

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
September 1a, 1982
PB PARAS; EGO**

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Anxiety, Attachment/Detachment, Ego as Combustion Process, Reincarnation

CONTENTS:

CONZE AND PB QUOTES ON EGO; MIXTURE OF THREE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

EGO AS CORE OF ANXIETY; MOMENTARY REMOVAL OF EGO AS TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE

EGO AS A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS CIRCULATING AROUND AN EMPTY CENTER, THE HIGHER SELF

GRADES OF ATTACHMENT TO EGO; USING MEDITATION ON THE PAST AND FUTURE TO DETACH FROM EGO

STUDENT DISCUSSION OF WHAT IS MEANT BY EGO

"I" AS SOUL

EGO AS SELF-ACTUALIZING PROCESS OF THOUGHT

BLISS EXPERIENCED WHEN COMPLETELY OUT OF THE EGO; MOMENTARY GLIMPSES OF TRUTH

CONSCIOUSNESS IS ORDINARILY MISIDENTIFIED WITH THE BODY

THE THOUGHT OF EGO EXISTS IN TIME AND SPACE

EGO'S IMAGE-MAKING POWER

A KERNEL OF MENTALISM – THINKING ONESELF INTO BEING

NO TOTAL LIBERATION UNTIL DEATH; NO EGO IN NIRVIKALPA; DEGREES OF IMPERSONALITY; EVEN THE SAGE RETAINS SOME EGO; NECESSITY OF EGO FULFILLMENT

REINCARNATION

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*], published 1984-1988. One Paul Brunton quote is, as of 2018, unpublished, and is noted as such.
- Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself*

- Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*
- Edward Conze, *The Memoirs of a Modern Gnostic: Life and Letters*
- Thomas Taylor, “Introduction to the Parmenides,” in Volume 3 of *The Works of Plato, viz. His Fifty-Five Dialogues, and Twelve Epistles*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)
- Rene Guenon, *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: I.1

NOTES:

- This is **1982 09/01a, PB Paras; Ego Evening Class, and the first entry associated with this date. 1982 09/01b = Hinduism; K.C. Bhattacharyya Seminar**, for which we have no audio, just JF notes.
- Earlier transcript versions exist.

TRANSCRIBED from Audio Cassette Tapes by HP, JF, et al. in 1992 as part of the set for *Standing in Your Own Way*. V11 version 2018. Reformatted from V11 version by JRM & JF 2019-2020, with Subheads and Table of Contents added by JRM. In 2024, IT updates prefatory matter and footer, replaces tape markers with audio file markers, adds Subsubjects, alters Subheads to make more accurate, completes Book List, adds Plotinus quotes section, corrects typos/errors, adds new notes within transcript, reformats to accord with new conventions.

Readable edited transcript – V14.1r.

AUDIO FILES: 1982 0901a, 1982 0901b. [Note: “Tape” and “Side” refer to original audio cassette tapes that were later digitized into .MP3 Audio Files.]

1982 09/01a at Wisdom's Goldenrod

PB Paras; Ego

Readable Edited Transcript

CONZE AND PB QUOTES ON EGO; MIXTURE OF THREE LEVELS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

[Audio File 1982 0901a Begins]

(Q: For the first 20 minutes of class Anthony does not say anything and it seems he is not in the room. It sounds from people's reactions that he walks in after 20 or so minutes.)

RC: [recap of previous week] (Q: That the ego is seen as the enemy, as evil and yet the ego is the channel through which this work and eventual fulfillment will come. So the question was left as--in what sense can we talk about the ego as evil. RC remarks about conversations with PB on evil, and also mentions the PB paper/essay "A Talk On Ego: by PB" (unpublished))

RC: (reads quote from Edward Conze) *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, pp. 22-23: ". . . there is in the core of our being a basic anxiety, a little empty hole from which all other forms of anxiety and unease draw their strength. In its pure form, this anxiety is experienced only by people with an introspective and philosophical turn of mind, and even then only rarely. If one has never felt it oneself, no amount of explanation will convince. If one has felt it, one will never forget, however much one may try. It may come upon you when you have been asleep, withdrawn from the world; you wake up in the middle of the night and feel a kind of astonishment at being there, which then gives way to a fear and horror at the mere fact of being there. It is then that you catch yourself by yourself, just for a moment, against the background of a kind of nothingness around you, and with a gnawing sense of your powerlessness, your utter helplessness in the face of this astonishing fact that you are there at all. Usually, we avoid this experience as much as we possibly can, because it is so shattering and painful. Usually, I am very careful not to have myself by myself, but the I plus all sorts of other experiences. People who are busy all the time, who must always think of something, who must always be doing something, are incessantly running away from this experience of the *basic* or *original* anxiety. What we usually do is to lean and rely on something else than this empty centre of ourselves. The Buddhist contention is that we will never be at ease before we have overcome this basic anxiety . . ." (Q: beginning of Conze quote omitted)

RC: Rough Ideas, 11, page 15.

PB: "His aim being the contrary of most people's aims, he tries to depersonalize his attitudes and reactions. What relief he feels with even partial freedom from the burden of self-consciousness. How heavy a load is borne by those who see, sense, or react with ego-centered nervousness." (Q: 6.2.183 and 2.6.3)

RC: Page 5, Middle Ideas, #11.

PB: "The body is in reality an object for the mind, which is its subject; and not only the body, but also whatever the ego thinks or feels becomes an object, too. It is less easy to see and even more necessary to understand that this ego, this subject, is itself an object to a higher part of the mind." (Q: 8.2.67)

RC: (Q: more summation of last class and student discussion)

VM: . . . PB does just that in the first line of this nice little essay “What is the Ego?”

PB: “It is everything we are personally aware of as being ourself--physically, intellectually, and emotionally. It acts through our senses, feelings and thoughts. Every living human creature knows itself in this personal way and cannot help doing so. There is nothing evil in it.” (Q: unpublished essay: “A Talk on Ego: by PB” (essay checked))

AH: The very tissue of our awareness is this complex, this ego-complex. What does it mean to talk about an experience, isn't the description of that experience itself from the point of view of the ego?

VM: Yeah the word ‘experience,’ to experience the ego as objective that really is an extraordinary use of the word ‘experience’. It is not normal subject-object experience. PB uses the dream analogy to try to illustrate the ego. I would suggest that that experience of being simultaneously awake and in the dream must give some clue to what it must mean to objectify the ego. You see it going on and yet simultaneously you're not quite in it. A deepening of that experience really is seeing the ego as objective. (Q: somewhat paraphrased)

(Q: Anthony enters?)

EM: How does this fit in with the idea that as PB says even in a mystical experience, in all kind of so-called higher experiences the ego is there?

AD: Don't have too rigid a concept of consciousness or mind, this higher mind is also present in the ego, if you think of it that way. In other words, don't compartmentalize mind. If you think of bulbs, three bulbs, one within the other, and there is light traversing all three bulbs, the innermost bulb we would say is your ego consciousness, the next one outer would be, let's say, a higher witnessing consciousness, the next one beyond that is even a higher consciousness. But don't make this break or this hiatus too rigid because you'll come up with them saying, well this experiencing the ego is you'll encapsulate it in that first bulb.

DD: If you describe this intermingling in our day to day experience, wouldn't you say that what is true it that we drift in and drift out of relative amounts of ego-ness and egolessness?

AD: Yeah, basically that's what we're saying. And very often there could be like a higher awareness in a person and because of his habitual modes of being he's not even aware. It's right there, it requires a little discernment and practice to be able to distinguish that there are times when the ego is objective to you--all its thoughts feelings and everything. At that moment you have to pin down and realize that you are the higher awareness, but most of us don't do that.

DD: I ran over a frog with a lawn mower and I saw my ego come into the body of that frog that the lawn mower had destroyed and I feel the ego come in, is that an experience of what you mean, a sense of my identifying with what it was that just happened and then I could go back out of it and disidentify, see it as an experience that happened and not that I necessarily participated in some egoful way. Is that a sense of what you're saying?

AD: I'm sorry I don't understand you.

DD: That was really a rather harsh example to give but it happened this weekend and when it happened I had this sense of experiencing myself as a separate being, as a frog dying, feeling the frog's pain, identifying with it, it was a personal thought. Correspondingly though you can just cut it off, detach, and see it as an experience and not experience the personal in any way, you don't have to participate in that way. That's a comparison between a relatively more egoful thought and a relatively more egoless thought.

AD: Could I try to restate, there was momentary identification with the frog's suffering on the part of the ego and then you stood back and saw it objectively.

DD: Then I didn't have to identify with it in any way--it just happened.

AD: But right then and there you would see the difficulty in distinguishing and discriminating the two awarenesses, again, it's a misleading term.

EGO AS CORE OF ANXIETY; MOMENTARY REMOVAL OF EGO AS TERRIFYING EXPERIENCE

RC: This is a good quote to follow that--Red #14, page 39.

PB: "It would be wrong to believe that there are two separate minds, two independent consciousnesses within us--one the lower ego-mind, and the other, the higher Overself-mind--with one, itself unwatched, watching the other. There is but one independent illuminating mind and everything else is only a limited and reflected image within it. The ego is a thought-series dependent on it." (8.1.74//Persp. p. 103)

RC: That was pretty much where we got to last week . . . If we're going to say that the ego is a thought series, a succession of thoughts revolving around an empty center and so on, then can we really focus on that, can we really get to understanding how is a thought created structure that as PB says can be changed by thought, even dissolved by thought. That is where we wanted to try to start seeing what we could find in terms of those kind of definitions.

LaurieD: Can I just ask you one question before you start with that. This core of anxiety that you spoke about, how are you relating that to the ego?

RC: Well Freud called the ego the seat of anxiety.

LD: So you're calling the core of anxiety the ego?

RC: It is hard for me to understand why the soul, a permanent being, a real being, would have anxiety. Thomas Taylor has a quote where he's talking about the Gods and he says that beings that operate from their very essence, "The creative activity of beings that operate from their very essence is unattended by anxiety." [Note: See Thomas Taylor's "Introduction to the Parmenides," in Volume 3 of *The Works of Plato, viz. His Fifty-Five Dialogues, and Twelve Epistles*, p. 10.]

HS: You would say the ego is the operation of the soul's very essence?

RC: No, if that were the case I don't think the ego would have anxiety.

HS: So you were reasoning the other way.

RC: It seems we are talking about something which thinks it has legitimate grounds for being anxious.

VM: Couldn't you say that what he's pointing out there, or what Conze is pointing out, is that this anxiety in some way is the ego's realization of its own finitude, of its own transiency, of its own extremely fragile existence and that is what strikes horror and fear to the ego, against this background of eternal mind. It gets a sense of its own finitude, its own limitation.

LrD: You have that experience and it seems the ego realizes it's cut off. There is this point of view where the ego is just cut off from, its just cut off and it's a very frightening thing.

AD: What experience are you talking about?

LrD: He's talking about anxiety...

AD: Yeah but what experience are you referring to?

LrD: Loneliness.

AD: It's cut off from what?

LrD: It's alone, cut off from, I don't know the only way I can describe it is loneliness.

AD: Would you read that example again that she's referring to, I don't know what she's referring to.

(Q: RC paraphrasing Conze, then--)

RC: From *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, p. 23: "In its pure form, this anxiety is experienced only by people with an introspective and philosophical frame of mind, and even then only rarely. If one has never felt it, no amount of explanation will convince. If one has felt it, one will never forget, however much one may try. It may come upon you when you have been asleep, withdrawn from the world; you wake up in the middle of the night . . ."

AD: What do you think he's referring to there? He is talking about what the Buddhists call *dukha*. What is he referring to there? If you are momentarily relieved of your ego you would experience that, what he's talking about there. It would be like an abyss opening up. I think where we are understanding things differently here, Conze does think he's a gnostic, I don't think so. If you look at his Memoirs. [Note: See Edward Conze, *The Memoirs of a Modern Gnostic: Life and Letters*.] I think what PB is talking about is something quite different then to what Conze is talking about. The momentary removal of a person's ego is the experience of the greatest dread and fear you could know. When it comes back you embrace it, you love it, you glorify in it. The point I'm trying to get at is what was that experience. Right then and there.

RC: The real experience I would think would be an experience of the unconditioned.

AD: Yeah wouldn't you say he experienced momentarily, nothingness, and that's why the withdrawal of the ego brings about the experience of nothingness and the dread to be without your ego.

RC: Who are you saying here is having the dread? What would prevent it from being an experience of great joy and freedom?

AD: You could answer that.

RC: From the ego's point of view an experience of dread but...

AD: From the ego's point of view an experience of nothingness IS dread.

RC: From the ego's point of view.

SC: So on the one hand what the ego experiences as its self normally is withdrawn but on the other hand there is still this ego that's dreading. Something's withdrawn and there is this chaos that has to be faced, but are you saying that there's still the ego somehow it's still present and that's the dread or fear.

AD: No only when it returns.

SC: Well if there is this emptiness, and all sensation is withdrawn, everything's withdrawn except this emptiness, and this emptiness is combined with fear and dread.

AD: No, the ego is withdrawn and there is a momentary experience of nothingness, the next instant when the ego returns, it experiences the dread, the anxiety, and everything else. Why hasn't it experienced it joyfully? You answer me.

RC: I would think in that case it's because, like the stage in that individual's evolution is such that he is identified with the ego rather than with the higher level of experience.

AD: He's not ready. And even when he's ready he's not ready.

EGO AS A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS CIRCULATING AROUND AN EMPTY CENTER, THE HIGHER SELF

Nancy H: Here is a quote from volume 3, page 12,

PB: "There is no need to yield to the fear of the void, which comes in the deepest meditation. That is merely the personal ego offering its resistance to the higher self. That same fear of never being able to come back has to be faced by all advanced mystics when they reach this stage of meditation, but it is utterly groundless and is really a test of faith . . ." (23.8.62)

AD: Yeah you try to convince the ego of that. (Q: laughter)

RC: Well I don't know if we can but what we were trying to do by going in this direction was to try to get at this pivotal point, which all thoughts are woven around, that is itself an empty center, but is it the Overself that's on a different plane that derives its consciousness, that derives enough power to create its own image of the world and so on. We were going really try to focus on that, I don't know if we can. On the one hand would we have any success in defining it and on the other hand would we have any success in exposing it. I don't know if that's the direction you want to go.

AD: That's fine.

JG: In which sense do you call it an empty center?

RC: That was from quotes that we read before.

PB: "There is no real ego but only a quick succession of thoughts which constitute the "I" process. There is no separate entity forming the personal consciousness but only a series of impressions, ideas, images

revolving round a common centre. The latter is completely empty; the feeling of something being there derives from a totally different plane--that of the Overself." (8.2.31)

RC: There are other quotes where he talks about the ego being a succession of thoughts or a vortex of thoughts all whirling around a common empty center.

VM: It's empty of true, eternal existence. It's not a true principle.

RC: Yes, its being consciousness is not self-derived. But none the less it seems to serve as the apparent unity of all the thoughts feelings sensations and so on.

HS: Which, the empty center you're saying? I personally think that there's Overself in the heart.

RC: So you think that is the empty center that he's speaking about in this quote?

HS: Yes. The ray of the Overself in the heart around which the congerie [sic; congeries] of thoughts, feelings, and emotions move.

AH: Doesn't that passage say that in reference to a higher principle, within that ego?

(Q: quote re-read)

PB: "There is no real ego but only a quick succession of thoughts which constitute the "I" process. There is no separate entity forming the personal consciousness but only a series of impressions, ideas, images revolving round a common centre. The latter is completely empty; the feeling of something being there derives from a totally different plane--that of the Overself." (repeat, 8.2.31)

RC: Orange vol. 11, page 47

AH: Is that feeling of something being there is this sense of "I" which is the sense of one's Overself but that is associated with all these other things. How does that describe this empty center.

RC: The center that he's talking about is empty, but it's felt as if there were something in it, but that feeling that there is something in it is derived from an entirely different plane than the empty center it is taken to be in.

AH: Is that to say that it is empty of reality at this plane, from the point of view of ego consciousness.

RC: I'm saying that this very thing that we are talking about here is the presupposition of the conventional level to you. If you don't have one of these things you don't have a conventional level. You've got no problem with two truths . . .

AH: If you don't have an empty center . . .

RC: Yeah.

LdS: You're saying that this empty center is a consequence of the fundamental error when the ego misappropriates the Overself. That fundamental misappropriation leads to this empty center--it's a simultaneous process.

RC: There is a quote here where he says that the ego is a diminished echo of the Overself-consciousness but it borrows enough consciousness and power from the Overself to create its own image of the world.

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0901a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

RC: There's another one that says the Overself is never deceived by the ego's image-making faculty.

AD: Yeah, but what is that empty center he's talking about?

AH: The I-thought.

S: The idea of unity.

AD: But I thought he said the thoughts revolve around it and he referred to it as empty?

AH: I'm thinking of that quote from the *Wisdom*, Anthony, when he says the first of the thoughts is "I".
[Note: See Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself*, "The Secret of the I," p. 79, Rider 1943 edition.]

AD: Never mind that quote; listen to this quote here. What is he saying here?

AH: I think he's saying that there is a bare givenness of "I" that is empty of any possible qualifications.
(Q: paraphrased)

AD: Will you read it again for me, this congerie of thoughts, series of impressions one following upon the other which circle around this emptiness.

RC: (reading)

PB: "... revolving round a common centre. The latter is completely empty; the feeling of something being there derives from a totally different plane--that of the Overself."

AD: So what's the center?

LdS: Ultimately it's the Overself.

VM: No it's like a mechanical swirling around of thoughts that's lit up by the light of the Overself.

LdS: It's a misappropriation . . .

AD: You mean when you look, when you introspect into yourself you don't see that there is a nothingness in you? Or do you keep skirting around it?

BS: Well if you keep using PB's terms...

AD: No just look into yourself, just stop for a moment. Haven't you noticed that it's always there the emptiness that you're running away from? Just stop for a minute, just think for a minute alright? You're home, you're going to sit down and read a book, you jump up, you get up and you run to the bar. What did you run away from? Or you're going to sit down and meditate and you jump up and you run out, what did you run away from? What is that emptiness in you? It is certainly not the ego, you wouldn't run away from the ego, you'd run towards it. Let's read the next one.

AH: Could you say it's in some sense the basis of the ego? The truth of the ego? The essence of the ego?

AD: Yeah but that's irrelevant here because I'm asking you to identify the point he's making there. If you haven't noticed this big gapping hole in you, that's not going to help, not even that sentence is going to help. 'Hole' is a good word. A big black hole in you, did you ever notice it? Or don't you even look that way?

LdS: Well he speaks about it as the center of the ego.

AD: Yes, I know. I know he speaks about it as the center of the ego. That nothingness IS the center of the ego.

LdS: Which is a nothingness...

AD: Fine, fine, ok. But what is the nothingness?

LdS: I would say it's the primordial error the ego...

AD: Oh jump in it and stop thinking...

AH: It's either the primordial error or the fundamental truth.

AD: It's your own higher self. You always run away from that emptiness, that loneliness, what you think it is...

AB: Anthony, isn't it an emptiness only because it is a complete denial of everything we take ourselves to be?

AD: Can't you see how complicated you're making a simple straightforward sentence? He's saying just take a look inside yourself, what are you running away from?

AS: You.

AD: From yourself, yes.

AB: But if there wasn't that anxiety it really wouldn't be felt to be empty.

AD: The anxiety is something else again, the anxiety has got to do with the ego, and the fact that the ego recognizes the fact of the possibility of its non-existence. Go back to this sentence here. I see you've got to have lessons in concentration again. Let's read this sentence.

RC: The same one?

AD: Yeah read it again.

RC: (reading)

PB: "... no real ego . . . quick succession of thoughts which constitute the "I" process, no separate entity forming the personal consciousness but only a series of impressions, ideas, images revolving round a common centre"

AD: So this is your I--concepts actualizing themselves from instant to instant. This is what you call your ego, go on...

RC: (reading)

PB: “. . . The latter is completely empty; the feeling of something being there derives from a totally different plane--that of the Overself.”

AH: The feeling of something being there, that's inaccurate?

AD: You mean, Andrew, I gotta keep repeating, you never felt yourself as a hollow man?

AH: As a matter of fact . . . my question Anthony, if you permit me a question, the feeling of something being there is also...

AD: That comes from somewhere else.

AH: Yes, it comes from a higher plane, but is that an error?

AD: Is that an error?

AH: Yes

AD: No, that's not an error.

AH: The feltness of something is the feltness of one's true self?

AD: What is it that that feltness is about?

AH: That feltness...

AD: What is it about?

AH: It's about one's true self, which is discovered upon scrutiny to be empty. Is that...

AD: Basically. When one looks into his own loneliness he runs away from it, he turns away from it, and he's preoccupied with a series of concepts that are actualizing themselves as this “I” process. And you become more interested in this process of combustion then you are about that center which is absolutely empty. Let's try another one.

GRADES OF ATTACHMENT TO EGO; USING MEDITATION ON THE PAST AND FUTURE TO DETACH FROM EGO

RC: The one that I've got right after that is,

PB: “The degree of ego-attachment which you will find at the centre of a man's consciousness is a fairly reliable index to the degree of his spiritual evolution.” (8.4.452)

RC: My question there is...

AD: Would you repeat it?

RC: (repeats quote)

AD: In other words how attached a man is to his ego is a degree or an index to his spiritual growth.

RC: Yeah.

AD: Ok.

LdS: In other words the more attached the more . . .

S: Right, right.

RC: I didn't mean that we should fill out report cards.

AD: I think you should.

RC: But he's saying the man.

AD: Everybody at night should go over his report card.

RC: Anybody got volume 14?

EC: To really be honest with one's self is very difficult.

AD: That's why one has to practice constantly. The Pythagorean recall exercise is a good idea, in which you review what you did all day long at night. Little by little a certain impartiality is gained. Before you go to sleep at night try reviewing everything you did during the day. You'll be aghast in the beginning but after a while you learn not to do it, you know little by little, and then you employ the other exercise where you try to visualize and imagine yourself how you should act, and employ the two simultaneously if you expect a little detachment from the ego. But basically, I think you could see what he's saying there, in so far--I don't think we have a ruler but each one for himself can decide how strong is his attachment to his ego. So if someone calls you an SOB, and you kick him in the shins before the words are finished, you have a relative idea of how strong your attachment is. On the other hand if you just ignore it and walk away and not even react, that gives you a different scale, your report card is different.

RC: This one seemed to be bringing in the question of how strongly am I attached to this succession of thoughts that revolve around an empty center.

AD: Yeah. So, in this succession of thoughts, if a thought comes up, and you get on it, as though you were a horseback rider and it takes you away and then there's a case where a person before he jumps on the thought he thinks about it and pauses it and then jumps on the horse and goes away, and there's another instance where you pause and then you say, "No I'm not going to jump on it," and you let the thought go away, there's three different ways/degrees/grades (Q:?) right there of how attached you are to your ego, if we said that the ego was a succession of thoughts which are actualizing themselves from instant to instant.

RC: He also says there's a qualitative change in consciousness once you jump on to that wheel.

AD: Once you jump on to that what?

RC: That wheel, once you go into that vortex.

AD: Yes.

STUDENT DISCUSSION ON WHAT IS MEANT BY EGO

RC: He seems to be speaking, well, maybe I should read one more quote. This one's a little bit longer but, "The ego we have, we are . . ." volume 8 Red, page 4, bottom of page.

PB: "An ego we have, we are; its existence is inescapable if the cosmic thought is to be activated and the human evolution in it is to develop. Why has it become, then, a source of evil, friction, suffering, and horror? The energy and instinct, the intelligence and desire which are contained in each individualized fragment of consciousness, each compounded "I," are not originally evil in themselves; but when the clinging to them becomes extreme, selfishness becomes strong. There is a failure in equilibrium and the gentler virtues are squeezed out, the understanding that others have rights, the feeling of goodwill and sympathy, accommodation for common welfare--all depart. The natural and right attention to one's needs becomes enlarged to the point of tyranny. The ego then exists only to serve itself at all costs, aggressive to, and exploitive of, all others. It must be repeated: an ego there must be if there is to be a World-Idea. But it has to be put, and kept, in its place (which is not a hardened selfishness). It must adjust to two things: to the common welfare and to the source of its own being. Conscience tells him of the first duty, whether heeded or not; Intuition tells him of the second one, whether ignored or not. For, overlooked and misconstrued, the relation between evil and man must not hide the fact that the energies and intelligence used for evil derive in the beginning from the divine in man. . . ." (8.1.191)

S: Is it the ego...

S: Excuse me Randy could you just read what the two things to be adjusted to are again?

PB: ". . . It must adjust to the common welfare and to the source of its own being. . . ."

RC: This person which is attached to the ego, it seems like we are not really saying that this person is really the ego, and we're not really saying, it's certainly not a conscious, living, moment of the Overself either. But it seems that this person is capable of clinging to the ego.

AH: I can't find any person in this discussion as such. If the I-thought and the empty center are the same thing, where would you find a person, the notion of a person?

RC: But all the time that he talks of there being no entity at all, he is feeling the pressure of its sensations and hearing the sound of its words.

HS: That's the ego that talks of there being no entity itself, at all? I mean like right here, we talk.

RC: Yeah.

HS: These two individuals. Now, when you say the ego has no center. I say the ego is empty and unreal, now who's speaking there?

AH: The ego.

RC: If the ego's all I know of myself, right, the totality of what I know of myself and I call that the ego. And there is all this other myself that I don't know about.

HS: Ok, but there's a kind of knowledge now, right, in the quote you just read, the ego's saying it's unreal. Now is that the ego's knowledge?

RC: He's saying all the time he talks, he doesn't say it's the ego.

PB: "All the time that he talks of there being no ego, no entity at all, he is feeling the pressure of its sensations, hearing the sounds of its words." (8.2.51)

HS: Technically, is that a reference to PB himself, I don't know what that's a reference to. He uses that word 'he'. If you interpret it that individual himself says these kind of highfalutin stuff, my individuality isn't real, isn't ultimate. In that meaning of the sentence, the question was who the person was in that kind of discussion.

RC: I think it comes back to who can't find the person. If you say you can't find the person well, who can't find the person?

HS: Ok well, is it the "person" who's looking? Or would you give it to, say the soul might not have the anxiety within itself.

RC: Well, that's what I'm wondering about, what the right word to use is. Like he says you can get a reasonably good measure of the individual's spiritual development by the degree of ego attachment that exists at the center of his consciousness.

HS: Ok but meaning less ego attachment the higher spiritual development. Is that what you think that means?

RC: I think for us we should take it that way.

EC: And Herbie isn't it misleading to say no individuality? Because that's the ego? I thought it's the other way around that we're looking for a true individuality.

HS: I meant it in the small sense. I don't know the correct word to use.

AH: I thought we said earlier that when we find that true individuality what we find is that empty center. We find that hollow man.

NH: Well it seems then that in that sense we have to talk about the ego as we talk about the Overself in that there is an individual ego but there is also a world-ego that each individual is caught up in this bigger ego which allows for more confusion. And when he brings in the element of evil--individuals might be doing evil acts but there's also world evil.

CdA: What is the world-ego?

NH: It seems to be something that we're all caught up in. Because when you talk about the ego as individual thoughts, you know whose thoughts?

AS: Maybe that thing was just a representation, you know the ego isn't all of the person as he was saying. Besides the ego there is this presence of the higher. Maybe that presence, the witness or the higher level knows the true situation but the ego appropriates that, that knowledge, it isn't really its knowledge, just as it doesn't really have its existence but appropriates. It doesn't have a separate existence but appropriates the feeling of a separate existence. So the ego makes the statement that it doesn't really exist, it is appropriating a knowledge which isn't properly its.

RC: So you think it appropriates the feeling of separate existence or it appropriates just a simple feeling of existence and that appropriation brings in separateness.

AS: Yeah, that's right.

RC: As my body is separate from yours, then my feeling of existence has to be separate from yours.

AH: May I ask a question please? Do we have three things? We have the hollow center that we described, we have the ego, and we have this person. Are we talking about three things?

RC: Well, that's why I read this one that,

PB: "It would be wrong to believe that there are two separate minds, two independent consciousnesses within us--one the lower ego-mind, and the other, the higher Overself-mind . . ." (8.1.74//Persp. p. 103, continued below)

AH: We are not even talking about two things.

RC: (reading)

PB: (cont'd) ". . . There is but one independent illuminating mind and everything else is only a limited and reflected image within it. The ego is a thought-series dependent on it." (8.1.74//Persp. p. 103)

HS: So the ego is this limited reflected image within this one illuminating mind would you say?

AH: But that can't be looked at as two things as juxtaposed.

HS: But before it was stated that the life and the consciousness both come from this illuminating mind.

RC: I got that quote by the way.

PB: "The ego, although itself a projection, draws from its creative source enough power to project in turn its own small world." (8.3.4)

HS: So its a peculiar kind of projection that has the power to continue projecting, it's not simply an effect, or is it?

RC: Because I can create my image of the world right or wrong I have the power to conjure up an image of it.

BS: Well if the ego is so to speak, some distant product of the Overself, it would seem that contained within the awareness of the Overself as its substrata, it would seem that the ego itself is the one that is divided into higher and lower.

RC: That is divided into higher and lower?

BS: Higher and lower, yeah, its emptiness would be right within itself.

AH: But its division into higher and lower is from its own point of view. According to this quote it has no validity for that division apart from the feltness of our experience as real. Like if you posit the division is within ego, a higher and lower within that. It seems that this quote is saying that that division is not a real one, its only from the point of view of the ego consciousness.

BS: Well it can't be divided if it could take two points of view.

Charlene: Last week, didn't you refer to the presence of an intermediate entity, Randy?

RC: That was two weeks ago but Anthony didn't want to go that way. So this week it is WRONG to believe there are two separate minds. But I'm asking about this fellow who clings to the ego, not yet someone of whom we could say has realized his Overself.

NH: When you say clings to the ego, maybe the ego is clinging because when you talk about the level of development being how much the person is really clinging to the ego so that the way of judging an ego would be the amount of clinging to it.

AH: The ego is clinging to the ego, Nancy?

NH: Yes, clinging to itself, to its own point of view.

AH: What is the ego clinging to?

VM: Its own habit structure.

LD: Its own way of seeing the world, its own structure.

AH: But what does that mean to say the ego is clinging to the ego, it doesn't mean anything. It's nonsensical.

AB: What if you just said its this clinging. There's this combustion of thought processes that goes around this empty center.

AH: But whose clinging to what?

HS: So you would say that the ego is clinging to the Overself?

AB: No, the intensity of preoccupation with the combustion of the thought processes is a clinging.

AH: Yeah, but whose clinging to what?

LouisD: But when you say I love myself does that mean the Overself loves myself or does that mean the ego loves itself? What's so strange about the ego loving itself, we all do it.

PC: Could you say that the I-thought clings to all the separate thoughts? I know in the *Wisdom* he says something to that effect, you know like the I-thought being like a caterpillar.

"I" AS SOUL

RC: Yeah, ok. There are quotes that talk about the I-thought, and talk about the ego as tying this succession of thoughts together and so forth but here is a very interesting one to throw into the game. Rough Ideas, #11, page 11, #30, this has actually got a note on it, PB's, before it starts. He says:

PB: "The "I" is *not* a thought at all. It is the very principle of Consciousness itself, pure Being. It is neither personal mind nor physical body, neither ego nor little self. Without it they could not exist or function. It is their witness." (8.1.72) (Q: Original begins "30. (PB) The "I" . . ." (R 1/123/30))

HE: Randy, he's talking about the "I" there, not the I-thought, isn't that different?

RC: Exactly.

HS: Ok but isn't that similar to the original analogy to one light, a graded series of bulbs. The I-thought now that's a peculiar kind of thought right, because it seems to be in each person's stream as it were but yet it seems to be deleterious to the purpose.

RC: [reads again]

PB: "The "I" is *not* a thought at all. It is the very principle of Consciousness itself, pure Being. . . ." (repeat, 8.1.72)

AD: So what does he mean here by "I" Herbie?

HS: I'd say the Overself.

AD: You would say what?

HS: I would say that he means the Overself.

AD: Yeah, ok. Discussion's over, right?

HS: No, actually, to be honest, I have no idea what that means. I don't know what it means to be the principle of consciousness in itself.

AD: Well, there no one can help you. But at least verbally you're capable of distinguishing that what he's referring to as the "I" is also equivalent to speaking about it as the Soul.

HS: In some sense yes.

AD: The soul is the principle.

HS: Some real principle.

JeffC: OK, Randy, in summary we have this whirling mass of thoughts, which as we identify with it gives the appearance of some center which from the ego point of view will appear as an abyss but instead of being empty there is really a fullness, and it is there we will find that higher, right, and that's the "I" that we are now referring to.

RC: Ok.

AD: Is that this quotation you're talking about there?

S [Anna?]: No we didn't finish reading it.

JeffC: I was going to make the correlation.

EM: You were talking about the whole discussion weren't you?

JeffC: Yeah, but isn't this going that way?

AH: Jeff did you suggest that the fullness there, in regard to the fact that it has an aspect of truth about it?

JeffC: In the sense that it is the source of the whole thing even though we are not identified with it, I thought that's what we said.

NH: And are there separate individual whirling masses, or is it one whirling mass?

HS: I think each individual has to confront one whirling mass first. I don't think there's any problem about an individual confronting the whole.

AD: Randy read the whole quote would you please?

RC: (reading quote again)

PB: "The "I" is *not* a thought at all. It is the very principle of Consciousness itself, pure Being. It is neither personal mind nor physical body, neither ego nor little self. Without it they could not exist or function. It is their witness." (8.1.72)

AD: You have a problem with this sentence?

AH: Well, I have a problem because the "I" is not a thought at all.

AD: So he's saying don't think of the "I" as the process of combustion, think of the I as Soul.

RC: I would relate this "I" to that entirely other plane where we "derive the feeling of something being there."

AD: Yeah but you see I think what you people are doing is, you're reading one sentence, and then you read another sentence, and you're making connections and I'm telling you to stick to the one sentence that you read and just understand that one sentence. Don't make connections with something you read before because this is not a book. These are just thoughts written down and each thought is a self-contained unit in itself. Now, if you feel that after you read fifty of these things you could write up a chapter you go right ahead and do it. But I would suggest you read one thought, understand it, drop it, you know. If you remember what we said about ego attachment, drop it, go to the next one, read that one, understand it, drop it, go to the next one.

RC: I would be delighted to do that.

AD: Don't be a caterpillar.

RC: I'd be delighted to do that.

AD: Let's do that.

RC: You want to do that in the class?

AD: Any other way you're gonna get confused.

RC: Ok.

AD: Let's do it.

HS: Let's do it.

AD: Read another one, and don't go back to the whirling thoughts.

RC: Same page.

AD: Because you have to understand this, UNLESS YOU KNOW WHAT THE EGO IS, YOU'RE ON NO QUEST. If you don't know who the enemy is you're just playing make-believe. Let's try.

EGO AS SELF-ACTUALIZING PROCESS OF THOUGHT

PB: "The ego is a structure which has been built up in former lives from tendencies, habits, and experiences in a particular pattern. But in the end the whole thing is nothing but a thought, albeit a strong and continuing thought." (8.2.45)

HS: It's problematical, isn't it, all you have is these thoughts and then there's this one thought. Like I don't understand how one thought could take over a whole stream so to say. Like all it is is thought, right, and the structure is composed of thought, and the structuring, like some guy run amuck you know?

AD: Well slow down and try again. Slow down, breathe slowly and think it out again. How is thought, which a self-actualizing process, ego?

HS: How is the ego?

AD: No, how is thought this ego?

HS: It would seem there would have to be in these self-actualizing thoughts a particular kind of thought.

AD: A what? There had to be what?

HS: A um...

AD: All the former preceding tendencies...

HS: Yeah but they even have to be...

AD: ...that you have...

HS: There's former preceding tendencies which now recapitulate . . .

AD: ...are actualizing themselves as this thought . . .

HS: ...each instant.

AD: All right, go on.

HS: And yet there has to be, there seems to be something within this thought itself that takes itself to be, as it were, in the technical, to actually be, real.

AD: Yes, go on, very good.

HS: What do you...

AD: Just keep going on...

HS: That is, there is, well I don't know, I don't know where to go.

AD: Well if you keep going on what would be the consequences? Wouldn't you see yourself as a phantom?

HS: If I actually could see that what's taking myself to be . . .

AD: What you take yourself to be is nothing but this process of thought, actualizing itself--this combustion process going on all the time.

HS: It would then seem to be that you would sort of say relativize the actual existence at that point.

AD: So you're becoming a Buddhist.

HS: Me? I'm into Neo-Confucianism.

AD: Stop and examine your life very very seriously like Socrates recommended, the unexamined life is not worth living, so stop and examine it, see what you're gonna come up with.

HS: Ok and if you examine...

AD: (Q: aside--I'll be in my cottage.) Herbie you said it, that's what the ego is.

EC: Say it again Herbie please.

HS: I was going to say it's a cancer but I'm not going to say that.

AD: It's a what?

HS: A cancer.

AD: That might be a good comparison. It feeds on itself.

HS: There's this dynamic structure and within that somehow the possibility arises for something in that dynamism, that motion, that structure to take itself to be, technically to be, to appropriate the reality of its principle, inside the structure.

AD: Ok let's use the example now Herbie, when you're having a dream alright? And this dream let's say has 108 acts, one scene following upon the other, right? In each scene, scene 1, scene 2, scene 3, there's a continuity of thought. Each thought takes itself to be real, ultimate, actual, but when you look at the dream you know that that dream character borrowed whatever consciousness he has from the person having the dream, it isn't his consciousness, but that consciousness which he has borrowed, and so to speak suffuses all his thinking, this is what he calls his ego,

HS: Ok, from the analogy, well I don't know, I would just say at this point, let's say that this dream character right here now, even when I hear something spoken in that way, there seems to be an immediate appropriation of that example so to say, and so to say, oh I understand it, and that's where for me the problem begins to arise.

AD: I'm sorry, I didn't follow you Herbie.

HS: This dream character, right here.

AD: The one in the dream, the analogy.

AH: No, Herbie.

HS: No, I was doing...

AD: Let's stick to the analogy. Use the analogy.

HS: In the analogy, the character in the dream is told that he is in a dream.

AD: No, he doesn't say he's in a dream.

HS: No, so no.

AD: The dream character doesn't say "I'm dreaming." Everything is real for the dream character--including himself. Upon his reality depends the whole of the dream scenario. Are we saying that he reappears incessantly, scene after scene, right?

HS: Ok. And in this reappearing you start to gain a conviction that there's a reality to reappearing, there's an assurance.

AD: That there's a reality to him.

HS: That in the 107th, the 108th scenes the same guy would be there? Ok.

AH: He experiences this continuity of himself in the dream.

AD: Which he mistakes for identity.

VM: But Herbert I thought you were asking something else, like almost the problem of knowledge.

LdS: In other words, if there were an epistemological discussion in the dream...

AH: The analogy doesn't work completely because if you do posit...

AD: Nothing works completely.

AH: But the dream that I'm having now, I can't posit a real person.

AD: I don't know what you're saying.

AH: In the analogy we have a person who is dreaming. And the dreamer borrows the consciousness from that.

AD: The dream character, the consciousness of the dreamer is immanent in the dream character, but the dream character is gonna think it's his consciousness.

AH: My experience now, I don't think I'm asleep, well yes I am from the point of view of this discussion. I am dreaming now, and if I were to wake up I won't find one who is dreaming.

AD: You won't find one who is dreaming, I don't see what you're getting at.

AH: I'm just wondering if the analogy is an absolute parallel description of ego-consciousness.

AD: It's only a way of helping us understand. Like I pointed out an analogy is good only so far and no further. You take the egg and you boil it after three minutes it's no good it blows up. The analogy is only good so far and no further.

AH: Because in the analogy the dream character has as his fundamental truth an ego subject who is asleep and dreaming. An ego-subject doesn't have a higher ego-subject.

AD: Why are you going outside the analogy, I'm only using the analogy.

AH: Well, I'm just trying to find out where this person is, you know?

AD: Well, like I said, I like to stick to one point at a time, one sentence at a time, and I just stay within that framework.

AH: Because you described to Herbie this process of the ego with these thoughts that congregate around an idea of continuity, and . . .

AD: Well insofar as there is an incessant process of thinking going on, and this thinking that's going on is actualized as Herbie, and thinks that it is Herbie, always refers to Herbie, Herbie is going to believe in the reality of his ego.

AH: What are those thoughts going around?

AD: No, they go straight too. One after the other. Just think about it for a minute, what you call your identity is this constant, incessant, uninterrupted process of one thought following another.

AH: But they're all strung upon some...

AD: [shouts] ON WHAT!!!

AH: On a sense of continuity.

AD: What's that sense of continuity?

AH: It's empty.

DD: It's the One.

AD: Well, not the One, it's that consciousness which suffuses the dream character with the scenario that's going on. But that consciousness is the experience of dread.

DD: I was just suggesting that we all, this appropriation seems to be an appropriation of the idea of the unity, or of the unity. We act as integral beings, as beings at the center of a distance that surrounds us. In a sense the ego is like a duplication in separate existence of the idea of the one. Like we appropriate that idea and live it out in separate existences.

AD: Well, the One wouldn't be appropriate here, you would say your Soul. So this dynamic process of combustion, which is an actualizing of one's own thinking into some pseudo-entity, alright, the Buddhists would say there is no substratum to that, there is no consciousness there. The Vedantists would say there is an underlying consciousness there. The underlying consciousness for the Vedantists would be the true "I"--the Soul. For the Buddhist there isn't anything there, so for the Buddhist it becomes like a blank

phenomena--there is no unity, there is no identity, there is only this continuity--one scene after the other. And if you can find an "I" there they say go ahead and do so. The Vedantists say well what is it that makes it seem as though I am the self-identical person from moment to moment and they would fall back on consciousness as the substratum of that whole scenario. In other words the person having the dream, alright, his consciousness is immanent in the whole process and that provides the underlying continuity or the substratum. The Buddhists would say there isn't anyone there having the dream it's just one scene after another going on.

AB: Isn't there an indication in the quote that one scene is the product of all the previous scenes? In other words the 108th scene, is the totality or the product.

AD: It's supposed to be the snowball effect.

AB: Right, and the force with which the 108th scene is held is translated to the 109th.

AD: Yeah, so that there's this ongoing process where all the previous tendencies are in the next scene, and then all of that in the next scene. So they call that the snowball effect. You know, as you roll a snowball it gets bigger and bigger, right so all these previous tendencies are already present in this moment here and now.

AB: But theoretically,

AD: No one could dispute that, and no one could prove it.

LdS: But Anthony, along the lines of what you said about the difference between Buddhism and Vedanta--in a sense hasn't PB synthesized that in a few quotes here where he says that the substratum, the Overself, is really not of the same order, or the same plane as that of the ego.

AD: Yes neither is the person who's having the dream of the same order as the dream character who imagines his unity.

LdS: Yeah that's the point.

AB: If you said that consciousness, or this awareness is infused into the dream and then the dream subject has this sense of himself. You could, if that consciousness was not infused in the dream, the dream could still go on, but you'd perceive the world as something other than oneself.

AD: The dream could still go on and?

AB: It would be experienced as other than oneself rather than as one's experience. In this analogy if you realized that you were dreaming, you could watch that whole process going on of one scene unfolding into another, without thinking that that was you.

AD: But then you'd have to say you're bifurcating your consciousness. On the one hand you're the dream character and on the other hand you're witnessing the dream.

AB: Right, and that's the conception.

AD: Well if you could keep that conception then you would have this fluid notion of mind that you have to work with. In other words, the consciousness in the dream character, and the consciousness of the

person having the dream, there isn't the wall between them. There is a fluidity of that consciousness which is in both. And you'll say that the consciousness that the dream character has is the lower consciousness, or the lower mind, and the person having the dream--that's the higher mind. So this way you don't break it up into two things.

AB: Not two things but when the lower mind or the dream subject is not aware of the dreamer then even though the continuity is there it's appearing as segmented as only the lower.

RC: I'd like to maintain this for the purpose of discussion that maybe 'consciousness' is the wrong word to use but that the dream character's state of consciousness is actually a state of consciousness which is entirely distinct qualitatively from the dreamer's consciousness.

AD: Um-hm.

RC: Rather than a smooth continuity of it being like one liquid thing that is in one place and also in another.

[Audio File 1982 0901a Ends]

[Audio File 1982 0901b Begins]

HS: But even when you say...

AD: You have to distinguish them, that's true, but if you separate them you're gonna be in a lot of trouble.

RC: Well, 'consciousness' definitely is the wrong word, I would think. But the level of the imagination, the intensity of the awareness, the breadth of the awareness.

AD: Well, we could put it very simply. What consciousness is outside of the imagination is experienced quite differently inside the imagination. But we have to keep the continuity of consciousness, otherwise we're gonna have two minds. And mentalism as a theoretical and practical philosophical tradition will just fall apart.

RC: Ok.

AD: Let's read another one.

BLISS EXPERIENCED WHEN COMPLETELY OUT OF THE EGO; MOMENTARY GLIMPSES OF TRUTH

LR: Could I ask a question before we go on to another one?

AD: Go ahead.

LR: When you were speaking of the experience of emptiness or hollowness which provokes feelings of dread and horror, terror, and you were saying that that blackness or emptiness was actually the higher self.

AD: Not the blackness that your ego experiences, not its reaction to it.

LR: I understand, whatever PB calls the empty center, is experienced as falling into an abyss from which one usually tries to run away. Can you describe at what point that is not exactly felt that way?

AD: That's not exactly what?

LR: Can you describe at what point the experience is one of light or intelligence? Rather than terror.

DD: Can you say the seeds of the ego's undoing lie in the ego? Where does that happen, why does that occur?

AD: When there is complete detachment from the ego, when your ego is completely cut off, completely. Partial, a partial cut off you would still experience dread and horror.

LR: But wouldn't that experience of the other have to take place in order to be totally cut off from the ego.

AD: Yes.

LR: So isn't that catch-22?

AD: No, it's not catch-22, it's catch-44.

LR: Can you explain?

AD: In the experience of the mystical that you are going to go through a preliminary dread, because as you approach it you become aware of it, you feel it, you know it, it is only when you are completely out of the ego that you experience the joy and the light but as long as there is even the slightest, even if you are at the very circumference of the ego, you'll still experience the dread, you've got to be completely out of it to experience the joy that you are speaking of, the bliss.

LR: So, can you give a little bit of...

AD: Let's not get into this now... Ok? I want to stick with the ego, a very personal friend of mine.

LD: Can the ego look at itself, or is that, I mean even when it looks it can see anything?

AD: Does the ego look at itself?

LD: When I examine myself.

AD: You have to say more, I don't know what you mean.

LD: When I examine myself, is the "I" that's examining, is that the ego?

AD: Again, it depends to what extent the person is identified with the ego. A lot of people will make the claim that their ego is objective, they can see it. Like for instance the remark was made, that the, what was it that Herbie said, the ego is non-existent, do you believe that the ego would ever say that? If you do you're a damn fool because the ego will never say that. So you're doing one of two things, either you're parroting, in other words you read something and you're throwing it back at someone else, or you actually had the experience of seeing, alright, it's unreality. Now which one are you saying? Are you parroting or are you speaking from experience? That's why I can't answer.

LD: Well insofar as I do try to meditate once in a while, I am trying to look...

AD: Yes. And most of the time you're caught within that whirling thought alright, you're caught within the ego structure itself, and occasionally flashes where you can see yourself objectively. But when you see yourself objectively you're NOT the ego, otherwise you can't see yourself objectively. And those flashes, and those momentary glimpses of truth are not rare. They come up very often when you study, when you try very hard, and the moment you relax you'll see something. Then it's gone and the wake is right behind. Let's continue, some more. I don't know this fellow, I know his social security number but I don't hardly know him.

CONSCIOUSNESS IS ORDINARILY MISIDENTIFIED WITH THE BODY

PB: "Consciousness ordinarily believes itself to be limited to the physical body. This belief it calls "I," it claims to be the "I." That they are associated together is unquestionable. But further enquiry will yield a further and startling result: it functions *through* the body and to that extent the connection gives life to the body, thus creating the belief that it is the body when in reality it only permeates it. What happens is that a part (the body) is imposing itself upon the whole (the consciousness)." (8.1.85)

S: Red vinyl 1-9, page 105.

AD: Alright would you read it again?

(Q: quote read again)

AD: All you have to do is go back to the chapter on "The Birth of the Universe".

HS: So you would say something like this is consciousness there, consciousness through mind, now associates itself with body. Body taken literally, meaning-- (Q: slaps leg.)

VM: The word 'mind' isn't actually used in here Herbert although I wouldn't disagree with you. I mean in this quote it isn't actually used.

HS: Ok, but, I just tried to bridge the gap between the association of the word ;consciousness; with body. At any rate consciousness is found as body, I say me.

VM: Always associates itself with body, and this limitation it takes as truth or as the real situation.

AH: But it is not only limitation because he says the permeation of consciousness through the body gives life to the body.

VM: Yes, I think it's just like Anthony was saying, this light shines in, and its prior source is somehow neglected or is lost sight of, so to speak, in its association with the body, the whole complex, you know. You could throw the thoughts and the emotions in with the body too for that matter, the psychosomatic organism let's call it, is another word which I think is in keeping with the way PB is using body.

HS: So the first thing is there is like an identification is noticed, whether its real or not, you don't see it as a permeation. But if someone goes to take your finger say, you know, there's like an attachment there. And you don't say that's my finger go on and take it you say, that's me! I think that's his point here I would suggest.

AH: But you know that last phrase was, the consequence of this permeation is the part--which the body is a part--in some mistaken feltness, feels itself as its own principle.

HS: Well, this thing does seem to be alive.

AH: Well, it is alive because of the permeation by consciousness.

BS: Would that be the psychosomatic organism--the result of consciousness permeating body?

VM: I guess you could say that.

AH: There's some mistaken conclusion and that's that the part imagines itself to be whole.

HS: It takes what's a permeation of the life so to say to be It. You know like the body is the life.

AH: You don't say life you say my life because it's my body.

ME: But this consciousness that he's speaking of here is not fabricating this body, right, this is individual consciousness?

AD: I don't think he's bringing in that point now. I think the point he's bringing in is like if you go back to the dream analogy, the dream character that appears to be a living reality is so because it is permeated by the consciousness of the person whose having the dream. But the question as to whether the dream subject, I mean the dream character, alright, is fabricated by the intelligence that's having the dream, I don't think he's bringing that in now, that's being left aside.

AH: He's not explaining,

AD: He's not explaining how the Oversoul so to speak produces from within itself, this all-encompassing intelligence produces from within itself, the body through which it is going to operate, he's not explaining that. He's only explaining that this consciousness associated with a body, permeating that body, now that body thinks itself to be, as you said, a self-independent reality.

AH: But there is something true about that insofar as it is life.

AD: Something true about what?

AH: There's something true about this experience of being in the body, the fact that's true about it is that I'm alive, the fact that there's life.

AD: But that wasn't the point. The point was that the body, with this life in it takes itself to be the whole.

AH: But there's something of the whole there, insofar as it is alive.

AD: How is there something of the whole of the Overself in the body?

AH: Because consciousness permeates the body.

AD: I'm glad you name me a Buddha, that was easy. How is the whole in the body?

AH: The whole can't be in...

AD: How is the stupendous wisdom of the Overself here now present? It's a misconception--the ego or this light associated with the body says "I am It." That's the danger, that's what we all assume. Everyone assumes that his ego is the principle of reality for himself. Because of misconception. Let's continue with our friend.

THE THOUGHT OF EGO EXISTS IN TIME AND SPACE

PB: "All our thoughts necessarily exist in the successiveness of time, but the thought of the ego is a more complicated affair and exists also in time and space, because the body is part of the ego. Whatever we do, the ego as such will continue its existence. But we need not identify ourselves with it; we can put some distance between us and it. The more we do so, the more impersonal we shall become, and vice versa."

(Q: Brown vinyl, p. 88, last one on the page.) (8.2.49)

LR: What's the vice versa?

RC: The more impersonal we become the more distance we'll put between ourselves and the body.

HS: And the versa?

VM: The more distance the more impersonal.

AD: The less distance the more personal.

AH: We always speak about space and time as being qualities that enjoy some sort of equal status.

AD: No, no, no, let's first get to the point. What's the point here.

AH: I was going to ask about his use of time, his use of space.

AD: Well, the first point we have to make.

HS: Generally thoughts are spoken of as in time.

AH: Thought's in time, body's in time and space.

HS: Body is a peculiar kind of thought, it has spatial reference.

AD: It has to get spatialized. Go over that Herbie.

HS: Time is--

AD: The ego considers time...

HS: The ego considers time simply that you would probably have an identification with your mental stream without necessarily identifying with...

AD: So you could have a succession of thoughts and they're not in space, OK, but how about the body?

HS: Body necessarily by definition is a spatial entity. I think in these terms.

AD: It's a corporealization of thought.

HS: Yes.

AD: Then, you have to have it in space.

LR: Doesn't he say the ego exists in time and space?

VM: Yes because it's connected to the body.

HS: In time as thought, in time and space as thought embodied.

RC: He's talking about the thought of the ego, "All of our thoughts in time, but the thought of the ego is a more complicated affair, and that thought exists in time and space." Because the body is part of it.

AH: Body necessitates the spatial reference. Does that also necessitate a sense of egoity?

HS: Does the spatial reference necessitate egoity?

AH: I'm just asking does the spatial referent necessitate a sense of egoity?

VM: No why should it?

LR: I think so, in some sense.

AD: Isn't egoity a thought? Is egoity a body? When I speak about your egotism am I speaking about your body or your glorification of the identity that you assume between this consciousness and the body. Or let's separate egotism from ego. Is egotism now, if you think of a person's egotism, is it something that's spatial?

AS: No, of course not.

AD: Well then it's thought. Then it doesn't need a spatial reference. Like for instance someone wrote 3000 years ago about how great he was. I gotta finish right down to the wire, right?--every sentence has to be completed.

AH: This passage says something, it's a more complicated affair, the relationship of this ego to thought and to body. I was trying to draw up implications of what was more complicated.

S: Would it be appropriate to read it again?

RC: (reading) "All our thoughts necessarily exist in the successiveness of time . . ."

AH: All of our thoughts.

AD: Yeah, they follow one after the other,

AH: Ego thoughts as well as other ones?

AD: Any kind of thought you have. One follows after the other, unless you get three at a time. I mean I notice one comes and then another and then another. And even in those people that have tremendous facility you know to employ four secretaries and keep them all busy at the same time, they still have to monadically get to one point at a time. You heard of that. Thought is successive one follows after the other. Ok, now if you were just pure thought I wouldn't be able to find you any place in space, but now suppose as thought you also corporealize yourself. Like when you think something real intensely alright, it will appear in front of you. You spatialized it, you made an image out of it. Now you have to refer to

space, and the ego has these two aspects, a spatial and a temporal aspect. You people really don't know who your best friend is. He's your first cousin. What do you do when you meditate? Get on the horse and go away? Let's have another one, Randy.

RC: I really like this one for a couple of different reasons. Do we want a quote that will lead on to more or do we want a quote that will be a good place to stop?

AD: Randy your preference, I like them all. I've never seen an ego so exposed. Better than any burlesque show I ever went to. Keep going.

RC: Ok, this one will lead onto lots. This is vol. 14, Orange, page 12, #34.

EGO'S IMAGE-MAKING POWER

PB: "As the snake is never killed by its own poison, the Overself has never been deceived by this image-making power of its own ego, although the ego itself almost continually is." (Persp. p. 97 only)

HS: You're so balanced.

S: Would you read it again, please.

RC: (reads quote again)

AD: See the tremendous cosmological implications that has, and epistemological?

VM: It reminds very much when Plotinus speaks about the animate as that which suffers but the Soul itself is never really disturbed by any of the passions of the animate and so on. The animate is that light associated with the body, its system of habit structures. [Note: See Plotinus, I.1.]

AH: And what does it mean that we educate our Soul?

VM: Wait . . .

AD: What does he mean by the ego's image-making power?

HS: Read it again Randy.

RC: (reads again)

VM: This image-making power, if you remember, really must depend, as PB explains it, on the body and the bodily apparatus. You know he describes that process where the seed-like thought-form first arise in the heart and then moves up to the head and then becomes intensified and amplified and so on. And that image-making faculty is intimately associated with the structure of the body, so it really can be understood as a function of the body, and I like that so much, that image-making faculty. But I guess its quite an obstruction to an appreciation of the Soul's intelligence that's trying to occur, so it's like poison.

AH: But like the snake, the poison doesn't affect it.

VM: Yes I guess there's a quiescent principle of Soul which still shines through it and is never sullied by the experiences.

AD: He says that the Soul is never fooled by the ego's image-making power, and then he went on, I just want to check, and then he goes on and says the ego is enough times fooled by it. So the ego makes these images and then believes in them, and then gets fooled by them. What would the image-making power of the ego be?

RC: Can we talk about the Sun in the natal chart?

S: The imagination.

AD: Come to the other classes. Let's go on.

AD: What you think we're struggling with when we have seminars? The ego is trying to show me the way, or you the way, you know, we've got to keep cutting out all its pretense and get to reason. The reasoning processes, and get to them, and then we know what we're talking about. But if you allow the ego ever to usurp its place you come up with a nice big jungle book/jumble (Q: word unclear). Let's have another one.

RC: Orange vol. 11, page 10.

A KERNEL OF MENTALISM – THINKING ONESELF INTO BEING

PB: "His first mental act is to think himself into being. . . . The whole world-process brings everything about, including the ego and the ego's own self-making." (8.2.15//Persp. p. 104)

AD: That's mentalism in a nutshell, that's too much for tonight.

RC: (reads again)

AD: That's the whole mentalistic doctrine, you know, that the Soul has for its content the World-Idea, and it actualizes that or projects it out from within itself. And included in that World-Idea is the ego and the process that it's going to go through. That's like a kernel of mentalism.

RC: That 'his' here seems to be more than just the ego, isn't it.

AD: That 'his' here is Soul, Oversoul. Or Soul identified with Nature.

RC: "His first mental act is to think himself into being."

MB: Can the Overself think himself into being? Or are we saying...[?]

VM: That's why Anthony said it was a soul associated with Nature, that principle which can think itself into space-time . . . can think itself into existence . . . space-time flux.

AD: Myra, you forget what I told you--as your ego is evolving, the World is evolving with it.

MB: I knew it was the same . . . But that's like the Soul is coming into space and time, or the Soul is coming to the karma, and that level, where it brings itself about...

AD: Well, think of the whole World-Idea, alright, is contained with each individual Soul, and each individual soul projects the World-Idea, but first it has to have the intermediary of an ego--I'm leaving out the intermediate Witness, alright--it has to have the intermediary of an ego through which the World gets

projected out, and all that exists within the Overself, within the Soul itself. So that's really mentalism there in that one sentence, it's like the kernel of mentalism. He's just stating it as briefly and tersely as he can. And the thing that you would see in that kind of paragraph is the status, so to speak, of the ego within that whole framework, that it has a role to fulfill, and that it's not willy-nilly projected out. I mean it has a definite role and it has to fulfill that role before it can, so to speak, realize what the Source of Being is for it. So when he says it creates being, or the Soul produces a sensible being for itself through which it is going to manifest, he is really speaking about mentalism.

MB: We were talking about the ego as being a thought, but it seems to make sense to further characterize this thought as having both passive and active potential. It's not merely the product of something but it also has a role to play.

AD: Yes it's both potential and actual at one and the same time.

MB: But not only actual but active.

AD: That's why I tell you think of it as a matrix of possibilities, that are always in the process of actualizing themselves. But you can't conceive of the matrix as being actualized at any time. A little more?

RC: 11, Rough, page 7, second one.

NO TOTAL LIBERATION UNTIL DEATH; NO EGO IN NIRVIKALPA; DEGREES OF IMPERSONALITY; EVEN THE SAGE RETAINS SOME EGO; NECESSITY OF EGO FULFILLMENT

PB: "At every point of his progress the ego still functions--except in deep, thought-free contemplation, when it is suppressed--but it becomes by well-defined stages a better and finer character, more and more in harmony with the Overself. But total relinquishment of the ego can happen only with total relinquishment of the body, that is, at death." (8.1.188)

AD: He's disagreeing with the Vedantist's jivanmukti concept. No total liberation until you're dead. Did you read the last two chapters in the Guenon book on the two kinds of liberation, in the body and out of the body? [Note: See Rene Guenon, *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedanta*, Chapters 23 and 24.] Did you just go over that?

VM: I don't think we went over it in class actually.

AD: Ok

VM: We did touch on it. We did talk about it a little bit about the prolongation and the after-death state a little bit. We did discuss that. Where he talks about an adept existing in the subtle realm until the end of that Manvantara.

AD: No that's something else.

HS: The vedamukti [sic; videha-mukti].

AD: It's a discussion that's been going on now in India for a couple of thousand years whether or not you could be liberated in the body. And there's pros and cons on that. And he saying no, as long as you have a body, complete and total liberation is not there. There's this 3%, or what was it, 2½ % of the ego is retained.

RC: He talked a number of times in terms of complete and absolute impartiality being the goal. It would seem that as long as you do have a body that impartiality can't be complete. Because your life forces are sustaining that in a way that they are not sustaining other things.

HS: But in that quote, the beginning of the quote Randy, didn't you read something about the suppression of the ego thought.

RC: The thought-free contemplation.

HS: But would that be an impartiality. Would there be any possibility of impersonality in that contemplation?

RC: I think that's in the quote where he says, "Every point it still functions except in deep thought-free contemplation when it is suppressed." (Q: see 8.1.188)

HS: Could you speak to that a little?

AD: In nirvikalpa there is no ego. You have complete impersonality, but any other state you would have some partiality, some person. Some distorting.

HS: So would you hold for a possibility of sort of say relativizing the partiality part of the thought. I don't know about complete suppression but at least making the "I" or the egoity part of the object at that point.

AD: I don't follow.

HS: Well you say that's only in nirvikalpa, which, it seems to me is a total suppression of all thought.

AD: Yes.

HS: But, it seems that in the actual whatever you could grasp of the conscious thinking, I think he was referring to that the ego thought can be held down a little and not absolutely appropriate the thinking and there could be a conscious foothold within the thinking.

AD: Yes there could be relative degrees of impersonality. Science is an example of that.

HS: Ok, but science is like an abstraction in this case. Science now is the science of thinking.

AD: All I'm saying is science attempts to be impersonal in its findings. Human being cannot be completely impersonal because there's always some interference, what they call the personal equation or the ego. And not unless its completely silenced would there be complete impersonality. Even in the case of the sage there is going to be some admixture of ego.

HS: But there would be the possibility of grades of impersonality.

AD: Yes, of course. Hopefully.

AB: Randy can you reread the beginning of that quote.

RC: (reads whole quote again)

AB: So the thing that was confusing me, any time there's activity the ego is there. But the quote begins, "At every stage in his progress the ego" . . . so is the entity that's progressing not the ego? I mean it seems when we speak about an evolution or spirituality the I at least in terms of the long path we are speaking about the ego becoming less and less egotistical. But I thought the way the quote was phrased that what was progressing was not the ego.

VM: He said in the last line, that it becomes a finer and finer vehicle.

AD: He'll stress that over and over again that the ego has to be fulfilled. Over and over again. He's not going to do like the Easterners and say get rid of it. He might say if you want to give it up after you develop and perfect it then you give it up, so that will keep you busy a long time.

AB: But as long as it is utilized or employed, as long as the ego is, there's a limitation on knowledge.

AD: There's no way around it. That's why in the expressions that come to us from various sages there will always be some disagreement among sages. Because of that 3% of the personal equation still functioning. You could see that when we're working with the charts right, anything coming from above must manifest itself through the natal chart, that is automatically going to distort it. That's guaranteed.

DD: It doesn't ever get fulfilled does it?

AD: It's fulfillment enough, Dennis. It's fulfillment enough. Even if you get rid of 70% of your ego. One more. Before I forget, pleasant dreams tonight. (Q: comments no class on Sunday because of wedding)

REINCARNATION

PB: "What he calls the "I" does not get reborn in further bodies, as he believes, nor did it do so in the past. But it does appear to do so. Only deep analytical thought associated with mystical meditation can de-mesmerize him from his self-made idea." (8.1.231)

RC: Red vinyl 1-9, page 105, bottom of page. (Q: then re-reads quote)

VM: This is a subject we've actually struggled with before.

AD: How could the Overself ever incarnate? How could Being incarnate?

VM: But you would say that there are certain possibilities in the Overself or in the Idea of Man that actualized themselves. And these possibilities can appear to be a continuous transformation and reincarnation that would be the normal and naive view of reincarnation. But then the other point of view might be that these possibilities are the unfoldment of what's already in the Idea of Man.

AD: Basically, the criticism is against any animistic understanding of reincarnation. I'm Joe Doe, when I come back Joe Doe becomes Henry Smith, you know. So there's this notion of some sort of continuity and so he's knocking all that out. There's no such thing--That's not what reincarnation is. Reincarnation, as you probably realize by now, is really misunderstood in the sense that they think that the same principle--the principle of the soul, soul is actually in the body, whereas the way we understand it is that

this indivisible whole of which part, the reasoning part of the soul takes and projects, and makes in the imagination actualizations of the possibilities that are contained within that. But in itself it is the principle and never could reincarnate. He just wants to knock that out, so just in case you have any idea that you're immortal because you keep reincarnating, that goes out the window too. Because for a lot of people that is a kind of feeling of immortality, that they're going to be coming back. But what's coming back is not you.

LG: Is that some fake (Q:?) thought that he's talking about at the end, the projection that is coming into contact with the body?

RC: Well, he's talking about someone becoming mesmerized by his self-made idea.

LG: Would you read the sentence again?

LR: Isn't the point also that he never gets reborn because he's never born at all?

AD: Yes.

LR: The Overself would have to be present to every incarnation but it is never getting born, or reborn.

AD: Well, it already follows when we pointed out that the light which suffuses this matrix of thoughts or possibilities, it is those thoughts or possibilities which actualize themselves as various entities, it is not the light which suffuses them that incarnates.

AB: The combustion process is not given by the light but is in the thoughts.

AD: It's thoughts themselves are getting actualized, not that light, and so there can't be an incarnation of that principle.

RC: (reading)

PB: "What he calls the "I" does not get reborn in further bodies as he believes, nor did it do so in the past. But it does appear to do so. Only deep analytical thought . . ." (Q: see above -- 8.1.231)

AD: In other words the "I" never incarnated, now or before or will it do so in the future, obviously, ok. So what is all this talk about reincarnation. He says well you're gonna have to give it a lot of thought. You're gonna have to try to get some experience in meditation to understand it. But reincarnation is just another word, most people don't know what they're talking about. They look in the dictionary.

LG: There is appearance of the "I".

AD: That there's an appearance of the "I"? If the "I" is an eternal and immutable principle, how could a matrix of possibilities be an appearance of it?

LG: If we take the appearance and call it the "I," that's the ego assuming the self?

AD: Assuming to be the Soul, yes.

LG: The thought of the ego, is a thought contained within the Soul.

AD: Go on. [. . .]

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0901b Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AD: The details that are left out is what we've been working at over here. Day in and day out.

SD: Anthony why isn't it he doesn't say it's not the "I" that doesn't incarnate, he says what he calls his "I," that phrasing is confusing to me. Is he really talking about the Overself, is that what he's denying incarnates?

AD: Read it again to him, Randy.

RC: What I like about this is that it doesn't seem to me to make any difference what you call "I," it applies in both cases.

LR: Yeah but the interpretation can be quite different if he means the ego does not incarnate.

RC: That's true too.

AD: How can the ego reincarnate if it's a matrix of possibilities. And the (Q: inaudible) cannot reincarnate because it's the principle of being.

AS: So what does incarnate?

AD: He's saying you gotta go figure this out, you gotta go study!

LD: If the ego doesn't reincarnate, what are you getting liberated from?

(Q: laughter)

AH: Who's getting liberated?

VM: Oh no.

AD: There's time and you'd better start!

[Audio File 1982 0901b Ends]