## Introduction to Shai Tubali

My guest today is Shai Tubali. And as I was looking at his work before the show, I was so amazed at both where he began and where he is now. He also, aside from having a real sense very early in life that living a consciously lived life was the only thing that really interested him.

So imagine that, you know, just waking up to being conscious and having that as your as your primary focus in life every day. He also has moved that into the field of academic research as well as writing and educating people.

He is also now working with University of Leeds on programs to actually measure these kinds of states. So you'll find all these angles into his work. Interesting.

And I know you'll really enjoy our conversation. So I'm so glad you're here. And Shai thank you for joining us. And I'm happy to be here Dawson it's it's wonderful to have you here.

And as I was just looking at your your mission, your work, your books, your approach. I want to just focus before we go to that moment when you realize that the primary interest you had in your life was awakening.

Yes. What led up to that? Well, there was I would say that there were just certain social fears that I was experiencing, even in the presence of my friends, my best friends.

And then I had this thought, how come I have I experienced this type of fear, even among my best friends?

## Early Search for Awakening

There has to be some kind of of a deeper solution to that, because this simply doesn't make sense. And there was also these these kind of strange, completely unreasonable calling, responding to to certain Zen books and, and certain certain scriptures and certain meditation books.

There were certain sentences, certain statements about about how one can become one with the universe. And these sentences, without really understanding why, really thrilled me and touched me to the core. So, without any rational reasoning, I felt the urge to to leave everything behind.

And there was what to leave behind because I was the novelist and the journalist. And the more I moved into the spiritual journey, the less I was able to do the previous things that I used to do.

and the things that I used to write about were simply impossible to, to write about. So you find yourself just not being interested in those same topics once you began to move along that journey.

Completely, completely. There was simply a major calling something that that was that was as if you're on the other side, from calling me from from there, from the dimension of of the timeless, of the limitless, of the of the deathless.

And which masters were the ones whose words you found yourself responding to the most strongly. Where it started? It started with with Osho, who with who was a rather controversial 20th century spiritual teacher.

I didn't realize that back then. I was just a deeply touched by his words of of of wisdom and and and guidelines on on how to meditate. But but I would say that the that the greatest source of inspiration was the 20th century spiritual teacher.

I wouldn't call him spiritual teacher. Who would be very angry if I if he heard he if you heard me speak in this way. and but the mystic and philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti and actually eventually when I turned to to the academic research, I dedicated my PhD to to his work and to is to his specific method of of transforming people, transforming

his discussions through, transforming formative dialog.

Yeah. And, I know that people wanted Krishnamurti to be the next leader of the Via Self Society. They groomed him in that role, and he rejected the whole thing, you know, the whole guru experience and, and all the authority that came with it.

So, yeah, he. exactly, exactly, boldly through the whole thing away. And instead he took a very, revolutionary and actually for, for many people, in comprehensible approach that negated any techniques, any, any processes and any path whatsoever, which I would say, pretty much opposes what they, what I, I have done in my book, The Complete Book of Meditation because they, I provide people with so many types of techniques.

## Krishnamurti, Techniques, and Sudden Enlightenment

Yeah. And, of course, the, the great monastic traditions, the those right paths have very distinct milestones you pass through, and they recommend you do certain things in different times.

And so they're, they're, they're highly technique driven and exactly. a pretty bold approach to throw the ball all the way. And unless and this is what I strove to, to demonstrate in my research, unless you, you, you understand what he does is another form of technique, another form of practice.

Because what Krishnamurti used to do was pretty fascinating. If, for instance, you you would come to him and ask Krishnamurti, what is the meaning of life, then he would insist that the usual approach is to provide the student with an answer, right?

The the guru, the authority, and knows what they are and what they. But but then Krishnamurti claimed that these these conditions us these limits, they're the and it narrows the pathways of our brain and and and and makes us repeat the, the the patterns of memory, which means that we forever repeat what we already know.

We never really enable the renewal of of the brain. Krishnamurti actually spoke of the transmutation of the brain cells. He believed that that one could actually revolutionize or, or or and renew the brain cells and destroy the old ones, and to and to create a sort of a new brain, a brain that that that is fast, free.

So what he used to do was to, to, to repeat, to hold the question and to keep negating whatever answer the A is, is discussant would would provide until they, they, they came to a state where there was simply, freedom and silence.

And true and true listening. But you say that in your work you actually do recommend specific techniques. Yes. Yes, I, I think that what Krishnamurti did was, was a, mostly impossible for, for, for, for, for most of us human beings who, who do require a certain process, a certain, a certain gradation.

I think what you offered was, was too immediate, too demanding. And we do need to, to, to start with something we certain we certain certain objects of meditation.

You know, I been intrigued by this, this question because I've read quite a few of the modern mystics and, some of them say the same thing as Mr. Murdoch said, like, there's one called David Carr's who wrote a book called perfect, Brilliant Stillness.

And he, he, he compares awakening to a ladder. You climb up and eventually you get up or you kind of scale the wall of human ego and you run this, this, this, this elevated level, and then you throw away the ladder and you're there.

And, what he says is that the ladder to situates that quite that what work for you, what works for the next person? You have to go find, find your own, method.

Carl McCullen too, in a book called The Big Book of Christian Mysticism, he says the same thing. You can never have a, a structured approach. Other people have highly structured approaches. Yes.

One of the one of the things I wondered is, whether, like this one, one teacher not right now who who has but of course, effortless mindfulness. He says here when he just began to do it effortlessly.

God, he just dumped all of his techniques and began trying. I'm thinking, well, that's great, but how long had he been practicing techniques before you dumped them?

I mean, those those, I think got it a long way along the road toward effortlessness. And it is at a certain point it doesn't go effortless. But there was a decades of practice before that that that's.

You know, you're attaching here, on a certain, a certain a debate that has been going on for, if since, thousands of years, actually hundreds of years.

if for instance, if you take care, then the debate in Buddhism between the, proponents of sudden enlightenment, this is how they call it. For instance, if you take Zen Buddhism or if you take the Vajrayana Buddhism, they speak of the mudra tradition.

They say you are already three, you already three. And all you have to realize is, is exactly that. Therefore there, there can be no thoughts there, and there can, and there can only be the the removal of all the illusion that hinders your realization that you are already free.

Now, of course, this is paradoxical because. Because even to realize that you are already free, then you sit in a monastery, right? For decades trying to reach these southern enlightenment.

And also they've, and also also Krishnamurti students say, I know, I know firsthand from interviews that they used to sit with him for decades, not really understanding and really struggling to reach this moment, what he called insight.

You see. So, so, so in both cases, there there has to be a process involved. There. There is. Yes, yes. Yeah. Other teachers have had been striving for years and years and years and never reach that, that effortless enlightenment stage. So, it is exactly.

Exactly, exactly. Yes, yes. I think that there is more the, the, the basic question of, of how you perceive yourself as a in terms of self image, you know, that there is in, in Vajrayana Buddhism there is a and wonderful a technique that is actually more than a technique.

It's something that you thought you should practice all day long, and in it is called deity yoga.

## The 23-Year-Old Awakening Experience

And in that yoga you visualize yourself, you begin to, to think of yourself as, as, as an already fully blossomed Buddha. And so, so whatever you do, whatever you say, whatever you think, the way you walk is like the the Buddha that you you envision yourself to be.

You see. So, and so, so this is, this is, and a certain statement is there a it's either you start with the self image of a seeker longing to one day become enlightened or you, you are beginning to assimilate this trust that you are in already, fully awakened, but that you just don't know it.

You say? Yeah, yeah. And, it's interesting to have these debates then have to realize for yourself. But the ultimate guide is experience because it's that old hermetic saying famous saying to the person that has not the the person who has had the experience, no explanation is necessary to the person who has not had the experience.

No explanation is possible. Exactly. Exactly experience. The experience was your that that defining moment when you realized that that was your, your primary direction in your, your human life.

Yes, exactly. This happened at the age of 23, which was perhaps you were too young. I don't think I could I could

really comprehend that I wasn't prepared for that at all.

Yeah, I was trying really hard before talking about trying really hard there for two years, to, to, to grasp the, the latent state that I even remember how I would imagine myself, being enlightened.

And then, after, after a few hours, I would realize that this was just nonsense. I was just there fooling myself. But then, at the age of 23, I attended a silence retreat with my spiritual teacher.

At that time, if a former, Israeli teacher and the and at a certain point, I just looked into myself. It was a it was a very simple moment of of of own, of honesty, of sincerity.

I actually didn't plan it. And I looked into myself and I and I simply looked for a search for this self. You see this self that, that, that we always imagine that, that there is there a completely solid, completely a continuous.

And suddenly I couldn't trace the center and, and all of, all of the chain of my memories and, and from early childhood until then, broke there was no no more that thread that, that, that connected all, all these memories.

And at that moment when, when I realized that that the self was an illusion, it's not that that that I killed the ego. I didn't destroy anything because there was nothing to destroy.

There was nothing there in the first place. And that was a moment of of such tremendous relief and joy and ecstasy and and and this, this, this center that dissolved, seemed to seem to spread in all directions.

The sense of I suddenly was everywhere. You see, I saw it in the, in the, in the rocks, and I saw it in the sky, and I saw it in people. I saw it everywhere.

And that that that then began. At that point, the celebration began a cosmic celebration. There was there was a sense of complete universality and unconditional love and unconditional joy, unconditional passion.

And for one year I stayed in my room not speaking to anyone because I was just, completely baffled. So shy. You had this overwhelming feeling of unconditional joy, love.

And then also because you didn't have a lot of responsibilities at 23, could go spend a year and just bask in the state and wow, what a. I was just so glad you got that experience.

Just just really inhabit that space for a long time. And then what did you do after that year? Well, after that, I remember that very vividly. I, I stood on a junction.

I had two options. One was to renounce the world, which was, to be honest, very tempting because just just to immerse myself in this, in this, infinite silence.

And the other was to, to commit myself to to helping others to alleviate their suffering. And, and I knew in my heart of hearts like that that, that I didn't really have a choice.

And then and then I felt I, I, came out to the world and, and began to, to speak. It began rather, spontaneously. But after after a few years, I started being frustrated because I realized that I was speaking out of this ecstasy, expecting and even and even hoping that that people will somehow simply respond to it and, and and join in the celebration.

But people couldn't understand. They admired the state I was speaking about, but they couldn't get in touch with it. So, so that that that prompted me to to begin, to begin a different phase in my life.

## Trauma Healing Through Expanded Consciousness

And that was striving to to develop the best methods I could imagine to, to enable people to, to experience this very

same state firsthand. So, so, so they know what it is.

And second, to be able to use these higher states of consciousness, not just for abstract reasons of, of of of illness, of, of inner, stillness, but also to be able to use these states to affect a certain dimensions of their life, for instance, their, their traumatic memories, their, their, their, their ability to make better decisions, their ability to cope with and with overwhelming challenges.

So that so that was the second phase. Curious about that, because there is a group I'm very involved with neuroscientists, and there's a group of them that says that if you hit these states of consciousness and you haven't healed trauma, they often lead to a dark night of the soul.

If you have healed trauma, then usually you don't have that experience. And the dark night of the soul essentially is trauma surfacing after a transformational experience like that. So, how do you see the relationship between those experiences and the trauma that many people have below the surface?

Well, I see these as two as two processes that need to take place at the same time. Not not not something that that you have to add to, to, to begin with, trauma healing or that you, that you should bypass trauma and hope for, for, for a transcendence without it, without taking care of these roots.

You see. So, so for me, and this is what I did with, with, with my method, they call the extension method. This is a method that, that, that, that first of all, it helps you to to very quickly reach a profound meditative state, a state of limitlessness, without needing to face all the, ordinary, difficulties in meditation.

So, so these folks, even for, for beginners, they, after a very short while, they experience what, what it means to and what it feels, to be like to be a Buddha when there are Buddhas and awakened Buddhas.

So, so this is one. But then it it it helps you not only to meditate more deeply, but we use these in order to, to return to, to a traumatic moment, but from the air, from the higher state of consciousness when you are immersed or, in, in, in the higher or broader state of consciousness, you are free, inherently free.

And because you are free, because you, you, you are tapping into a certain state which, which has forever been unaffected by time and memory to a certain degree.

You have, you you encounter a place in yourself that has never been traumatized. So then from this place, which has never been traumatized, we return to the trauma.

We tend to the experience. And and people are shocked because. Because suddenly the they are not afraid to to to get in touch with the trauma. They are not afraid because because they have a certain neutral or transcendent perspective that enables them to unravel all the memory connections that have have been removed ever since that traumatic moment.

So they are able to pour the the presence of out of the higher state of consciousness into that moment, which of course, at that time experienced in a very narrow, confined sense of self.

Psi, that concept that we can move in these elevated states beyond memory, beyond time, beyond all the suffering or experience them, experience ourselves as that, and then move back into dealing with our trauma from that perspective, in that context is a powerful one.

I wanted to be to maybe share a story of someone who did that and the difference made for them. Yes. What we just to the the recent case of a young woman who was raped while, while having a gun, attached to to her forehead to to her, to her head.

And that was, that was, an extreme case. And actually, that woman was, was terrified of even getting in touch with the memory, retelling the story. So she was she felt that that she this was this was nearly impossible for her and and, of course, in the, in the, in the trauma work, the, the first phase is retelling the story and reviving the, the, the

emotional, the emotional flow.

Because one of the things that happens to us in that, that happened to us in, in a traumatic, experience is that is that we stop we we block the flow of emotions.

We don't want to feel. We don't want to be there. We in a way, we we we are not there. We are not present. Which which is already a hint or a point that that that that makes the, the, the presence achieved by higher states of consciousness.

So, so significant, so beneficial. And so she was, she had to, to retell the story. And of course, this was this was incredibly difficult to her. But then, then we moved to to, to the point in which, which is called the expansion.

And what we do in expansion is actually a simulation of enlightenment. Because because expansion, the very principle is that is that you we begin with a very confined sense of self, a very confined set in mind, and a very, a very limited.

Experience of ourselves. And then we, we are beginning to, to, to break, to dissolve, to remove the boundaries of the mind until we, we experience, and limitless and boundless state of mind.

So, so when she when she did that, when she went through that process, she, as she was able to to look again at that experience with this tremendous sense of, of self completely wide and, and she felt that she, she was able to, to finally confront it and to and to purify, her presence to, to actually be there.

And I know that this sounds almost fantastic, but but but what she could experience at that moment was, was, was to, to feel again or to feel for the first time a sense of, of unconditional, a sense of connectedness.

And that, that, that actually healed her. So after two sessions, she was finally able to, to, empty the psychological content of that memory. And you think that if what might have happened had she not had that experience, if you carry that with her as traumatic stress for the rest of her life, she may have gone to develop PTSD and all of the medical consequences of that.

So it's so powerful to know that these these transcended experiences don't just take us to these places. They help us heal this, the parts of our lives that are suffering.

And so exactly, exactly. I'm just so curious what your personal experience is when you're having one of those transcendent experiences.

## Returning to Daily Life and Integration

I mean, I'm assuming you do that when you meditate in the morning. I'm assuming you meditate in the morning. I don't know, that's true for sure, but, when you meditate, where do you go?

What does it feel like to you? Well, it depends, because transcendent states of consciousness, I would say that there is a certain fundamental state that is that is ongoing or that that that remains uninterrupted throughout the day.

And then they and then they are a deepening, a transcendent states of consciousness or, or or a certain variety of, of states of consciousness. Sometimes you can experience, say, universal love or compassion and, or, and sometimes you can have a certain certain extraordinary perceptions.

But, but, but the fundamental state which is ongoing is a state of limitlessness. This means that usually, for the most part, we experience our mind as if it were a limited to the to the region of the head.

You see it and, and, and and it is it is limited to a degree that that all that the way we experience our mind is confined to a to a to a bundle of thoughts and emotions that, that keep, keep moving in circles within our head.

But then if we if we could imagine that for a moment, imagine that that, that these, these, these boundaries of the head have been dissolved and all of a sudden the the sense of mind, the sense of, of consciousness flows in, in every direction and it flows through the walls, flows through the ceiling and breaks through the, the floor, and and these everywhere.

The the easiest way to to to get in touch with this feeling, by the way, is if you get it, if you, coming to contact with the sense of I am we all have this sense, basic sense of I am right.

Because when we say I am hungry, I am tired, I want this, I want that. So. So at the root of it all, there is a sense of I am. Now, if we can simply feel that this sense of I am a purely and and located in the body, it may start as a tiny seed of I am this a tiny seed of presence.

But if we begin to breathe into it and let and we let, it is spread throughout our body, filling our body from head to toe, and then and then visualizing how it is, how it is pouring out of our body, surrounding the body.

And then and then it flowing throughout the entire universe all the way to the edge, to the far edges of the universe. And, and and then this is basically the this is the fundamental state of enlightenment, this sense of of being everywhere.

And in this, in this sense also nowhere. It's everywhere and nowhere. And then, the word you used earlier, I wrote it down in my notes over here was when you were in that initial year, you talked about whether you would live in the quote unquote, infinite silence.

What is the right silence like to you? Where infinite silence is, is, first of all, I would say, a natural state. And this is something important to remember about meditation.

Because because ultimately, and perhaps here we are returning to the beginning of our talk, and we in a way, our mind is already silent and the universe is already steeped in deep meditation.

So when we are beginning to, to, to, to, tune in to, to this meditation of the universe and the inherent silence of our mind, the spaciousness of the mind, we, we, we simply seem keen to, into space.

So, so that space is like outer space, and the outer space is always vaster. Then. Then the many, tiny stars that that, that, appearing it. Right. So, so it's it's simply being in these, in this state in which there is no time, no space, no I know role, no identity.

and therefore also no world. You see, no world in the sense of of the concept of the world. So it is it is falling into unity. So she in this last part of our conversation, we moved from healing trauma.

We've also looked at these elevated states. being far beyond your local self, you alluded to non-local, endless oneness with you. All that is, is as, as far as the universe goes.

And further. And then when you come back, well, first of all, I think I got to ask you two questions. One, the first question is when you get back, how do you move from that elevated state into dealing with.

A package that was lost in the mail, a dispute with a, a friend of yours or a family member? a negative experience with a client. Just all of the the stuff.

Maybe somebody, you know, runs into you, dense your car. what do you what do you how do you then move back into the world to be able to deal with all of that stuff.

Right? Yes. That's that's the million dollar question. Yeah. Yes. Because because that's true. Now, the thing is that when, when, when I come down, as it were, and and I need to, to face things from my, from my ordinary consciousness, I need to, to begin to, to be able to translate it what I, what I knew at that moment, into into a certain practice or a certain, a certain way of, of behavior, a certain approach to life, you see.

So, so, for instance, I could ask myself and if, if before that I knew something with, with certainty, I knew that that I was, that I was free. So how how would that how would I behave if I knew that right now?

So the thing is, that is that, of course, where most of us, cannot retain their broad state of consciousness unless we we are, we have attained the state of the Buddha or Ramana maharshi.

So, so what we need is to is to extract this knowing, this inner knowing what we what we knew, with certainty and then try to, to behave this way. In this way, we are creating a bridge, a bridge between the broad state of consciousness and and the ordinary state of consciousness.

If we don't, strive and even struggle sometimes to act, according to what we know, this bridge will never be created. So we cannot rely on on just having another broad state of consciousness that will dissolve once again, we have to create these bridges.

And I know in your work you have size, the importance of integration, because we've all known spiritual people, maybe great masters who were able to reach these elevated states.

And then if you look at their daily lives, often they're in chaos. They're maybe, more kinds of abuse going on. Exactly. And it's the, classic tale of the fallen teacher.

So, they, they were not able to integrate their, those elevated states with, with what's down here. So that's, that's pretty powerful to to approach every situation to that question, how do I translate that state into what I'm doing right here on earth?

Exactly, exactly. You know, by the way, that that in the tradition, into which I was initiated, it is called the Siddha Yoga or the Ananda tradition. it is a Hindu Hindu tradition.

I, I was told that that traditionally you are not supposed to be teaching, before you have completed 21 years of awakening, because only after 21 years, do you, reach a certain this level of, of integration, this level of, of fully integrated being that has that there's absorbed each person personal traits into, into the enlightened state.

So I think that this is a very humbling perspective. hahahahahahaha. Go get a life and then spend 20 day, 2021 years dealing with all the things of the world.

And then you, Exactly it it'll be a teacher. Yeah. That that's that's powerful to realize that you you need that integration period. I know that every time I'm teaching meditation, every meditation I teach ends with grounding and really anchoring yourself back here.

And, you want to both be out there and, to come back here. Exactly. So much for all of the information, all the inspiration that you have shared with us.

I really appreciate you and your work. Stay out there and stay doing it. the physical level. till then, I'm your host. Go to church, be happy and be in love with life in every moment.

Thank you.