

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY  
with Anthony Damiani (AD)  
September 29, 1982  
PB PARAS; EGO**

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Witness-I, Revulsion

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*], published 1984-1988. Some Paul Brunton Notebook paras are, as of 2018, unpublished, and are noted as such.
- Sri Venkataramiah (Swami Ramanananda Saraswati), Recorder, *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

NOTE: Earlier transcript versions exist.

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## 1982 09/29 at Wisdom's Goldenrod

### PB Paras; Ego

#### Readable Edited Transcript

#### # TRIPITAKA: DISCIPLINE, MEDITATION, REFLECTION; PB PARAS ON EGO

[Audio File 1982 0929a Begins]

PB: "The aspirant will receive personal knowledge from within, as apart from mere teaching from without, only to the extent that he has inwardly prepared himself to receive it. The fruits of the quest cannot be separated from the disciplines of the quest. He is considered capable of grasping philosophic truth when, either now or in a previous existence, he has to some degree purified his understanding by self-discipline, introverted it by meditation, and tranquilized it by reflection. . . ." (2.9.1)

S: What is a purified understanding through self-discipline? Is it an organ, a process, or is it a fixed and standing truth? (Q: this question is condensation of 10 minute discussion.)

RG: Anthony, any comments?

AD: Remember when the Dalai Lama was here? What did he give us? He gave us three books. What does the three books stand for: the *Tripitaka*, the three canons, the three baskets?

HS: Three kinds of teaching?

AD: Three kinds of teachings? No, no. What are you, Tibetan?

What are the three baskets? Very specific references about them (Q: or "in that *Tripitaka*"). One is called the law or the discipline, the vinaya? (Q: means laws or discipline, rules); the second one? -- and the third? (Q: 2nd = meditation, 3rd = understanding). You don't remember? Well, what are the three things he just told you? Discipline, meditation, reflection. What are the Vedantist things you have to do? Self-purification or discipline, concentration or meditation, and reflection. Those are the three things that you have to do. And then if you do them, what happens? Well, THAT'S WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. YOU WILL NOT GET IT ANY OTHER WAY. Somebody that's going to come and whisper in your ear? Alright, I'm going to read a few quotes and then I'm going to pass it on to Randy. The last volume called the Rough Ideas. I'll read all the ones that I classified as ego. This is the most potent comprehensive and organized systematic expose. I just can't believe it. Of course, I'm prejudiced. But I think what you've got up in the library are the greatest writings that have been done in the past 500 years. This is a total doctrine or tradition. But this alone is worth the price of admission. As a matter of fact, it is admission. What we're talking about IS the admission. These are some of the things that I'm going to run through. I'll read them slowly, no comments, there are not too many.

PB: "Some seek detachment from one thing, others from another thing, but he who seeks detachment from his ego has the highest aim--and the most difficult." (8.4.273)

AD: Another one.

PB: "When a man wakes up to the discovery that his desire to teach others may only be another form of personal ambition, he may, like Saint Thomas Aquinas, stop entirely. But with the birth of true humility he may do the one or the other." (8.4.467)

AD: You remember the story about Aquinas after he finished writing? He had a revelation, put his pen down and never picked it up again. But he sure wrote before that.

PB: “The ego is an object. The mind knows only objects. Therefore man does not know himself when he knows only ego.” (8.2.74)

AD: We’ll discuss them later. Just run through. You know, try to get saturated. (Q: 8.4.273 . . . 8.4.467 . . . 8.2.74 read)

PB: “The Real Being is not a thing. This does not mean it is nothing. Man is so constituted that normally he can know only things. If he is to approach God, he must let go of his ego-self, his individuated being.” (8.4.227)

PB: “He must begin by learning that the ego is very much the lesser part of himself, that it must be kept down in its place as an obedient servant, its desires scrutinized and disciplined or even negated, its illusions exposed and removed.” (8.4.378)

AD: By the way, these are Himalayan peaks.

PB: “Men discuss gently or debate fiercely under the influence of their personal standpoints and tendencies. They are not aware how much the ego colours their thoughts and statements.” (8.4.64)

PB: “The emotionalists are betrayed by their personal fencing-in of feeling; the intellectuals are betrayed by their shrivelling-up into personal analysis and criticism; the fantasists are betrayed by their personal imaginations. In all three classes, the personal ego limits and shapes their results. They look for God where God is not.” (8.4.109)

PB: “When the personal ego is put in its place, not allowed to dominate, when it becomes the ruled and not the ruler--and further, when meditation aligns it with the Overself and knowledge keeps it there--when finally application brings it into the day’s activity, then inner directives guide the man, inner harmony gives him peace of mind. Unpleasant happenings will not be allowed to disturb this mental evenness, nor untoward ones allowed to upset his feelings.” (8.4.464)

PB: “The man who has enough respect for himself to realize that he could (and should) become a better man will find that the line of self-improvement stretches all the way into infinite distance. At what point is he to stop? For in the end, however much he polish and perfect the ego, it must give itself up to the Overself.” (8.4.237)

PB: “There is no satisfactory answer to the question why human beings have to develop the ego only to destroy it in the end. The one given by the Indian gurus following Shankara Acharya, is that its suffering makes them seek for the cause and thence for the remedy. But this is like banging one’s head against a wall in order to get the relief experienced when one ceases. If this is the purpose of existence it will seem senseless to many.” (unpublished, R1/122/22)

PB: “When humans forget their source and deny their innermost being, they become creatures whose lives are empty of any higher meaningfulness--more than animals, yes, but hardly human enough to justify the dignity of the species.” (8.4.30)

PB: "Alas! the ego pursues him wherever he goes. This is bad enough but when he fails to recognize it and blames other egos only for his troubles it is pathetic and even saddening." (8.3.122)

AD: Each one of these will hit you right in the gut as long as you don't think you're 99% gold. You know, I had diarrhea.

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." (8.2.44)

AD: I'm not going to leave any out.

PB: "What is wrong with the idea of personality if it is correctly understood, if its signs and patterns are kept down to inferior status? Let it be accepted as a changing passing thing, if you like; let it always be subservient to the ever-present reality of Overself: but why fear its expression?" (8.1.205)

PB: "A time must come, whether in this birth or a later one, when the ego must give up the struggle, which is both with itself and the Higher Power at the same time." (8.4.261)

PB: "The ego is there to serve him, but the mistaken unenlightened man thinks it is to be served by him." (8.3.175)

PB: "Virtue and compassion thin down the ego but do not confer enlightenment." (8.4.426)

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)

PB: "The ego is always its own centre of gravity." (8.3.145)

AD: That's from the Rough Aspects, I mean, the Rough Ideas. Randy, you could read from the Middle, anything that says A, anything.

PB: "What Blake wrote a hundred and fifty years ago the Maharishee echoed in our own time. "Nought loves another as itself" was the Englishman's poetic line. "All beings love themselves," was the Indian sage's terser comment." (unpublished, 11m/1/2)

PB: "He must learn to face the startling fact that the human ego carries itself even into his loftiest aspirations for the Divine. Even there, in that rarefied atmosphere, it is seeking for itself, for what it wants, and always for its own preservation. This is merely to enlarge the area of the ego's operations and not, to use Aurobindo's word, to divinize it." (Persp. p. 105)

PB: "The Overself is there but the ego intercepts its communication." (8.3.92)

AD: (to student) Let's get a little background and then we'll discuss them.

PB: "When his conduct is indefensible, the ego will prompt him to defend it." (8.3.132)

PB: "The neurotic has contracted both attention and interest into his little self." (8.4.120)

PB: “When ego is absent, a precondition for Overself to be present exists.” (8.4.472)

PB: “The image which the ordinary person often fashions for himself of a well-developed spirituality, is usually superior to the actuality.” (8.4.333)

PB: “Too many live in too small a world peopled only by their own families, their own personal materialistic interests; in short, they are shut up inside their egos.” (unpublished, 11m/4/3)

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.” (8.2.67)

PB: “So long as we persist in taking the ego at its own valuation as the real Self, so long are we incapable of discovering the truth about the mind or of penetrating to its mysterious depths. It is a pretender, but so long as no enquiry is instituted it goes on enjoying the status of the real Self. Once an enquiry into its true nature is begun in the proper manner and continued as long as necessary, this identification with ego may subside and surrender to the higher.” (8.4.386)

PB: “The “I” shields itself from all threats to complete belief in its own reality, permanence, and separateness. Consequently, it sees metaphysical-yogic work as a danger to be removed by appropriation and absorption. Such work is then misused to serve and strengthen the ego while seeming to unmask it.” (8.4.339) (Q: reread)

PB: “He tries to avoid recognizing that he is held prisoner in ignorance and in suffering by his own ego, that its condition is unhealthy and unbalanced, and that he must find some way to liberate himself from its thralldom.” (8.4.114)

PB: “Anything and everything may be made to serve the ego and help it to become fatter. Yet they too, regarded from within oneself in the right way, may help it to become slimmer. It is the proper business of the truth-applied to show this way.” (8.4.240)

PB: “So long as he persists in making his ego the tyrannical center of all his relations with others he will be unable to take correct view of them. His own will be confused and not clear. It certainly cannot obtain an impersonal outlook. The resulting experiences may be deplorable.” (unpublished, 11m/8/10)

PB: “The ego may be suppressed but not eradicated, as when a person is used by the higher power to give a message, a guidance, or a revelation.” (8.1.193)

PB: “Who has not felt a stranger as he looks back at the person he was long ago, the man who felt so strongly about matters that seem such mere trivia now, who acted in ways he would disdain today? Where is the “I” in all this and what is the permanent self?” (unpublished, 11m/8/13)

PB: “They are too preoccupied with passing judgement upon other persons ever to do so upon themselves.” (8.4.141)

PB: “What a ridiculous psychological spectacle it is to see the ego preening itself at its spirituality!” (Persp. p. 105)

PB: "Each person is ready to criticize the ego of other persons but not his own, which he is forever ready to justify." (unpublished, 11m/9/22)

HS: I can't take much more of this.

AD: See they're all running out? A few more, a few more. Don't be anxious, Herbie, let's hear it all. I want you all to go home and get sick. I was sick last night. I want to get everyone else sick. A little more, come on.

PB: "Ordinarily the ego is the agent of action. This is apparent. But if an enquiry is set going and its source and nature penetrated successfully, a surprising discovery about the "I" will be made. Its true energy is derived from non-I, pure being." (8.1.41)

PB: "The whole structure of ego-and-its-body tyranny must be overturned--a feat beyond his direct capacity but achievable if philosophic insight is the goal." (unpublished, 11m/10/2)

PB: "When all thoughts vanish into the Stillness, the ego-personality vanishes too. This is Buddha's meaning that there is no self, also Ramana Maharshi's meaning that ego is only a collection of thoughts." (8.2.57)

PB: "Millions live in the unbeing of maya and are satisfied to stay thus. They have no glimpse of their own being; its reality, its glory, and its stillness are inconceivable to them." (unpublished, 11m/10/7)

PB: "When the wish for non-existence becomes as continuous as the thirst for repeated earthly existence formerly was, when with George Darley, the early nineteenth-century English poet, he can say "There to lay me down at peace/ In my own first nothingness," he has become an old soul." (8.4.358)

PB: "This narrow fragment of consciousness which is the person that I am hides the great secret of life at its core." (8.1.111)

PB: "It is a matter of changing his self-image, of moving over from the picture of a personal ego to the non-attempt to form any image at all, remaining quite literally free from any identification at all. It is not an active work of negating ego but a passive one of simply being, empty Being! For the ego will *always* strive to preserve itself, using when it must the most secret ways, full of cunning and pretense, camouflage and deceit. It takes into itself genuinely spiritual procedures and perverts or misuses them for its own advantage." (8.4.207)

PB: "Each man is himself the biggest obstacle confronting him on this quest." (unpublished, 11m/11/38)

PB: "We begin by understanding the ego--a work which requires patience because much of the ego is hidden, masked or disguised. We end by getting free from it." (8.4.379)

PB: "Everybody is devoted to his own "I" quite naturally and inevitably. But the meaning of the term "egoist" must be narrowed down to one who habitually tries to use others for his own advantage or tries always to get his own way irrespective of the needs of others." (8.3.165)

PB: "What is this being, this ego, in whose service he spends the years, for whom he runs hither and thither, toils to satisfy its desires and suffers to curb them?" (unpublished, 11m/12/43)

PB: "The ego's consciousness is a vastly reduced, immeasurably weakened echo of the Overself-Consciousness. It is always changing and dissipates in the end whereas the Other is ever the same and undying. But the ego is drawn out of the Other and must return to it, so the link is there. What is more, the possibility of returning voluntarily and deliberately is also there." (8.1.135)

PB: "Human beings in general do not care to be reminded of their end, their mortality. How much more would they dislike this concept of their non-selfhood!" (8.4.135)

PB: "The ego-shadow produces its part of the inner experience or intuitive statement cunningly and unobtrusively intermingled with the real higher part." (8.4.322)

PB: "This does not mean destroy the ego--as if anyone could!--but destroy its tyranny, harmonize its personal will with that of the World-Idea." (8.1.192)

PB: "So long as the ego's rule is preserved, so long will the karmic tendencies which come with it be preserved. But when its rule is weakened they too will automatically be starved and weakened. To start this process, start trying to take an impersonal detached view." (8.3.84)

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 0929a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

PB: "It is an excellent question to put before any man--Who am I?--but it will need the accompaniment of another one--What am I?--if the beginner is to get an easier and fuller working of his mind's attempt to procure a less puzzling answer." (8.1.35)

PB: "This unusual interrogation of himself, this demand to know *what he is*, may take a full lifetime of the deepest examination to satisfy." (8.1.42)

PB: "What anyone sees of other persons is neither their essential being, their most important part, nor their best part, but only something which is being used for self-expression under greatly limited, deceptive, and obscuring conditions." (8.1.118)

PB: "The personal ego is surrounded by defense mechanisms which make difficult the operation of penetrating to its lair." (8.3.117)

PB: "That which separates a man from others, which makes him a person, an individual being, is his ego." (8.1.150)

PB: "If he identifies with the ego as a real entity by itself, and not as the complex of thoughts and tendencies which it is, he is caught in the net of illusion and cannot get out of it." (8.2.33)

PB: "However careful he may try to be, the avoidance of personal bias in the ego's favour may only succeed in transferring it from the gross to a subtle plane. And the more the mind possesses critical capacity where others are concerned, the more it is blind to its own egoism." (8.4.291)

PB: "The importance which he gives his own ego is not baseless. It derives, if traced to its deepest ground, from the Overself. He has misplaced his true identity but the false one is not entirely so." (8.1.132)

PB: "No one is keeping him out of this enlightenment except himself." (8.4.58)

PB: "He must recognise the real source of so many of his troubles and not prolong them by clinging to it." (unpublished, 11m/19/159)

PB: "The ego which gets a man into his troubles is unlikely to get him out of them--unless it reforms, learns, or lets some wisdom in." (8.4.8)

PB: "Wherever he goes he brings this ego with him, looks at the world with the same eyes, the same desires and limitations." (8.4.85)

PB: "The ego seeks its own interest as its first consideration and also its last one." (8.3.137)

PB: "Let them not waste so many words about or against this little ego of ours, decrying its character or denying its existence, but try to understand what is really happening in its short life. Let them find out what is actually being wrought out within and around it. Let them recognize that the Governor of the World is related to it and that we are steeped in the Divinity whether we are aware of it or not." (8.1.130)

Randy: Those are all the ones you have marked in this section.

### **# SPIRITUAL VALUE IN STUDYING THE EGO; TRY TO GET AN OVERALL COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE**

AD: Alright, let's talk about them now, if you've got anything to say. (Q: S: . . . (softly) . . .) If you're going to talk, speak up.

DB: There were a couple quotes which spoke about how on the one hand the ego obscures the Authentic Being, and on the other how the ego itself was obscured, that is, it doesn't present its true face to our awareness. (Q: refs. = 8.3.92, 8.1.41, 8.1.111, 8.1.135, 8.1.118) It seems we are dealing with two unknowns. I would like a little more elaboration of that . . . Not being aware of the authentic reality, and not being aware of the labyrinth of the structure that the ego represents . . . (inaudible) . . .

AH: Wouldn't it be one and the same ignorance? (discussion condensed into this comment)

AD: Yes, what kind of being are you? You don't know your higher self and you don't know your lower one!

(Q: student discussion)

HS: Where is the necessity to see through any complexes? Why aren't we just enjoying ourselves?

AD: I think we've made enough reference to the fact that you suffer for the consequences of enjoying yourself! That the ego leads you into these fulfillments which become problems, and troublesome.

HS: Oh, so it's the consequences of the behavior that becomes the suffering that then produces the demand to get beyond that kind of ignorance? I can see living a life of enjoyment. (laughter) But I don't really see where gaining access to information of the impersonal consciousness as it were, or the deeper part of the ego is necessarily spiritual.

AD: You don't think it would be spiritual for you to know something about your ego?

HS: Not necessarily, no.

AD: In that case then you would have to suffer the consequences of whatever it--that desired, right? You'd go around serving it all the time. Do you want to do that? I'm talking about something that's happening right now, in these classes, the confrontation with what we are. You like it? Sign up. You don't like it? Sign up. One way or another you're going to have to draw a line now. What side do you want to be on? You're going to make a choice one way or another. David came to the conclusion that it seems that both ends are unknown.

HS: But David also said that to know the deeper aspect of one's personal self was spiritual, was concordant with knowledge of the higher.

AD: Yes, because if you tried practicing the higher practices, the ego will come in and show you exactly how to accommodate it. If you're going to get on the quest, you can't be a nincompoop for too long. It hurts. After a while it hurts and becomes painful. After a while it becomes excruciating. So even to know something about the devious ways it operates, its strategies, its tremendous comprehension of how it can keep you always under its power, there's some spiritual value in that. These are things we have to know. Why do you think I'm going through these classes? Put the metaphysical discussions aside. Let's stick to the brutality, the reality that we are.

AH: If you knew some of the deeper aspects of this ego you might know a deep enough aspect to realize that it has a kind of tenuous existence.

AD: Don't kid yourself. Don't come to me from the Buddhist point of view that the ego doesn't exist because it's been around as long as the Overself has been projecting itself, manifesting itself through some kind of a life. The residue of all that living becomes a tendency which you're going to find is perhaps not a permanent entity, but good enough to drive you up a wall for the next indefinite incarnations.

S: . . .

AD: If you think you're going to enter into the arena of spiritual struggle, the quest, without having a real good idea of what's going on with your ego, you're in for trouble.

AH: I don't know why we're talking about this . . .

AD: I want to talk about MY problems . . .

HS: Let's talk about the Overself . . .

AD: Do you know, there's a quote there, maybe Randy could find it where he speaks about the ego actually as the devil.

PB: "The ego is Satan, the devil, the principle of evil, so long as it is not recognized and mastered."  
(8.4.14)

AH: There is also a quote that says it's empty.

AD: I know. As soon as you say it's empty then you're on your way. I know. I don't think you understand my profound reasons that have been going on for a long time why I regard any such talk like that as utterly futile and even esoterically stupid. I don't care who says it. Anyone who thinks he's going to

outwit his ego is in for a real rough time. That's why I don't like to call it empty. I like to think of it as a real fire-breathing dragon. If I come within a few feet of that breath I get intoxicated.

AH: What does it mean, then, to understand the deeper aspects of the ego, the more surreptitious and subterranean aspects of it?

AD: That's what it means!

AH: Do we become more and more fearful of it?

AD: No. Again I would remind you of what he's saying, so you can have respect for your enemy and know who he is and perhaps even be aware the way he's going to come at you. Even in the highest states, and the highest states include all the way up to the void. Because in the void it can't hide. You can't have thought there so it can't hide there, it gets exposed. But everywhere else it goes up with you, every step of the way.

AH: . . .

AD: So we have to discuss it, we have to try to understand it. I want you to go home with diarrhea too.

AH: So when we sit down to meditate we should look for the ego?

AD: No, when we sit down to meditate, we are doing something else. We are trying to develop that introversion necessary, by which and through which you can become aware of it.

S: . . .

AD: I think the advantage of these quotes as we read most of them or all of them, I think that you'll get a totally comprehensive picture of what the ego is in terms of its lowest and in terms of its highest, the range that it encompasses. Because this notion of ego's has been so mal-handled in most traditions that it's become really a bone of contention, even in the classes.

S: . . .

AD: So, I think he's trying to give you an overall comprehension. We can't take the attitude that the ego must be destroyed. It turns out it can't be because it's a projection or a manifestation of the Overself. But on the other hand he points out how you could misidentify yourself with the ego and get lost in the net or the web of illusion that it spins out for you. So you have to plant yourself firmly in the middle of everything he says about the ego and go about systematically exploring what he means by it: metaphysically, ontologically, epistemologically, psychologically. All these various aspects that it has. Instead of assuming that you know it, just because you feel nice and warm, here and there, now and then. Anything that we can understand about it will be to our benefit.

LR: Given a specific situation, what would you say . . .

AD: Before we worry about a specific situation that may arise, I would suggest that we try to get as much of a comprehension of the many facets that the ego has and then we'll worry about a specific situation.

LR: But we're facing specific situations every minute of our lives.

AD: Well, right now we're facing this one. I'm trying to point out that the specifics right now are unimportant. What you really want to do is to get an overall comprehensive grasp of the many facets that the ego has, then you worry about applying it to any contingent situation. But first get this general overall framework that PB is delivering to you so that at least you become aware. Even that's going to be quite insignificant when it starts its attacks.

AH: Could I ask a question?

AD: There's no question. David didn't ask a question, he just recognized the two things were unknown. He didn't recognize his ego and he didn't know that authentic being.

RC: I have that quote he was asking about. I think I finally can read it.

PB: "The "I" shields itself from all threats to complete belief in its own reality, permanence, and separateness. Consequently, it sees metaphysical-yogic work as a danger to be removed by appropriation and absorption. Such work is then misused to serve and strengthen the ego while seeming to unmask it." (8.4.339)

PB: "So long as we persist in taking the ego at its own valuation as the real Self, so long as we are incapable of discovering the truth about the mind or of penetrating to its mysterious depths. It is a pretender, but so long as no enquiry is instituted it goes on enjoying the status of the real Self. Once an enquiry into its true nature is begun in the proper manner and continued as long as necessary, this identification with the ego may subside and surrender to the higher." (8.4.386)

### **# EGO IS ONLY INTERESTED IN PRESERVING ITSELF – IT HAS NO AWARENESS OF HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS**

DB: We have this ego, and it blocks the light, and because of it we're not aware of our own higher nature, but it is . . .

AD: That's not true, that's not true. The ego is not aware of the higher nature.

(Q: student discussion)

JB?: Insofar as it has a conception of a real self, there's some unconscious awareness of the existence of a reality.

AD: NO! NO! NO! The ego is interested in one thing and that is preserving itself. It has NO awareness of the higher consciousness. It would get LOST if there was a higher consciousness. In Nirvikalpa, it is suppressed, it isn't there.

S: . . .

AD: Could you understand this part: If we think of the Overself constantly manifesting throughout eons of time, that you came up from the stone, through the plant, through the animal, and into the human species, and that in all this process of manifestation, the ego was concerned with one thing, preserving itself. And then if you conceive of that tendency which is only a thought but strong enough to strangle us every moment of the day, if you conceive of that tendency, then you tell me that tendency knows the higher Awareness?

DB: No.

AD: Of course not. The only thing it knows is that it must preserve intact that tendency to go on being what it is.

RG: And then you're saying that tendency itself becomes the capital "Self" because that's all it knows?

AD: Yes, but that self-serving should not be confused with Self.

S: . . .

AD: Now if you notice, I was very angry, because he (Q: the ego) does that all the time, to the class, to us, to each and every individual here. Every moment of the day. It wasn't a literary gesture when I said this was the greatest expose I've ever seen. And I think I've read about 3000 years of history East and West and there's nothing comparable to this. Just be fooled once and you can rest assured the next day it will club you. Let's discuss some more.

AH: . . .

AD: Well, there we'll disagree, but I'll go right up to that point.

AH: . . . I think the Buddhists point out in a very circular sort of dialectic its empty nature, because wherever you look for it, you can't find it. (Q: paraphrase)

AD: But it's strangling you every moment! It doesn't matter that I can't find it.

HS: What do you mean when you say it's strangling you every moment.

AD: You know damn well what I mean.

HS: Can that strangling itself become an object to observation?

AD: Yes, it'd be a good idea to try to understand what it is that's strangling you.

HS: How would you examine this strangling?

AD: That's what we're doing tonight. Why don't you just open and read randomly? That's exactly what we're doing. We're trying to expose its secret work.

HS: And the way to do it is?

AD: Well, let a master tell you about it. And have a real sentinel inside, it's there with a sword or a gun, and as soon as a thought arises, shoot it.

LR: Would you say then that if there's any emotionality at all the ego is in control?

AD: No. The sage has emotionality.

LR: Would you call that emotionality or feeling?

AD: What would that distinction be to you?

LR: I thought you've been trying to make distinctions.

AD: I just wanted to make sure in this general conversation that we don't think of a sage as bloodless like a stone.

LR: Isn't there a distinction between the ego's emotions and the higher self's feeling--that they're two distinct things?

AD: Yes, when we're talking psychology, we can try to make distinctions as to what they are. One's more associated with the body, the other more like a mental refinement of that.

LR: Are you saying that emotionality is equivalent to the ego?

AD: Certainly emotionality-- There are five ways the ego gets characterized, and he had a statement there, and they are thought, imagination, feeling, intellect, and one more (Q: action). [Note: See PB, *Notebooks*, 8.3.5.] He characterizes the ego by these five. Again, what's the point? We want to try to get a look at the way it works, what characterizes it, what its attributes are. You know you keep cutting down one desire after another but if you don't get to the root it just keeps spreading more branches . . . we want to get acquainted with it.

AH: If it is as pervasive as we've described tonight, if it is that pervasive . . .

AD: As far as you're concerned . . .

AH: As far as I'm concerned . . .

AD: You!

AH: Where shall I stand to observe its pervasiveness?

AD: Well, he pointed out, at the very beginning, the very first note that was read: there's a need to engage in the quest which consisted of intense concentration, meditation, reflection and discipline or purification. Now this is a standard procedure in the Vedanta, Buddhism, or anyone else. And it surprises me that, as I mentioned, this is what, when you speak about the three baskets in Buddhism, that's what you're talking about, that these three have to be employed. And it isn't going to get you to Nirvana overnight. It's going to get you acquainted with WHAT AND WHO YOU ARE. Then you worry about getting to Nirvana. But if this is the obstacle, if every man is an obstacle to that, then he should get to know about that first. But he's not going to transcend or transgress its boundaries. Any more comments about what we're reading?

**# EGO WILL ALWAYS PRESENT YOU WITH ANOTHER DESIRE; EGO ACCOMMODATES ITSELF TO AND APPROPRIATES SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE**

CS: Couldn't the ego set up these traps which cause us pain so that we eventually will look inward? (Q: paraphrase)

AD: No, the ego will never accept the consequences of what it does and that's a real delusion if you think that the ego is going to try to encourage you to inquire into its nature. Because it will immediately present you with another desire. And then when you get hurt with that one it will give you another one. That de-evaluation is going to be really very momentary. You get hurt, and after an hour you're right back in it all over again. You say, "Wow the world really isn't such a hot place," but within an hour, you're right back. Even those people who have a tremendous loss and de-evaluate the world, even then the tradition is not to

accept that person as renouncing the world because it can not be done then, it's momentary. Two days later, three days later, he's right back there. The world has got all the glamour all over again. Don't give me that, that the ego is going to present you with a desire which if you fulfill will hurt you and then cause you to turn inward. He didn't say this ego was the Overself. It's a mishap, it's a bad reflection.

SS: So who is it that pursues meditation or imposes discipline?

AD: YOU, YOU! Your ego, YOU.

SS: So the ego deceiving itself and annihilating itself?

AD: It's not deceiving itself. It's going to make out. It's going to accommodate you. "Oh, we'll sit down, we'll meditate." After a while, you're fast asleep. But let's say you DON'T fall asleep. Let's say you have a magnificent experience, alright? It's YOUR experience, right? It's your experience. The ego appropriated it completely. No longer is it an experience or something was given to you, "It's MY experience."

RC: It seems like one of the values of these quotes becomes apparent later when PB says that many people get legitimate spiritual experiences and then think they are illuminated when they come out. In the non-inspired state they're thinking that they're the same inspired person that had the experience. He speaks about the after-effect of the glimpse in terms of its being either falsely interpreted or falsely appropriated. It's a real disaster he's trying to prevent with these notes on the ego.

AD: Yes, because you betray it within a short time, a very short time. In the very structure, all these tendencies that the ego has and has not recognized, it immediately takes over that experience, appropriates it for itself, aggrandizes itself one way or another through them, and betrays the glimpse--I think before the cock crows three times.

### **# GENERATING THE DESIRE TO LEAVE CYCLIC EXISTENCE; REVULSION**

AH: There was one quote where he says the mark of an old soul was that he preferred non-existence in balance with existence? (Q: ref. = 8.4.358)

AD: No, the mark of an old soul is when you got clubbed enough times over the head that you've had it. "No more." You don't want no more . . . . An old soul.

AH: That's what he meant by the equal desire for non-existence?

AD: No, that was another quotation when he mentioned that. When the desire not to incarnate anymore gets as strong as the desire to constantly experience, when that happens, now you're ready for the quest.

PB: "When the wish for non-existence becomes as continuous as the thirst for repeated earthly existence formerly was, when with George Darley, the early nineteenth-century English poet, he can say "There to lay me down at peace/ In my own first nothingness," he has become an old soul." (repeated para, 8.4.358)

AD: What would "my own first nothingness" be?

AH: My Overself.

AD: Yeah, before the tendencies started.

HS: And this desire for non-existence?

AD: It's very prevalent among many communities. You don't want to be reborn anymore. You had enough. And this gets you going on the path. A young soul for whom the world and the manifestation of the world has all this glamour is not going to be like that, he's not going to feel that he had enough of the world.

AH: The Tibetans make quite an issue of generating the desire to definitely leave cyclic existence.

AD: Yes, but if you didn't have enough lives, you may not be able to generate that desire to leave cyclic existence. You may generate the desire that you want to keep coming back, as many lives as possible.

HS: And this desire arises in the ego?

AD: Yes, all desires will ultimately trace back to the ego.

HS: It's a desire of the ego . . .

AD: . . . to perpetuate and continue.

HS: But you have this desire faculty--

AD: What faculty is that? It's inherent in the very nature of the ego itself.

HS: And this desire to leave cyclic existence is an appropriate desire for the quest?

AD: Oh yes.

HS: So it's possible that from within the ego itself there could arise the proper desire?

AD: Well, I don't know if I would put it that way. I would put it this way: This ego that you're talking about suffered so much that it's ready to put aside the desire to go on existing. The residue of all that suffering will be a counterattack to the desire to go on existing. It will be very natural, then, for that ego to seek the quest or to seek a spiritual path to find its way out.

LD: And that's the point you could really go on the quest?

AD: He may go on the quest, sure. He may.

I don't know if you remember the story in *Talks with Ramana*. Somebody had reported to Ramana this strange story about an Englishman who, in England, happened to look at a picture of Ramana and broke out into tears, started crying. And he had no mystical inclinations or spiritual desires one way or another. And they asked Ramana what it was about. And he said he had reached that point in his evolution and he just turned around. From then on he just went the other way. So it's what the Hindus refer to as the soul's inclination towards manifestation. When it reaches a certain point, then the inclination is to withdraw from manifestation. That means it has to seek a path to get out.

LR: Is that the "revulsion" you refer to?

AD: Yes, that's a very fancy name they give it. "Revulsion."

RG: Anthony, you just spoke of it as if it were the ego's revulsion.

AD: In this particular quote, it's a point, that if you can--if we exaggerate it and use an analogy or an example-- If within a relatively short span of recent lives, the majority of them have been basically suffering, there will be built into the ego this residue, this counter-tendency towards manifestation, the desire to find a way out. It gets deposited as a tendency within the ego and then becomes counter-productive as far as the ego is concerned.

[Audio File 1982 0929a Ends]

[Audio File 1982 0929b Begins]

(Q: student discussion)

AD: . . . There comes a point where the ego's development does reach what they call the turning about, turning around, and desires to find a way out.

RG: At that point when you have the revulsion, is that the point at which the egotism can stop?

AD: No. It goes on and on and on.

BS: Could I ask a question?

AD: Go ahead, talk to the class. They've got egos, too. Don't think I'm the only one with an ego.

BS: Does cyclic existence only refer to the ego, the ego-complex?

AD: I think they mean something much more definite. Cyclic existence, I think, means to continue reincarnation into the ego or as the ego and bondage to the ego. That's all I think they mean by cyclic existence.

LR: The ego doesn't have any idea of a higher life. Did you say that?

AD: I didn't say that the ego has no idea of a higher life. It doesn't KNOW the higher awareness.

LisaR: When we human beings are afraid to die, that's coming from the ego point of view because the ego will die?

AD: Yes.

LisaR: Then why does it seem when the ego has suffered enough and makes that turnaround, is it really not the ego that makes the turnaround but the soul, and the ego appropriates it as its own?

AD: You think the soul turns around?

RG: Well, you did speak about it as the soul's leaning towards manifestation and then away from manifestation.

AD: Yes, but when I said that the soul's manifestation, I didn't say that the soul was differentiated and had an intellectual interest in these matters. The soul's consciousness is undifferentiated, always the same. The weight of the turning around falls on the tendencies that are inherent in the ego.

LisaR: So then the turning around, the ego tends towards its own death with joy! . . . Who is it that is trying to undermine the ego, who keeps us talking about these things? Who is it that is trying to catch ourselves from being trapped by the ego? (Q: paraphrase)

AD: No. Again, we have to go back to the original position that we took. We spoke about the ego as a matrix of possibilities and thoughts, tendencies, alright? There's deposited in this matrix through the various lives that you lived, certain tendencies. And if a person spent a few lifetimes generating or profoundly having these tendencies, that is, introversion, meditation, if he persistently practices, these tendencies will be left behind as part of the matrix of possibilities that constitutes his ego. And it is this which will, after a certain length of time start gathering momentum and see its way out. It's still all in the ego. It's the ego that's going to go out and seek enlightenment. It's the ego that's going to enjoy nirvanic bliss, only if it gets destroyed.

RG: . . .

AD: Are you saying the ego is the higher mind?

RG: No, no. But if the ego is looking at the ego, it could never see it objectively. Whereas if the ego is an object to a higher mind, then by making the ego an object of its inquiry, the higher mind would also be imposing the discipline. If the ego can be made an object, it has to be something other than the ego that looks.

**# EVERY SOUL HAS WITHIN ITSELF THE MATTER THROUGH WHICH IT CAN MANIFEST; EGO AS AN EVOLVING MATRIX OF TENDENCIES; IT IS THE EGO THAT PARADOXICALLY GETS ENLIGHTENED**

AD: Tell me, does this higher mind reincarnate? Or is it a permanent kind of thing? If you call that higher mind the reasoning soul, and the reasoning soul is what brings manifestation about. Again, let me try to say it once more. We spoke about the fact that the soul, through the intermediary phase, the reasoning phase, manifests itself as the ego. The ego is a manifestation of that. And we said that each and every soul has, within itself, the matter through which it can manifest itself. Now, this matter, through which it can manifest itself, if we think of this matter and it's not going to be chemical atoms--if we think of this matter as retaining the tendencies, the potencies which is a continuous drift of the way manifestation has been going on. If we think of that as the ego, and not confuse it with the reasoning soul or with the Overself's consciousness, then we always have to locate ourselves in that ego, in that matrix of possibilities. Always there we got to take our stand. To be realistic about what's going on. So if you say, "Well, I wanted to become a spiritual quester," many people would say that there is a call from the soul. Sure, I think that's very feasible and it happens very often when there's some sort of-- some call from within the soul, a sound, a noticed sound that an ego reverts and turns back. But in general, the way we're speaking now, is that we have to think of this ego as (Q: has?) all these tendencies, and that it is up to us to generate those tendencies that are conducive towards an expansive enlarged version of the ego so that it includes within itself greater and greater comprehension. It is the ego that ultimately and finally, paradoxically as it may sound, gets enlightened.

MB: So it's not only bad?

AD: Oh no, I'm just picking out the bad. I'm concentrating on those aspects because this is our fundamental problem. There is no one here excepted. There are no exceptions to the way the ego works. There are none.

DR: How would you talk about that, then? If we use Lisa's example--where you know (Q: you're in?) some situation and a thought arises that characterizes the nature of self-preservation and you say "No" to that thought . . .

AD: Yes.

DR: . . . And you keep trying to duck it. The way you would talk about it is an ego looking for a better means of self-expression instead of taking a very selfish means, it's looking for something a little bit more refined. And you wouldn't speak about trying to duck the ego or any kind of terminology like that, because that would be inappropriate. It's a matter of terminology. In that ducking of different possible thoughts that arise, determining your course of action, that ducking you say is an ego looking for a better means of self-expression.

AD: In other words, when you're carrying on some practical exercise, like the remembrance exercise, that's the ego. Yes, sure, and PB has a quote for instance, where he points out that the ego will even submit to this abasement providing it can continue living!

DR: That brings in a difficulty, because if you say that that's--you know, what you do there is you're trying to distinguish one class of thoughts from another, you're looking for . . .

AD: Well what's difficult about that? What do you think the ego is, one thought? I call it a matrix of possibilities so that we avoid that turning it into a THING. It has many facets, many aspects. How many "I's" do you have? You ever notice yourself: "I want this," ten minutes later, "I want that," and ten minutes later, "I want the other thing." Now which "I" wants what? And which "I" is "I"? Oh, come on. If you keep falling back, thinking of the ego as a thing, you're going to get into all these kinds of difficulties. But if you think of it the way we spoke about it, as a bunch of tendencies, alright, insisting upon their survival, and working towards it all the time, and if you reach a point where you say, "Darn it, you're not going to get any further with me," alright, he says, "OK, I'll submit, you want to meditate, let's meditate." When you really get into meditation and you get carried and you're really going well, the ego comes right over and says, "Well, I think this fellow has taken me far enough."

DR: In every possible human experience there's a reflex of thoughts that will appropriate it.

AD: So it's always going on, all the way up.

DR: So, if you're going to try the exercise, each time you try to distinguish which is that complex of thoughts and you keep trying to duck it.

AD: So you keep applying the exercise.

DR: And you're going to call that exercise "self-preservation"?

AD: (loudly) Well, the ego is accommodating itself to these tendencies so that it doesn't get removed. It will do anything as long as it continues. You've heard of the instinct of self-preservation, "I above all

else”? So what’s wrong with the ego saying, “Alright, I’ll accommodate myself to this higher trance state; you know, what am I going to do with this guy?” (Q: laughter) So then you go into high trance state and you come out and you think you are the new messiah! Now, who’s there? Of course! I never said it was a nice Virgo clean fight with every blow above the belt. I never said that! Every step along the way you go up, the ego goes up with you. And at each level you’re going to have a struggle with it. Sometimes it’ll take you down a peg or two, or maybe three or four. (Q: Anthony speaks loudly during this paragraph.)

RG: But on the one hand you say, I’m going to sit this ego down and it’s going to meditate with me.

AD: No, You don’t say that. You say, “I.” “I.” This ego, is going to sit down and meditate.

RG: Now, who is pushing that ego to sit down and meditate?

AD: But we just pointed out that there are certain tendencies within you which are beginning to show their manifestation. You desire to meditate. That’s part of the tendency that you have. Why? Because maybe you suffered enough and decided somewhere in the dim past that you want to figure a way out. Maybe you didn’t suffer enough. Maybe you saw some beauty that you could never see on earth and you decided that’s what you want. I don’t know why. But I do know that all of a sudden you say, “I want to sit down and meditate.” So, you sit down and meditate. PB even makes the point that the most impeccable manners, the most refined personality is the ego!

### **# WITNESS-I; FLUIDITY OF SUBJECTIVITY; YOU ARE THE BATTLEFIELD**

RG: And he says also here:

PB: “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.” (8.2.67, repeat)

RG: Now let’s say you try to do that as an exercise.

AD: Yes, take the Witness position, sure. Fine. That means that you already know what the ego is. You’ve stepped out of it once you’re in the Witness position. But I’m not talking about that quote. If you want, I’d be glad to. That’s the Witness position and he recommends certain exercises where he tells you “Try to take the Witness position,” because all you need is ONE, one glimpse to step out of the ego and to see it for what it is. Then when it takes you, you know.

RG: But it isn’t the ego that takes the Witness position. The ego is seen from the Witness position.

AD: No, the ego cannot take the Witness position. But remember, it will always try to infiltrate. You know, just like the Fifth Column during the war? Always infiltrate, you can rest assured.

DB: Ultimately it sounds like the association with thought has to be broken, that seems to be the real distinction.

AD: (softly) The real distinction is that you do have to step outside of your thoughts, once. Otherwise you’ll never, never, get to the core of what ego is.

DB: . . . This identification with thoughts, patterns of thinking and behaving, that subsides, and then one can speak about surrender to the higher?

AD: Yes.

DB: So what we mean by “identification” is just the functioning of thoughts?

AD: Can you give me an example of what particular quote are you referring to?

PB: “Once an enquiry into its true nature is begun in the proper manner and continued as long as necessary, this identification with ego may subside and surrender to the higher.” (repeated para, 8.4.386)

DB: So, I was asking if a proper way to understand the quote would be that we could only understand “surrender to the higher” when the preoccupation was no longer with thought. (Q: condensation of remarks)

AD: I think so.

HS: In the discussion you speak of the ego as a matrix of possibility?

AD: An idea.

HS: One thought?

AD: Not one thought.

HS: A collocation of tendencies?

AD: It’s thought.

HS: Is that the ego’s native view of its own existence?

AD: Only as long as you make it absolutely necessary. The ego will even acquiesce to saying “I don’t exist” if that will accommodate you. There’s one quote, see if you can find it, where he calls the ego a liar. It lies to itself, it lies to you, and it lies to others.

HS: We’re having a discussion right now. There’s information being given out. The information is that the participants in the discussion, who have a notion of themselves as egos, are not really egos in the traditional term of the self-inherent, but they’re matrices of possibilities, is that assimilable knowledge? (Q: paraphrase = So if you think of the ego now as not some self-inherently existent “I” but as a matrix of possibilities, is that assimilable knowledge?)

AD: Sure. It might take a little time to get it over but you’ll assimilate it.

HS: That knowledge can be assimilated?

AD: Yes. You’ll be able to vigilantly watch and see it operate in front of your very clean mental eyes.

HS: And you’re not talking about conception now?

AD: No, I’m not talking about conception. I’m talking about you actually seeing with your mental eyes. You see someone praise you and you feel good, and someone criticize you and you scream. And you can see the ego’s wings flapping as clearly as you can feel the pole you bump into.

DD: Who sees that? If the ego is an object of attention-- that the exercise you perform where you cut off every image that arises . . .

AD: No, no, no. That exercise is very specific. That's the Hua T'ou exercise and it'll probably blow somebody's mind if they work it out. What we're talking about here is a little bit different. I don't want to bring in the exercise, I don't want to mix it up with the one we're doing. I don't want them (Q: you) to conceptualize.

DD: Dickie's point about making an object of attention, can one aspect of the ego which is more conscious, more learned, observe other voices in the ego?

AD: No. What he is speaking about here is the Witness-I. That's different. It's like, for instance, you wake up from a dream and you see that you don't need the dream ego to operate. So you can wake up from egotistic consciousness and see that you're the Witness-I and that you don't need the ego consciousness to work with. That requires explanation all by itself, just like in the first section where he starts going through the fact that the ego is part of the World-Idea, and therefore cannot be destroyed. We'll hit that in the first part.

AS: It may be true that the illuminating awareness is always the higher one, but that's true even in the normal experience. No matter what's operating, the ego never is the consciousness. But all of the desires and the tendency to push towards it would have to be from the ego because that consciousness itself cannot have any desires or tendencies.

RG: I thought there was a middle level in there, which was neither the Overself consciousness nor the ego, but the rational. In the first quote we read: ". . . For then he is able to use this highly concentrated well purified, efficiently serene consciousness as an instrument with which to engage himself in a quest to understand in true perspective what the ego really is." (Q: 2.9.1) Now what is that serene consciousness? It doesn't seem to be the ego the way we've been talking about it, it doesn't seem to be the Overself.

AD: Again you are making classifications that are very rigid. Given this situation where you put yourself through this discipline and meditation and all that, then the infiltration of the higher Witness consciousness can operate in you. It's the story that you are going to make these very severe classifications. Here's a quotation for instance that Randy picked out.

PB: "The least important part of Mind gets our almost undivided attention. The illusion-attacked conscious ego--an illusion itself--forces us to see and hear the sense world, or its own vain thought-forms and dream-images, almost all the time. The real part of the Mind is ignored and left out as if it were illusory!" (8.4.5)

AD: Now, I would call the higher part of the mind what you're referring to as the Witness, the permanent, and these can infiltrate right into that ego consciousness providing that you went through those three disciplines. And it can be available to you.

RG: Ok, so is it that the ego has purified itself and now you speak about the ego as rational?

AD: No, I wouldn't go that far. I would say that there would be occasions, various times while you're going through those disciplines for it to be available to you, but it won't be always available, nor can you control it.

S: Ok, so when he says, "This efficient consciousness is an instrument to engage in a quest to understand," (Q: paraphrase) isn't he speaking about reason there?

AD: Yes, but the reason won't always be PURE. That's what I'm talking about. There's a fluidity of the subjectivity, the higher "I," yes, there's a fluidity there.

RG: But when it's operating in this quest to understand what the nature of the ego is, in that case, it's not the ego that's understanding, it's the Rational Soul that's understanding what the ego is.

AD: Yes. That could be, sure. There could be insights coming in. But it all comes down to this, and we're going to end the class on this note. It all comes down to this: You're the battlefield.

LrD: Is that what you mean when you say that the ego is the field of experience for . . .?

AD: No, no. I don't want you to change it. I want you to leave it the way I said it.

YOU ARE THE BATTLEFIELD. (Q: AD emphasizing, not shouting) Don't change it.  
Arrivederci.

[Audio File 1982 0929b Ends]