

The Seekers Forum Transcript

Dropping the Mirror: An Interview with Rupert Spira

September 2020



Mark: Well, I am thrilled today to be speaking to Rupert Spira, who is one of my very favorite teachers. Rupert, welcome to the podcast.

Rupert Spira: Thank you, Mark. Thank you for inviting me.

Mark: Good to see you. I'd like to begin by asking you about your personal story, and how it is that you, yourself became a seeker, became somebody who was interested in the spiritual path, how did that evolve for you?

Rupert: My mother and stepfather were very interested in these matters. I grew up in an atmosphere of non-duality. They belonged to something called the Study Society in London, which studied and practiced the classical teaching of Advaita Vedanta. All during my teenage years, I was exposed to this, my mother and stepfather had friends that would come to the house, so the conversations, I was familiar with the conversations.

I met a lot of people, of course, much older than me, who were interested in these matters. It was offered to me on a plate in a way. I didn't have to go very far to find it. I became interested in these matters. I actually first started reading the poetry of Rumi, aged about 15, long before Coleman Barks and others made him popular, and made his writing more accessible to the West.

I read the rather dry, and I still think very beautiful translations by Arberry and Nicholson, which were the only translations that were available at the time, but I loved them. This was my first heart awakening. I then became more interested in the Advaita philosophy that I found out about through the friends that my parents knew.

In my late teens, I started mantra meditation, and I remained at the Study Society, at Colet House in London for the next twenty years or so, practicing meditation, mantra meditation, and studying the classical Advaita Vedanta teaching, which I loved dearly. At the same time, I couldn't quite make it my own. It wasn't until I was in my mid-30s that I met Francis Lucille, who himself had been a student of John Klein's.

Francis introduced me to Atmananda Krishna Menon on the direct path, and also, the tantric approach to the body. Things changed for me quite rapidly then. From my mid-30s onwards, I spent the next thirteen or so years, I spent as much time as I could with Francis in Europe and America studying the direct path. I went from the classical Advaita, that was my background.

It was really this direct approach that I learned through Francis that really made the difference. [crosstalk].

Mark: Excuse me. Go ahead.

Rupert: When I say, "Made a difference," the Advaita Vedanta teaching had a very profound effect on my life, but it wasn't until I met Francis and came across the direct path that I really felt that I could make the understanding my own.

Mark: What was it about that earlier teaching, the classic Vedanta Advaita approach that didn't resonate for you?

Rupert: That didn't resonate for you or-- It was primarily a devotional path. I started off. When I was young, I had a very Christian upbringing, I had a very strong feeling for God. Then, as I said, I was very interested in Rumi's poetry. The devotional approach of the classical Advaita system was just a natural step for me. My mind was also asking questions.

I wasn't finding answers to my questions that they were the formulations when, they didn't seem quite in line with my questions, with my era, with my culture. It was as if I came up against a wall. I couldn't find answers to the questions that I was asking. It satisfied my heart, but it didn't satisfy my mind. I think the two need to be attended to equally.

Mark: Yes. Did it not speak to you as a man in the world, in a relationship, with a career? Was it the embodiment of it, that was--

Rupert: No, there was some conflict between-- I was 16, 17-years old when I first started practicing mantra meditation, and studying Advaita teaching. Then, for the next 20 years, I embarked on my life as an artist, as a potter, and I had an intimate relationship. I loved life. I wasn't a natural renunciate or reclusive, I loved life. I love relationships. I love the activity. I loved objects. I spent my life in my studio making objects. I love beauty.

Yet, the Advaita teaching was turning away from the encouraged one to turn away, at least, to a degree from the objective content of experience. There was a mismatch between my love of truth, and my love of beauty. It really wasn't until I met Francis that I realized that these two loves were really the same love, but until that time, they had been in conflict with one another. Yes, I couldn't find a way to integrate the classical Advaita teachings into my life.

Mark: What about the conflict between being an artist and being a seeker/teacher or somebody on the path of liberation? Was there a conflict between your ambition as an artist, or that creative impulse? Did you perceive there to be a conflict that you were then able to resolve?

Rupert: I wasn't really able to resolve it until I came across Francis and the direct path, and the tantric approach, because the tantric approach, as you know, it lays a lot of emphasis on beauty. The sensual experience is not benign. On the contrary, it is sublimated. Up until that time, there was a conflict between the fact that in my studio, by day, I was making objects, and I loved objects.

I felt apologetic about my love of objects and the love of beauty. Then, by night, I would go back to my bedroom and read Ramana Maharshi. It took some time for these two paths to be reconciled. In fact, I think this is the great contribution that the Vedantic approach has made to the spiritual tradition, is the inward-facing path, as I sometimes refer to it, the path of self-inquiry. The turning away from the content of experience, towards the subject, towards pure consciousness.

I think that, I don't know any tradition that does that as well as the Vedantic tradition. However, it is not so strong on the turning back towards experience and integrating our understanding with lived and felt experience. I think that tantric traditions do that more successfully, but in my opinion, that they're not so clear on the inward-facing path. That's why I ended up with a balance between these two approaches.

Mark: Do you consider the direct path particularly useful for the way we live today, as spiritual people in the world?

Rupert: I do, Mark. I feel that the direct path is really the path for our age. It requires no affiliation to any particular teacher or any tradition. There is nothing to subscribe to, there is nothing to believe in, there is nothing to commit to. Of course, anything we say is conditioned by the culture in which we were raised, including the conversation that you and I are having. Of course, all words come packaged in the conditioning in which they arise, but the direct path is, I think as much as is possible, the essential understanding has been divested of all its local, temporal, cultural traditions.

It has nothing to do with Christianity, Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism, Advaita. It is just a clean, clear contemporary formulation of the great understanding in a way that is consistent with contemporary language and contemporary life. To answer your question, yes, I feel it is the path that is most suited to our era, and it may not have been possible. Humanity, up until now, may not have been ready for this very direct approach.

Of course, it was always available, but it tended to be only given out in rather special secret circumstances, but now, it is being made widely available. I think it's not a coincidence that it's been made widely available now. Our world culture is ready for it now.

Mark: It has particular unique difficulties, I think, as a path.

Rupert: Tell me what you think the difficulties are, Mark.

Mark: When I talk about the direct path with friends, it feels particularly strangely to say this for women that I speak to. They feel like it seems intellectual and a bit dry to them. It seems abstract. As you say, there's no real devotion in it, per se. I do know people who have trouble with the-- They want more how-to, which reminds me of Krishnamurti and the truth of being a pathless land, which was my first love. That doesn't appeal to many people. [crosstalk] It's rigorous and steep.

Rupert: Yes. You said it doesn't have a devotional aspect, I understand, of course, why you say that. It doesn't have a devotional aspect in the sense of having a person or a deity to direct one's love towards, but it is devotional in the sense that it is devoted to the truth or the reality of our actual experience. In that path, I consider it to be the height of the path of devotion, but in some point, the path of devotion, the object of devotion must dissolve.

Otherwise, we remain in the subject-object relationship. The early stages of the path of devotion, the devotee, and the beloved remain. Particularly, for one on a path of devotion, one who has been accustomed to devoting themselves to the beloved, whether the beloved is a person or a deity, in the higher stages of the path of devotion, the subject and the object, the lover and the beloved must dissolve.

That is, I think a danger on the path of devotion. It's our reluctance to give up the object of our devotion. Of course, there are parallel pitfalls on the path of knowledge as well. I readily accept that.

Mark: What might some of those pitfalls on the path of knowledge be?

Rupert: The turning away from experience, and never turning back towards it again, that's the main one, so one turns away from the content of experience in order to recognize one's essential nature, and one just remains there, and never integrates one's new understanding of oneself with one's lived and felt experience in life. Even worse, one uses the recognition of

one's true nature, the subject of experience to absolve oneself of the responsibility of leading a decent, loving, intelligent, sane, just life.

In other words, we use the recognition or the so-called recognition of our true nature to justify behavior that falls considerably short of it. Those would be two of the pitfalls. Another pitfall that you have already mentioned is that it can become heady, if it's not really grounded in experience. Both paths, the inward-facing path, which as I said, I feel is best exemplified in the tantric tradition and the outward-facing path, the tantric path. Both these paths have their strengths, and they have their weaknesses.

Mark: I'd like to ask you about the seekers path itself, Rupert. Let's talk a little bit about spiritual materialism. I think it's such an important, and often overlooked aspect of what happens as we pursue spiritual matters. How do you address spiritual materialism, and how do we not fall into that trap?

Rupert: Mark, can you, for all of us, define what you mean by that? Because people mean, I've noticed slightly different things by the term "spiritual materialism." What do you understand by the term?

Mark: Well, I'm thinking about Trungpa, and I'm thinking about turning enlightenment into another goal, another object, something else to attain, and wearing one's seeker hood heavily, ostentatiously, self-righteously, attaching egotistically to the very thing that is meant to liberate you from the ego.

Rupert: Creating identity around being a spiritual seeker.

Mark: Yes, and turning it into another commodity, really. You're turning a wisdom into another commodity. How wise are you? Have you done that workshop? "Oh, I had that awakening." "Oh, that chakra got [chuckles] touched in that workshop." It becomes very materialistic. It's a material approach to what is essentially, obviously, not a metaphysical.

Rupert: It's difficult for me to comment on that, Mark, because I never come across it.

Mark: Really?

Rupert: None of the people that attend my meetings are afflicted with this attitude. Of course, to the extent that I know what's going on in the broader world of new age spirituality, I'm aware of it, but it's not something that I come across. I think, if this attitude of spiritual materialism is simply not entertained by the teacher, then, the group of friends that gathers around the teacher, I don't mean in a formal community, I mean just that the people that attend the meetings, if it's not supported in any way, then, they tend not to express this. As I say, I never come across it.

Mark: You don't come across spiritual ambition in your meetings, or in your--[crosstalk].

Rupert: At my meetings, are people that either, they fall into two camps, either because they long for happiness, or they want to know the nature of reality, 80% come because they suffer, and they want to be happy. They've tried everything else, and it's failed, so spiritual life is the one unexplored avenue. That's how most people come. "I'm suffering, I want to be happy."

Others, perhaps, those that are a little more intellectually inclined come because they want to know the nature of reality. They notice that whatever we know of the world is obviously filtered through sense perception. In other words, sense perception imposes its own limitation on reality. What is reality divested of the limitations that our senses impose on it? Actually, in the end, these two questions turn out to be the same question, but there are two different ways of approaching it.

The vast majority of people, and I would say everyone that I come across in my meetings, are interested in these two things: “I want to be happy,” or, “I want to know what’s true,” or what’s real. They’re very unpretentious people, usually, not big egos. They’re very sincere. They just want to be happy, and so, we embark on this very experiential exploration of the nature of happiness or the nature of reality.

I don’t come across a lot of people with huge egos, who have become spiritual egos, who claimed to be enlightened, who claim some marvelous understanding. Of course, as I said, I’m aware that it goes on out there, but I seldom come across it.

Mark: As you’re speaking, I’m thinking, it’s because of the teaching itself, it doesn’t really offer any rewards, in the sense of, you’re going to get to that level, and then you get this, and then you get that. [crosstalk].

Rupert: Exactly. I think that’s what I meant when I said, if it’s not supported in any way by the teaching. For instance, I never used the word “enlightenment,” unless somebody asks me a question using the term “enlightenment.” If somebody says, “What is enlightenment?” Then, of course, I’ll use the term because they’ve used the term, but I would never, let’s say, never, very rarely, use the term “enlightenment” because it’s so latent with association, and the very association to which you are referring, the enlightenment as this marvelous experience, that, if you work hard enough, and meditate for long enough, you’re going to have this incredible experience, which will distinguish you from everybody else, and you’re above the fray from then on.

This very traditional view of enlightenment, at least, those of us in the West, who traveled either physically or intellectually to India during the ‘60s, ‘70s, ‘80s, ‘90s, we acquired this rather romantic and misguided sense of enlightenment. For that reason, I tend not to use the word. I talk about just by the recognition of our being, and you can’t really build a very big ego around the recognition of your being, just the recognition of one’s simple being, and its innate piece.

You just can’t build an ego around it, there’s nothing there to claim. I never make any claims about myself. I think you’re right, that there’s not much to build an ego around. If someone were to do so in the community of friends that has gathered around this teaching, it would not be confronted, it would just simply not be attended to, it would just be completely ignored. I just not-- I just have no interest in it. We just don’t go there. Such a person would either fall in-line fairly quickly, or they’d leave.

Mark: Right. [chuckles]

Rupert: I wouldn’t [chuckles] hear from them again, but most people have already done their research these days on YouTube. If they come to my meetings, they already know roughly, what to expect. The filter has already taken place. I notice that the people that come to my

meetings, that they're sincere truth seekers and truth lovers, and that they just want to be happy, or to know truth or reality.

Mark: You talk about 80% or so of the people coming to you looking for relief from suffering, and I know that for myself, when I first started to practice, I thought that spirituality would make my pain go away, and I was in for a big surprise because what it actually did was made me so much more aware of the suffering, not that one has to become very aware of it, before you move into another phase. How do you respond to the idea of spirituality making your pain go away, and folks who approach the path in that, with that motivation?

Rupert: Well, I agree with what you say, in the sense that, very often, for many of us, our suffering is so painful and unbearable that we don't fully feel it, we're so busy escaping from it, either medicating it away or meditating it away, or doing something more or less refined through substances, activities, relationships, et cetera, doing something to prevent us from having to fully feel or face the discomfort of our suffering.

I agree with you too, then, the early stages of this investigation, it requires a process of facing one's suffering, not avoiding, and opening oneself to it, welcoming it, embracing it, rather than turning away from it. However, I would suggest only the first stage. Then, as one develops, there is, in most cases a gradual, occasionally, suddenly, a disillusion of one's suffering.

I do think that the recognition of one's true nature, by which, I mean, simply the recognition of the nature of one's being, before it is qualified or colored by experience, it does bring relief from suffering because the nature of our being; there are many ways we could speak about our being, but one of the simplest ways of describing the nature of our being would just be that, its nature is peace.

It is inherently peaceful, or inherently fulfilled. If one is in touch with one's true nature, one feels its innate peace and joy, and this does bring about a reduction or dissolution in our suffering.

Mark: One might encounter difficulty, encounter pain, encounter loss, encounter reasons for suffering, but underneath it, there's the awareness of the nature of being, so it doesn't land in the same way? It doesn't stick in the same way?

Rupert: Yes. To begin with, one can travel all the way back through the layers of experience, through our thoughts, through our feelings, and until we, for want of a better term, arrive at our being. Of course, we don't really arrive there, but you understand my meaning. We get in touch with our being, which seems to lie behind the content of our experience, and to begin with, this seems to be something that we visit briefly from time to time, and then, we get lost in experience again.

As a result, of course, we suffer. We identify ourselves with the content of experience, in which case, we have to trace our way back again to our essential being. We recognize it again, we taste its innate peace and it's fulfillment, and this back and forth happens for some time. After a while, our being is not something that we just visit from time to time, like a cottage in the country that we go to at the weekend. We move in, it becomes our new identity, to the extent that our being, our essential being becomes our new identity.

We remain in touch with its innate peace, not just in the background of experience, but in the midst of experience. The peace of our true nature that normally lies in the background of our experience begins to percolate into the foreground of our experience, and pervade the foreground of our experience. As a result, suffering, it rises less and less, it is outshone by the peace of our true nature, and in time, it simply ceases rising.

Mark: May I ask you, for someone like yourself, who's been doing this work for many, many years, confronting the world situation today, and the pain, the loss, the suffering, the confusion, the danger, how do you respond inwardly to this? Does it cause you grief? I'm curious to know.

Rupert: Yes. When I see anybody suffering, whether it's the relatively few people I meet these days because of the situation, but when I hear or read or see on the news of the enormous amount of suffering in the world, it melts my heart every time I see it. The vast majority of our suffering-- I'm not speaking of situations that are physically challenging, I'm speaking of psychological suffering. The psychological suffering that people experience is due to losing touch with their being, and it's innate peace.

My response to it is, to want to share this simple experiential understanding that the peace of one's true nature, the peace of one's essential being is available to everyone. One doesn't have to devote yourself to a teacher. You don't have to subscribe to any particular religion or spiritual community or tradition. You don't have to change your life. You don't have to meditate for eight hours a day. It's just available.

Everyone's being lies in the background of their experience. In most cases, it is simply overlooked in favor of the content of experience. Whenever I see someone suffering, my main immediate, my heart response to it is, go back to your being, that's where the peace you long for lives.

Mark: What about fear, Rupert? Do you feel fear in your own experience, and when you look at what's coming and where we are, where does fear live or not in you?

Rupert: I don't feel afraid, Mark, just to answer your question simply. Obviously, I see that the world is in a state of upheaval. Who knows what's coming? I don't feel afraid of it. Of course, whatever happens, I will have to face it moment by moment. I can't tell you how I will respond to it. I respond as I respond now, moment to moment to my experience, or whatever is involved.

I live in Oxford, in England. It's a benign place to live compared to, if you were living in Beirut a few weeks ago, or so, I'm not being confronted on the streets on a daily basis by the kind of upheaval and danger that I know many are facing.

Mark: Even in your role as a father, for example, you can't get-- You don't get triggered in around fear or around these kinds of insecurity?

Rupert: I feel concern for-- I have a 21 year old son. I feel concern for my son. I feel concerned for, when I see him and his friends. I think of all the people his age, roughly, his age, or all of the young that are coming into their adult life. I feel for all of them. Obviously, I witness it with my son because I'm having conversations with him about, well, what's he going to do when he leaves university?

What we know, is there going to be a job for him? How's he going to manage? All this, what will the world look like in five and ten years' time, politically, ecologically, et cetera. Of course, I'm confronted with it most immediately, in relation to him and my nephews and nieces, but I feel it for all that generation. I feel concern for all of them.

Mark: Yes. In terms of your work as a teacher, I want to ask you, if you don't mind, what are the misconceptions around the direct path or around Advaita that you run up against that are-- [crosstalk]

Rupert: [chuckles] Well, the main misconception, Mark, around non-duality, in general, and the direct path in particular, is that it is intellectual and difficult, and dry. That's the main misconception.

Mark: You talk about in some of your talks, a new age, newer non-duality or a new age.

Rupert: Yes. What I mean by new age non-duality is, although, there's nobody here, there's nothing to do. Just every single question, whatever the question, and the questions come from-- Over the last ten years, of course, I've had thousands of questions, and they just come from the entire spectrum of experience. To answer every question in one way or another way, there's nobody here, there's nothing to do. I find that totally inadequate.

It's true that there is no individual separate self. Therefore, the question of whether or not there is something for a separate self to do is really moot, because there isn't a separate self either to do something or not to do something. I find it so unsatisfactory to simply respond to every question with, there's nobody here and there's nothing to do. Not only that, I feel that it betrays, not on your lack of sensitivity and intelligence, but a lack of honesty.

It's just so easy. Just anybody can just set up their stall on YouTube or website, and put all the right words, all of that and just respond to everybody, there's nobody here and there's nothing to do. That's what I would consider new age non-duality. Of course, like a lot of new age teaching, there's truth in it.

There is, as I said, there is no ultimate individual or separate self, but that does not mean that it's appropriate to answer every question, and to dismiss anybody who might want to know what the nature of consciousness is, how they might be happy, how to cope with the loss of a loved one, or the death of a child, or it's just a story you're telling yourself.

I find it disingenuous, if there's nobody there and there's nothing to do, why are they teaching in the first place? Why? Presumably, they expect people to come to their talks and listen to them. Let's not go there anymore, but that's what I would consider to be new age non-duality.

Mark: Right.

Rupert: Let's leave that aside. Going back to your pitfalls. Of course, I understand why people consider the Advaita teaching, in general, and the direct path in particular, to be heady sometimes, but if it's well explained, and it is explained not in intellectual terms, but it's explained as-- It's not really that it's explained, but if whoever is speaking about it has the ability to actually walk us through the process, experimentally, it's the difference between going for a walk in the park together, and describing going in a walk for a walk in a park.

I agree that to describe going for a walk in the path is intellectual, however beautifully described it is, but actually, to go out together and walk through the park, that, to me, is the real teaching, the experiential teaching. There's nothing intellectual about that. It's highly experiential and very simple. Simple, direct, easy, almost anybody, any of the seven billion of us with simple, clear guidance, could follow it in that experience.

Mark: Talk to me about what a world founded on non-duality, looks like. Let's say, obviously, this is speculation, but let's say a hundred years from now, the direct path really has become the primary ethos and primary way of looking at the world, what changes?

Rupert: Well, quite a lot changes because the fundamental understanding that is really shared by all the religious and spiritual traditions that have a non-dual core or a non-dual understanding, that the fundamental understanding is that, everyone and everything share their being. In other words, there aren't seven billion beings or seven trillion beings. If we include all the animals or seven zillion beings, if we include all the objects. There's just being. You can't even say there's one being, there's just being.

Everyone and everything derives its apparently independent existence from that being. If you would put non-duality in a nutshell, that would be, at least, one way. Of course, there are other ways one could speak, but that would be one way of describing it. If one understood that and felt that, and led a life that was consistent with that feeling, understanding, you wouldn't need any more teaching.

That would be sufficient, because we would not only understand, but we would feel that everyone and everything is our very own self. Look at the political upheaval that we're experiencing now, look at the ecological crisis. Let's just take these two, both these crises are founded upon, in the first case, the idea that other people are others, and in terms of ecological crisis, that the world is other, separate from us.

In the first case, it gives us permission, the belief that others are other than ourselves. It gives us the permission to treat people in unjust, unkind, unloving ways. In terms of nature, the belief that we are separate from the world, allows us to treat nature in a way that exploits and degrades it. As a world culture, if we were to truly understand, and not to mention in between these two examples, I could have spoken about the way animals are treated.

If we were to understand, not just understand, but feel that everyone is our very own being, that what I essentially am, is that the very same self, not similar, but the same self that you are, how is that going to impact the way I relate to you and treat you? If I were to say I feel the same about animals, how would I treat animals? Not only that, but if I were to feel the same about nature, about the world, about the objects, about the plants, how would I treat the planet?

If I were to live in a way that was consistent with this feeling, understanding, and if everyone were to do so, that would transform our society.

Mark: Beautiful. We can only pray. [laughs]

Rupert: We can only pray, as you and I and innumerable others are doing, each of us in our own way, we can only help to share our understanding such as it is, in our own way. Each of us has our own way that is particular to our conditioning and our characters.

Mark: Do you still make pottery?

Rupert: No, I don't. I don't, Mark, I miss it sometimes, but no, I don't. Life, quite unexpectedly, ten or so years ago, took another turn. I wrote the first book, *The Transparency of Things*, and then, imagined that I would just go back to my studio, and spend the rest of my life there, which is what I had always thought I was destined for. Then, the invitations began. I began speaking and traveling, and then, the whole thing grew and took off. No, now, I don't.

Mark: You do miss it sometimes?

Rupert: I do miss it. Sometimes I get-- It's a very deep impulse in me to make something with my hands. I do miss it sometimes, yes.

Mark: Let me see if there's anything else I wanted to ask you, particularly. I think the last thing I'd like to ask you, Rupert, if I might, is what does hope mean to you? Hope is such a loaded term and complicated. What is it? How do you explain that?

Rupert: I'm with T.S. Eliot. Hope is always hope for the wrong thing.

Mark: Can you say more?

Rupert: Expectation would always be expectation for the wrong thing. What we are hoping for, what we are hoping is going to happen, is already happening, or rather, it is already present. You see, if we're hoping for something, that thing is, by definition, not present now. We must be hoping for some kind of objective experience in the future. If we are hoping for something, and, obviously, you mean hope in terms of our deepest desire for happiness.

If we're hoping for something in the future that will finally bring us peace or fulfillment, this hope betrays the fact that our desire for peace and fulfillment is still invested in objective experience. If our desire for peace and happiness is invested in objective experience, we are destined for disappointment. The reason we're all interested in these matters in the first place, is because we have either understood, or we have at least intuited that peace and happiness cannot be found in objective experience.

To continue to hope for some marvelous, enlightened experience, that is finally going to make us happy, it's a recipe for disappointment. What we long for is present now. What all people long for, above all else, namely, peace or fulfillment. Enlightenment is just the exotic word for fulfillment. What everyone longs for, above all else, peace, fulfillment lies in our being. In order to access it, we need to recognize our being, how it essentially is.

For most of us now, our being or our self, is so thoroughly mixed up with the content of experience, but although, all of us have the sense of being myself, all those have the knowledge I am. We don't know ourselves clearly, and it is for this reason that our innate peace and joy is not fully felt. It is for this reason that we projected onto an object in the future, and we hope that one day this object or this person, this relationship, this teacher, this something will happen. It won't.

Mark: What about hoping for change in the world, for example? Hoping for--

Rupert: Yes, hoping for change in the world, that would be a different sort of hope. Yes, that would be like a prayer that this understanding that we are speaking of, namely, the

understanding that everyone and everything shares their being. It would be a prayer that this comes to pass in our culture. You could say it was a hope, or it's even more than a hope. It's a prayer that a significant number of people recognize this.

As a result, this understanding begins to infiltrate the mainstream. You're quite right, Mark, in that sense, hope would be perfectly legitimate. Like you, I hope or pray for such a situation.

Mark: As do I. Well, it's been really wonderful speaking to you, Rupert, thank you so much.

Rupert: Not at all, as I say, Mark, I first came across you with the book you did about art with Andrew Harvey twenty-five years ago. I was very delighted to be invited by you. Thank you. It's a pleasure to speak with you.

Mark: Thank you so much. Please take good care of yourself.

Rupert: Likewise, yourself. Who knows? I hear, think you talk at the same conference maybe, if and when we all start traveling, at least, to an extent. Again, I hope maybe our paths will cross in the flesh one day.

Mark: I hope so too. Thank you so much.

Rupert: Thank you, Mark. Take care.

Mark: Be well. Thanks.

Rupert: Bye-bye.

[00:49:30] [END OF AUDIO]