that you've come to the conclusion that there's no end to spiritual evolution, no end to development. I don't know whether you mean [that's] just in this life or you possibly mean that when this body drops that there's some sort of essence that continues on and picks up where we left off, next time around, which is more of a Hindu emphasis, where it is said that dropping the body is like changing clothes and putting on new garments.

So I don't know, that theory kind of makes sense to me but it's something I've been dwelling on for 40, 50 years, so maybe I'm just brainwashed with that way of thinking. How can you be so certain that when you have had some past life experience [that] it *wasn't* your soul or your essence in a previous body?

**Culadasa:** Well let's go back to the idea of resonance. The only way that I could is that there must be some kind of resonance.

**Rick:** Yeah, there must be some subtle essence that moves from one to the next, as you buy and sell cars but you're still the driver of the new car.

**Culadasa:** Um, no. That's not what I'm saying and I don't agree with that, okay? Alright, I'm saying that there's some kind of ... I have put my mind, this mind that is associated with this particular person into a state of resonance which allows me to tap into, it *seems* that, the cumulative experience of an individual mind somehow persists. It is like any event that happens in the universe, the information from that continues to propagate, we can even measure the background radiation of the Big Bang.

So it seems that that's the case too with ... so I can put myself in a state of resonance and resonate. Why would I not assume that that was me? It's because one of the things that I've learned as a result of my most profound insight experience is, that there is no subtle essence in here, that that is an illusion. In

other words, no matter where I look and how deeply I look and no matter what stories I want to make up, it just isn't there, there's nothing there.

The thing is as we spoke of a field of consciousnesses, I'm a part of that field of consciousness, and when I die, everything about the experience of this person during this period of however many decades that it's active and interacting with the field of consciousness as a whole, *that* remains part of the field of consciousness as a whole.

So a sperm unites with an ovum and an embryo is formed. Due to genetics and various environmental factors, a brain begins to form that will function in a particular way. After the birth of that child there are going to be various other formative influences. Now, it can come into resonance with the portion of the field of consciousness that basically was generated by this person during its period of activity, and as such, to the degree its resonant it can absorb that – absorb those characteristics.

But it's not the only one; there could be 10 such children or a 100 such children that come after I die, or even while I'm still alive, whose minds come into resonance and can draw upon what is present in my contribution. It's just like I can point a telescope to the sky and I can locate the signal, the radiation signal of a supernova that happened sometime in the past because I have my telescope focused in the right place and in the right way. It could be a radio, telescope, or it could be all kinds of instruments, and I can take that information and incorporate it with other information, I can add to our understanding of the universe, if I was an astronomer.

So if I was an infant, and then I'm a 6 year-old and then a 10 year-old, and then I'm an 18 year-old who discovers Buddhism and starts meditating and things like this ... well one of the things that happened in my experience is that the more I meditated, studied, and studied Buddhism and spirituality, the more I felt myself that I began to have understandings, I began to have knowledge that I don't know where that came from. Well, I think I do know where that comes from ...

**Rick:** Past lives!

**Culadasa:** What's that?

**Rick:** I said, past lives.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, past lives.

**Rick:** But not necessarily yours.

**Culadasa:** Not necessarily mine, but past lives of people who devoted their lives similarly and went beyond where I went, but I came into enough of a resonance with them that I could tap into that. And I have this experience when I'm teaching sometimes; I'll hear wisdom coming out of my mouth and I'll say, "Wow! That's beautiful, I didn't know that."

**Rick:** Yeah, like where did that come from. Well, there's a number of thoughts I have on this, for what it's worth. So what you're saying basically is that all the qualities and experiences that one accumulates

in a life is like filling a bucket, and when the body dies that bucket gets dumped into the field. And when it's time to form a new life, the bucket gets taken out of the field but it could be a mixture of all sorts of things from all sorts experiences that various beings have had and that forms a new life.

But then what about the fact that you said earlier, that your teacher or someone in your lineage was said to be the reincarnation of so-and-so, and the Dalai Lama is supposed to be the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama and is a reincarnation, and so that does seem to be part of that tradition.

**Culadasa:** Well I don't find any conflict with that at all. As you may be aware, when a Dalai Lama or one of these other high rinpoches dies, then there are some people with a very well-developed skill set that go in search of "the reincarnation." Well what are they *really* looking for? I would say what they're looking for is a child who they can sense that with the right training can be brought into a resonance to tap into that.

**Rick:** I thought they test him by seeing if he recognizes beads and other belongings of the previous one, and all that stuff?

**Culadasa:** I think it's at a deep intuitive level where they are tuning in to that child's mind, maybe not at a conscious level. I would warrant if we could study the process closely enough we'd find that, intentionally or completely unconsciously, the lamas doing the testing are making sure that they pick the right set of beads, because they've already by some other process concluded ... this is a really good candidate. And they don't always succeed either; some of the Dalai Lamas of the past have turned into ... it was a total mistake, they picked the wrong kid, either that or the training that they gave them didn't take, but it's a combination.

I think when you're looking for a tulku, first of all you try to find a child that's suitable, has potential, but then a *huge* part of it is the training that they undergo subsequently. And I want to go back to what you said earlier, it's *not* like you take a bucket of water and you throw it back in the lake because there's a certain coherence.

Now I would say that the less well-developed a person is mentally and spiritually the less coherence there is to their mind, so there is some part of their mind that's going to come back as something noble and beautiful and some other part of their mind that's going to come back as a cockroach. But the more spiritual coherence that somebody has developed, then the more these tendencies as a part of the whole in the field of consciousness ... there are so many different analogies that we could draw upon here.

**Rick:** Let's take a concrete example. Let's say these kids who are born with microcephaly because of the Zika virus, so you would say that there is no undeveloped soul or somebody with bad karma who needs to experience that kind of a life, it's more that the cosmic intelligence expresses in all sorts of varieties but there's no personal thing attached to it? Maybe you should re-express that in your own terms.

**Culadasa:** Let's use a different example. There are, I don't know, everyday dozens or maybe hundreds of children born into extreme poverty in Calcutta, for example. That's going to be a person and that person

could say, "Why me? Why wasn't I born into a wealthy family in the Bronx?" Right? So there's going to be a person that has that experience and let's forget about there being some kind of self that did something that made them deserve that.

The *world* has done something that has created Calcutta and has created poverty and that meant there's going to be children born into that and we're all part of the same thing. So yes, it's all of our karma that ...

**Rick:** Okay, and I promise I'm going to get off this point in just a second because there are a lot of other things we should still talk about, but what about near death experiences? Have you ever studied those and the kinds of things people experience, the kinds of beings they encounter and so on when the body is basically checked out?

**Culadasa:** Yes I have, and there are a lot of things that you could say about that. Let me start out by saying that a near death experience is exactly that – they haven't died ... by definition they haven't died. And of course we have cases where people are "brain dead," there's no electrical activity you can measure on the scalp.

**Rick:** Eban Alexander?

**Culadasa:** Right, but now, I mean there was a point in time when if somebody's heart stopped beating we said, "Ah, they're dead;" now we restart hearts. Now we're finding more and more cases where there's no electrical activity measurable at the scalp but the person comes back and they're normal again.

**Rick:** But they say, "Yeah, but I saw the surgeons operating on me and I saw something that was outside the window that couldn't even have been seen in the position I was in that room," so there's some kind of subtle extension of the person that takes a different vantage point.

**Culadasa:** Yes, and there's a number of ways that you could explain that. You don't need to resort to the idea that ... I'll offer this ... there are quite a few cases of people who have come out of deep anesthesia who can recount the conversations. I mean, surgeons and their assistants and nurses talk about things during the surgery, and patients - there are quite a few cases documented of people who come out and say, "Well I heard you talking about something else," or "I heard you talking about me," or "What happened during my surgery?" And they say, "Actually your heart stopped for a while and we were worried," and they remember hearing that.

There's another explanation to the "...there's something else that happened outside the window" - if our minds are really not separate, which is a thesis that I hold very strongly to ... I'm a nondualist, I believe that matter and mind are not separate, it's only one stuff, and it's neither mind nor matter but it appears as one or the other depending on how you look at it.

So therefore, from the point of view of mind, which is just a point of view of this stuff, but from the point of view of matter, we're just as connected as we are physically. All you have to have is one of the nurses in the operating room look out the window ...

**Rick:** Ah, and you're picking up on her perception.

**Culadasa:** Although I've never seen an operating room with a window, but *anyway*, if they had one, there's no reason why that perception could not be picked up mind to mind, especially in an extremely altered state like deep anesthesia.

**Rick:** Okay, good. So I'm going to shift to some questions and get us off the topic we've been discussing, and maybe it will be a little abrupt shifting from one question to the next but it will enable us to bring out some more facets of your teaching. And a couple of questions have come in from listeners, so maybe I'll ask those first, but you're going to have to define some of the stages used, some of the terms used, because people won't know what you're talking about otherwise.

So let me ask a couple of those first, and this is going to be a little disjointed because we're going to jump from question to question. This is from a fellow named Jivan from Fairfax, Virginia who asks: "How do Dzogchen, Mahamudra and Rigpa fit into your model of awakening? Are these post-stage 10 practices?" And that's the question – please, again, define terms as you answer it.

**Culadasa:** Okay, so I divided the development of samatha into ten stages and I took as my starting place the mind stages of samatha that a sangha developed many centuries ago. The tenth and final stage is where your samatha persists for a very long time after you get up from meditation - samatha as I described it earlier. So the question was, "Are Dzogchen and Mahamudra ...?"

**Rick:** How do they fit into your model? Dzogchen, Mahamudra and Rigpa, how do they fit into your model? Are these *post*-stage 10 things or somewhere within the first ten stages?

**Culadasa:** The answer is no. Essentially what the Dzogchen and Mahamudra are in their essence, are one of the practices that I teach people to do *in* stage nine as a part of helping them to achieve the fully developed samatha and move on to stage ten. So that's where they fit into it.

And the Rigpa, that's the clear light of the mind, that's essentially what we were talking about as the field of consciousness that you can open yourself up to, and it's very illuminating in many senses of the word.

**Rick:** Okay, good. Here's another one, this is from Taylor in Texas: "How does insight deepen and perception change beyond fourth path?" Again, there will have to be a definition here. "How practical are the stages of awakening? Is it common for practitioners to achieve fourth path, for example, and find it undesirable or attempt to drop back to an earlier location?" That's the kind of thing Jeffery Martin talks about ... that you can't handle the stage you're at so you kind of dumb down to previous stage to make it livable.

**Culadasa:** Yes, Jeffrey's locations that he's defined, and when you talk about 'path' and 'fourth path,' the Buddha defined four paths, four stages of awakening in terms of certain fetters that fall away, and so I'm not going to explain them in detail. But the fourth path is the highest one he bothered to mention - although I can tell you that that's not the highest path, that's not the end of the process - it's called Arahant or Arhat, depending on the language you're using.

Jeffery's locations and the Buddha's four paths have a lot of strong parallels but they don't map perfectly onto each other. The one thing that Jeffery found is that people who appear to be in his location 4, which sort of but not exactly corresponds to fourth path – Arhat, they found that the loss of emotion that occurs as a part of that to be extremely disturbing and they didn't like it; they felt like they were no longer human and so forth, so therefore they *intentionally* drop back to a lower path.

And what I'll say about that is that's too bad for them, in a sense, but then again it's quite alright as well because to be at one of the lower classes is not a bad thing either. But that is a temporary phenomenon, the fourth path, and as a matter of fact, one of the higher paths is when you come to the place of *fully* embracing the world once again, in other words reengaging your humanity in a whole new way. So because there's a temporary period where you seem to have lost it, it's unfortunate not to move through that to the next side or to the further side of it.

But the other thing too is that it's not uncommon for there to be a movement between these different paths, and this can be something that is not intentional or can be something intentional. Somebody who is at a third path, for example, and either intentionally or unintentionally goes back to a second path state where there still is desire and aversion, where there's, in this case if they're at third path, there would be a reoccurrence of desire and aversion for the things of the sense realm.

If they do it *intentionally* because they want to explore something more deeply, so that they can perhaps prepare themselves to move to fourth path, or it can happen unintentionally just because the insights that they have haven't completely consolidated or matured, and some incident in their life causes them to move back to that state.

**Rick:** Yeah, that actually relates to a question that my friend Ben sent in, we got a bunch of questions from him. He said, "How does your sub-mind theory help explain the many fallen "awakened" teachers" – he put 'awakened' in quotes – "from the East and West?" I could elaborate on the question but I think you get it.

**Culadasa:** Yes, well actually in terms of fallen awakened teachers ... there's two answers to this. The one that relates most to the mind system theory and the sub-mind is that with any insight, and with any path attainment, not necessarily every part of your mind achieves that insight, and of those that do, not every part of your mind achieves it to the same degree. There is a process of maturation and as a matter of fact, you could regard the four paths themselves as describing a process of maturation.

If you think of the mind as a hierarchy of sub-minds and sub-sub-minds and sub-sub-sub-minds, then an insight needs to spread both horizontally and vertically, and what you're after is eventually a place where all the sub-minds at every level have integrated the same insight. But before that's happened, before that's happened you could find yourself in a situation that activates part of your mind with its past conditioning that hasn't integrated those insights at all.

**Rick:** That's good. Kind of relates to Ken Wilbur's idea of lines of development and how lines don't necessarily develop sequentially or in complete correlation with one another; they can get pretty out of whack.

**Culadasa:** Yes.

**Rick:** So I'm just going to ask another question here and take a swing at it: "Discuss awakening to no-separate self versus the full enlightenment of the arahant. It seems that both Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures describe full enlightenment as involving *behavioral* changes that indicate a lack of attachment to aversion and a disposition to compassion and love."

It kind of goes back to what you were saying and let me just put another spin on the question before you respond. Thinking of my discussion with Jeffery Martin, I remember when I talked to him I said something similar to what you just said, which is that there are stages and weight stations and some may seem rather dry but that's not the end, so you want to move forward rather than back. And I think it relates to the fact that awakening can take place at different levels – head, heart, gut, and the whole chakra system can be brought into discussion.

But there are stages to development and as you said, there are some marvelous examples of people who are by no means beginners or intermediates who are profoundly devotional and compassionate and full of heart, so one should never mistake dryness for any kind of final destination. I hope I didn't deviate from the original question here ... sorry.

**Culadasa:** I kind of lost what the actual question was.

**Rick:** Yeah, let me read his original question and maybe we can weave both these things together: Discussing awakening to no-separate self, which I think can be a dry state, versus the *full* enlightenment of the arahant, it seems that both Hindu and Buddhist Scriptures describe full enlightenment as involving *behavioral* changes – and this is an important point. Is there a correlation between development of consciousness and the way you behave - could you be an enlightened shmuck? And the correlation with compassion and love and so on.

**Culadasa:** Okay, yeah, I got you and I can answer this ... except I'm losing my own train of thought here.

**Rick:** Well, I'll help you for a second but interrupt me as soon as you're ready. You ready?

**Culadasa:** Okay.

**Rick:** Okay, go.

**Culadasa:** No, no ...

**Rick:** Oh, you're ready for me to interrupt. So we're talking about correlation between awakening and changes in behavior, development of the heart, compassion, love ... okay good, go for it.

**Culadasa:** Alright, yes. All of the four paths are associated with distinct changes in behavior and as a matter of fact, in the tradition I come from, and I can't speak for traditions that I'm not familiar with but certainly in the Theravadan tradition which I'm familiar with, if we believe that somebody has achieved a particular path or a particular stage of awakening we'll say, "It seems like you have ... we'll see in 6 months or a year or 2 years."

And there is this thing that they say in some schools, that only an awakened person can tell if somebody else is awakened and I say that's BS, because their behavior will reveal it. Now the thing about 'no separate self' ... it's really that the self manifests in us in two different ways, one is conceptual - I call it the 'ego self,' it is the *idea* of who we are. If I ask you to describe who you are or write it down, if I ask you to spend the next week ... every day sit down for half an hour and write down a description, what you would get is a *conceptual* description of who you are – what you like, what you don't like, your personality characteristics, bla, bla, bla. And that's a good description of who you are, that's the ego self.

**Rick:** Yeah, it's who my relative self is.

**Culadasa:** Right. That's what goes away with first path, with stream entry. What remains is the inherent sense, this feeling, a *feeling* that I'm a separate self even though I know I'm not. From stream entry on I'll know I'm not a separate self, I've seen through that but I still feel like it. What goes away with the arhat is the *feeling*, the inherent sense of being separate, that's completely dissolved.

Now, the other part of this you mentioned was compassion. Very interesting work done by another friend of mine – Richard Boyle – and he didn't interview nearly as many people before he wrote his book as Jeffery did. What is the name of Richard Boyle's book? Anyway, Richard deserves that I ... anyway, what he recognized as a result of his interviews and which I totally agree with in my experience, is that when somebody achieves the first level of awakening there's a certain kind of compassion that is born that is inevitable, because they have had a realization that they are not a separate self. So their mind will never quite lose the compassion that's born of that realization, but it may go no further than that.

And so a person can become an arhat and still only have that primitive level of compassion. Compassion and wisdom have to be developed separately, or no, I should say they have to be developed concurrently, yes.

Here it is, *Realizing Awakened Consciousness* – Richard's book.

**Rick:** And is there a correlation between them? Like is it a stretchy rubber band, where if you pull it the other end is going to come along, or are they totally disconnected?

**Culadasa:** They're not totally disconnected but there's also a stretchiness so that somebody could go an awful long ways in the wisdom direction and still have pretty primitive compassion, but the further they go there's going to be this tension pulling them in the direction of compassion. And I think that's what accounts for a lot of our fallen spiritual masters, you know? You ask, "How could the person have done that to his students and his sangha?" Well, he may have had a lot of wisdom but he was missing on that other component. And the other side of it is you can have people lack the wisdom but they develop an enormous amount of compassion.

**Rick:** So I guess what you're saying is it's not like a table, where if you pull one leg all the other legs are going to come along; you can't just sit in Samadhi on a regular basis and expect to become a compassionate person necessarily, that you might need to work on several levels. Fine, have your

Samadhi experiences, but also go out and do some selfless service or do something to develop the heart and the behavioral ... you know, that kind of thing.

**Culadasa:** Yes, you do have to. and it's one of the things that I think the Tibetan tradition does a better job than most do, is they have *a lot of* practices designed to develop compassion, and there's loving kindness meditation in the Theravadan tradition ... it tries to do the same thing. But there's even a downfall in this: you can do all these compassion practices and they'll develop the part of your brain that is associated with compassion and that also produces a state of happiness - and this is one of the interesting things I found, is that you take somebody who does compassion meditation, stick them in an fMRI machine and the parts of their prefrontal lobe that is associated with happiness light up.

So you can do all these practices - sitting in your monk cell or your meditation hall or in your cave - and you can really develop the compassion part of your brain and you can enjoy a lot of personal happiness as a result of that, and never do a single thing for anybody else's benefit.

**Rick:** It would be interesting to see if such a person went to New York City and started walking down the street and encountering the stresses and challenges and trials and tragedies of life in the outer world, the real world – “real” world ... you know what I mean - whether it would hold up or whether it was just easy to maintain when you're sitting in your cave, but it kind of falls flat when you get out there.

**Culadasa:** Well what happens is ... this happened to me, I didn't develop the compassion part to the degree I should have. And then there came a point in my own spiritual development where fate or whatever ... I was brought in contact with people with an *enormous* amount of suffering, and that part of me just ... it blossomed. It was there, it was primed, I developed it. From a neurological point of view the synapses had been formed in that part of my brain, it's just I hadn't experientially had anything to trigger it. And once it did then my heart opened, and I started becoming a much more compassionate person as a result of it. I'm still in the process of developing that.

**Rick:** Yeah, well it's kind of interesting. The analogy that comes to mind is ... let's say you're practicing martial arts, and you're just practicing and practicing and practicing but you never actually entered a tournament or anything. But when you finally do enter one you do pretty well because of all that practice, as compared to somebody like me who entered – if I were to enter such a tournament – would get ... you know!

And so you finally had a chance to apply it and it showed that you had actually developed something, and you did.

**Culadasa:** That's right, and so a really important part of the spiritual path is to get out of your cave and get out in the world and get that triggered. And I think this is what happens with some of our fallen masters – they become too secluded. They sit there on their mountaintop, they may be surrounded by a thousand adoring students but it's not triggering what needs to be triggered.

**Rick:** Another syndrome is they were raised in an ashram in India or someplace like that and never confronted with the sorts of things that they encountered when they came to the West, and so they had no idea they would react as they did once confronted by those things.

**Culadasa:** That's exactly right, yes, and it can be quite overwhelming. It was overwhelming for me when I first experienced it, it was like, "Oh, my God!"

**Rick:** Yeah, and I try to take the attitude of 'there but the grace of God, there go I,' and 'judge not lest you be judged' - if I were in their shoes, same thing might have happened to me. So it's good to be compassionate and appreciative of the benefit that they *do* bring to the world or have brought to the world, and you take what you need and you leave the rest.

You write that the purification of the senses results in subtle perception, at least that's what my friend Ben said that you wrote, and that these experiences of light, joy, silence, etcetera, sound like aspects of the personal God-realization experience that is discussed in some other traditions. Do you think there is some kind of experiential overlap there?

**Culadasa:** Yes, I do. Personally, I think all legitimate, valid spiritual traditions ... there's a commonality there. And we use different language and we apply different conceptual interpretations and models to do it, but yeah, there's a lot of overlap.

**Rick:** Yeah, well actually on that point, I've often wondered why – at least I've often *heard* that - Buddhism doesn't really talk about God very much. I mean guys like ... what's his name, the guy who wrote the *Waking Up* series? Sam Harris ... manage to be dedicated Buddhists and yet Atheists.

**Culadasa:** Yes, totally Atheistic.

**Rick:** Yeah, so I kind of wonder about that because my sense of things is that full realization would open one up to something that ... and the word 'God' is very much misunderstood and misused in many corners, but some sort of Divine Intelligence that is *far* from being random or capricious or anything else, that the universe is infused with, permeated by, orchestrated by vast intelligence which we might call God. Does Buddhism see it that way or what? Why does Buddhism have a reputation for being Atheistic?

**Culadasa:** You speak of Buddhism as if it were one thing! And there are so many different kinds of Buddhism, and flavors and tastes and everything like that. What I think is pretty much universally not seen in Buddhism is the kind of *personal* God - God as a person, God as a being, and without going into detail, such a notion is in conflict with almost every core doctrine of Buddhism.

On the other hand, if you go to very progressive Christian thinkers – Catholic and otherwise – you will find they have descriptions and notions of God that I think many Buddhists would be very comfortable with - I say *many*, but not necessarily all or even most. But I think it would be horribly naïve of us to think that we represent a level of mental and spiritual development that can perceive the limits of the underlying intelligence and beauty, magnificence and even teleology in the universe.

When I look at the universe - and I study physics and things like this as part of my process – when I look at the history of the universe I see it as a very progressive evolutionary process, when I look at human history I see the same thing; I see it in animal evolution, I see it in human history.

I lived through the revolutionary times in the 60s when race relationships in this country underwent dramatic changes. For example, take entropy, physicists will say [it is] the Third Law of Thermodynamics, - that you can tell which event is future and which event is past by the degree of entropy - I say you can take two events and say which was in the past and which came later by the degree to which the universe has expressed this kind of evolution toward a higher state.

I don't begin to pretend to understand what that is, I just recognize that it's there. And I know that there are people who would jump all over me for saying that and I don't mind. To me, I see it and it's as clear as can be, and I'm quite happy in my ignorance of how it works.

**Rick:** Doesn't sound too ignorant to me, that was a great answer. And interesting you should mention entropy because obviously if entropy were the only law, the universe would just disintegrate. But obviously there is something which creates order and complexity and specificity and so on, that is quite the opposite of entropy, even though entropy may be tugging at its heels all the time but there is always this increasing sophistication. Which to *me*, very much speaks of Divine Intelligence that has some kind of ... what's that term? Evolutionary Panentheism.

I've discovered that that's what I am, if I had to define my philosophy; that there is this evolutionary imperative or force in the universe that just keeps evolving more and more sophisticated vehicles through which the Divine can be a living reality.

**Culadasa:** Yes, I would go along with that and I always try to stop short of putting labels on it, because as soon as you put words to it somebody can tear it apart.

**Rick:** Yeah, like if you use the word 'God,' somebody might use a strawman argument that you're referring to some bearded guy in the sky or something. We can agree on our terms but I think you and I are talking about the same thing - just some vast, unfathomable intelligence, or something.

**Culadasa:** And I would say that that realization itself is one of the greatest gifts of pursuing the spiritual path, is that you discover it is a mystery that you *know* you will never even begin to plumb. But to exist in the midst of that great, incredible, wondrous mystery is itself so awe-inspiring that to live there for a moment makes it all worthwhile.

**Rick:** Yeah, and I think this relates back to what we were saying earlier about devotion and compassion, because when you really start to tune into that, what we were discussing, it just thrills the heart and gives you this sense of awe and reverence, it really wakes that quality up in you.

**Culadasa:** It really does.

**Rick:** Here is maybe a final question; we'll see if anything else comes up from me or you or listeners. But this is from ... oh, here's another one that just came in ... but this is from ... Well let me see what this other one is first because this other question is kind of final.

Okay, this is another good one to ask. Are you doing okay timewise?

**Culadasa:** I'm doing fine.

**Rick:** Okay, great. This is from someone named Dawn in Louisiana who asks, "What is your view of the siddhis, the so-called psychic powers?"

**Culadasa:** Well, I think some of the siddhis ...

**Rick:** Buddha was said to have some, right?

**Culadasa:** Yes. Well a lot of things said about the Buddha are quite questionable.

**Rick:** Yeah, a little bit.

**Culadasa:** So it depends on which siddhis you're talking about, but the fact that I've already stated that I'm a total nondualist and I believe that our minds are interconnected, so there are some siddhis which are quite, to me, they are quite understandable.

**Rick:** Being able to see something at a distance or know something at a distance. You know somebody is going to phone you and all of a sudden it rings and that kind of thing ...

**Culadasa:** Sure, yeah, those kinds of things, no problem at all. Now you get into walking on water and walking through walls and ...

**Rick:** We need proof.

**Culadasa:** Yeah, I'll have to see it.

**Rick:** I think that's a healthy attitude. Here in Fairfield, Iowa there have been people practicing a siddhi program for decades, and there's this lady I was talking to at a garden party and she was saying, "Well, I've gotten to the point where I wake up in the middle of the night to use the bathroom and I can barely walk because I'm floating and I'm just on my tiptoes." And I said, "Great, do you own a bathroom scale?" and she said, "No."

So I said, "Well get one, and next time this happens just step on it and see what your weight is and let me know!"

**Culadasa:** Fabulous answer, that's brilliant!

**Rick:** Somewhat related to this but a little bit different is ... actually we kind of touched on this. Did I already ask you this? I did a little bit, about subtle perception, then we got into talking about love and devotion and things like that. But I know that in Buddhist iconography and so on, there are all sorts of

beings floating around; I see these rugs where there are all these characters on different levels of creation and so on. In your view, is there a vertical dimensionality to creation with subtle realms in which beings reside that we might not be able to perceive with our ordinary earthly senses?

**Culadasa:** A simple answer: yes. A more complex answer is: what we can perceive and how we perceive it is limited by both our sense organs and the neural tissue we have to process the input of those sense organs. And we could look at many other living organisms on this planet and we can know that there are lots of things that we perceive that they don't, we could look at other organisms and there are lots of things *they* can perceive that we can't. And so to posit that there are actually beings of a sort and realms of a sort that are energetically undetectable by us, well, in physics we have dark matter and dark energy, so that by itself says, yes, this is possible.

**Rick:** Yeah, some people posit that birds can actually *see* magnetic lines and that they navigate that way when they migrate. And we know about bats and whales and all kinds of things that can hear things and see things that we can't, so that's not surprising. It's somewhat analogous but not entirely, because what we're talking about here is subtler realms and many people do develop the capacity to experience them; their sensory capacities evolve and they can see angels or whatever these beings are.

**Culadasa:** Exactly, and I agree with that, I know people like that, and I'm impressed by their abilities and I don't find it as a surprise. Because if there were beings of a sort that our senses can't detect but they had minds, then their minds would be part of the same mind-field that we're a part of. So even though we couldn't from the *material* perspective see them, from the mental perspective, if we're part of the same mind-field then why could we not sense them and have contact with them?

So it is completely plausible to me. I haven't personally ... well, have I had ...? I practiced shamanism for a while and while I was doing that I definitely felt like I was in touch with spirit beings of a different realm, that could not be seen, felt, touched, or anything else, so I won't say that I haven't experienced that.

I could also look at that and say, okay, I was very much primed by the whole training that I did and the things that we do as a part of shamanic processes and the drumming and things like that, and that those could have been projections of my own mind. I can't deny that that's a possibility but nevertheless, I had those experiences and they could as easily represent having actually had contact with beings in a different realm, as they could be a projection in my mind.

**Rick:** Yeah, okay, good. Here's a question that just came in from my friend Ben – the other ones he had sent me previously, this just came in – he is down in Austin. He said – and this will take a little bit of explanation because it is an in-group question – “The so-called ‘pragmatic dharma movement’ pioneered by Bill Hamilton, Daniel Ingram. Kenneth Folk and others takes a full disclosure attitude towards attainments. Do you agree with this stance?”

And I think what he means by that is when I interviewed Daniel Ingram, he said he was quite upfront about the attainments he felt he had achieved and he felt like you shouldn't hide your light under a bushel, and if people are going to practice for decades to attain something, then when somebody finally

does [attain] they should say so, you know, otherwise what hope is there for people starting out? So do you agree with that?

**Culadasa:** I certainly do agree with that, and here is an opinion I want to throw in, I'm glad I have the opportunity. In the Tripitaka – the Buddhist book of the stories of the Buddha – this is the book of discipline, where each of the rules he made for the monks has a story behind it. So within there he gives the instruction to his monks *not* to make claims about their meditation and spiritual attainments for sake of personal benefits, he doesn't say, "Keep it a secret."

But how that has subsequently been interpreted is that you don't ever mention this to anybody except maybe your teacher, or maybe somebody else who is at the same level of attainment that you are. And the effect of that is just the opposite of what you might think its intention was; it allows somebody to pass themselves off as having attainments that they don't, because they act as though they do and then somebody comes and says, "Well, are you enlightened?" and the person says, "Sorry, can't tell you that." And it allows people including ...

You mentioned Bill Hamilton, he wrote a great book called *Saints and Psychopaths*, and there are a lot of psychopaths among our saints. And it is exactly this kind of thing that allows psychopaths to play these kinds of games.

**Rick:** Yeah, I feel very strongly and I've given talks on this that if we had a clearer understanding of what enlightenment actually is, then it would be a lot harder for psychopaths to pose as saints, and all the abusive cults and strange things that have come along would have had a really hard time getting off the ground; people wouldn't have been so easily misled. So I think it is important for us as a culture to evolve in the direction of a much clearer, more precise, more detailed, common understanding of the whole spiritual realm.

**Culadasa:** I agree with that totally, with the caveat that what we're talking about are things that can be subject to being misunderstood and we have to be careful how we talk about those things, for that reason. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't talk about them, we should, it's important that we do, and it's important that Jeffery Martin and Richard Boyle and people like that do the work. I've got a couple of ... there's a fellow named [Michael] Costeines who did a PhD thesis ... it's good we're doing research on awakened people so we're going to develop a body of knowledge about what awakening really is.

**Rick:** Yeah, and there are a lot of people working on this sort of thing independently and I hope that more and more they collaborate with one another. There is the Science & Nonduality Conference in California and that Consciousness Conference they have down in Tucson and there are attempts to do this, but I think much more could be done.

And I think that one of the things that could be done is some kind of neurophysiological parameters that would be measurable and that would be found through enough research to correlate with various states of consciousness, that you could actually take some kind of EEG test to determine what stage you were at, if it were all properly developed.

**Culadasa:** I think we're a long, long way from that but is it theoretically possible? Yes.

**Rick:** Yes, an interesting goal perhaps. Um, okay, unless a final question comes in, this would be a good wrap-up question: "What are you working on in your own personal practice?" - this is from Ignacio Martinez in Buenos Aires. What are you working on in your own personal practice?

**Culadasa:** Um, two things I guess, one is as I mentioned before, compassion – developing my own compassion and a total reembracing of my own humanity. I would consider that as being a path-level that's not traditionally described, that I'm working on. And the other thing that I'm working on is the implications of my own death.

**Rick:** Mm-hmm. And in that regard and apperpoe of what we were discussing earlier, what do you make of the whole Bodhisattva that well, 'I'm not going to check out of here ultimately until all beings are awake and I'll be happy to come back again and again?' Sounds like you wouldn't buy into that notion because you don't believe in any one entity coming back again and again.

**Culadasa:** Well I actually ... yes, I don't believe in any kind of self or soul or entity that's going to come back again as it is, on the other hand, attitudinally it is right on, it is perfect. That's what I'm saying – reengaging with the world ... never withdraw from the world because you feel like you've made it. This is the kind of Mahayana criticism of the Theravadan Arhat that, "Okay, that's fine, you're enlightened so now you don't worry about the rest of the world..?"

**Rick:** Yeah, "I'm out of here!"

**Culadasa:** Yeah, and I don't buy that at all, I mean, you do absolutely everything you can to bring absolutely everyone else along with you and you do it now. It doesn't matter if I'm wrong and I come back again another lifetime, that's not my concern; my concern is what I do now.

**Rick:** Yeah, that's good, and it's a little bit of an angels-on-the-head-of-a-pin argument – whether we come back or this or that happens, or who knows. I once heard an interview with some yogi who spoke good English and he was asked about this whole coming back thing and he said, "I don't really care, whatever God wills, I just want to be of service. If I come back, if I don't come back, it's in God's hands and I'm surrendered to that."

**Culadasa:** And that's exactly what the Buddha said when he was asked about these things, although all these Buddhists forget it. He said, "It doesn't matter, reincarnation or what happens after you die is irrelevant – forget about it, doesn't matter."

**Rick:** Ah, good. Well I didn't have your physical book but I think people can see this (holding up book) – *The Mind Illuminated: A Complete Meditation Guide*. I've been reading it on my iPad and it's a great book - very thorough, a little bit heady in places, I mean you really have to focus to understand what you're saying but it's a good exercise in and of itself, and it's like a marvelous analysis.

The feeling I got as I was reading was like, wow, this is someone who has really been studying the mind for a long time, in terms of his own subjective practice and experience, and has fleshed out great, great

detail as to how - or a detailed theory at least as to how the mind functions. So it's interesting, very good book.

**Culadasa:** Thank you, thank you.

**Rick:** So people wanting to get involved with what you're offering or what not ... what do you have to offer? You have a facility down there, near Tucson, right? People can go there? Are there also online courses? Do you travel around and teach them? What could people do to get in touch with or connect with you?

**Culadasa:** Well right now I'm putting most of my effort into training people to teach what I teach, and I have a lot of students who have a high level of spiritual attainment themselves ...

**Rick:** Yeah I know, and sorry to interrupt but I just wanted to say, I've heard it said that you can tell the quality of a teacher by the quality of his students, and I've been listening to a lot of recordings of yours and I was very impressed with a lot of the questions that your students are asking and things they're saying. I thought, "Wow, this is really a mature group."

**Culadasa:** And the crème de la crème are the ones ... every Saturday morning and every Sunday morning I do a 2-hour online class with different groups of people; I have four groups going right now and that's where most of my energy is going. Also, I've been dealing with a lot of health issues and cancer.

I am leading a retreat this summer at Shambhala Mountain Center and I believe there's space in that. I'm also doing a retreat in September at Berry Center and it is full, but there's a waiting list. And at the moment I'm holding off on scheduling other retreats to see where my health goes. I also have another book that I'm working on and I want to have time for.

What we do have is people coming here and doing solo retreats, and occasionally I do retreats here where we live for the health reasons, and because of the other book I'm writing. We're kind of backing off a little bit on the number of people coming here do solo retreats with me, but I'm hoping we will be able to do more of that and I'm hoping that more of my students will be able to assist me with that.

So the best thing that I can say is to monitor what's going on at the [www.dharmatransure.org](http://www.dharmatransure.org) website and people can contact us directly for more specific information at [upasaka.tuladasa@gmail.com](mailto:upasaka.tuladasa@gmail.com)

**Rick:** Okay, and I think I have your address. I'll listen to this and make sure I've got that right and I'll put it on your page on [www.batgap.com](http://www.batgap.com) so people can just click on it and go, because we won't bother trying to spell it right now.

Great! I really appreciate the time you've spent, I really enjoyed this conversation. I realize that there are a lot of things we could have discussed that we didn't get to, we just sort of went down this avenue and that avenue. And if people are intrigued by what they heard, there's a lot more to learn and read about if they want to read your book and delve into what you're teaching. So thanks.

**Culadasa:** Thank you very much. It's my pleasure to do this.

**Rick:** Thanks for listening or watching everybody. This is an ongoing series as you know. Go to [www.batgap.com](http://www.batgap.com) to get notified by email of future interviews, to check out past ones, or to explore. There is a menu called 'At a Glance' – go to that and it will summarize everything we have to offer at the site. And of course there will be a page for **Culadasa** and for this interview, with links to his website and his email and his book, and so on.

Next week I believe I'm interviewing Pamela Wilson again. I interviewed her about 5 or 6 years ago so it will be a little catch-up with Pamela.

So thanks **Culadasa**, it's been a joy.

**Culadasa:** Thank you, it *has* been a joy.

**Rick:** Yeah, I really enjoyed it and thanks to everyone listening or watching, we'll see you next week.

{BATGAP theme music plays}