

Conscious TV - Dr Amit Goswami – ‘Consciousness, Quantum Physics and Being Human’

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Interview by Iain McNay

Iain: Hello and welcome once more to Conscious TV. I’m Iain McNay and my guest today is Dr Amit Goswami. Hello Amit.

Amit: Hi

Iain: Amit has written many books. He is a Quantum Physicist and he basically has done a lot of work in bringing Science and Consciousness together, which I have personally found very interesting and very important as well. I have read four of his books, which I have here. He has written about eight or nine books all together. There is [showing books to viewers] “God is not dead”, there is “How Quantum Activism Can Save Civilization” - I am going to feature this a bit at the end of the interview. “The Quantum Doctor”. “The visionary window – a Quantum Physicist’s guide to enlightenment” - we [also] talk about this to some extent and he also has a DVD out called “The Quantum activist”. So Amit, I’ll put these down [places books on floor]. Just let’s run through, a little bit from your side, of how you got from being a normal scientist to include the element of consciousness, which is still, unfortunately, quite rare in science.

Amit: Yes, quite rare and I got into it completely by accident, by fluke. I had no idea. All that happened was that my life was a mess – this I know! I was 37; you can call this early mid life transition, using Carl Jung’s line, but whatever it was, I was unhappy no question. I was at this conference and that conference brought forth a kind of unhappiness that I had never experienced before. Like an intense jealousy at other people’s success, lack of success on my part, no body paying attention to me [when I had] a more important contribution, I think. But I had doubts obviously about myself – but this goes on for the whole day. At the end of the day at 1am I notice that I have finished a whole packet of Tums that I always kept....

Iain: This is for indigestion

Amit: Indigestion. I had it and I always kept it in my pocket, but... a whole packet! I was disgusted. I went outside the room that I was in, at a party. Went outside [and] it was on the ocean. So the ocean air hits me with cold air and a thought comes, all of a sudden, nothing ever expected like that. Why do I live this way? That is the thought. Why do I live this way?

Iain: And it was the first time you had a thought like that was it?

Amit: Right first time because I was quite content living, publishing papers, academic success. Not so much success in my personal life; in fact personal life was a disaster, but

academic life was supposed to be going OK. I didn't realize that there was so much unhappiness [in my life] and after analysis it seemed intuited that there must be a huge lack of congruence between my life and my livelihood, and the idea come to me, that why do I live this way, must mean, that why do I live this unintegrated way. This incongruous way.

Iain: I understand, yes.

Amit: So I was determined to find for myself happy physics; physics that will make me happy. I felt that what I was doing with structure of nuclei, or what people generally do in physics, high energy physics and astro physics and thinking of problems "out there", which has no bearing on our life, no bearing on our consciousness, no bearing on how to love your wife and love your children. This kind of physics is very much like in the medieval ages. You remember Asian monks used to wonder about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. I realized that this is what I was doing, I was just escaping and everybody is doing that of course but that doesn't justify me doing the same thing because it was making me unhappy. If you are happy doing that it's fine but I was unhappy, I could not deny it. So, that started a twelve year journey of the same unhappiness, but now with a direction. I have to find happy physics.

Iain: Happy physics (laughing) I haven't heard that term before it's a good term.

Amit: Somehow, somehow after about five or six years of searching it led me to quantum measurement theory.

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Iain: So what type of things did you try just briefly in those five or six years?

Amit: Oh I tried; my childhood brought me back to Indian spirituality a little. I started doing yoga.

Iain: You said on the phone to me that your father was quite a spiritual man.

Amit: My father was quite a spiritual man, I remember very distinctly how especially when I was upset as a child how just his proximity would calm me down. It is an amazing effect. Only later on I met people, very spiritual people. I think they are enlightened people. Two of them. Later on I met with energies which are as profound as my father's. Very profound energy, this peace that you feel in the proximity of these people is one of the real verifications, of what later on I identified as non-local consciousness.

There is some sort of situation in these people; they are situated differently. We are situated and our thoughts go on, ego going there, going here... what shall I accomplish, what shall I wear, what shall I conquer today, what shall I do? It's because, these people's mind is not like that.

Iain: Yes, so when you look back, you saw that your father had something that you wanted in a way, and you felt it was...

Amit:..it was very intriguing, let's put it that way. So when I was having these changes coming to me, you know, I started dreaming about my father and one dream especially stood out. I am dreaming my father up here he has a snake in his hand and he throws the snake at

me and I catch it. So I went to a dream analyst and the dream analyst said snake means transformation. So I thought OK, this confirms my situation; I need transformation I need to change. After that, I never dreamt again of my father; after I realized that I need to change, the dreams did not come back.

Iain: Was he alive at this point?

Amit: No, no he actually passed away.

Iain: So it was as if he sent you a message somehow. I think you tried meditation during this time?

Amit: I was trying meditation; I was trying yoga, I was trying to get to all the spiritual people's talk that I could find around. I was meeting people such as Ram Dass, people such as John Leary who were quite famous at that time and because I was a physicist, gaining access to them was not very hard. So those are the avenues that I was moving. I was also talking to psychologists, thinking that they would have something for me to do. Physics of psychology or physics of consciousness and quantum measurement theory of course had consciousness associated with it by that time. John von Newman suggested consciousness collapses or changes quantum possibilities into actual events or experiences. But that's dualism so that was not very popular amongst physicists because everybody knows philosophy of dualism – [the question of] how different non material consciousness can interact with the material body is left dangling and that problem is a severe problem for science because...

Iain: Did you feel a little isolated?

Amit: Absolutely.

Iain: In your situation because it's very rare, especially at that stage, to do what you were doing, in trying to bring this conscious side to science.

Amit: Yes and people in my department were generally upset.

Iain: They were upset with you as well?

Amit: Yes I had conversations, several conversations with the department chairman and some veiled threats, but I had tenure, I had gotten the promotion to full professorship so I didn't worry about it, all they could do is to stop my salary increases and I didn't care.

Iain: So you came to this realization that everything, I am reading out the notes from one of your books, that everything, starts with consciousness. Consciousness is the ground of all being. You must have been quite excited when you realized that.

Amit: Well this was probably the most exalted experience in thought that I ever had. I had equally comparable experiences but without thought. Any experience that could be called a creative insight – this is probably the greatest creative insight that ever came to me. Realising that consciousness is the ground of being is an adequate foundation for doing science.

Iain: How did this come? Did it come when you were intensely thinking or did it come just as

a realization?

Amit: No, nothing like that. I was talking to a mystic friend named Joel Morwood, he was quite a man himself and a little bit younger than me but I and he used to argue a lot. So this was one of the evenings I was in Ventura California. I heard Krishnamurti that day, that was something that must have softened me up.

Iain: Oh you went to J Krishnamurti.

Amit: J Krishnamurti. Yes that must have softened me up or something, because he and I had argued many times about this kind of thing and I usually would be a little high handed. He was only a filmmaker and I am the physicist, so you know... physicists have practically the monopoly over the world or how to analyse the world, right? In this culture. So I was high handed with him and I was lamenting that... look this quantum measurement problem, how quantum possibilities become actual events of conscious experience, we are just not able to solve it. How can consciousness be a brain phenomenon and still transform possibilities into actuality, because brain itself should be a possibility, according to Quantum Physics.

Iain: So you had this realization that consciousness is the Ground of Being and then you realized after that, that conventional science was upward causation (raising hands up) and your realization meant there was downward causation (lowering hands down) just briefly explain what that is to the viewers. Upward causation and downward causation.

Amit: Yes, this is basic because if you include consciousness without causal power you really have not done anything and scientists could say that consciousness is just every epiphenomenon.

Iain: So what is causal power?

Amit: This is causal power, so downward causation is the causal power of consciousness, that of course, has always been postulated by religion, so that is nothing new. But religions, the reason that they fall short... a) is dualism. How does the non material body interact with the material body? The second is they never spell it out. What does it mean, how does God work, does he just wave a wand and then things happen like a soul goes to hell or heaven depending on good deeds or bad deeds that he or she has done? So that kind of thing of course is very repugnant to modern people, correctly.

Iain: Right, let's start with the ground of consciousness (hand moving horizontally in the air from left to right at face level) which I am putting up there (face level) rather than down there. And then what are the various levels or layers underneath that [*ground of consciousness*]? So you start with consciousness...

Amit: Then it gets a little subtle. Quantum physics says that objects are possibilities – this is the key.

Iain: So everything, whether it's your DVD, or a glass, or your hat, or my hand, they are all possibilities?

Amit: They are all possibilities and that's the key because you see the puzzle that people have always felt [*is*] how could consciousness, which is something conceptual, something

nebulous, something wooly contain matter which is solid, which is rigid, which is hard, how can that be? How can something wooly, something nebulous contain solid stuff? So saying that Kingdom of God is earth, Kingdom of God is everywhere on earth, doesn't help, because people cannot comprehend how can that be - because everything is nebulous up there (holding hands at face level) and here everything is concrete (holding hands in lap). So Quantum physics resolves this dilemma and says first of all: no, everything is really all wooly stuff, all nebulous stuff; possibilities.

Iain: OK, so how do we then get from a possibility to something that's tangible, that we in our dualism can see?

Amit: So for that tangibility, we go back a little and explain what upward causation is. So upward causation means elementary particles are the base level of all matter. Elementary particles make more and more complex objects: atoms first, molecules, molecules make the cells – living cells... and other bulk matter.

Iain: So we start with something that is tiny, tiny, tiny and then something a little bit bigger.

Amit: (nodding) tiny, tiny, tiny and a little bit bigger, yes, and by the time they make cells, we almost begin to see them and then, cells, neurons make the brain and then the conventional wisdom of conventional sciences; says that brain makes consciousness, mind and all this stuff that we experience inside of us... thoughts, feelings and all that stuff. So of course in that case, question arises; if consciousness has to change, because this was already suggested, mind you, from von Newman, different mathematician suggested that look... he proved the theorem. The theorem says no material interactions - upward causations, in other words, this interaction of elementary particles that rises upwards and forms conglomerates like atoms, molecules, cells, brain – that kind of upward interaction, material interaction, just cannot convert possibility into actuality. It just cannot do it. According to the mathematics of Quantum physics it just cannot do it.

Iain: Yes, so you start with something new, which is downward causation?

Amit: Downward causation, which von Newman already suggested. But that doesn't work, because how does consciousness exert downward causation on matter? Of course the idea is to choose among the possibilities; that part makes sense, but how? Because any interaction, according to scientists at that time, requires a signal to go from consciousness to the brain, but no signal ever goes outside of the material world. The material world energy is always a constant. So this was the problem with dualism and how do I avoid dualism? That night when I realized consciousness is the ground of being, I also realized if that is so, then of course material possibilities, these Quantum possibilities, are all within consciousness; they are part of consciousness. So when consciousness chooses, consciousness chooses from itself. If you choose from yourself you don't need a signal. If you choose from yourself you can choose without any interaction.

Iain: But what is choosing from consciousness, or how is consciousness choosing or why is consciousness choosing?

Amit: Why can't be answered. How, of course is irrelevant. It's choosing without using signals, that much is what matters.

Iain: Yes, I realize that...

Amit: So why does consciousness choose? That could take a while for us to get into. What's the purpose of manifestation, what's the purpose of choosing? We will come to that; evolution has something to do with that. At that moment for solving the Quantum measurement problem, this is the crucial concept: that consciousness chooses without any signals; without interaction that consists of exchange of signals. So the question is: is there such communication without signals, in reality, in the world of manifestation? This is where the idea – signal-less communication, quantum non-locality, morphogenetic field becomes the supreme idea that I was putting forward – that consciousness must be non local. Consciousness is capable of non-local communication. Communication without exchanging signal and that's how it communicates with the material waves of possibility. That's how it chooses.

Iain: Non-local means that it is not anywhere as such, it is everywhere.

Amit: It's not anywhere as such; if you want to think of a picture it is everywhere and nowhere, you have to do paradoxical. Paradoxical language is the only way you can express it properly. Or we loosely call it outside of space and time. Loosely... very loosely. It's everywhere and nowhere, so it's complex, so the effect of whatever is outside of space and time, where signal-less communication can take place, is something you really cannot express in its fullness, without including paradoxical language. The crucial point is that no signal is involved, so the crucial experimental question was, that are there signal-less communications between brains, and that experimental question, thanks to Jacobo Grinberg who was a Mexican neurophysiologist, was answered within a few years in 1990 to 94 he found that yes, human brains can indeed communicate non-locally. Amazing experiment. But that came later; I already had published my paper on Quantum Measurement Theory.

Iain: We also had Rupert Sheldrake on Conscious TV and he very much talked about that as well – that kind of communication.

Amit: This is the basis of all paranormal phenomena, this is the basis of Quantum consciousness in non locality, in healing, we have now distant healing experiments, this is the basis of that.

Iain: It explains many things, doesn't it?

Amit: It explains a whole bunch of things (throwing arms open). The non-local consciousness is an idea whose time has come. It not only solves the quantum measurement problem, not only allows us to develop a new paradigm of science, but to really solve the fundamental problem that scientific materialism has created; which is that, it is a science of only objects; it's a science of insentient matter, it's a science of non living matter. But it does not have anything to say about the living experience. It does not have anything to say about conscious experience. It cannot say anything about, where is the experienter; who is the one that experiences. There is nothing to say this science that we have developed, that we worship, even today by at least 50% of the people – this science has nothing to say about who you are. Who I am. Who the self is, how consciousness is represented in the brain.

Iain: So how did that affect you because you were looking for happy physics? So how did

that affect you in your personal life when you discovered that? Did it bring you anything in terms... it brought you understanding, I realize that. Did it bring you more happiness?

Amit: Well, yes and no. I expected much more glamorous results from this experience of realization because this is what many people say as the realization to what in Indian tradition is called Jnana yoga, the yoga of wisdom. What I had done was discover through the wisdom tradition to studying a creative understanding, I have resolved the paradox in my mind of how could non-local consciousness, or God, if you use religious language, exist. So that should have been a very transformative experience but do you know what my surprise was? I was not ready for this one. I thought naively, because that's what my readings told me, that if you had such an experience, you were instantly transformed! [it's] nothing like that! I found that yes, there is a great amount of capacity that was certainly released immediately. I certainly saw myself as much more creative in my thinking and indeed I could write better, I could express myself better – all this is true. But you know, to my great dismay, I found that, I still had the same difficulty about loving my wife, loving my children, loving people around me. I was still quite competitive. A little less [than before] agreed. Realising that consciousness is the ground of being, consciousness is non-local, ultimately when starting to speak about that to people [it] softened me down a lot.

Iain: Yes, it was like you had the realization but, my guess is, it had to be integrated.

Amit: Yes, it has to be lived. That is what I was missing. Fortunately I came across the idea of creativity and I got into developing a theory of creativity. Creativity researchers have already shown that creativity consists of four stages. Preparation, which I did. Incubation, it happened automatically – I didn't know that sitting and being both are important as well as doing. I didn't know, but I sat and be a lot of my time because when I was not doing regular physics anymore I had huge amounts of time left to me because I was not in the hum drum of publishing and perishing – that kind of world anymore. So I had all the time to write maybe one paper a year. So that gave me whole afternoons, I remember, sitting with a tall glass of diet Pepsi in the students' cafeteria. So I had a lot of just sitting, doing nothing. So I was doing what I now call the do-be do-be do-be do practice – alternate doing and being. Very intense.

Iain: Alternate doing and being. Just very briefly distinguish between them. Doing and being.

Amit: Doing is the intensity that I felt while studying the question – questions of consciousness.

Iain: Right, so you were active (pointing and circling hand around temple area).

Amit: Active yes, I am stoking the unconscious so to speak. Being is unconscious processing – the processing that is most important for creativity. It happens in the unconscious, not in the conscious. That's where possibilities are generated for consciousness to choose from. Because, remember it has to be a new idea, so new possibilities have to come. You are never going to get new possibilities through conscious searching.

Iain: Yes. I understand. So you are doing; doing and being (alternating hands up and down).

Amit: Doing and being. And then the quantum leap... insight! Then creativity researchers found OK, insight of course that quantum leap is what is most aggrandized, that is what is called enlightenment, whatever name you give it. But name doesn't matter; the point is enlightenment is not it. It's very important, of course, insight is very important

Iain: It's a stage isn't it?

Amit: But then the insight has to be lived and that fourth stage of creativity is called manifestation and wow is manifestation hard when you are trying to embody consciousness. I still haven't finished the journey (laughing) it's still going on and I don't know if, in this life, I will ever be manifested Being.

Iain: Do you see what is still going on? Do you see that, as also, an element of doing on your part and being aware of your reaction to situations and your programming, or do you see it as a process that happens on its own?

Amit: I think I have resolved that to some extent by realizing that there will be a time when I will know. Right now I am very much into, what I call, accomplishment. I want to accomplish, I want to change the world and to change myself to love my wife even better than I do today with even less reaction that I have today. I want to have that same relationship with everyone in the world – even with my antagonists. Jesus did say love thy enemy. I take it very seriously. If I can learn how to love my enemy... that day I may say, OK Amit Goswami you have crossed another hurdle about manifesting love in your life.

Iain: OK, at this point, I want to very much connect that with something else I thought was very interesting; which is how you see free will, because pretty much with upward causation, I understand, free will doesn't really exist.

Amit: Correct.

Iain: But with downward causation, there is an element of free will. So you can have the intent to love your wife, or be more creative or whatever, because that is contained in the downward causation.

Amit: That could be contained in the downward causation, by intention from the ego level we just put out the word, we just put out the idea. Then it's a question of – will the idea resonate with non-local consciousness because ultimately the quantum chooser is at that non-local level of consciousness.

Iain: So we, from our individual self, we put the idea out and it's almost if the decision gets made in an area which is not separate but it's part of the non-local, as you call it, consciousness. Which is part of the Oneness, as I would call it. Is that correct?

Amit: Right, right. And we can be a little more specific. So any conscious idea that we generate, that idea, if it is sufficiently stoked, will get into the unconscious because the memory will play and whenever we are not collapsing thoughts, that memory will play in the unconscious. Possibilities will be generated from that memory. This is what we are looking for. So the possibility of transformation, this unhappiness that I don't know how to love, this helplessness at what makes me so irritable, what makes me so defensive in my reactions when a love object comes into the vicinity, what is it? We can't handle our irritability or

defensiveness with an intimate person – if it's not intimate we do fine – often times. But with intimate people we always get into this, defensiveness, irritability, negative reaction; why is that? Because we have these memories and they are continuously giving possibilities into our unconscious - so by stoking love, stoking the intention, we create additional possibilities in the unconscious. And these other possibilities, and these existing possibilities - they interact. Their interaction is conflict; will you go on the same old same old way or can you change?

Iain: You also talk about in one of your books – about how the feeling, or the belief, that we are separate, is causing a lot of our pain.

Amit: Yes, belief that we are separate actually does produce a separateness of mind from the physical, vital from the physical or feelings become separate from thinking and this is pain. You know I have felt pain several times in my life, especially when I have become single in between my marriages – those times of intense loneliness, you feel separate from the whole. Why do you feel separate? You feel completely unloved. You feel that no body cares for you. In those moments, if you knew that there is a quantum self, a representation of God in ourselves and there is this self to comfort us. Many people call this self as God, [the] comforting God. The God that comes to your aid; to whom you call out when you are in danger, when you are lonely, when you are feeling separate. But I didn't even know, after my first marriage broke up, I didn't even know that this happens. The second time my marriage broke up I did know and this was much, much less – the loneliness I did feel, a little, but I did not feel anything with the intensity that I felt the first time. So indeed this kind of realization helps us to deal with separateness and if you are not separate anymore, that is already a very good sign. But coming back to what signals the end of the search; so long as I have accomplishment orientation – I want to accomplish – so long as that happens, we accomplish. That accomplishment may involve outer stuff like, I write books. That accomplishment may also involve inner stuff - I learned to love and this goes on (circling and entwining hands) I learned to be more just; I learned to appreciate beauty a little more, I learned to appreciate truth a lot more and so forth. Both goes on. But these are all accomplishments. A time comes when you just are bored about accomplishments; so you don't care anymore. This is the crucial thing. When that comes, then you are ready to do your final accomplishment and this is the search for self-realisation. Then you want to realise how God is represented in this, what is called, the quantum self that I mentioned a little early on. Then you want to know this quantum self directly. This is not a Jnana experience like I had before, this is not an ordinary Samadhi experience which I also had; this self-realisation experience is beyond all experiences. This is the highest experience that the human being can go. Then you know the nature of the self: when that creative idea comes [to you] 'what is the self' [and it comes] by direct realisation. Even then though you have to do the final step of that creative process which is to manifest, shift your identity, from the ego to the quantum self. Manifest God in your life.

Iain: In a way that's a dilemma because the one that often wants the shift to have the shift, is the ego itself.

Amit: That's right. So that is why spiritual traditions always say, surrender the ego. That is the last step. And you know how ordinary people interpret what spiritual traditions say and what gurus tell you? It's horrible; because everybody interprets they have to give up the ego to gain access to spirituality. No, spirituality contains, in the vast part of the spiritual journey... spirituality has to involve the ego because without the ego there is no creativity.

Iain: Yes, well I was just looking at my notes because you talk about this; that we need the ego. Ego loves the old, it's conditioned as you said; but it also gives us a reference point too which is important for stability and human interaction.

Amit: Absolutely; who would we be? Who would I be is important to me, so long as that importance remains [then] how can I give up the ego? Now how many people do you see around, including the Gurus around us, including those people who are great thinkers and we respect them, they are supposed to be enlightened, how many people do you know to whom you can go and take your shoe off and give it on the head (gestures holding shoe and tapping down onto someone's head); how many people do you know, that won't feel insulted and, would not start shouting at you?

Iain: (Laughing)

Amit: So when you are in that state, when nothing is an insult any more because you are no body, Richard Alpert [aka Ram Dass] later confessed to me that he was a pretender, he went through that phase where he would pretend. He used to start his talks with: "I am no body special talking about nothing special" but he knew. He told me himself: "I knew, that of course I'm faking, because this is what I am supposed to say". So when that happened we come back and realise that there is a lot of work to do, we realise that stage has not come yet. When that stage comes, when I am ready, then I won't be interested in myself any more. I am ready to let it go. At that point we can start the final journey. Before that, if you started, it's fruitless, because you will have the experience of self realisation but you will still want to be somebody with that realization.

Iain: I think the two run for a time don't they for many people that are searching and open to looking. They both are running. There is still the wanting to be, to a degree, successful on the outside, still looking, and yet the understanding that the fundamental work is on the inside. I suspect that has been the same for you over many years.

Amit: The important work is to give up that search, give up the idea of being somebody, being the teacher, being the guru, being the world teacher being the world renowned great, great person who everybody listens to. All that just drops away. Then you just sit. If people come to you fine, let them be happy; that's fine it doesn't matter but you are always situated in that peace. This is what brings that extra capacity of non-local consciousness in the proximity of great, great people.

Iain: And that's what we are looking for really is peace, isn't it?

Amit: Yes, ultimately we are all looking for a complete peaceful mind. [It's] a tremendous journey and I am so grateful that Quantum physics allows me to understand most of this journey although I have not achieved some of these later stages, but Quantum physics allows me to analyse even the highest stage of realization, I think, I hope.

Iain: I'd like to go back a bit into something we didn't cover in any kind of detail which I think would be helpful for people and for me; would this be this point at which we need the observer for the ground of being to become something tangible? I know you talk about a quantum collapse which is not easy to grasp. Can you just take us through that, how that fits together?

Amit: Well, this is the most complex question of the theory that had to be built. This question [of] how consciousness actually embodies itself in the brain, amounts to the brain having a very special situation in its body. It has to have a very special situation with which consciousness can get trapped; consciousness can identify. Because that is what must be happening, look, the observer himself or herself is also Quantum possibility so the possibilities looking at possibility cannot be denied. [for example] You, possibility looking at this flower [that's also] possibility. I hope the flower is coming on the TV picture (laughs).

Iain: (laughing) It is, I can see it on the monitor it's there.

Amit: So possibility looking at possibility... collapse happens and then this possibility might actualize. But what about brain, where did brain go if you were outside of both brain and the flower?

Iain: Yes, I think you must describe first what is collapse – what do you mean by collapse?

Amit: Collapse is just another word – habit talk, technical habit of a physicist. Physicists call from the beginning this idea of wave becoming particle, as wave collapsing into a particle.

Iain: OK, so in a way you see it the other way round. If something collapses it disintegrates, but here you are saying the collapse is nothing, becoming something.

Amit: In a way, yes nothing becoming something: manifestation.

Iain: And that is the collapse; the waves becoming the possibility.

Amit: Yes possibility becoming actuality.

Iain: But you need the observer effect for that to happen.

Amit: You need the observer effect, but observer is also possibility so what has happened is that consciousness... Why don't we see the brain in the process? Because both collapsed. Flower there (points to flower), brain there (points to Iain) but you are not seeing the brain you are seeing only the flower. In the process, consciousness has identified with your brain and the brain is saying, "I see the flower". So what is in the brain that allows consciousness to identify with the brain? This is the key question. The answer actually was given by a fellow without knowing it, named Douglas Hofstadter brilliant physicist, I knew him actually he was a student at the university of Oregon where I taught. He wrote a book called Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid... beautiful book. In that, he suggested, that if you have a tangled hierarchical system,; a system in which you cannot trace the hierarchy from the beginning to the end, in between there is a singularity, a discontinuity, so that it is impossible to construct these tangled hierarchical systems from scratch. Just remember, does the brain have that? Yes the brain does have it. If you think about the brain at the surface state, at the macroscopic state, allows our self to perceive and then it makes memory. But if you look at these two concepts, perception and memory, perception of course is required for memory but funny thing is that memory is also required for perception. There are many, many stories that if you have no memory of an object, you cannot see it.

Iain: Well that's right I have read that many times. In fact Deepak Chopra who you were talking about earlier, – I remember reading once – he was talking about certain tribes in the Amazon that as when we see a plane we can see the exhaust behind the plane (moving

hand in the air to demonstrate fuel vapors streaming out back of plane) they (Amazon tribes) can see something similar behind birds when they fly, they can see that but we can't see that because we are not trained to see it, it's not our reality, our consensus reality.

Amit: So that's a tangled hierarchy, when two things require each other that's a tangled hierarchy. So brain has a tangled hierarchy. If there is a tangled hierarchy then we identify with it. To see the identity examine the sentence: I am a liar. If I am a liar then I am telling the truth, if I am telling the truth then I am lying; if I am a liar then I am telling the truth, if I am telling the truth I am lying. If you go on ad infinitum notice you cannot really come out without consciously realizing "What am I doing? This is silly I won't play this game" and you jump out. But you tend to identify, for a while it will be quite tempting to go on (thinking), "Oh this is fun". Children in fact sometimes start crying because they will say I cannot just go on like this, but how do I get out? (laughing). So that's a tangled hierarchy. This infinite oscillation between two extremes.

Iain: But where did the initial observer come from to create the manifestation of the universe?

Amit: So now examine it going back and what do you see? If I am identified, if I am trapped in this circularity, then I am identified with this sentence. So similarly if I am trapped in the circularity of the brain, perception requires memory, memory requires perception, then I am identified with the brain. So what you call the observer, arises after the event of collapse, after the change of possibility into actuality. In the process both subjects, the identification of consciousness with the tangled hierarchical brain and the change of the object, - collapse of the object - both have taken place in the same process of choice. Consciousness chooses [and] out of the choice is born the observer as well as what the observer is observing. So, this is why Krishnamurti... there is a very beautiful word that Krishnamurti used, "For the brain [the] observer is the observed". I have read that sentence many times before.

Iain: Say that again...

Amit: For the brain the observer is the observed.

Iain: Observer is the observed. OK.

Amit: How do you think of the brain processing a picture... a picture of you that I am processing right now? You are an image on my retina. This much everybody understands and then that retina image is processed by electrical system of the brain, everybody understands [that]. But then you get an electrical image, is that electrical image somebody, a little me, watching? In the back of the brain, is there a television screen and a little me? Is homunculus watching that? That kind of funny picture is what people have, unfortunately. So by recognizing that no, the observer and the observed, the homunculus and the picture on the screen they are the same, there is no difference, there is no distinction, the observer arises because consciousness has identified with this whole thing, memory and perception, the whole apparatus that we call the brain.. That's the mystery of how consciousness becomes embodied; and this mystery cannot be solved within scientific materialism, there is just no way. Scientific materialism says we have a science of objects. Objects only give you objects; you can never get a subject separate from the object by starting with objects. You have got to start with consciousness.

Iain: (laughs) OK, does the universe have a purpose?

Amit: Yes, the universe has a purpose and the purpose is to manifest the highest ideals which Plato called archetypes or, for a more beautiful name, supra mental; the supra mental values.

Iain: But how do you know this?

Amit: How do I know this? By studying the theory of evolution from a consciousness point of view. The theory of evolution is conventionally seen as Darwinian. In fact media treats Darwinism as evolutionism basically. This is not right, this is just so very wrong, because in normal circumstances, if physicists, biologists chemists, did not have such a feud with religions, under normal circumstances, all scientists - in fact physicists and chemists do recognize this (it's the biologists who are very stubborn) - would recognise, that Darwin's theory just does not hold water. It is a good theory; it has served well the purpose of developing biology as a science because there was nothing before Darwin, nothing much. So Darwin made biology respectable, all that is true. That's only historical gratitude, like Physics is very grateful to Newton for what he did, but to say that Physics *is* Newton today, would be [a] complete mistake. Newton has been suppressed by Einstein [and] by Quantum Physics and many, many developments have occurred in Physics that Newton could not even dream of. So Biology should be able to do the same thing, except that they cannot, because of this feud with religion. Christians, even to this day, creation is told a completely different picture that defies evolution, because they are so sure that everything in the Bible must be literally true. Similarly, the biologists have accepted the dogma that Darwinism must be absolute. If you give up Darwinism it's very easy to see that there are gaps. There are gaps in the fossil records and these gaps have to come from somewhere because they suggest that consciousness must have two tempos: one very fast and one slow like Darwinism says, so Darwinism describes the slow evolution. The first evolution how does that come? If you are looking from consciousness' point of view... remember the process of creativity? Quantum leap? The discontinuous change... that is the key! So why is consciousness creatively unfolding the world; manifesting the world in progressive steps of creativity? Why is it doing that? Immediately you find one astounding thing, the amoeba and humans both have some commonality; [the] amoeba can reproduce, so can the human, but look at the biological process of reproduction. Amoeba reproduces by cell division, that's it, they don't even have differences of male and female – no sexuality there. Male female develops a little later on in evolution, one progress already, but still sex is being used for just reproduction. Then later on, brain develops and we have circuits of pleasure, then sex is used for pleasure. [this is] The second stage of sex. But for human beings, especially in the 21st century people are already moving on to another even higher exploration of sexuality and reproduction and this is the use of sex to make love. Make love, nothing less than love. They are investigating, can I love my sexual partner unconditionally? Many people are searching like this. I teach people to do that because in my own life that is a major practice. This kind of evolution of something that starts at a rudimentary level but then ends up becoming a better and better representation: this is the object of evolution. Initially we cannot fathom love, we don't have it [we are] just cell-dividing and then we have the possibility of loving another but it's remote it's just sexual reproduction and then it gets a little bit better, now there is pleasure in sexuality, so the other is welcome now [it's] not just mere reproduction [the] other is good it will give me pleasure. And then the stage comes where the other is necessary for the exploration of a value: love. And then maybe an even higher stage which we don't know about.

Iain: So how do you put this together with... because you have this book 'Quantum Activism Can Save Civilisation', how does this come together on a practical basis?

Amit: This is of course, I feel, the most important thing today for all thinking people, all feeling people, all people who want to integrate their lives like I did, have to face up with. What these ideas that we spoke of - of scientific materialism, consciousness doesn't exist except as brain phenomena, matter is everything – what these ideas have done is literally undermine those values which is the purpose of evolution which is what makes living worthwhile. Consciousness gives us values, if you denigrate consciousness, values would automatically be denigrated. Does the brain as a conglomerate of environmental particles have values? Material scientists try to bring values back in to evolution but they cannot do it because matter cannot even process meaning, let alone values. These things are subjects of scientific proof today. We should give up on scientific materialism if we want to save civilization. Unfortunately scientific materialism is also very entrenched today; you have to realize that and then you have to recognize the power of activism.

Iain: But see when I switch on my TV, which I do sometimes and I watch the news, it doesn't matter which news channel I watch it's not usually very encouraging so I am just wondering how... obviously Quantum Activism in itself is what you see as a way forward, and yet it would seem, from our media anyway, that the way forward is a long way away, if there is one. I was just wondering how you see it practically, for the average person what Quantum Activism means.

Amit: Yes this is what the average person needs to know. It does seem fairly remote, today. But you know, two answers. First of all it seemed remote when a few scientists, take Descartes, Francis Bacon... a few scientists were struggling against the power of the church; it seemed very remote then, didn't it? So it means nothing that it seemed very remote. Several decades ago it seemed remote that communism could ever break in Russia. So how movement of consciousness works is actually by jolts by surprises. This is what the nature of creativity is. So that's one answer.

Iain: So that's the Quantum side, it's the surprise side in a way.

Amit: Surprise side of it. It would be creative, it would be a revolution, it would be some kind of nudge, big changes come abruptly, suddenly even social changes. The other aspect is, which is very, very hopeful for every one I hope, is that, it does not take very many people to do it. Rupert Sheldrake first had this intuition. He published a book, or several books, in the 80's where he put forward this idea that only a few people, because changes that we make in our brain, involves what Sheldrake called morphogenetic field these fields that are responsible in some way... I call them blueprints of biological form. So when we change the brain, make a positive emotional brain circuit of love let's say, the morphogenetical fields associated with love which is the blueprint of that brain, that becomes associated with love and therefore it will become a loving morphogenetic field. It is a changed morphogenetic field. That change I was able to show, Mark Mitchell and I, that change in the morphogenetic field is stored not in the brain but is stored non-locally. Quantum memory is non-local memory, outside of space and time; everywhere and nowhere. And then what happens? If it's non-local memory, anyone on earth irrespective of time and space can access it. So in the future, or this is the vision, vision is that if enough of us become conscious that we need to change and we are capable of, we are capable of the creative experience. We are capable of turning our creativity inward, create brain circuits of love, and we do it in

communities so we do it in groups, we do it in such a way that non locality will be facilitated. So these non local memories are available in the future and they are used automatically without effort by...

Iain: But you see, and I think you talk about this in one of your books, people in a way struggle for values. They are very caught in the whole consumerism, the whole material aspect of society and many people are very lost in terms of where to start.

Amit: yes so that's the other part of Quantum Activism, so we develop these people who will develop brain circuits which will then propagate in the future through non-local means – that's one idea. The other idea, very important to recognize, is that we can change the market place. Right now the market place only sells material goods and it's sort of almost hypnotic and we go on believing that a more capable cell phone is going to give a more satisfactory life but of course it doesn't. So unhappiness actually goes on increasing in this consumer society. But suppose we start to consume this stuff that we value; suppose we start to consume meaning, values and especially, I will tell you the real key of this: suppose we started making vital energy. Vitality as a commodity in the market place. Can we buy vitality? Yes, it turns out that yes people are already thinking of producing vitalized water. I am working with a Brazilian company to produce vitalized cosmetics but what does that mean? That means that if a woman puts this cosmetic on she will feel more vital energy – she will feel energized and wouldn't you love to be energized before you go out into the workplace in the morning, when you put on your make up?

Iain: So it's very much something coming again from the inside, even with your vital make up, in a way it's a catalyst you kind of bring the inside out rather than trying to be what you think you should be for the outside.

Amit: Right and this inside will be bubbling, the inside will be bursting so you will not only be a thinking person with intensity but a passionate person, a feeling person with intensity, it's the combination of thinking and feeling that makes us creative to the utmost. So I think that when we vitalize the organic objects that we imbibe in one form or another, some of them we take as food, some of them we put on as perfume, some of them we use in other ways but all organic substances have a vital component. We, right now, are very lost in the material. We ignore the vital, sometimes we throw away the vital. Sometimes we make the material so changed from the organic that it is doubtful that it will still contain the vital. For example artificial genetically engineered rice that Monsanto sells, I am against this for this simple reason: we don't know enough, we don't know the vital physical connections today, well enough, to know that genetically engineered rice has the same vitality that ordinary rice used to have. It's very risky. Anyway, to come back to this, if we start paying attention to the vital... organic food YES, vitality even more YES, if we keep the vital energy and if we can make that ethical commodity for economic buying and selling, the world can change faster, because people will see the importance of the subtle, people will see the importance of the experiential much more quickly if these things are introduced.

Iain: We are going to stop there. I must say I think you are 75 years old, you look very vital to me. I think you are a living example of what you are talking about which is very refreshing to see.

Amit: Thank you

Iain: We are going to show some of your books again, “Quantum Doctor”, “The visionary Window: A Quantum Physicist’s Guide to Enlightenment”, the DVD of the Quantum Activist along with the book (holds the book up), ”How Quantum Activism Can Save Civilization” and “God is not Dead” .Thank you very much for coming on to Conscious TV I have really enjoyed our conversation and thank you, everyone, for watching and we hope to see you again soon. Goodbye.

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