

CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
September 22, 1982
PB PARAS; EGO

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Consciousness, Thought

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*].
- Paul Brunton, *The Quest of the Overself*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)
- Paramahansa Chitsukhacharya, *Tattvapradipika* (*Chitsukhi*)

- Bible, John (14:10), Matthew (5:48)

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: IV.3.30, VI.7.40

NOTES:

- Anecdotes about PB from Randy highlighted in yellow.
- Earlier transcript versions exist.

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1982 09/22 at Wisdom's Goldenrod

PB Paras; Ego

Readable Edited Transcript

THERE IS ONLY ONE ILLUMINATING MIND, THE EGO IS A THOUGHT-SERIES DEPENDENT ON IT

[Audio File 1982 0922a Begins]

RC: The idea was to take a quote and stay right on that quote until we get to it. And we are to be very ruthless with things that don't fit, and focus the discussion directly on the quote that we're talking about. The one we did last week:

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." (8a-bvc.4 (14v/39/19) Persp. p. 103 & 8.1.74)

RC: David, it seemed you had the most succinct expression last week.

DB: It seemed as if there were two ways of expressing it, one of which would say that the ego, as that particular series of thoughts, has the property of taking itself to be a mind independently of that one illuminating mind. And the other one, I think there was something to the effect that everything else he speaks of it, the whole process of the instantiation of the ideas from within the higher soul all the way down through the cosmos and our psychology and so on and so forth until we get to here. At which point egoity itself seems to be itself epiphenomenal to all of that. And that it was possible to have that whole system, like in that quote he refers to as "everything else" operate free of that egoity. I think there was a distinction made that we could consider that whole process of unfoldment from within the higher self as in some sense the ego, and egoity itself is something which so to speak appears on its surface. And there was a discussion after that which had to do with development of that egoity that we're basically so familiar with as being dependent upon the appearance of reflective consciousness within that whole system of unfoldment . . .

RC: It seems to me we were talking about the IV.3.30 quote. [Note: See Plotinus, *Enneads*.] We had a soul manifesting intelligence within it, in an ongoing flow of the present moment, with no vacillation, and no necessary confusion. And then . . . within the ego standpoint . . . where most of us are, we have a more or less confused stream whose constantly living in the past or in the imagination and that second is a thought-series dependent on that single illuminating mind. Anthony used the image--this wasn't in class but after--he said if you imagine a pillar of light shining down, like that is the ray of light emanating from the soul, and then within that, you have a series of dots and dashes. It's as if the dots and dashes took themselves to be the light. (inaudible) Somehow we have to figure out how that can be so.

DB: Does each one of these dots and dashes . . . and is it that they individually take themselves to be independent, to be a mind, or is there a context within which all those dots and dashes take place which lend to those individual thoughts that quality of egocentricity?

RC: . . . The analyses that we do of the ego are necessarily incomplete and inadequate because they don't subsume the ego-thought itself. We're always standing in the ego-thought as we make the analysis, and consequently not able to objectify the ego-thought that holds them together . . .

We are speaking of the ego-thought . . . not so much as one thought juxtaposed with other thoughts, but as a kind of thought which lends coherence to the whole series . . .

But since we're not able, when we're in the ego-thought, to objectify it, I wanted to move on to the next quote . . .

NH: Is that "one mind" the basis of all individual egos?

RC: Within the quote, when he says "The ego is a thought-series dependent on it," I'm inclined to think we're talking about a principle, that we do have to go through and experience and incorporate . . . even though there's a big difference from the particular constituents of one ego and the particular constituents of another ego. That's what David meant by saying it's epiphenomenal, but it's an ongoing epiphenomena thing, meaning it's a by-product of the ideation.

NH: They all evolve from that one principle of ego.

RC: Even though we wouldn't say that principle is itself a metaphysical principle.

. . . Is that one mind the source of all egos? "There is but one independent illuminating mind . . ."

(Student discussion)

DB: I think of that one illuminating mind there is the Overself.

NH: . . . Is he talking about individual egos as being individual thought-series . . . or is this thought-series which evolves from this mind is actually the ego-principle which is epiphenomenal.

RG: What does this mean--principle of ego versus thought-series ego? "The ego is a thought-series dependent on the illuminating mind." Now why bring in a third principle?

RC: I'm not thinking of it as a third principle but as that which makes it possible for there to appear to be a thread of continuity within the series that makes it seem like a series, instead of a mad man's dissociating ideation.

RG: I thought it was the reflection of the Overself in the thought-series that allowed the taking of the thought-series to be the ego.

LR: If I remember . . . we were trying to trace the source of the error, and to say why is it that this notion of egotism arises. If we say that the ego is an instantiation of the Overself . . . if there aren't two minds there's one, then how is it that this error arises. That was the last problem we posed. One of the things we said was, yes . . . ego is not epiphenomenal, that ego itself is intrinsic to the process, but EGOTISM is extrinsic. The last question was how is it possible that this error arise. We postulated that it could only arise within a reflective consciousness, and that there were only some creatures that had that reflective consciousness . . .

RC: I don't think it is jumping around to bring in a quote that we did before. We had that quote where PB made it very clear that he said that the Overself is not deceived by the ego's image-making power, but

that the ego always is . . . I would argue against saying that it is the Overself that is deceived by the ego's image-making power. And that that attachment of the ego to its own image-making power, and getting caught up in it, is where the confusion lies.

(student discussion)

AH: I thought your commentary was proceeded by the idea that the Overself is never deceived, and you're going to argue that point.

LR: Was I saying something to seem to argue that? How does that follow, I'm already lost.

RG: I'm even lost before you're lost. I thought we were discussing this quote. I asked a question on this quote, you made a comment, was your comment intended to reveal the substance of the quote or just review history? Review last week.

LR: You're taking it back to the one line of light coming from the Overself, isn't that what you wanted to get back to?

RG: I don't know.

TRACE YOUR SUBJECTIVITY TO ITS ORIGIN TO GET TO THE HIDDEN OBSERVER; DREAM ANALOGY

AD: Why don't we go on with the next quote. Let's go on with the next quote.

RC: This is from Red volume 14, page 39.

PB: "If there is not to be an endless series of observers, which would be unthinkable, there must be an ultimate one, itself unobserved and self-illuminated." (end of para 22z-def.3 (14v/39/23) 22.3.256)

PB: "If it could be both that which is observed and the observer itself for a single second then surely the two mental conditions would instantly annihilate each other. The task is as hard and as foredoomed to failure as trying to look directly at one's own face. Thus the inherent impossibility of such a situation stands revealed. There is only one last hope for success in such a quest and that is to abandon all attempts to know it by the ordinary methods of knowledge. What would such an approach necessarily involve? It would involve two factors: first, a union of the personal "I" into the hidden observer, of which it is an expression, although the merger must not be so absolute as to obliterate the ego altogether; second, an abandonment of the intellectual method which breaks up consciousness into separate thoughts." (8z-path.3 (14v/44/63) 8.4.171)

(Q: quotes read again)

VM: That quote seems very disturbing because . . . given this unific mind--I'm using unific in the limited sense of the individual mind or outflowing of the soul--how does one account for that egotism, that false subjectivity. PB says that if that Witness consciousness and that apparent subjectivity were to get together, they would somehow annihilate each other. So that approach is foredoomed, you can't go that route. So what approach should you take, and then his answer seems to be a very mystical one. The first thing is to absorb, at least temporarily, that lower subjectivity into the higher. And also drop that demand

to find an intellectual, at least in the lower sense of intellectual, an intellectual understanding of this paradox.

RC: I would take this quote to mean you can't resolve it at the thought-series level, that you have to dip into the deeper consciousness that doesn't operate in terms of the thought-series. Otherwise you don't include the ego-thought in what's being objectified and consequently you can't really get (inaudible) of what you're trying to get at.

SD: . . . I think that what PB is referring to there is what's impossible is for a subject-object relationship in the ordinary sense to be brought back together. That an "I" could discursively know itself simultaneously is impossible, but I think what he indicates as the way to find the real observer, is in fact to, at least to some degree, merge that lower subjectivity back into its source.

LdS: . . . I thought he was speaking only of the higher mind there and saying that it couldn't be at once the observed and the observer, that it is self-illuminating, but that is not the same thing as splitting itself in two, and turning one aspect of itself into an object, and remaining also a subject.

AH: What is it that happens in one second in that quote . . .

PB: "If there is not to be an endless series of observers, which would be unthinkable, there must be an ultimate one, itself unobserved and self-illuminating." (repeat of above)

PB: "If it could be both that which is observed and the observer itself for a single second then surely the two mental conditions would instantly annihilate each other. . . . (repeat of above)

AH: Those two mental conditions are subjectivity and objectivity in the normal sense?

RC: Knowledge and error.

MB: I don't understand that answer to the question. I don't understand the sentence, first of all, "If it could be . . ." I don't even understand what he means by "it".

RG: The observer.

MB: The ultimate observer. "If the ultimate observer could be that which is observed and the observer for a single second . . ." then he's not talking about the ordinary subject and object.

VM: I don't think he is either.

AD: Can we try an example, a living example, one that we fall back on: dreaming. Vic, you're having the dream, and the dream is a series of thoughts, they're discontinuous, but there is a discontinuous continuity, one thought following upon the other. Dream Vic appears in the dream, and there's a problem that he's faced with, and he's thinking about the problem in the dream. Now we're saying that the dream itself is a series of thoughts, one following upon the other uninterruptedly. And there would be this way of looking at it I think that might help. Dream Vic has, or in some way, Vic's consciousness is, immanent in dream Vic's consciousness, and the one way that he can get to the hidden observer is by dream Vic identifying himself with his own subjectivity. If he attempts to get to the observer, that is the real Vic, through the thoughts that he's having in the dream, it would be hopeless.

The other problem would be: if dream Vic really had a consciousness of his own, and the real Vic had his own consciousness, and they confronted each other it would be sheer cancellation.

VM: Let me see if I understand it by restating it in slightly different language. You do have this higher subjectivity which is this all encompassing mind, within which this appearance and apparent subjectivity occur. Now it's impossible to effect the unification of those two apparently opposed positions through the lower route, in other words you can't make the unification occur on the level of, as PB calls it, intellectual thought, or conceptual thought, or discursive thought. If this unification is to occur it's by sublating or negating.

AD: But you see, it wouldn't be unification.

VM: No, it would be almost more like dissolution.

AD: It would be the cessation of dream Vic's identification with something external but identifying with the immanence of the consciousness that he thinks is his. The dream is a very good example because in the dream you can see that the consciousness which is immanent in dream Vic is identifying itself with the sensible appearance of a dream Vic, and thinks himself to be those thoughts. So that the thoughts, in a sense, now abrogate that consciousness to themselves and think of themselves as an independent "I" of the dreaming, of the real Vic who is having the dream.

VM: The question is what principle or what factor gives rise to the possibility of that limited identification of this larger consciousness with some fragment of the whole. In other words, how does one account for this mistake, this error? I don't want to steer off the wrong course.

AD: No, I don't think you're steering off . . .

VM: . . . Using the dream analogy . . . it is understandable how this one larger mind can give rise to an (inaudible) in opposition to the limited subject, but what principle in nature (does one have to bring in to explain this identification (inaudible))--the body?

AD: If it were a principle you'd make it a reality then.

VM: Yes, I guess it would have to be only an epiphenomenon or temporary occurrence, otherwise you would be doomed to that condition eternally.

AD: But isn't it also possible to conceive that insofar as we can conceive that there are thought processes, that within thought processes there is room for error, and this is the error that is being committed by the thought processes? (pause) And wouldn't this be the fundamental ignorance?

AH: Is that to say that any kind of dualism is ignorance? Any kind of split . . .

AD: There is no split here. There's no split. There is one mind functioning and there are grades within it, or stratification within it. There's no split.

AH: Then what is ignorance?

AD: Well, we just said that this primal possibility for thought to misconceive its own operation.

AH: Its own operation being exemplified by the normal subject-object consciousness?

AD: To take itself to be a subject! Thought takes itself to be the subject! It's usurped the light and now that light in conjunction with that thought takes itself to be the subject. There is the apparent "two minds."

AH: As the quote suggests, is that taking itself to be the subject, an attempt to solve the problem at that level there is an infinite regressiveness.

AD: Yes, it can only attack the problem by identifying itself with its subjectivity. Another example, perhaps, would be the mote which is passing through a sunbeam, and the mote is lit up, and this mote now takes itself to be light--it's lit up by the light, and takes itself to be an independent particle of light. That could be another example.

BS: Are you suggesting that the fundamental error is inherently in the efflux from the higher mind? If there is only one mind, and we really can't make the separation between a series of thoughts and it except by some discursive meaning, which may not be real...

AD: Let's stick to the analogy, because I think it's more picturesque . . . the dream analogy.

BS: . . . It would seem that the dream thoughts that appear as objective outside the subject that the dreamer has, and the dream subject would both be from this one mind. (paraphrase)

AD: Not the thoughts, let's concentrate on the subjectivity. The subjectivity or the consciousness which belongs to the dreamer is the same consciousness which is immanent in the dream subject. This consciousness which is immanent in the dream subject because it is associated or identified with the appearance of a dream Vic, then this dream Vic abrogates to himself the "I," and calls itself the "I".

BS: But that abrogation is what we're calling the error.

AD: But right now we're really concerned with trying to distinguish, and see, how this one consciousness cannot be divided into two subjects or into two minds.

JG: Please repeat that example of the dream.

AD: Vic is having a dream, and we're saying that the dream is a series of thoughts, which include, of course, the presentation of a dream Vic with the dream problems, or dream tables and chairs, et cetera. We're saying that the consciousness which belongs to the person who is dreaming, who has the dream, is immanent in the dream subject. It isn't that dream Vic and Vic are two different minds or two different consciousnesses. They are one and the same. PB suggests that if you want to get to the hidden observer, the dream subject identifies himself with his own subjectivity, his consciousness, and if he follows that through he will arrive at the Vic who is having the dream or the consciousness of the hidden observer. If dream Vic in the dream thinks that he can get to Vic's consciousness by DEBATING about it, by having thoughts about it, by conceptualizing about it, it will be a dead end. Just transpose that, translate that into modern wakeful consciousness.

AH: If the dream Vic looks out to any kind of object, the task is impossible . . .

AD: Yes, it can't be done.

AH: It can only be solved at the level of the subjective.

AD: Yes. When the dream Vic says, “Wait a minute, maybe I have a real Daddy upstairs somewhere” and he identifies himself with this consciousness which is immanent in dream Vic, and you have to go upstairs, he’ll find the hidden observer.

If you identify with the consciousness which is illuminating the thoughts that you refer to as the ego thoughts, if you identify with the Logos principle or consciousness within you and not with the thoughts, then you could trace back the genesis of this consciousness to its origin. This would be the hidden observer in you.

(hard to hear clarification of AH question)

AH: Could you say something about the line “for a single second . . . annihilation”? (paraphrase)

VM: I’ll read the lines again.

PB: “If there is not to be an endless series of observers, which would be unthinkable, there must be an ultimate one, itself unobserved and self-illuminated.” (repeat of above)

PB: “If it could be both that which is observed and the observer itself for a single second then surely the two mental conditions would instantly annihilate each other. . . .” (repeat of above)

AD: That would be the same as saying that if you conceive of dream Vic to have an ultimate consciousness, and Real Vic to have an ultimate consciousness, and they were objects to each other, there would be another cancellation.

VM: Can you say that again please?

AD: If you can conceive of dream Vic as (having--last word not heard on tape) a consciousness of its own, and the real Vic who is having the dream as having a consciousness of his own, then each would be object to each and each would be subject in its own right, that’s like having nothing.

LR: It’s impossible, right?

AD: It’s impossible, of course.

LR: He’s saying you can’t make an object out of the subject, for one thing. So he’s saying that the observer cannot also be the observed.

AD: Yes, and this is the same premise as in the Vedanta, that your ultimate consciousness is available for immediate perceptual usage but cannot in no way be objectified. (ref: *Tattvapradipika* (*Chitsukhi*)).

AH: So this is impossible?

AD: To objectify your own consciousness? Yes, it’s impossible.

AH: But he does suggest a way of dealing with it.

AD: Yes, and that was to identify with your own subjectivity and trace it to its origin. OK let’s go to the next one.

THE EGO IS DOOMED TO EVENTUAL DESTRUCTION

RC: This is from volume 4, vinyl, page 64, #100.

PB: “Being what it is, a compound of higher and lower attributes which are perpetually in conflict, the ego has no assured future other than that of total collapse. The Bible sentence, “A Kingdom divided against itself cannot stand,” is very applicable to it: this is why the aspirant must take heart that one day his goal will be reached, even if there were no law of evolution to confirm it--as there is.” (8z-diss.g (4v/64/100) 8.4.397)

VM: I’d like to see if I can state it slightly differently. I think PB is saying here that the ego, insofar as it’s a contemporary amalgam or composition of this appropriated light of the soul and this ignorance, or this propensity to take this reflected thought-series as true subject. Insofar as it’s this compound, this temporary compound, these two opposing principles or factors, then it’s doomed to eventual destruction. Because by its very nature it doesn’t have a certain ontic reality.

AH: These two factors . . . they’re being held together in a synthetic way, they can never be blended, they always remain separate . . . they can never be mixed, like oil and water.

DB: If I could just back up . . . We start out with the one illuminating mind, and from within that there is this production. At the end of this production, is the appearance of this ego-centered state of consciousness, which is a compound, we’re saying now, of on the one hand this illuminating mind’s power, and the consequence of that illuminating mind’s activity or unfoldment. Are those the two things of which the ego is a compound? He’s making a division of the lower and the higher here and I’m not real sure where the lower is coming from, with respect to the last couple of quotes.

(RC rereading)

PB: “Being what it is, a compound of higher and lower attributes which are perpetually in conflict, the ego has no assured future other than that of total collapse. . . .” (repeat)

AD: The ego is a compound. What do you expect? You want a commentary for 100 pages?

DB: No, I...

AD: All compounded entities must dissolve.

DB: Yes.

AD: Why go on any more? Read the next quote.

DB: I don’t understand what the two constituents of this compound are.

AD: Whatever they may be, as long as it’s a compound, it must disintegrate sooner or later.

DB: I’m not disputing that fact, I’m looking forward to it.

(Q: dissent in groans from the masses)

DB: Well I’m not but...

AD: None of us are.

DB: But I really don't understand now, within the context that he's laid out in the previous quote.

AD: That's not a previous quote, that's another quote. I like to stick to one quote at a time, that's the way I work, I explained it to Randy, I explained it to everybody. One sentence is all I work, I do not assume there is a continuity between one thing and another.

DB: OK.

AD: No murkiness. He made that very clear, that these are single singular ideas, each one standing on its own leg. I like the discussion to continue, so when I say, go on, let's please continue, because a certain amount of information has to be made available to you before you get a big picture. That's false. Let's try some more quotes.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE AS THOUGHTS; EGO AS FIXED AND INERT; ABIDE IN THE NOW, LET THE IMAGES GO; PB ANECDOTE ABOUT MYSTIC VS. PHILOSOPHER

PB: "To deny himself is to refuse to accept himself as he is at present. . . ."

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0922a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

PB: ". . . which normally constitute the ego." (see below)

RC: Volume 4, page 64, #101.

TL: Can you reread that please?

PB: "To deny himself is to refuse to accept himself as he is at present. It is to become keenly aware that he is spiritually blind, deaf, and dumb and to be intensely eager to gain sight, hearing, and speech. It is to realize that nearly all men complacently mistake this inner paralysis for active existence. It is restlessly to seek the higher state, the nobler character, a more concentrated mind: it is to be willing to withdraw from all that accumulation of memories and desires which ordinarily constitutes the ego." (2b-ren.g (4v/64/101) 2.7.1.)

AH: Is this state described as inner paralysis, is that the state of the ego?

RC: That's it.

AH: So the ego state of existence is mistaken for active existence, which in this quote would refer to an ego-free existence.

DB: I thought that what he was saying was that ordinary man's active state is that inner paralysis; it is a consequence of that inner paralysis. He's saying there, the last quote seems to be saying the ego is constituted of these memories and desires. Now, starting out with the notion of our ordinary state as being spiritually deaf, dumb and blind, it seems the fundamental point around which the ego is structured by these desires and memories and so forth is the fact of not knowing what it is or who it is. That's the underlying presupposition of the ego's life. And as a consequence it attaches itself to these desires, and builds up these memories and feels very much at home with it. Now is that the sense we're getting from

this? Like the inner paralysis is the presupposition of the ego, its total unawareness of itself, and because of that we have these thoughts, memories, desires, and so on. Or is it the other way around?

RC: I think of it as taking myself as being this compounded entity that has to constantly be sustained. Particularly all of its lower and biological desires are trying to sustain a continual state of dissolutionment as a certain desperate state of paralytic grasping that it needs as a substrate. If I take myself to be that, then I am spiritually deaf, dumb, and blind. .

DB: I was thinking of it differently. But it's perhaps beside the point. But it seems like each one of the desires, memories and so forth that one might have, offers an identity of sorts. Like you have a desire for a motorcycle. So you say " Oh well, I'm the one that wants this motorcycle," and so your identity is established until the next thought . . . Starting out with this paralysis, this unawareness, there's a response, there's this passive acceptance of these thoughts. Do you see what I'm . . .

AH: David, I think you're suggesting a distinction between the ego as paralysis, or the ego as being paralyzed.

DB: Right.

AH: Now if it's the ego being paralyzed by its identity with these thoughts and memories, that's one thing. But if the ego itself is the state of paralysis he's describing, that's another thing. I would guess that this quote has the flavor of its being the first case. The ego itself is that state of paralysis?

JG: Would you mind reading it one more time?

AD: Maybe you can get a feeling for that if you read from the volume that you gave me Randy, remember you bracketed two things, on the fourth or fifth page?

RC: Volume 11 that you went through today?

AD: Do you see a bracket mark on one of the pages--I don't remember what page it was on--it might be further down, further on. Where he speaks about the ego. Or he speaks about our experience of ourselves at this present moment, in a little while we'll be in the past, and if we can see that in the past it was an idea, we should be able to recognize that now in the present it's an idea?

RC: OK, page 17, Orange 11.

PB: "If we analyse the ego, we find it to be a collection of past memories retained from experience and future hopes or fears which anticipate experience. If we try to seize it, to separate it out by itself, we do not find it to exist in the present moment, only in what has gone and what is to come. In fact, it never really exists in the *NOW* but only seems to. This means that it is a phantom without substance, a false *idea*. (8b.4 (11g/17/5) Persp. p. 101 & 8.2.14)

PB: "Let him examine himself and see how his ego leads the whole troop of other faculties or hides among them for refuge, asserts itself or deludes him. If it can perpetuate its hold through grandiose vanity, it will parade its highly magnified virtues and make him sticky with smugness; if through humility, it will over-emphasize his sad crew of faults, and make him neurotically self-centered and morbid." (8d.a (11g/17/6) 8.3.49)

PB: "If the ego can trick him into deviating from the central issue of its own destruction to some less important side issue, it will certainly do so. Its success in this effort is much more common than its failure. Few escape being tricked. The ego uses the subtlest ways to insert itself into the thinking and life of an aspirant. It cheats, tricks, exalts, and abases him by turns, if he lets it. Anatole France wrote that it is in the ability to deceive oneself that the greatest talent is shown. It is a constant habit and an instinctive reaction to defend his ego against the testimony of its own activity's unfortunate results. He will need to guard against this again and again, for its own powers are pathetically inadequate, its own foresight conspicuously absent." (8d.4 (11g/17/7) Persp. p. 100 & 8.3.82)

PB: "When it is declared that the ego is a fictitious entity, what is meant is that it does not exist as a real entity. Nevertheless, it does exist as a thought." (8b-est.a (11g/17/9) 8.2.32)

DD: The ego as we've talked about it seems to be a kind of conspiracy. We've depicted the conspiracy, and I can sort of get a sense of that. Why should the conspiracy perpetuate. What directs it, what sustains it? How does it continue deluding, out of its own power, out of some... It's the continuing of it that bothers me most, that's . . .

AD: And that's the whole idea. That's the whole idea.

LR: That it bothers you?

AD: It's got to bother you. It's got to become a sore. (last word hard to hear)

AH: But if its continuance is assured because it doesn't exist in the now, if it doesn't exist in the now then it's got to exist in the past or the future. By definition it's going to continue because it stretches time out for us as well as other things. It stretches our sense of personal life into a sequence of past, imagined present, and future.

AD: But the point, the point is, in that remark is to let you look at it in this metaphysical way. If you recall a memory or some experience that you went through or had in the past, and you recognize that it is only now an idea, a memory, a thought, the thing that he's asking you to recognize is that now, while it is happening now, it is still just a thought. And if you could transpose that understanding, that all things are thoughts, then the present intense moment is de-evaluated to some extent.

AH: In remembering an event in the past, I am able to receive it in my memory as a thought. If I was able to perceive the event as happening.

AD: At that time when you had something happen to you and it is just now a thought, you see that it was happening to you, the subject was a thought, and what it was experiencing was a thought. Alright, you follow that? In other words you see that the subject and the object were both included under the notion of thought. Then what makes you think that the very present moment that you're experiencing something is other than thought?

LR: Are you going to respond to that or can I? The problem for me seems to be, that if , when the ego is defined this way, as a series of habits perpetuating themselves, one moment to the next, and PB's designed a series of exercises to help us to extract ourselves from that thought series, I can follow, conceptually, what that's doing and what that definition of the ego is. It seems that in the extraction from

that habitual series of thoughts, it's hard for me to understand how then one could experience anything temporal. Anything that partakes of that kind of momentary existence, seems to require egoity. And I have a difficult time understanding how one could remain within that temporal patterning--one thought following another--and yet not be in the ego. Because whenever I'm following those exercises it seems like you're either here or you're not. I can't even conceive of hearing anything if you're not...

NH: I'm having the same problem, it seems that if anyone is to stop functioning with an ego, they would also have to stop functioning of being with a body . . . Because you have to exist in the moment to moment pattern in order to function in the world.

RC: We're still oriented toward trying to get at this notion of the paralysis and it's taken as a state of active existence, and contrasting that paralysis to a state of active existence.

AH: That state of active existence, I don't think requires canceling out the body or the world, but Linda's question, or my question, it may require canceling out our notion of time and space.

AD: No, no, no, no, no. You're going away from what he's talking about. Randy returned you to the point. What is this paralysis and what is the actor? If we say that the ego is one thought followed upon by another, then each thought would have a fixed content, wouldn't it?

LR: Yes.

AD: Then that fixed content would be paralyzed. In other words if you take a film and you project it on a screen, the contents of one still is fixed. And if you think of that one still as the ego-thought for that instant, alright, and then the next instant you have another still, and there the ego-thought is again fixed and its contents are fixed, again you have paralysis and inertia. And following one upon the other you have this situation, right? Then what is the active, if that's inertial and paralyzing, what would be the active? Wouldn't it be the light that's illuminating that? Those stills?

RC: And the intelligence that's forming it.

AD: Yes, by light here I mean intelligence.

S: But...

AD: You follow what I said first? And now if I could answer Nancy, you're not being asked to stop functioning in the world, you're just asked to stop identifying with that inertial context. You are being asked not to identify with that context, the content that is fixed.

LrD: In other words you have to try not to appropriate these images that you're identified with. You have to get away from that identification with the images and go back to that unific consciousness.

AD: Yes, alright. Although it seems that whenever you take flowing water out of the brook and put it in the glass, it never seems to be the same water.

RC: It may be appropriate to reiterate a quote that we read before, in this context or part of one. This state that we're talking about of active existence . . .

PB: “. . . This is not to be confounded with the idle drifting, the apathetic inertia of shiftless, weak people who lack the qualities, the strength, and the ambition to cope with life successfully. The two attitudes are in opposition.

“The true aspirant who has made a positive turning-over of his personal and worldly life to the care of the impersonal and higher power in whose existence he fully believes, has done so out of intelligent purpose, self-denying strength of will, and correct appraisal of what constitutes happiness. What this intuitive guidance of taking or rejecting from the circumstances themselves means in lifting loads of anxiety from his mind only the actual experience can tell. It will mean also journeying through life by single degrees, not trying to carry the future in addition to the present. It will be like crossing a river on a series of stepping-stones, being content to reach one at a time in safety and to think of the others only when they are progressively reached, and not before. It will mean freedom from false anticipations and useless planning, from vainly trying to force a path different from that ordained by God. It will mean freedom from the torment of not knowing what to do, for every needed decision, every needed choice, will become plain and obvious to the mind just as the time for it nears. For the intuition will have its chance at last to supplant the ego in such matters. . . .” (Persp. p. 226 & 18.4.145, full para begins “The unfulfilled future . . .”)

LR: I guess my question is, I guess I can't see how it's possible from what Anthony said, to grasp a content without fixing it in some way. I know there's a mistake there but I don't see how that's possible.

RC: I think we have to go back to what we were trying to get to in the second quote we worked on tonight. We were talking in terms of operating responsively to a consciousness that doesn't break these up into this thought series the way the ego does. It seems that at the level of the ego, it is going to remain impossible for us to understand it. He says in this quote that I just read is that what living this way means in lifting loads of anxiety only the experience itself will tell.

LR: I follow the idea of not living out something in the past or not anticipating the future, which is to say, just apprehend the present at any given moment. It's just the present that you're focused on. But the question still remains, following that same thread, how is it possible to apprehend a content without in some way fixing it.

AD: Well Linda, I'm pointing out that the fixed content is exactly what he's speaking about as paralysis.

LR: I know. I can't follow how it is possible to see a content or entertain any content without in some way doing that to it, fixing it, because how else does the mind grasp without doing that to some extent.

RC: When you're listening to music and you're really listening, and you're with each measure as it moves, and you're not somewhere else, it seems that your mind is moving responsively, with that music in the present moment. The moment you realize I really like this, or I don't like that, and start adding a commentary, it seems that you've broken, that the link has been broken.

LR: I can follow the example of music, but I can't listen to music all the time.

AD: You want to try again Linda? If the I is associated with a fixed content then you are in a state of paralysis, you follow that?

LR: Um-hm.

AD: If the “I” is not identified with it then you have a free flow. I’m just trying to understand and explain what he’s saying about being in the state of inertia and being in the state of creativity, or free, freedom.

LR: Now, if you were to speak from that point of view of the free flow, is that possible, aren’t you fixing something every time you’re saying it? Can you operate from that point of view of the free flow, and still be talking? Because aren’t your very words trying to fix a content?

AD: Is that what we’re talking about? What are we talking about? Can we go back to the quote?

RG: We’re talking about the identification with the thing, right? Not the form of the thing.

AD: Ask him to reread that quote.

(Q: Randy rereads)

PB: “It is to realize that nearly all men complacently mistake this inner paralysis for active existence.”
(repeat of 2.7.1)

AD: Now, what could that be referring to?

RC: Maybe I should actually read what comes first.

PB: “To deny himself . . . is to realize that nearly all men complacently mistake this inner paralysis for active existence.” (from 2.7.1)

RG: If you take the example of the film projector and each frame of the film is that fixed content. Now, the light of the projector shines through each frame. It seems when each frame takes itself to be the light also, then there is a paralysis, and you take yourself to be that fixed content. But if you could take the standpoint of the light, you would see the contents flowing. You could talk within the contents but you would see it, it would be an objective act, it wouldn’t be a subjective identification.

AD: That’s good.

NH: Doesn’t that identification with the light demand that the individual frame be broken down as well?

RG: No, the individual frame, in a movie film, the film just keeps going on. The light shines and the film goes on, on the screen. It doesn’t demand that each frame be broken down. All it means is that the light doesn’t take itself to be the frame, but can stand back as the light and watch the film play.

NH: But that frame still exists, and if the frame is the ego then the ego must be continuing.

AD: The frame is gone. The next instant there’s another frame.

RG: And that whole series of thoughts is the ego, and it’s the identification of the light with each frame, to create the sense of continuity that gives the identification.

VM: We can go back to the dream analogy. I think almost everyone has had that experience of being perpetually awake. It doesn’t make the dream stop, but that limited identification with the fears, concerns, anxieties, and so on of that embodied dream subject that goes chasing around in the dream, that really is diminished, but the dream still continues.

NH: But when you have that awareness that you're dreaming, then you aren't dreaming.

AD: No, he's saying suppose you had that awareness. The point here is the same thing like Dickie says, if the light insists on identifying itself with a content of one of the frames then you've got "death." If the light doesn't identify with the contents of any frame, it flows smoothly.

LR: I follow it.

AD: You do, well now apply it.

LR: Well, that's what my question is.

AD: No, no, this is your doing. This is what you DO.

AH: It's easy enough to see that in the case of the frame there is someone who identifies, but in the case of the light--

AD: In the case of you and I?

AH: No, in the case of the light, who is it that identifies?

(Q: grumblings of dissent from the masses)

AD: In the case of you and I, who is it that's identifying with the image that's in your mind now?

S: The ego?

AH: Can I ask the question again? I don't know what you're talking about. In the case of the frames that identified with the light, as Dickie's described it, each individual frame usurps the light for itself. It's easy enough then to talk about a content and someone who identifies with it...

AD: Yeah, and then you also have to talk about a light which is entombed in that frame.

AH: Now, describe the process of disidentification, where the light doesn't entomb itself.

AD: It means to let the images go. Let them fly. Don't hold them.

AH: But what is there of my experience that isn't entombed in that frame?

AD: I don't understand your question.

AH: What aspect of my experience could I point to as not being part of that tomb?

AS: The light.

RG: That which knows.

AD: You, you, use the word, simple, YOU.

S: How could the frame identify with the light?

HS: How could the light identify with the frame?

RG: The light does not identify with the frame.

LD: You just said it did.

RG: No, the frame takes itself to be the light.

(more student comments)

AD: Thoughts take themselves to be the consciousness.

RG: Consciousness never takes itself to be the thoughts.

BS: Why not?

AD: Can you give me an instance?

RG: If it could then it wouldn't be conscious, it would be ignorant.

BS: . . . Could you tell me the way out, if it wasn't the consciousness that identified with the thoughts but it was the thought which is a fabrication to start with...

AD: If the consciousness identified with the thoughts, yeah, Bert, then you would be saying the Overself is identifying with the ego, these thoughts, and therefore now the Overself is the ego.

RG: Right, the Overself is ignorant and is therefore at one point not conscious.

BS: I didn't say it is the ego.

AD: But these are the consequences of what you're saying.

RG: If for one moment the consciousness ever took itself to be the content, it then would be ignorant, and could never have its reality again. For one second.

BS: Couldn't you take the opposite line, too: if you have this fixed, inert frame, minus the consciousness or light, how could something that is not conscious attribute consciousness to itself? (paraphrase)

RG: That's the point--your example could never be, there could never be the frame minus the light. There would just be dark. If there is no projection of light through the film there's no content--just darkness. Light is always shining. (paraphrase)

BS: So the light is always identified with it . . .

AS: No, the light is always shining, but that doesn't mean that the thoughts are always identified with the light. You could imagine another case--the frame is lit up, but not as if it were a subject--rather, as a content. So the world can appear, even when there is not a false identification of content and subjective consciousness. (paraphrase)

LR: And that's right at the point that I was asking: all those descriptions, we're describing the observer of those stills, frames of the film, and the notion always seems to be to take the point of view of the light which is lighting them up. In the same way you're not to identify with any past memories, or future anxieties, or anything like that, and it's constantly pointing to the observer, the light, that's doing all this, and that's the point of view that the exercises bring out. (hard to hear)

My question is, how is it possible to be the observer . . . how can you JUST be the observer of all that and also participate, do anything?

AD: DO IT AND FIND OUT. All the great ones have testified to its possibility.

LR: I'm not denying that it's possible. I'm asking . . . about the actual experience.

RC: A Lama that was here spoke a little about it. He said for most people you have a choice; you can operate at the conventional level or operate at the ultimate level, and being in one means you're not in the other. And they say, that it's only when you reach the state of Buddhahood, that you can operate simultaneously at both levels.

VM: She's asking how do you maintain Sahaja.

RC: Basically, yes.

LR: I don't think I'm going to Sahaja.

AD: We recognize that the exercise is carried on by the ego, in the ego, for the ego, we recognize all that. But the thing is to do it, it's going to be theoretical unless you do it.

LR: So why are we discussing the quote?

AD: So that I could point that out.

(Q: laughter among the masses)

AD: You'll see that even if you do simplest mantram after awhile it goes on by itself. And you say, "How could that be, I'm not even paying attention to it."

LR: That's not the question.

AD: You could be observing it and it's going on by itself.

LR: So you observe yourself going on by yourself?

RG: Yeah.

NH: Well, we said that the ego consists of a past and a future. If that's so then someone who has abolished the ego, still has to exist, that person has had past experiences and is going to continue to experience things in the world.

EM: I don't think they abolish the ego, they abolish the identity with the ego.

NH: Ok, then you have to say that it's a purified ego rather than an ego that's nonexistent. The ego still must be operating on some level in order for there to be a continuation of that consciousness, that individual consciousness.

RG: I think we've already established that the ego has to continue to operate. And in the example of the film, the film or the ego will still go on, but it will be seen as a thought and not as consciousness. To talk of abolishing it doesn't make any sense.

DD: You're saying as long as you have this light you'll have a presentation of images, that are illuminated. You can abolish egoity or an attachment to those images but you'll have a presentation of images if you have this light.

AD: That's going on, yes.

RC (Anecdote about PB): This may be a good point to bring in something that's not in the notes but I think is really important that applies here. PB told me that... it's very interesting the way he started out, maybe I'll try to recreate some of that. He started to say, he said, "I studied all the books, I met all the teachers, and I practiced all the meditations, and THEN I FOUND OUT what they all had to learn." And then he didn't say anything, so finally I asked him, "Were you meaning to just leave me hanging here?" "Hanging where?" So I reiterated what he said and he said "Oh yes, well what did you think I was going to say?" I said, "Well, I thought you were going to talk about the difference between the "Who am I" and the "What am I". He said, "Yes, precisely, it's the difference between the way the mystic reacts to an intuition and the way that a philosopher will react to the same intuition and it defines two entirely different paths of development."

There will be a break in a person's life when he realizes that the soul is not the body, that he is not the body, and he is not the desires associated with it, not the habits built into it and so on. Now he can react to that either by trying to escape it once and for all forever, and he'll become a mystic and he'll go through many lives possibly of development before he finally realizes that in principle that is not possible. And he may bring himself a great deal of pain before he finally realizes that despite what he does with his will, despite what techniques he tries to employ, he's trying to effect something which in principle, is not possible. Then he may react properly to that insight and ask, "Well, what is it then, and what does it mean to have a body?" When he begins to explore that objectively, knowing that he's not the body, that there is a side of the body that is worthy of contempt, and that there is a side of the body that is going to be the only means that you have of vision, that then he can begin philosophical development.

AD: In other words the recognition that the ego is part of the world's being comes upon you and you stop saying that it doesn't exist. Let's read a few more of the quotes Randy, a few more of the quotes you picked out.

CONSCIOUSNESS CAUGHT IN THE PSYCHE RESTRICTS ITSELF TO THAT PSYCHE AND TAKES ITSELF TO BE OTHER THAN ITS SOURCE

RC: This is one that you mentioned that you'd like to do. Volume 11, page 14, #30.

PB: "It is ludicrous if that part of the mind which is only within the personal consciousness, the ego, sets itself up to deny the Mind-in-itself--its own very Source. For the ego is shut in what it experiences and knows--a much limited area." (8e-lmt.g (11g/14/30) 8.1.103)

AD: I don't think they think it's so great so let's try reading it again.

PB: "It is ludicrous if that part of the mind which is only within the personal consciousness, the ego, sets itself up to deny the Mind-in-itself--its own very Source. For the ego is shut in what it experiences and knows--a much limited area." (repeat)

AD: That's pretty straightforward. If we go back to what we said that the ego is a bundle of thoughts, one thought, take one thought at a time, the light that suffuses through that thought is caught in that thought, that's your personal mind. That personal mind now denies its own source, and it's restricted by the scope of that thought within which it is encompassed. If you understand that you'll get an insight into what the ego is, instead of arguing with me.

RG: So in this sense you're almost saying ego is thought or equals thought, or the identification with thought.

AD: Well maybe something like that Dickie. Like that consciousness which is included in that thought for the momentary duration of its existence, and that considers itself as distinct from the source, and even different than the source. And the other point, again, is the restriction that the thought itself places on that consciousness, restricts it to its boundaries. You better read, pick out the ones you need.

DB: Anthony, could you please repeat what you just said.

AD: I can't hear with my eyes, David.

DB: Would you please repeat what you just said.

AD: We spoke of the ego as thought, a bundle of thoughts, an indefinite number of thoughts, a matrix of thoughts. Take one thought and the light suffuses-- now light is infinite, alright?--It suffuses that one thought. The light that's captured, or encompassed by that one thought is now what you call your personal mind, your ego.

DB: Right.

AD: This considers itself as distinct and other than the light from which it comes. And further it is restricted in scope, in comprehension, by the very boundaries of the thought within which it is encased.

DB: If I understood what you just said, it would be the

[Audio File 1982 0922a Ends]

[Audio File 1982 0922b Begins]

AD: Yes, your personal mind, yes.

DB: Ok, without the light, well in the first place you couldn't speak of the thoughts, but it's this conjunction of the light with that thought, now this is the problem I've always had with this. Is it being said that well, two problems. One is it that we're speaking of the thought identifying itself with the light and considering it then to be independent of the source of that light, or the light identifying itself with the thought and considering itself independent from its source.

RG: We've already said the former.

DB: Ok, now, please what do we mean by identification.

RG: How does the error arise there is that what you're asking?

DB: No.

AD: I thought that the better word was ‘suffuse’.

DB: OK.

AD: ‘Identification’ is not even conceivable in the analogy. It’s quite meaningless.

DB: Suffusion by the light of this thought. Ok, the consequence of that is this limited perspective which the thought has. Now, the suffusion seems to be one thing, and the consequent egoity seems to be something else.

RG: Yeah, the light shines, that’s the suffusion. And then the film strip takes itself to be the light, that’s the other part.

DB: And that’s not a problem for you?

RG: It’s a major problem. It’s no problem to my understanding of that. I don’t understand what’s so hard to understand about that point.

DB: Ok, we’ve got this thought, which requires this light, the light shines on the thought, all of a sudden out of any one of a number of things the thought might do, it takes itself to be . . .

RG: No, come on, isn’t it the most natural and the most logical thing in the world that the thing that lights up the content, that the content would really believe that it was? Without that light the content is nothing, of course it’s going to believe that it’s the light, how could it not? There’s nothing else it can do but take itself to be the light. Can you really think that when the light shines it up it could say “Oh, I’m not the light, without the light I wouldn’t even be here.” It’s inconceivable.

DB: That’s very well and good for you to say but I’m sorry I don’t understand it.

AD: Instead of using the word ‘thought,’ use the word ‘psyche’. Something in biology. Any living organism, if it had infused within it consciousness, would think that it is that consciousness. You have to go to living, vital analogies because it wouldn’t work with a machine, like even a computer. Although I know some people would disagree, a computer doesn’t have any self-identity in this way. But a living psyche, which had consciousness suffusing it would take itself to be a subject. We’re not discussing any other issues, anything else here is a side issue. We only want to stick to point that is being made in this particular sentence. Let’s continue, Randy.

THE EGO GETS IN ITS OWN WAY AND SHUTS OUT THE TRUTH; PROPER ADJUSTMENT BETWEEN EGO AND OVERSELF BRINGS ENLIGHTENMENT

RC: More of the same or something different.

AD: From the same volume, you got a lot of nice stuff with stars there.

PB: “The ego gets in its own way and shuts out the truth. It is so immersed in itself that it sees nothing else than its own views, its own opinions. And this is true even when it apparently undergoes a mental change or an emotional conversion, for in the end *it is the ego itself*, which sanctions the newly accepted idea or belief.” (8z-blk.a (11g/16/7) 8.4.90)

AD: Aren’t you gonna applaud? I told you PB deposited the University of Nalanda right here in your lap.

PB: "The ego stands in the way: its own presence annuls awareness of the presence of the Overself. But this need not be so. Correct and deeper understanding of what the self is, proper adjustment between the individual and the universal in consciousness, will bring enlightenment." (8e-k.a (11g/16/8) 8.4.369)

RC: I think we can apply that very practically. In terms of the way that we've spoken about the natal chart if we wanted to go that way.

LC: First he said that you are going to choose to eliminate and then it is going to be done by the ego anyhow, and the ego is going to sanction that . . . The ego is saying, "Oh yeah now I know something." But he's saying there is a proper adjustment that can be made. This proper adjustment, are we to infer then that this is something that it has to be something that's not made by the ego but has to be made some place else? The adjustment had to be made by other than the ego.

VM: I think the adjustment is made in the ego. But remember a couple of weeks ago, how do you know when a spiritual transformation has taken place, and it's not just some trick of the ego? And one of the formulas if you like, we can't reduce it to formulas, but one of the hallmarks of a genuine transformation is that the ego is seen to be less significant. It is more of a humiliation than an aggrandizement.

DB: I think he said you could tell when you don't feel good about yourself.

VM: So if it is more of a humiliation than an aggrandizement then you know that something really useful has happened, instead of some form of ego inflation.

AD: There is a very strange thing--there's one of the quotes there he speaks about ultimately it's the ego that enjoys nirvanic bliss, only after its been crucified. You have that one?

RC: I couldn't put my hand on it.

AD It's in that collection.

NH: So the ego should only be spoken of as an enemy only until you get to a certain point.

AD: If you say it's an enemy you speak like a mystic.

RC: If you say it's an other but an intimately needed tool.

NH: You have to get to a certain point to be able to talk about it that way, otherwise you'd just be glorifying the ego.

RG: I thought we made a distinction between ego and egotism. The ego itself is not the enemy but egotism. At every level, any level.

RC: Specifically, my natal chart, to a certain extent is keeping me from seeing other things. But, in another way, in so far as I can see the operation of some of the same universals in myself, then I can recognize some of the same universals operating in another person's chart...

NH: Could we go over a little about what egotism is as opposed to the ego?

AD: No we'll stick to the quotation here, it'll come up again.

MB: Randy, what was the number of the last quote you read? "The ego gets in its own way . . ." That one.

RC: Volume 11, page 16, second from the bottom, Orange.

LC: I still want to know how you make that proper adjustment.

RC: That's why I was saying, I think we could talk about it very specifically in terms of tool we use a lot in the astrology. In so far as I can see Mars operating in me, like sometimes it has happened that I'll have a certain transiting aspect that I don't have natally, and in almost simultaneously with recognizing what's happening to me, I realize that person that I know that has this aspect natally has to live with this all the time. Or gets to live with this all the time, however it may be. That you can see how on the one hand you've got a specific chart, you've got certain built in tendencies, but you can also experience aspects which don't belong to you all the time, the way a natal chart does. You can make some contact with the universal, you can start to know something about Mars...

LC: Or you begin to see the objectivity of it?

RC: Right, or about Venus, or about a square, it's really not just a personal thing. And you can see how your own personality is constituted by these universals. And specifically in terms of PB I think he talks about it in terms of when this development begins to take place, the ego itself actually begins to have more respect for other people and for other people's needs.

LG: This is all sitting there within in that consciousness. Like all that is going on within that paralyzed moment. That's not trying to objectify those activities in the psyche. And not being directed as the consciousness. You know, it's a weird thing, it's of utmost necessity and you have to do that and it's somehow . . .

RC: Anthony has given the example a number of times of how with anything the ego enjoys you immediately fill it up with "I want that again." Or if it doesn't enjoy you immediately have "I don't ever want to go through that again." You can see there's little moments of paralysis when something comes along that even vaguely resembles what you think it's going to be than you just stop looking and you go into that paralysis.

LG: Well, it's a loosening of the knot.

EGO AS SOURCE OF COUNTERFEIT ILLUMINATION, CAN JUSTIFY ANYTHING

AD: Read a few more Randy. Read about how the ego provides even the spiritual path and the spiritual. I like that one. I could listen to that all night.

RC: Page 5, Orange 11, #33.

PB: "The ego not only obligingly provides him with a spiritual path to keep him busy for several years and thus keeps him from tracking it down to its lair; it even provides him with a spiritual illumination to authenticate that path. Need it be said that this counterfeit illumination is another form of the ego's own aggrandizement?" (8z-sp.4 (11g/5/33) Persp. p. 99 & 8.4.321)

LR: I think the ego must be pretty brave if it can do that. I think that's really attesting to incredible, it's certainly not diminishing the ego in any way.

AD: We're not trying to demise the ego anyhow, we're trying to understand it. We're going to take a philosophic stand toward it. We don't want to be naive like the mystics who keep trying for incarnations upon incarnations to get rid of their ego, in spite of the fact that a philosopher tells them you can't, they really have to learn the hard way that they can't. So then we begin to approach the fact that it has to be understood, what its purposes are, what it's for, it's all part of the World-Idea. Let's get into it, let's investigate. Don't tell me it's illusory, I know it's an idea, it's a thought.

MB: Are we saying that this quote talks about the ego providing the long path, or that the ego provides a fake path.

AD: The ego can do both. It can provide you with a long path, short path, fake path. It will make you think that you are the noblest, you remember--noble Buddhist. It can justify anything.

RC: It almost seems like if you're operating in terms of a horizontal development than it's necessarily provided by the ego. And it is only those times when you are actively engaged in something where you're trying to penetrate to a deeper level beneath the presuppositions that you are currently operating with.

AD: Yeah, than you're bringing in grace and you're bringing in something higher.

RC: Exposing your presuppositions to a more rational consciousness, only then is there is any chance of it actually being a spiritual path and not a power trip.

VM: Another way of saying it would be, psychology without a philosophic understanding is a way of the ego perpetuating its own dominance . . .

LR: Would you say the way you knew that you were on the right path was you felt lousy every time you left the place?

S: "Oh boy we got it!!! We got the right path!"

MELANCHOLY AND DESPAIR ARE EGOTISTICAL; THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGATIVE FORCES REACTING VIOLENTLY TO A SUCCESSFUL CONTEMPLATION

RG: No, no, the ego will make you morose as well.

AD: Read the quotation you showed me about melancholy and depression just as . . . Wiggle it as much as you want you're going to get into a corner and you're going to realize you're going to have to think and reason your way out.

LR: (inaudible)

RC: I don't know where this is from . . .

PB: ". . . When he realizes that even despair is egotistical, he will realize that it is not only the so-called evil passions that have to be curbed but also the depressive and melancholy emotions. . . ." (23.3.73, partial para, begins (*Dark Night*))

AD: So you got no way, you got no guarantees that if you're in a depressed state you're on the right path.

DB: But depression is so righteous.

RC: Did we do that quote that's longer on the same thing basically, that it can bring joy, oh yeah we did that tonight, ok . . . I like this one a lot . . . I don't know where this is from.

PB: "When the ego contemplates the Overself with perfect attention, there is dismay in hell but joy in heaven." (23c.a (4v/104/20) 23.7.6)

RC: I think you could really draw this one out in a sense. You can see as you go through this material that there is a part of you that gets real happy, and there's another part of you that gets real upset. You can decide which one's going to use you most.

AH: You can tell if you're still operating from the point of view of the ego if you're happy or if you're sad.

(Q: laughter, for above & following comments)

AS: Or anything in between.

RC: Or neither, or both.

AD: Is, is not, both, neither.

DD: What does he mean by dismay in hell? Is that poetic?

RC: I think it's literal. This whole arena of within the ego that we talk about, within the image making faculty of this desperate little creature, who is always defending himself against exposure, always coming up with alibis. It is a self- created hell. For the real person to say no way, there is a much more rational way of being, I think the little guy really feels like the jig is just about up. Let's you get away with it for a minute then they get you out to eat some ice cream, and get one of the kids yelling and get you mad.

HS: When you say real person what do you mean, the Overself?

RC: Call it the real "I". I don't know that there is a better word for it. Like PB with the secret of the "I" exercise, if you could really plumb to what you mean when you say "I," to really strip it of the associations that you have. [Note: See Paul Brunton, *The Quest of the Overself*.]

HS: That would be the real or the rational person?

RC: In terms of his topography, I think that's what we try to do every time we put up this chart and try to understand how the individual soul gets built and comes into the system of nature, we really try to talk about its topography and we try to show that there is a level of the "I" that corresponds to every level of the intelligible experience.

HS: Different "I," or a different level of the "I"?

RC: I think there are many levels at which we experience the "I," and all of those levels, one by one get subsumed under the ego, and as soon as we know them, and we can say that's me or my reality and so on, then the ego is growing and including them somehow.

HS: So in that context then, with the ego growing, you would say there is a proper growth available to the ego. You want to head to the real person, or you want the real person to show up, as it were, to come forth.

RC: We're talking about a proper balance between the universal and the individual in consciousness, and to me that is a real person.

HS: And then the example you used for the universal was a working knowledge of astrology.

RC: Well, I just said that given that we do that a lot it seems like that's an easy way to talk about how can you say you're balancing the individual and the universal in your consciousness.

HS: You can see the principle working through.

RC: You can see Herbie's got a Mars, but he sees that other people's Mars operate differently, and it becomes available to him to see that Mars is something different than the way that you use it.

HS: And that knowledge there you would say belongs to who?

RC: Again, for lack of a better word, I'd say the real person.

HS: You would say the real person.

RC: Yeah, that knowledge.

AD: I also would like to add sometimes the "dismay in hell," when a contemplation is successful, is the accumulation of negative forces around you, and they will react violently. So in the case of some very advanced mystics who are contemplating, there could be, all hell could break loose outside, all around, above and below them.

CdA: What do you mean "around"?

AD: It's around.

CdA: But they themselves are not experiencing it?

AD: No, they're not experiencing it, not if it's a successful contemplation, then they're excluded from all that. There could be everything going around, thunder, lightning, Indians could be on a war path, anything could be going on.

CdA: (inaudible) . . . other people that are around . . .

AD: Yes, sure, negative thoughts can become operative.

LR: But the opposite also; it could rain, like it could rain for forty days if it's not (been) raining.

RG: Which is the "heaven rejoices" part.

LR: Yes.

AD: Either way.

JG: I don't get anything, what's going on?

AD: Well, Johanna if you sit down and meditate real intensely, and you get a successful meditation you may find your kids start screaming, the dog barks, your husband complains, the landlord knocks on your door--you know all these things could start happening. And all you're doing is simply meditating quietly.

JG: Are you serious now?

AD: Yes, I'm very serious. Someone might even come and hold you up.

(Q: 1 minute of many people talking at once)

DD: The images that are presented, these images are both based on past experience, memories, desires, and also are suggested by negative forces, or negative . . .

AD: No, I don't understand, Dennis, what you mean. You say the images are being suggested to you. Who's the "you" you're referring to?

DD: The ego. In other words, I used the term before conspiracy. How would ego seduce, how are we seduced by the ego.

AD: (hard to hear) When you're going to do what? When you're trying to meditate, or?...?

DD: Just in general.

AD: Oh, you're still back with that uh, conspiracy that's going on?

DD: Yeah. That bothers me.

AD: It should bother you. It should bother all of us. But it's always going on. It lays its plans and strategies.

DD: Are we wide open? If we're not vigilant are we wide open to images that are not of our own making?

AD: Oh yes, very easily that could be incorporated into your stream very easily. Very often negative influences will come to you through others and (inaudible) . . . your environment.

RC: You read that, in the very beginning when we started working on the notes, you read that paper about the tests and trials. So when the person has actually reached the stage of becoming an adept these forces can't get him from within, they will attack him through other people.

AD: They will come from outside. They could present themselves in a variety of ways.

RC: I think that's why a lot of them became hermits. It was actually an act of compassion.

AD: But even there you get attacked. You remember poor St. Anthony in the desert? . . .

RC: Yeah, but at least he didn't have other people dragged in and have them lend their bodies to it. (and inaudible student comments)

AD: Let's read a few more. Come on, we got to build up background, we got to get familiar with this person we are.

IMPORTANCE OF CRITICISM; PB NOTES PROVIDE A 360-DEGREE VIEW OF THE EGO; IMITATION OF GOD

RC: Ok, well, this is a light one, but it's worth reading. I don't know where it's from.

PB: "A sincere aspirant will not only expect criticism, he will demand it." (6e-crit.2 (6v/25/133b) 6.5.262)

PB: "He should develop the sense of self-criticism to a high and even painful degree. He cannot any longer afford to protect his ego, as he did in the past, or to seek excuses for its sorry frailties and foolishnesses." (4d-se.a (6v/26/134) 4.4.121--note only the last part of this was read in class.)

AD: I told you a story, I remember many many years ago PB handed a few of us a sheet of paper, he says "I want you to put criticisms down about me." "Criticize you?" Some of them did, they handed (him/in) long lists. He looked at them afterwards, "Cross some out there." (laughter)

RG: Can we try that? (more laughter)

RC: Here's an encouraging one. This is volume 11, page 18, #19.

PB: "However badly we all reflect the Overself in the personality, however tiny broken and distorted the reflected image usually is, still it *is* a reflection. It is within the capacity of all to make it a better one, and within the capacity of a few to make it a perfect one." (8e-eph.a (11g/18/19) 8.1.129)

DB: One more time.

PB: "However badly we all reflect the Overself in the personality, however tiny broken and distorted the reflected image usually is, still it *is* a reflection. It is within the capacity of all to make it a better one, and within the capacity of a few to make it a perfect one." (repeat of 8.1.129 above)

RC: The one about the mind of the perfect man, he's one of the few that has a perfect reflection of what's actually taking place.

AD: I think you'll see as you go through these notes, especially I'm picking on one topic, the ego. I think you'll see it's the most totally encompassing understanding that I've ever come across in any tradition. I just can't believe--it's like a circle around, you know, he's going to attack it from 360 degrees, and you're going to get to understand what the ego is. By hook or by crook, he's going to get you there.

RC: I wouldn't be taking this quote to be saying that it's within the capacity of a few to become omniscient, or to actually instantiate the whole of the soul in their personality, it's simply that they could actually see what's happening. They don't distort it, the intelligence which is creating the real now is what they perceive, their reflection (inaudible) is the perfect one.

LR: How is that different than the instantiation of the whole of the soul?

RC: Well, I think as long as we're talking in terms of reflection, the ultimate that we could be talking about, is in terms of the thought-series level. And I think he's saying that even at this thought-series level, you could be having an accurate, you could be operating at that level in conjunction with the World-Idea.

AD: That's why I consider it so important to align the conceptual understanding that you have with the doctrine as truthfully as it can be expressed. IT'S NO MINOR THING! If you notice, that's one of the reasons why I swear at Nagarjuna. Let's have a couple more from volume 11, Randy.

DB: Anthony, could I just ask one question about that last quote? It seems like there was a real parallel between the way he was speaking about that reflection of the Overself in the personality as becoming perfect. There seemed to be a real parallel between that development and the way Plotinus speaks of the Intellectual-Principle's relation to the One. That the IP [Intellectual-Principle] as an image of the One, its prior is so great that it stands as a reality, something like that. [Note: See Plotinus, VI.7.40, fourth para.] And it would seem like this development of the reflection, within the personality, is a temporalization of that same idea. I'm just asking if that's the case.

AD: That's the same thing in St. John, 16 or 17, something like that where he says "I am in thee as thou art in me." (Q: John 14:10) Or the way Jesus says, "Be perfect as thy father in heaven is perfect." (Q: Matthew 5:48) He's speaking about the perfection of the ego. It would be like your father in heaven. It's one of the consummate pinnacles of Platonic thought that ultimately you are to strive to achieve the imitation of God, not that you are God, but an imitation of God. And they used to call that THERAPIA. . . Things change. (laughter)

SEEING THE TENDENCY OF EACH THOUGHT TO APPROPRIATE THE LIGHT

RC: Volume 11, page 20, #38.

PB: "The ego is like a repression which must be dug out of the subconscious mind, seen and understood for what it is, and then let go until it vanishes, losing all its secret power thereby." (8c.g (11v/20/38) 8.3.2)

MB: Can you do that again please?

PB: "The ego is like a repression which must be dug out of the subconscious mind, seen and understood for what it is, and then let go until it vanishes, losing all its secret power thereby." (repeat 8.3.2)

AH: Perhaps the comparison with repression would be like in the way you might have a complex that causes you to behave in a compulsive way, and in order to stop behaving that way you have to dig it out and unravel it. The suggestion being the ego is behaving compulsively.

AD: That's what you're doing now, right Andrew? Like when we try to understand that within each thought, suffused with each thought there's this light, which has been associated with this thought. This thought now takes itself to be an "I," and that this becomes a proclivity, or tendency within thought, and that it repeats itself in every other thought. And that you have to get to this complex, you have to get to this actual tendency, and see it inherent in each and every one of your thoughts. Dig it out, bring it out in the open, confront it and run like hell. (laughter)

Randy made an interesting remark about this, he said he found this to be really a philosophic way of understanding the ego, not to be confused with psychology.

RC: That's basically the way PB treated the category, was that it was meant to present the philosophical perspective of the ego.

NH: (softly) In connection with that quote, it seems that to dig the ego out of the subconscious mind...

AD: You're talking to yourself.

NH: First you would have to separate the ego from the subconscious mind in order to dig it out of the subconscious mind?

AD: Well, that's what you're doing. That's what you're doing here and now. That's why I'm asking Randy to put us through this. Even if you don't dig it out, you'll know what it's about, where maybe you're located, if you keep, you know, using a pitchfork.

NH: Is that to say that the ego is different in the conscious mind than it is when it's operating in the subconscious mind?

AD: Well, in the conscious mind it's only like the tip of the iceberg, but its roots go all the way down. (pause) I'm happy to see all these happy faces, let's have a few more.

ON EXIT FROM NIRVIKALPA, THE EGO IS SEEN TO BE A SERIES OF THOUGHTS; MUST BE TRAINED NOT TO RE-APPROPRIATE THE LIGHT TO MAINTAIN PERMANENT ENLIGHTENMENT

RC: Here's another one on HOW you dig it out. Volume 11, page 21, #51.

PB: "The ability to discriminate between appearance and reality, between the false "I" and the true "I," is developed by subjecting the reports of the senses to the criticism of the intellect, by checking emotion with reason, by standing aside from all of these faculties with the intuition, and by diving deeper and deeper into one's essence in meditation." (20z-pd.a (11g/21/51) 20.3.81)

AD: He has another one there Randy where he says through meditation you can get to the hidden roots of the ego.

PB: "The deep realization of the unreality of ego leads at once to sudden enlightenment. But only if this realization is maintained can the enlightenment become more than a glimpse." (8z-cnre.g (11g/21/48) 8.4.442)

AD: Well, that wasn't the one but that's just as good.

RG: Could you read it with conviction Randy instead of posing it as a question?

RC: Same page, 21, #48.

PB: "The deep realization of the unreality of the ego leads at once to sudden enlightenment. But only if this realization is maintained can the enlightenment become more than a glimpse." (repeat of above, 8.4.442)

HS: When you read "unreality" there, how do you read that?

RC: Metaphysically unreal, that it's an ongoing epiphenomenon. The suitcase can go down on the train.

HS: Existentially real, but metaphysically unreal?

AD: You recognize its nature to be a thought.

HS: But again, it's not denial.

AD: It's not permanent. It's not permanently obvious. If you have a momentary nirvikalpa samadhi, where you're in a thought-free consciousness, the moment of exiting from it you recognize the unreality of the ego in the sense that you see it's just a series of thoughts. If you can hold on to that, and not be engulfed by the wake that the ego is going to confront you with, then you remain permanently enlightened.

HS: But you would come back though.

AD: But usually when you come back you're engulfed, you're taken in, the ego really embraces you with such loving warmth that you go right down to the pit again.

HS: You're saying the possibility for the entity to remain outside of the ego's stream even though there's like a re-entry into it?

AD: Yeah.

AH: What is that identity?

AD: The identity here that he's referring to is the fact that you recognize yourself to be this pure cognitive-ness, thought-free state of mind. That's not really identity, this is what you are.

AH: How do you hang on to a thought-free state of mind?

AD: Because you already have disciplined the ego, and so you can tell it what to do. If you haven't disciplined the ego, you will not be able to hold on to that native identity that you are.

NH: Does that mean that the Sage has to maintain constant effort?

AD: No, we said that if you already went through the discipline of putting the ego in its place, not making it tyrannize over you, making it a good servant, then you are prepared to hold on to the enlightenment. So for the Sage it wouldn't be an effort, it would be a constant state of affairs with him.

NH: So some of us who are not prepared enough would lose that hold.

AD: Most of us if we get a glimpse we're not ready for it and the moment the glimpse ceases we're right back inside the ego, and it has its way.

MB: What about the anxiety that arises after a glimpse like that? Is that the ego also?

AD: That's the ego, yes, making sure that you never go back there again, that was a really dark terrible hole.

MB: Because he makes this promise that this deep realization leads at once to sudden enlightenment. That's a pretty big . . .

AD: Sudden enlightenment simply means that you're free of the ego, and you're experiencing the mind in its thought-free state, the mind in its original condition. That's what that means. Enlightenment has to be

sudden, in that way. But now it's another story to maintain it, to hold on to that situation. It will depend on the prior discipline that the ego's been put through, and understanding. All these things are not necessary. You could have that enlightenment, it could endure for six months and then you lose it again. You could have it for a day, there's no way of telling.

HS: But in this way of speaking then the ego itself is so to say tamed, so it doesn't re-appropriate it, the light, as it comes in?

AD: You have to try to be explicit. Try again.

HS: In terms of the discussion, you were saying that sudden enlightenment is a shift towards a native identity beyond the continuum, the ego continuum. And now you're saying when the native identity shifts to come back into the continuum again . . .

AD: Herbie, if you're in a thought-free state, there are no thoughts, there's no need to get identified with anything because you are, or the mind is in its original condition. Now, thoughts, so to speak, are being produced. I don't want to go into that side again that there is always a world being manifested. And when you come out of the thought-free state, it is very easy to identify yourself again with the series of thoughts, one way or another. Either they foist themselves, foist themselves would be a good way of putting it, or envelop you and then that condition of being in a mentally thought-free state is gone. You're back in the identification or as identified within the ego, in other words you're back into the personal mind.

HS: And it's the personal mind that gets trained to not re-appropriate improperly?

AD: Yes.

HS: It's not that the original native mind won't re-enter the egoic stream, right?

AD: It's not that the . . . ?

HS: It is that the original mind, so to say, re-enters the ego stream. The consciousness will re-enter the stream.

AD: The stream is always there, the World-Idea continues, all the time. It doesn't stop.

HS: But the stream itself could be trained, and not re-appropriate.

AD: Yes, yes. Not to be overwhelming. So that when you are reinserted...

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0922b Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AD: ...you get more and more immersed in it. Well one or two more, Randy.

PB: "When we can fully accept the truth that God is the governor and manager of the universe, that the World-Mind is behind and controlling the World-Idea, then we begin to accept the parallel truths that all things and creatures are being taken due care of and that all events are happening under the divine will. This leads in time to the understanding that the ego is not the actual doer, although it has the illusion of doing, working, and acting. The practical application of this metaphysical understanding is to put down

our burdens of personal living on the floor and let Providence carry them for us: this is a surrender of the ego to the divine.” (18e.a (11g/22/69) 18.4.2)

AD: Well maybe we should end on that happy note. You know what I was thinking Dickie, Randy, maybe we ought to leave the classes without structure, just let them ramble on this way, until we get somewhat finished with the category of the ego and then see if we could make a general picture of what has been going on.

PC: Randy, where was that read from?

RC: #69, 11 Orange.

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