

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
October 27, 1982
PB PARAS; EGO; FORGIVENESS**

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Forgiveness, Audacity

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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 Some Paul Brunton Notebook paras are, as of 2018, unpublished, and are noted as such.
- C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*
- John Milton, *Paradise Lost*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: IV.8.2, IV.8.5, V.1.1

NOTES:

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

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1982 10/27 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Ego; Forgiveness
Readable Edited Transcript

PB PARAS ON EGO

[Audio File 1982 1027a Begins]

RC: But, we haven't finished up on the ego material yet, in the sense there's so much of it.

AD: Nor will you. (laughter)

RC: We'll just keep going with that for a while. . . .

PB: "The ego moves through all the three states, but *Turiya* itself is motionless." (8a.a (11v/40/5) 8.1.26)

PB: "We must not confuse Atman with ego. The ego is produced, along with the non-ego world, by Atman." (8a.a (11v/40/6) 8.1.27)

LR: Read the first again? (para reread) The identity of the knower and the known, you have the ego there? I was surprised that you have to take the ego to Prajna consciousness.

(S: Don't leave home without it.)

PB: "These injuries to the ego are the price we must pay for the blessings of the Overself." (8z-why.a (11v/40/9a) 8.4.32)

PB: "He needs to look at himself without letting the ego get in the way." (8e-k.a (11v/40/9b) 8.4.377)

PB: "He who can get outside his own ego, and leave it behind, can get to Truth." (8z-cnre.a (11v/39/11) 8.4.460)

PB: "To the degree that we loose ourselves from the ego's grip, to that degree we loose ourselves from its mental anxieties and emotional agitations. As its power wanes, our care-free peace waxes." (8z-cnre.2 (11v/39/11) 8.4.475)

PB: "To surrender the ego is to surrender the thought of it, and this is done by stilling the mind whenever, in daily life, one becomes self-conscious. This silenced, ego vanishes. It is deep, mental effacement of the thought of being a certain "XY," this quick stilling of the idea of being a particular person, this serene rejection of the intellectual movement and emotional agitation of the ego, that constitutes the "giving up of the self" which Jesus and all great mystics have insistently enjoined. This art of effacing the ego by stilling the mind, by suddenly stopping its whirling flood of thoughts, could not be practised at will and at any time if one had not practised it previously and frequently in deliberate exercises at set times. It is not an art into which the man in the street can straightway plunge. He is not ready for it. He must first get a disciplined mental nature through daily work in meditation as well as a subjugated emotional nature through hardened will. These endeavours must be brought to perfection first before the feat of giving up the ego can itself be brought to perfection." (8z-path.a (11v/38/12) 8.4.151) (reread)

PB: “Every time he resists the impulse to angry action, or the urge to bitter scolding, he resists the ego. The cumulative result of many such disciplines is to thin down the ego and draw nearer the hour of its final destruction.” (8z-path.a (11v/39/13) 8.4.241)

PB: “When a man can forgive God all the anguish of his past calamities and when he can forgive other men and women for the wrongs they have done him, he will come to inward peace. For this is what his ego cannot do.” (8c-hum.a (11v/39/14) 8.4.349) (reread)

PB: “The amount of energy he pours into sustaining the ego and holding to illusions to his own detriment could just as well be poured into sustaining a quest of the Overself to his own gain.” (8z-path.a (11v/38/53) 8.4.165)

PB: “Philosophy denies to the ego the final rulership of man but allows to the ego the necessary activities of man. How else can he live in this world? The ego may stay in its proper place attending to the needs and sustenance of his body and intellect, but always as a subordinate to the higher self and obeisant to the higher will. “ (8a-indb.2 (11v/38/57) 8.1.201)

PB: “The ego naturally resents and is implacably opposed to the only course that will lead to its final overthrow. “ (8d.a (11v/38/58) 8.3.74)

PB: “We have to pass through the life of the ego but we do not have to be enslaved by and fettered to it.” (8e-sur.2 (11v/38/60) 8.4.255)

PB: “How easily can the ego clothe itself in false altruism or hide behind high-sounding speech! How quickly can it exploit others to its own advantage! How smoothly can it lead a genuine aspiration into a side-path or, worse, a trap!” (8z-sp.a (11v/37/26) 8.4.304)

PB: “The sense may trick us with a physical illusion, but can the self trick us with a mental one? Is not the one certain fact which does not depend upon the sense’s experience the fact that we exist as individuals and consciously exist? Is not the right to say “I am” the one certainty which cannot be dispelled, the one truth which cannot be denied?” (8a-im.2 (11v/37/26) 8.1.101)

PB: “This whittling away of the ego may occupy the entire lifetime and not seem very successful even then, yet it is of the highest value as a preparatory process for the full renunciation of the ego when--by Grace--it suddenly rises up in the heart.” (8z-grce.a (11v/37/31) 8.4.422) (reread)

RC: . . . “It” would have to be “the full renunciation.”

PB: ““Whoever is full of himself has no room for God”--13th century Kabbalist.” (8g.0 11v/37/32)-unpublished)

PB: “When the ego fails to detain him in formal weaknesses, it will disguise itself anew and direct their strength into subtle and even spiritual channels. If it cannot hold him by his more obvious weaknesses, it will do so by his subtler ones; if not through his shortcomings then through his alleged virtues. It does not find much difficulty with all its craftiness and cunning in perverting his most fervent spiritual aspiration into disguised self-worship and his spiritual experiences into undisguised vanity. Or it will use his sense of remorse, shame, and even humility to point out the futility of his attempts at moral reform and the impossibility of his spiritual aspirations. If he yields to the duplicity and perversity of such moods, he

may well abandon the quest in practice and leave it in the air as a matter of theory. But the truth is that this is really a false shame and a false humility.” (8z-sp.a (11v/36/61) 8.4.314) (reread)

PB: “Before we can cultivate the best in us, we must crucify the worst in us. The ego must be hung and nailed by degrees if the Overself is to be resurrected in our consciousness. This is why it is so important to cleanse our emotions and correct our thoughts. The desires and the negatives must be overcome to make a way for the truth, the beauty, and goodness.” (8e-sur.a (11v/36/62) 8.4.220)

PB: “Just as the evil situations in life are made to yield some good in the end and subserve the evolutionary process, so the good ones are made to yield evil results by the ego’s ascendancy and craftiness. It will turn his very spiritual aspirations against him, and pervert them. If he gains a little interior peace, for instance, a lot of smugness, pride, or even arrogance may be mixed with it.” (8z-sp.a (11v/36/63) 8.4.303) (reread)

PB: “The ego must live in the world, must satisfy its needs out of its environment. It is therefore entitled to its point of view. The mistake lies in tyrannically making that the only point of view.” (8a-indb.a (11v/36/65) 8.1.186)

PB: “For all that is talked and written about it, very few ever succeed in making the full mystical surrender of their ego.” (8e-sur.a (11v/36/66) 8.4.263)

PB: “The attrition of the ego will come out of this incessant struggle against it, but the atrophy of the ego will not. For who is the struggler? It is the ego himself. He will not willingly commit suicide, although he will deceptively allow a steady grinding-down of his more obvious aspects. “ (8z-who.3 (11v/35/43) 8.4.437)

PB: “Through the operation of unexpected events or unsought experiences, we are partially exposed to ourselves for what we always have been but did not always know. But such is the power and the cunning of the ego that it never exposes itself--the real malefactor--and keeps us in ignorance of the real root of our troubles. It will keep us preoccupied with thoughts of a highly spiritual kind, it will let us smugly feel we are making progress, but it will not let us see and slay the true enemy--itself!” (8z-sp.a (11v/35/44) 8.4.302) (reread)

PB: “The man who asserts his ego in everyday life is often the man who is more successful than his modest fellows. But it still remains open to question whether his kind of success is worth having.” (8z-ism.3 (11v/34/18) 8.3.164)

PB: “If he will stop looking at his own life from the shut-in standpoint of his little ego and instead look at it from the wide-angle standpoint of its place in the reincarnationary cycle of development, it will become filled with new meanings, rich with higher significances. To bring his personal idea into alignment with the World-Idea will then become both his duty and his happiness.” (8a-inda.a (11v/34/20) 8.1.169) (reread)

PB: “To free himself, for however short a period, from the consciousness of self may seem an impossible achievement. But the statement of it often leads to a confused understanding and needs to be more narrowly confined. It applies to the surrender of personal consciousness to the impersonal Overself consciousness. There is some kind of self in both.” (8a-indc.2 (11v/34/22) 8.1.183)

PB: “If he loses his ego utterly and completely so that no trace of it exists at all, he would have to die, for his body is part of the ego. But he lives on. This shows that what he really loses is not the *ego-nature* but the *ego-will*. It is replaced by the higher will. “ (8a-indc.a (11v/34/23) 8.1.215) (reread)

PB: “It is not only that he thrusts the ego aside during certain uplifted moods but also that he steadfastly maintains this denial of self during the moment-to-moment experience.” (8z-path.a (11v/34/24) 8.4.163)

PB: “They dedicate their lives to worship of the ego when they might dedicate them to worship of the Infinite Power that sustains their souls and bodies.” (8z-path.a (11v/34/26) 8.4.166)

PB: “The same nature which, filled with ego, is such an ugly sight, becomes, when purified of it and reflecting the Overself’s presence, a beautiful one.” (8z-cnre.a (11v/34/27) 8.4.459)

PB: “All our movements occur within the “I.” All our decisions and judgements, inner experiences and intellectual perceptions are the product of egoistic activity.” (8z-ism.a (11v/34/29) 8.3.156)

PB: “A master counselled patience. “Can you break iron with your hands?” he asked. “File it down little by little and one day you will be able to snap it into two pieces with a single effort. So it is with the ego.”” (8e-sur.g (11v/33/29) 8.4.195)

PB: “When he clearly realizes and intensely feels that his ego is non-existent, unreal, and fictitious, how can he assert that he has found God, Truth, or Illumination? For he will then just as clearly see that there is no one to make the assertion. The others who do so, thereby show that they still have an ego; consequently they still remain outside the Truth. Their claim to enlightenment is, by their own words, stamped as false.” (8a-indc.a (11v/33/30) 8.1.214)

PB: “The student who wishes to progress beyond mere parrot-like book memorization will fill his mind with this great truth of the ego’s unreality, permeate it by constant reflections about it at every opportune moment, and regularly bring it into his formal meditation periods. He will approach it from every possible angle and study every possible side of it.” (8z-path.a (11v/33/31) 8.4.367)

PB: “Remove the concept of the ego from a man and you remove the solid ground from beneath his feet. A yawning abyss seems to open up under him. It gives the greatest fright of his life, accompanied by feelings of utter isolation and dreadful insecurity. He will then clamour urgently for the return of his beloved ego and return to safety once more--unless his determination to attain truth is so strong and so exigent that he can endure the ordeal, survive the test, and hold on until the Overself’s light irradiates the abyss.” (8z-cnre.4 (11v/33/32) Persp. p. 99 & 8.4.465) (reread)

PB: “The student who wishes. . .” reread.

PB: “The best measuring-stick for progress is, in earlier stages, the degree of disappearance of the ego’s rule and, in later ones, the degree of disappearance of the ego itself.” (8z-cnre.a (11v/33/33) 8-intro #2)

PB: “All his thoughts and imaginations are based on egoism, are immersed in the belief that the ego exists and is real.” (8z-ism.a (11v/33/34) 8.3.158)

PB: “The illusion of the ego stands behind all other illusions. If it is removed, they too will be removed.” (8z-cnre.4 (11v/33/36) Persp. p. 99 & 8.4.466)

EFFACING THE EGO; FORGIVING GOD

DB: . . . Which part of the sentence does ‘this’ refer to?

AD: That!

PB: “To surrender the ego. . .” (reread)

DB: I don’t understand the first part of the quote. He speaks of facing (effacing?) this ego whenever one becomes self-conscious, throughout the course of the day and so forth. What is meant by self-conscious in that context?

AD: When you’re thinking about yourself.

DB: That’s all?

AD: That’s all.

PB: “When a man can forgive God. . .” (reread)

DB: That was the ‘this’ I was asking about. Does it refer to both? (S: Yes.) What is the implication of speaking in terms of forgiving God there?

RC: Did you ever read C.S. Lewis’ book *Till We Have Faces*? He plays around with Cupid and Psyche in that book.

There’s one very beautiful daughter of the king and that’s Psyche. And she has a sister who’s extremely intelligent and very ugly. They grow up together and through the course of their childhood the more beautiful sister naturally is really loved, and at one point she even has healing powers. Anyway, they take her off and put her out in the dark someplace where the Love God is supposed to come get her.

The other sister thinks that’s just atrocious; the whole thing is just a pagan ritual. She develops a pretty good intellectual world-view in which she puts together a book about the grudges she has about each of the individual Gods. She intends to break all the myths down. She’s just about finished with the book when she meets her sister again. Her sister is just blissfully happy with this creature that the other person thought must be just an ugly horrible thing--if there even was such a thing--and it really shakes her up that her sister is really happy, having gone the way that she thought was primitive.

That night she has a dream. In the dream she walks a long, long time until she comes to the edge of the world, and a beach. She’s taken into a cave where she’s going to address the Gods. She’s been invited to read all of her objections to the Gods and make her case against them. She starts reading her book, accusing each individual God: this is something that you did wrong to such and such a person at such and such a time. And in the course of reading it to the Gods, it gets changed so that she’s saying that “I did” such and such a thing, “I thought” such and such, “I felt” such and such. So she goes through this experience of realizing that all the grudges that she had against the Gods were her own predispositions and her own misunderstandings.

DB: Can it be said that a certain level of the ego’s functioning is directed against the Overself? . . .

RC: I think more will come out when we get into the surrender quote . . . If I were to let go of that ME then most of the things that it objects to would go along with it.

LDm: I think it means to stop making judgments against other people, or God, and take the load on your own shoulders?

RC: . . . different kind of surrender appropriate for mystics and that the kind that's appropriate for the philosophers . . . But it's held more in a perspective of seeing how this person being at a certain stage couldn't have done otherwise, and dropping the emphasis that they did it to me, they would have done it to anybody, not feeling personally attacked, or personally offended.

MB: . . . If you identify too much with the experience you will not understand the laws that govern experience . . .

RC: . . . You can't extract yourself from these painful experiences until you do see how your own actions and predispositions contribute to them (this matrix?). . . . When you step back out of those habitual responses that precipitated situations that you don't want, you get a perspective where you can learn more about what's behind the whole situation. . . .

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 1027a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

IS THE EGO OPERATIVE IN PRAJNA CONSCIOUSNESS?

LR: On the first quote, I didn't think when you hit truth you had the ego anymore.

AD: No.

PB: "The ego moves . . ." (reread)

RC: It's not in the fourth state.

LR: I know, I was hoping it wasn't in the third either.

AB: Could you function with Prajna consciousness in the world?

LR: Yes.

AB: Then you'd have an ego.

LR: But is the Prajna consciousness waking consciousness?

AB: It might not exclude waking consciousness, which would mean that you'd still be functioning through an ego.

LR: No. If Prajna includes Taijasa and Vaishvanara, then you could be operating with Prajna without the ego--What do I understand as Prajna? Fully conscious. Identity of knower and known. Or truth.

RG: How would you distinguish . . . ?

LR: Turiya--I don't think there'd be anyone there to be conscious . . . It's hard for me to see how you could have that identity with truth and still hold a limited point of view.

AB: Wouldn't the ego still be there as a thought?

LR: I thought it was the Overself, which was in identity with that kind of truth. I don't want to equate ego with Overself. I thought the ego's kind of proper realm was wakeful and dream consciousness.

AS: The quote doesn't say that it is the ego which has the Prajna consciousness, just that the ego might be there even while there is Prajna consciousness. (inaudible) He's not saying the ego is what has Prajna consciousness. Somehow even in a Prajna experience it might appropriate that experience. It can't appropriate a Turiya experience (inaudible). I don't think he's saying that it's the ego that has this actual...

RG: I think you could make a case that there is a vehicle in Prajna. It's not pure Turiya. So that in the sense that there's any vehicle at all--any body, any sheath--that sheath could be construed as an ego. We've read a lot of quotes that show the highest level of the ego, as lasting through incarnations, is the I-thought that would be (inaudible) in the Prajna consciousness.

LR: But the vehicle here is the Overself.

RG: I disagree. The vehicle is not the Overself.

LR: The vehicle of truth?

RG: The Overself is never a vehicle.

LR: The Overself IS the vehicle for truth.

RG: You have to distinguish the truth of the 'what' from the truth of the 'who'--otherwise you have no distinction.

AH: There was a quote that spoke directly to that issue: whose ego is it that experiences the truth?

RG: But there's first a question of what level of truth. Would you equate the truth of Prajna with the truth of Turiya? No. Or would you?

LR: I think of Turiya as the Void.

RG: But is it Truth?

LR: I don't know what it is. I'm more concerned with--in the Prajna state if there could possibly be an identification with the subject(?) I see the explanation, that even in the Prajna state the ego could appropriate that experience.

AS: He says in another quote that the only place, the only place that the ego is finally obliterated is in the absolute stillness of Turiya.

FORGIVING GOD; FORGIVENESS

AD: It's obliterated in (the stillness of?) Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Before that it's still active. The ego could reach right up into the Prajna consciousness and it does, to some extent, interpret what's going on there. But I'm still interested in the other one, about forgiving God. You mean that until I forgive him, until that time, I'm going to go on being angry with him?

AS: But he says in the other quotes that the only God the ego worships is itself. I think that goes along with it.

AD: You're answering the question with another question. What I want to know is, am I going to be angry with God until I forgive him?

JG: It seems likely. (laughter from class)

AD: And he says I can't forgive him because the ego by definition won't forgive him.

AH: It seems that any anger or any dissatisfaction is anger and dissatisfaction with the higher principle.

AD: You're stopping there?

AH: In the context of this model of discussion, any dissatisfaction, any feeling of remorse, any negative feeling whatsoever, we're subtly blaming God for it. We hold it against him because of the basic dynamic of the ego structure itself. We have no reason whatsoever for righteous indignation under any circumstances. (laughter, then inaudible remarks)

AD: Not according to my ego. (might be responding to an inaudible remark)

DB: A quote I read in Ramana--he said most men are real happy to thank God for the things they're pleased with but very few are able to thank him for those things that they're not pleased with. That seems relevant to this quote. That's why I don't understand the whole purpose of forgiveness. Sometimes we can go through these unpleasant experiences and get enough understanding out of them, so that we have reason to be thankful for them. But that seems to me different somehow than saying I forgive you for such a resounding whack you gave me. I don't understand that at all.

MB: What's the difference?

DB: When you forgive someone--say I insult you, I do something bad, right? You get mad at me, but later on I apologize and say, "I'm sorry" and you say, "Oh, that's alright, I forgive you." It doesn't seem to work that way. If God apologizes to me then I forgive him. (laughter) I can't piece it together. I don't see what I have to forgive my Overself for.

AB: You forgive someone for something that you don't like that they did. The ego will never like, never be happy with its lot. It will always be disgruntled. So that's the sense in which . . .

HS: I don't really know that I'm mad at God.

JG: Oh, you are all the time. (laughter and many remarks at once, including:)

AB: Don't you say "Why do I deserve this?" . . .

HS: One questions his fate. You're talking about fate, karma?

AB: Yes, that's God.

AD: You wouldn't be angry, Herbie. You'd just be making jokes. (more laughter & inaudible remarks)

HS: Never mind. I don't understand. My every day life. I don't find any problem with it.

AH: But if the ego, the circumstances and the world are all part of the World-Idea, it's all presented by the World-Idea, what possible status does indignation enjoy? Where is there any place for indignation to occur, if the whole thing is presented by the World-Idea?

AD: That famous line from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, what was it? I'd rather be a devil in hell than an angel in heaven? (Students chime in with various versions, including: "Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven.") I could be mistaken. (lots of comments all at once)

LR: I don't get it either, Herbert. I don't think I'm mad at God. I'm just mad at everybody else.

MB: "Everybody else" is part of the sentence, too.

AS: Until you realize that there's God in everybody, you don't even realize that you're mad at the other person, you're really mad at God.

RG: Linda, you're never mad at the world for being the way it is. Not people, the world.

LR: I'm only mad at people.

MB: That was part of the sentence also, about forgiving other people. Randy read the quote?

RG: You've never been mad at Pluto, Linda, for giving you a certain experience?

PB: "When a man can forgive God all the anguish of his past calamities and when he can forgive other men and women for the wrongs they have done him . . ." (repeat)

AD: (interrupts para) He's not there. When he can forgive him, he's not there. What does that mean?

LrD (Laurie): The ego's not the one that does the forgiving, obviously.

AD: Ah, you're catching on.

RC: It would seem that those major events that we're talking of might be real fundamental to what the ego is. . . .

AD: The ego doesn't forgive anyone.

HS: It would seem, in the context of the sentence, we're talking about some outside power feeding you experiences that are going to cause you anguish. But I think if you're talking about forgiveness which can't come from the ego, it seems that there's also an assumption of the responsibility of your existence unto yourself, back to yourself.

AB: Doesn't that require a universal outlook? To see a purpose or appropriateness of something that happened to you? The ego couldn't have that universality so it can't really forgive.

HS: Yes, but this forgiveness . . .

AD: How often have you spontaneously forgiven someone who has hurt you deeply?

HS: Not at all. I don't know (?).

AD: Can you count them? Well, that's how often you were enlightened.

AD, aside: It's going to be a small book.

DB: Anthony, it doesn't seem like the ego's capable of doing anything but holding a grudge, right.

AD: You're catching on.

DB: Is it being said that when the self-will of the ego is dismantled or overthrown or annihilated that at that point whatever's left over, forgives?

AD: Get your ego out of the way, then something in you can forgive.

DB: Now there's something within us that can forgive. Now we've got the ego out of the way. Now are we talking about the relationship of this individuated consciousness to the Overself?

AD: You're making it complicated. I mean you're never going to get around to forgiving anyone by the time you find your way out of this. Perhaps (inaudible). You would have nothing to think to be angry about.

DB: It seems to me that once the ego is out of the way, it's not so much a question of forgiveness but a question of accepting whatever has happened. You want to know what the difference is?

AD: Yes, please. Accepting what happens to me and forgiving what made that happen.

DD: Perhaps it's just a question of semantics.

LR: I can understand needing to accept anything that comes, but . . .

RC: I can accept what someone does. I can accept the way a person's operating and still not like it. I'm not saying that's forgiveness, but I'm saying it can be done.

HS: It's not simple acceptance.

RC: There's more to it than just acceptance.

LrD: It's one thing to say you accept it, but it's another to really--anybody could just say that, and go along deluding themselves that they accept something.

RC: I think forgiving is a real big thing.

JG: Especially when it hurts you. If someone else is hurt, you can easily forgive.

JfL: I think forgiving involves a judgment. You've made a judgment about the person's position or stance.

AH: I think it's the same. Insofar as there's acceptance or forgiveness, the ego is displaced. Because the ego is that which cannot forgive or cannot accept. By definition. Haven't we agreed that the ego cannot engage in the act of forgiveness--by its own definition it can't do that? So, insofar as there is forgiveness, the ego's displaced. It's not like anything is gained. It's like something is just got out of the way.

DB: Perhaps it's just my heritage that holds onto--(class dissolves into laughter--this was a big class for mumbling and laughter.)

AP: Isn't it so that when this veil falls from your eyes and you see, the nature of the ego is revealed. Your own ego. You can't pass judgment on anybody else's. Isn't it more like that?

AD: Maybe you haven't noticed that if you forgave somebody, it wasn't YOU? Now, we're talking about when you got hurt, we're not talking about somebody hitting you with a fly swatter. (laughter) We're talking about you really getting hurt and you forgive them. Is it you? Have you noticed WHO it was? Let's go on to something else. You see the way the ego takes over, it takes credit: "I forgave you."

BS: Perhaps we don't understand what the act of true forgiving means. I know you say, well that's when you weren't yourself, you weren't the ego at that time, that's the time when you were inspired from/(or?) the Overself. . . .

AD: That's like being like nothing, Bert, in front of the other person.

BS: True, but still but perhaps we don't know.

AD: Well, I'm sure we all at some time, at one time or another must have had it, must have felt it.

BS: We've had it, but I do wonder about the significance. . . .

AD: Usually it's accompanied by the feeling, "Oh, ain't I great." That's of course something else. But if the forgiveness is really there, and spontaneous, you will see it's the higher part of you. It's certainly not your ego.

BS: Right now, the ego speaking--of course it would have to be the ego, the whole discussion--it would wonder the significance of that real forgiveness. If we're speaking--PB speaks--of whittling the ego, little by little--there's a real acceptance and so on. After awhile I get the feeling that, there's nothing left. Actually, what are we speaking about in terms of the person?--unless we're equating the person with the ego, that we're whittling down. In other quotes, PB says if the ego, or person, realized what it really is, it would realize that it's a representative of the Overself or the World-Mind. I could see the act of forgiveness is an act of selflessness, if it's done properly.

AD: Then why go on?

BS: Because I go right into the--Void.

AD: If it's truly an act of selflessness, why add any more words to it? That's it. In that moment you had forgiveness. Or forgiveness was given. But how could the ego, by definition, be selfless? How could it forgive?

BS: I'm probably trying too hard to see the (inaudible)--probably lack a certain amount of faith.

AD: There's some subtlety here.

BS: Let me see if I could bring out what I was thinking of before--I may have forgotten. In truly forgiving someone . . . (pause)

AD: The statement you made which was adequate and comprehensive. The moment of selflessness is when the act of forgiveness can take place. You may regret it when the ego comes back. (laughter from class)

MB: Can I add one thing to this, a different angle on this, a personal example? There are a lot of people that have been through very difficult times who become agnostic and the reason they become agnostic is because they feel that if there was a God he certainly wouldn't have allowed these things to happen. Wars, things that have happened in the world that are just hard to reconcile with the notion of a God that's good. And by becoming agnostic they've denied the existence of God and the possibility for them to ever achieve any realization of God or any denial of their ego. And it's by clinging to this blame, this situation of anger and blame that they've really precluded any possibility of liberation of them. I know so many people like that, personal examples, people in my family.

AD: So the ego has become very effective in maintaining that separation, hasn't it?

BS: One of the things that has occurred to me . . .

AD: You're probably wrong, of course.

BS: . . . is that a certain humility . . . (hard to hear)

AD: Well, practice it. (laughter) You do that all the time, right!!

(More PB paras & student discussion)

MORE PB PARAS ON EGO; TURN YOUR BACK ON THE EGO AND CONCENTRATE ON THE HIGHER SELF

AD: Let's have a few more, Randy.

PB: "The ego, with its petty conceit and private desires, shuts him in on itself and cuts him off from the universal life, with its truth and reality and power." (8z-blk.2 (11v/31/29) 8.4.119)

PB: "The more he tries to fight the ego, the more he thinks about it and concentrates on it. This keeps him still its prisoner. Better is it to turn his back on it and think about, concentrate on the higher self. " (8z-path.a (11v/31/31) 8.4.161)

PB: "Most aspirants will submit themselves to all sorts of disciplines for the body, the passions, and the mind but they will not submit to the one discipline that really matters. They cling to their precious ego like barnacles to a ship and will let everything else go except that." (8e-dif.p (11v/31/32) Persp. p. 101)

PB: "If people are so determined to become the victims of their own egos that no words, no sage counsel, can stop them, there is no other course left except to leave them to suffer the consequences of their actions and thus learn the hard way." (20a-eso.a (11v/31/33) 20.2.177)

DD: Keel-hauling . . .

AD: That's a very liberating doctrine, isn't it, Dennis?

DD: . . . I was thinking about barnacles.

[Audio File 1982 1027a Ends]

[Audio File 1982 1027b Begins]

PB: “The more he tries to fight the ego, the more he thinks about it and concentrates on it. This keeps him still its prisoner. Better is it to turn his back on it and think about, concentrate on the higher self.” (repeat, 8.4.161)

AH: I don’t understand that.

AD: That’s very easy, Andrew. When we come here and discuss the soul, you can’t be looking at television.

HS: So, all you’re doing is giving the guy a rest.

AD: Yes, but if you do it five or six nights a week, it helps.

HS: But then you have to be doing this all your life.

AD: Well, that’s alright. Then you get to the point where your life is over. (laughter)

HS: Yes, go on. What do I do then?

AD: Instead of thinking about the lower ego, think about the higher self.

AH: Then the ego’ll say, “What a good boy am I. I’m thinking about the higher self.”

AD: Not if you listen to Thomas Taylor, who keeps telling you you’re the dregs of the universe.

AH: Then the ego’ll say, “Look how terrible I am. I’m the dregs.” (laughter) How will you turn your back on it?

AD: Very easy! I keep telling you, you don’t believe me! You get angry. You turn around, and you walk away from it. That’s how you turn your back on it! What do you want! A map, a diagram? legends? It’s that simple and that straightforward. You get angry, you turn away and you walk away and you leave the anger where it was. You have to be kidding me if you want a diagram of this.

AH: Anthony, the first part of that quote where he talks about the trap of trying to discipline the ego, that it’s really a way of submitting to it.

AD: He’s talking there about the long path and there he’s giving you a very precise formulation of how to cut the whole problem, by turning your back on these things. If you keep trying to think of how you can straighten out your ego, you’ll be forever involved. If you just turn your back on it and do the things that really matter you won’t have to worry about straightening out the ego. Except a little bit. (laughter)

DB: The difference between being constantly preoccupied with one’s own special self as opposed to being constantly preoccupied with the thought of the Overself . . .

PB: “Whatever you do to work upon the ego, whether you remove this weakness or improve that faculty, it will always be ego and your consciousness will always remain within its tightly closed circle. In the time you give to such work you could be occupying yourself with thought of the non-ego, the Overself, and dwelling in this thought until the sunshine behind it bursts through and you bask in the glory. “ (23a-tns.3 (17v/45/4) 23.4.64)

PB: “By contemplating the inner sun, the Overself, he is inevitably drawn upward in increasing light . . .”
(para continues) (2a-prg.3 (17v/46/4) 2.2.34)

LR: Remember the quote you read about when ego lapses and you experience despair, loss, you don’t have any ground to stand on, you don’t know where you are, and then he says you’ll run right back to the ego unless you have this great aspiration for truth. He seems to imply there that there may be a waiting period--between the lapse of the ego and any kind of irradiation of light? Is that true? Is that necessary?

AD: It wants to know if it’s for real.

LR: So it’s actually possible for the ego to lapse and for you to be locked totally in that state?

AD: No, there’s a waiting period. It simply means that that’s a period of testing. If you really mean it.

LR: Would that be like the dark night? Is that part of the dark night?

AD: You can call it that. It doesn’t have to be.

LR: He’s got a lot of quotes on the dark night. Would you classify that as the dark night?

AD: It’s felt as a dark night but that’s because there’s no philosophic understanding. If there was then there wouldn’t be a dark night. It’d just be grayish. . . . Let’s have some more, Randy. I don’t want you kids to get morbid.

MORE PB PARAS ON EGO; SOUL’S AUDACITY; NIRVANA

PB: “The ego may warp his mind with feelings of unwarranted despair and imaginations of unjustified defeatism or with feelings of exaggerated achievement and imaginations of unjustified optimism. “ (8d.a (11v/31/34) 8.3.72)

AD: Go on to the next one.

PB: “So long as we maintain our foolish self-sufficiency, our independence of the Divine source, we must expect to be left to manage living with just these limited resources.” (8z-why.1 (11v/31/35) unpublished)

PB: “It is not wrong that we love and serve ourselves . . .”

AD: For who else is going to do it?

PB, cont: “. . . for who else is closer?--but only that we do so by excluding the higher purpose of life.”
(8z-ism.3 (11v/31/38) 8.3.163)

PB: “A man begins to come into his own the day he rejects the ego. His rejection may not last more than a minute or two, for the false self is strong enough to reclaim its victim. But the process has started which will bring it to an end.” (8z-path.a (11v/31/39) 8.4.162)

DB: Was that quote saying something to the effect that we’re doing all this to ourselves, all the time? We actually make the decisions?

AD: Why do you think you’re always angry at God for?

RG: He’s making you do it yourself! (laughter from class)

DB: It seems to me a remarkably different perspective to think of this limitation that we function within as being something that we do. It's not like it's an accomplished fact, and somehow we got stuck in it, and we're just trying to figure a way out of it, but we do it all the time, each moment. We bring it to birth. It's something we're continually doing all the time, and we like it. We like it here. I mean, we do this silly business and we like it.

RC: I think that thing that Anthony mentioned before. It generally fits the archetype. When Lucifer decides that he is leaving, his statement is that it's better to rule in hell than serve in heaven. He's one of the most colorful figures in Western literature.

DB: Certainly one of the most well-lit.

AD (95% probability): It's not a figure, it's our ego.

RC: Much more interesting than God in . . .

AH: Is it so that we do it to ourselves? Is it so that we do it with every thought?

AD: With every breath!

AH: Every single thought keeps doing it.

AD: Remember when Plotinus asked, "What makes our souls leave the Nous?" He says, "It's self-audacity." [Note: See Plotinus, V.1.1 (second para), IV.8.5 (fourth para).]

AH: Are there any thoughts that don't do it?

AD: If it's a thought, it's doing that.

(fairly inaudible exchange)

CdA: How are you comparing self-audacity to the ego?

AD: The ego is an emanant of the Overself.

CdA: The audacity is the actual incarnation as the . . .

AD: . . . It's right there in (inaudible), right in the Overself.

CdA: The audacity is prior to it. It always seemed that because the audacity always being there . . .

AD: It's not always there. Not all souls have it.

CdA: But it's that audacity that made the soul . . .

AD: . . . which made the devil say I'd rather rule in hell than serve as an angel in heaven.

CdA: Is that audacity part of the Soul in the Nous?

AD: (hard to hear, to CdA) Yes . . . it goes right down . . .

Let's read a few more. Dickie, you up there, I want you to get to the one for the Buddhists. There's the one quote by the Buddha.

PB: “Buddhism points out that although Nirvana *is*, there is no self to perceive it. As Buddhism denies a permanent self, the question of what Nirvana is *experimentally* does not arise. . . .”

RG: Is this the one you mean?

AD: There’s a couple there. Go right along.

PB, cont: “. . . Nirvana is not a state of mind which is to be produced but is what is realized when the long-cherished notion of “I” is given up. Nirvana, in short, is the miracle of egoless being. The Buddha’s doctrine of the soul was stated in negative terms because he was controverting current misconceptions. He explained this in *Alagadupama Majjhima*, 1, 135: “Even in this present life, my brethren, I say that the soul is indefinable. Though I say and teach thus, there are those who accuse me falsely of being a nihilist, of teaching the non-existence and annihilation of the soul. This is what *I am not and do not teach.*”” (22c-b.a (11V/30/21) 22.3.406)

AD: Face east when you say that. A few people to the east. Read it again. That’s one of the canonical writings and I can show you dozens of them. Read that again.

(PB: “Buddhism points out. . .” reread)

RG: Do you want to comment on that, Anthony?

AD: No, go on a little bit more. I don’t think a comment is necessary.

PRACTICE SEEING THE EGO IMPERSONALLY; A SAGE HAS TO WILL HIMSELF INTO INCARNATION; MORE PB PARAS ON EGO

PB: “There is a useful technique to help attain this purpose. It is to refuse to identify oneself, one’s “I,” with the personal ego. This calls for frequent, if momentary, awareness of thoughts, emotions, and the body. It can be done at any time in any place and is not to be regarded as a meditation exercise.” (8z-path.a (11v/30/20) 8.4.159) (reread)

JfL: Would this relate to the self-consciousness of what a ego is, that was in one of the earlier quotes? There was that quote where--at certain moments in the day, if you’ve been faithful, and you practice your meditation--then when the moment comes you can turn your back on the ego. (?--whole paragraph fairly inaudible)

AD: No, it means something different. What he’s saying here is that, every now and then try to take an impersonal view of what’s going on. Look at yourself objectively, as though you were another person, completely different, you don’t recognize yourself as yourself. A really impersonal objective view--of the moment. And that brings about a kind of dis-identification. That’s what I meant when I said, you turn your back on the ego. If you get angry and you just look at it very impersonally and objectively, at that moment, there does develop this detachment from identification with the ego. The consequence of that is a certain impersonality and a certain flow, flower, and the more that impersonality flowers, the more obvious your ego becomes.

EleanorC: Is it part of the soul’s function to descend? When is it audacity and when is it not? (AD/EC question clarification)

RC: The choice of whether to serve in heaven or rule in hell, it doesn't matter, the physical place or the time. You can be physically in the same place and be doing either.

EC: I hear that, but I also hear that descent was called audacity which means . . .

RC: The audacity is what makes it a descent.

EC: You're saying that the soul, on the physical level doesn't have to have audacity?

RC: Yes, incarnation is not necessarily incarceration.

EC: Anthony's got to answer that . . .

AD: He answered.

EC: He did?

AD: Yes.

EC: Are you saying that PB came in free of audacity?

RC: I asked him how it was that a Jivanmukti could reincarnate--the karmic thread was broken. How do those two things go together: no more karma, yet you come back. He said you have to exert the will. If you don't exert the will you don't come back--here.

LR: What about for the rest of us? (RC: inaudible)

AD: Don't worry, you'll exert the will, you'll exert it.

RC: We (Q: Randy & PB?) were talking about the body, the notion of the philosopher's acceptance of the ego and inquiry into what it means to have a body, to be incarnated and so on, and I told him I'd never been able to agree with the Hindu's formulation of Jivanmukti as it had been presented. That to me it seemed that it was something that in principle didn't make sense, that the soul of God could be ripped out of the body of God once and for all. He said there always will be an association with some sort of body.-- We were discussing the Plotinus quote about when the soul has awakened it "walks the lofty ranges" . . . -- [Note: See Plotinus, IV.8.2, fourth para.] He said there'll always be some association with body, not necessarily this kind of body. You can get out of this one. He said most of them do. Most of them don't come back into this kind of condition. In order to do that you have to exert the will.

AD: Let's read a few more.

RC: From what I saw of him, it was much more of a serving in heaven than any ruling of hell--he was opening the door to anyone who wanted to walk in.

PB: "If he ruefully realizes that his most seemingly spiritual conduct and apparently altruistic deeds have been illusory, if he sees at long last that he has lived for his little self alone even when the world admired his unselfishness, then the time has come to live not primarily for others, but for the other self, his highest and greater one." (8e-sur.a (11v/30/22) 8.4.224)

PB: “The ego’s self-love is so strong, its attachment to old attitudes so tenacious, its justification of wrong or foolish deeds so blind, that the likelihood of vanquishing its rule is a thin one. All this shows how absurd is man’s complacent self-righteousness and smug virtue.” (8z-si.2 (11v/30/23) 8.3.146)

PB: “Only he who seeks constantly to efface his personal ego can know how hard, how long-drawn a labour it necessarily is. For it demands not only an absolute honesty of self-examination but also a complete modesty of attitude.” (8e-dif.3 (11v/30/24) 8.4.277)

PB: “If man is really looking at his own image most of the time, if everything that happens to him is regarded by him as of paramount importance, the ego being what it is, this could not be otherwise.” (8z-blk.0 (11v/30/27) unpublished)

PB: “One of the ego’s chief delusions takes the form of believing that its advance planning, its reasoned management, and its apparent solutions of problems are more important than they really are.” (8d.2 (11v/28/39) 8.3.100)

PB: “Although the price of attainment, which is the gradual giving up of the lower self, is agonizing because the lower one is the only self we know ordinarily, there is for every such surrender a compensation equal in value at least to what is given up, and actually of more surpassing worth. This compensation is not only a theoretical one, it is a real experience; and at the last, when the whole of the lesser self is surrendered, the only description of it which mere words can give is blissful peace. Since agony of mind cannot coexist with peace, the agony falls away and only the peace remains. The warning must be given, however, that the Higher Self never yields its compensations until the requisite surrender is made. If this is done little by little, which is usually the only way it can be done, then the lovely compensation will follow also little by little.” (8z-cnre.a (11v/28/40) 8.4.443)

AD: Did you get your question answered, Linda?

(inaudible)

SOMETHING IN THE EGO RECOGNIZES THE HIGHER POWER IN A PERVERSE WAY; BATTLE WITH THE EGO AND SURRENDER

PB: “If we could pin down this sense of “I”-ness which is behind all we think, say, and do, and if we could part it from the thoughts, feelings, and physical body by doing so, we would find it to be rooted in and linked with the higher Power behind the whole world.” (8a-eph.4 (11v/28/44) Persp. p. 102 & 8.1.134)

AD: Try once more and then go back to that complaint we have about--to the Lord, you know?

PB: “If we could. . .” (reread)

LrD: So the feeling of I-ness that we have, is ultimately derived from our identification with the higher power.

AD: Isn’t he saying there in a nice easy way that you know why the world is the way it is and why you’re angry at it? Doesn’t it come to that? That you really know there’s an Infinite Power behind this world which makes this world to be what it is and that therefore your ego is justified in being forever angry at

that Power. Doesn't it come to that? I told you the ego's a very smart guy. He knows much more than we give him credit for. That's why I said that this was a very liberating doctrine. All these readings that we're doing. A compulsion, when not understood, is the most dangerous of all things, and the effort to understand something about the ego and the way it works is an absolute necessity in this game.

DB: You're saying that you isolate this sense of I-ness from the feelings and thoughts and so forth and you discover, or it's discovered, that its source is the Overself or the World-Mind? So that IF he's aware of the fact that the world is the way it is because of the fact that it's a projection or an expression of the World-Mind or the Overself, and it is aware that IT is equally a projection, and it's because of it that it's angry. Did I just say the same thing you did?

AD: (I put it) (Q: hard to hear) a little differently.

DB: That's what I was afraid of.

AD: Doesn't it simply come to the enmity ("aminty") that exists between the ego and its higher self?

DB: Can it be said that the sense of separation that the ego experiences from the higher self is precisely that enmity? It depends on that enmity for its separation from the higher self, its anger, its whatever.

AD: No. I was just thinking of the fact that there's something in the ego that recognizes the Higher Power in a very perverse way. And that this recognition is why the ego could never forgive the God or the Father or whatever the Power is that made that world, because it certainly didn't make the world according to its desire.

DB: According to the ego's desire, right. But I don't understand this perverse manner in which it's aware of this responsibility because it seems that the very fact that it can make this sort of judgment is a reflection of the fact of its source being rooted in the Higher as well. It wouldn't even be able to do so if it weren't for the Higher Power.

AD: That's alright.

DB: It doesn't matter to it?

AD: It doesn't matter.

(fairly inaudible dialogue is below:)

JfL: The ego has its source in the Overself and is fed by the infinite?

AD: By the same power that made the world.

JfL: When you get into the--when you take the ego and try to strip it of all its accumulations from the cosmic circuit . . .

AD: It's part of the cosmic circuit. It's part of the World-Idea.

JfL: You try to strip it of (inaudible). You're left with just the bare scrap of what it is. As you take the file and file down the metal . . . (Q: Ref is to 8.4.195, "This whittling away . . ." read at beginning of class, not marked)

AD: . . . As you thin down the ego.

JfL: As you thin down the ego--you don't have the ego anymore or the rational soul or the thoughts--it now has only (inaudible).

AD: Yes.

JfL: Only has--and you're in an area where it has a hang line?

AD: Hang line?

JfL: Hang line, narrow support--you're going to jump off this little thing it's hanging on. . . .

AD: It's not going to jump off. It's not going to do it voluntarily.

JfL: Let's say it gets pulled out from under him. Now you're left . . .

AD: That could bring about not only an intense meditation but it could also bring about a pathological conflict.

JfL: The ego would--(destroy?) itself.

AD: For you to engage in the conflict, withdrawing from the ego--will brings about a pathological conflict. I mean it's usually brought about that way. You're not going to go in there and say I'm going to have fifteen rounds with you.

JfL: Where is this battle being staged? Where is it in terms of the chart?

AD: There's no place on the chart.

RG: You can't find it in the twelfth house.

AD: You can't find it anywhere. But it will be in you. The battle will take place in you. You'll know it. It'll be brought about. There's very rare exceptions like Ramana, you remember, when he, I don't know what, he took out a cigar, a ring or something, he took three things, threw them on the ground and stepped on them. That was the announcement that it was over. But prior to that, you know, when he said he wanted to experience death, he had brought that on almost, I mean, because there was that maturity.

Remember, he decided that he wanted to experience and see what death was, he lay down in the corpse posture, put himself into trance. And there, right then and there, he conquered the ego. I think those kind of people are rare. Most of us do it the other way. It's going to happen TO us. (inaudible . . .) That's why I don't like to talk about surrender because it's really a paradoxical thing. Very paradoxical.

Well, a few more? Ten o'clock, ok. Dennis, I still say this is a liberating doctrine. Because this is a good example of it. Dennis, see? That sword (Q: statue of man slaying dragon with sword on mantle piece) is PB's remark. That sword is the same like those remarks PB is making, without which we don't even know what to do with it.

DD: He doesn't seem angry either.

AD: No, he's not angry. He's very calm, cool, and collected.

MORE PB PARAS ON EGO

PB: “Both emotional reactions and reasoned convictions may be wrong so long as a man is not purified of this egoism.” (8z-ism.2 (11v/26/24) 8.3.171)

PB: “A man can carry his selfishness into his rules of self-discipline, his ambition into his aspirations, and his vanity into his meditations. The results will only stimulate his ego, and not minify it.” (8z-sp.2 (11v/26/25) 8.4.337)

PB: “Nothing can annihilate the ego during the body’s lifetime, but its function can be reduced to one of mere subservience to the Overself.” (8a-indb.a (11v/25/1) 8.1.185)

PB: “Everything seems lost to a man when he surrenders his own personal will deep in his heart to the higher self, when he abandons his personal aims, wishes, and purposes at its bidding. Yet the truth is that only then is everything gained.” (8z-cnre.a (11v/25/6) 8.4.458)

PB: “When we talk of the ego we mean the mind, the body, the senses, and the memory. For take them away and we are as nothing.” (8c.3 (11v/25/11) 8.3.19)

PB: “The lines along which every ego has to develop its consciousness lead first to an increased self-centeredness and selfishness but later to their waning. It is useless to wish that it were otherwise, to wish for a good without its evil shadow, to say that the horrors of war would then never have occurred.” (11z.0 (11v/24/39) unpublished) (reread)

PB: “It is both true and untrue that we cannot take up the ego with us into the life of mystical illumination. The ego is after all only a reflection, extremely limited and often distorted, of the Higher Self . . . but still it is a reflection. If we could bring it into correct alignment with, and submission to, the Higher Self, it would then be no hindrance to the illumined life. The ego cannot, indeed, be destroyed so long as we need its serviced while in the flesh; but it can be subjugated and turned into a servant instead of permitting it to remain a master. When this is understood, the philosophical ideal of a fully developed, mastered, and richly rounded ego acting as a channel for the inspiration and guidance of the Higher Self will be better appreciated. A poverty-stricken ego will naturally form a more limited channel for the expression of the Higher Self than would a more evolved one. The real enemy to be overcome is not the entity ego, but the function of egoism.” (8a-indc.4 (11v/8/14) Persp. p. 100 & 8.1.206)

AD: That’s a very good one. I think you ought to read it once more and we’ll call it a night.

PB: “It is both. . .” (reread)

AD: I’d like to ask you, do you want to continue? I think we’ve got enough for another two readings.

RC: At least one.

AD: At least one? Do you want to finish it up, because then that will be practically everything we found on the ego. I think it is worth it. It’s really the only thing that’s worth it. If you go home and you experience a certain kind of nausea now and then, that’s a good sign. If we’re not happy with our lot, that’s a good sign.

So, alright, then we’ll finish it up next week . . . Then Randy wants to bring you some encouragement . . . (simply) because I won’t be here. [Audio File 1982 1027b Ends]