

CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
November 24, 1982
PB PARAS; PHILOSOPHY; SAGE

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Philosophy

SUBSUBJECT: Sage

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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 Some Paul Brunton Notebook paras are, as of 2018, unpublished, and are noted as such.
- Bible, John (15:5)
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

NOTES:

- Anecdotes about PB highlighted in yellow.
- PB quotes are from Red Volume 12 (12v).
- Earlier transcript versions exist.

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Readable edited transcript – V14.1r.

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1982 11/24 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Philosophy; Sage
Readable Edited Transcript

PB PARAS ON THE SAGE; HELP THE SAGE GIVES; EFFECTS OF THE SAGE'S PRESENCE

[Audio File 1982 1124a Begins]

PB: "Let us not wrongly believe that such a man is content to live in cold and proud spiritual aloofness, without charitable thought for his erring fellows and without compassionate feeling for his groping ones." (unpublished, 12v/125/68)

PB: "His wonderful calmness does not make him utterly impervious to all the happenings of his era, nor callous to all the turns of national fortune or disaster." (25.3.231)

PB: "He neither approves nor disapproves of anyone." (25.3.327)

PB: "Through good and bad fortune alike he will carry this peace with him." (unpublished, 12v/125/72)

PB: "That certitude which comes to him is not merely the kind which opposes the meaning of hesitance, but also the kind which is the opposite of mere belief, which is born of complete understanding, perfect knowledge, and direct experience." (25.3.193)

PB: "It is not the studied poise of good breeding but a natural poise upwelling from within." (25.3.291)

PB: "The adept is built too high for ordinary men to appreciate him and too remote for them to understand him. It is inevitable that he should dwell isolated and aloof from all except those whose great aims justify the contact." (25.3.469)

PB: "One feels that such an adept is in mind the oldest man one knows and yet in heart the youngest." (25.3.196)

PB: "One enters his presence with humility--for here is a man immeasurably greater than oneself--and with relief, for it soothes and calms as nothing else does or can." (25.5.144)

PB: "The sage is not less practical for all his transcendental consciousness and mystical experience. He understands as well as any cynic the low depths on which so many human relations function. He sees quite clearly the greeds, the pettinesses, and the rancours that fill the air of human society. But he also sees beyond and above them." (25.3.197)

PB: "The contradictory attitudes involved in satisfying physical need and submitting to spiritual detachment are united and resolved by the sage into a single harmonious insight." (25.2.241)

PB: "The belief that the adept can explain everything is a false one." (25.3.357)

PB: "Such is the World-Mind's grace that it inspires men of the most different types to arise and help their fellows, men as widely apart as General Booth, who founded the Salvation Army, and the late Lord Haldane, who sought to translate his philosophical vision into unselfish public service. Thus, even in the darkest epochs someone eventually appears to help the most ignorant, the most sinful, and the most

illiterate, even as someone eventually appears to guide the virtuous, educated, and intellectual. Inability to comprehend the highest truth or inability to live up to the loftiest ethics is not made by true sages a bar to bestowing help. They assist the undeveloped from where they now stand. And such is the wisdom of these sages that they know just how much to give and in what form it can best be assimilated, even as they know when it is better to convey material assistance only and when ethical, religious, mystical, or philosophical instruction should also be given.” (25.5.97)

AH: How would the sage bestow material help?

AD: You got 14 windows in the barn out there.

AH: I can’t hear you.

AD: You got 14 windows in the cellar of Mrs. Ybor’s.

AH: Oh, no! (laughter)

AD: (inaudible), Andrew.

(student comments)

AD: (inaudible). I always used to take some souvenir back with me. So did everybody else. He gave you your board back, didn’t he, Andrew?

AH: Gave me what?

AD: Your cutting board? Isn’t that a material thing?

AH: But, Anthony, certainly this quote isn’t only referring to the collection of relics. I mean, there must be some other--

AD: I would frame that if I were you.

AH: I actually use it.

AD: Alright, but you’ll have it longer if you frame it. (laughter)

AH: Is there something more in this quote? (laughter) The question is can the sage alter circumstances for people if that’s to their benefit?

JG: You mean the board is not enough? (laughter)

AH: Yes.

AD: (inaudible)

AH: This discussion is becoming increasingly cryptic. (more laughter)

(student comments)

RC: I was a little perplexed with healing power; we talked a lot about that, and in different places in the notes, he even talks about some of the healing practices that he used to do. That would probably be material benefit.

AmyO: What was that one prerequisite?

RC: Entering the thought-free state, step one. (laughter)

(Inaudible student comments)

DB: . . . There is a quote in there that speaks of the sense of relief and calm that one experiences in the presence of the sage and the awareness of peace that is possible in that presence.

VM: . . .

DB: How is it possible that we could be aware of that?

JG: Aware of your own peacefulness or PB's?

(DB/JG/Inge/DB et al./LaurieD/)

DB: There's something completely, other-worldly, absolutely transcendent to everything that comes within the circle of the ego's experience of the world, you can't see it, you can't hear it, and yet it's unavoidably present, and one can be aware of that, I can't understand how--I'm not disputing it--

AD: You're not aware of that, David. What you're aware of is that your thought-process have slowed down. You're not aware of the peace except through that film. Ok?

DB: So you're saying that in that presence, one's own individual thought-processes are stilled--

AD: Slowed down, not stilled.

DB: Slowed down so that the feeling of the peace is an inner resonance to that presence.

AD: Yes. When your thoughts slow down, then you automatically start feeling peaceful. But another person might enter into the presence of the sage and would feel tremendous agitation, and feel all kinds of (things/pain). It depends on the sensitivity of the person.

RC: I told him about--Edgar Allan Poe describes his first meeting with Walt Whitman, and he said he looked up from his desk and saw this giant of a man standing in the doorway, and he looked into these deep blue eyes, and for the first time in his life, Poe said he knew terror. And PB said, "Well, sure, not everyone would find it terrifying."

AD: Wasn't Poe also an alcoholic?

DB: A junkie.

(Silence for about 1 minute.)

MORE PB PARAS ON THE SAGE; PB ANECDOTE

PB: "There is no such act as a one-sided self-giving. Karma brings us back our due. He who spends his life in the dedicated service of philosophic enlightenment may reject the merely material rewards that this service could bring him, but he cannot reject the beneficent thoughts, the loving remembrances, the sincere veneration which those who have benefited sometimes send him.* Such invisible rewards help him to atone more peacefully and less painfully for the strategic errors he has made, the tactical

shortcomings he has manifested. Life is an arduous struggle for most people, but much more so for such a one who is always a hated target for the unseen powers of darkness. Do not hesitate to send him your silent humble blessing, therefore, and remember that Nature will not waste it. The enemies you are now struggling against within yourself he has already conquered, but the enemies he is now struggling against are beyond your present experience. He has won the right to sit by a hearth of peace. If he has made the greatest renunciation and does not do so, it is for your sake and for the sake of those others like you.” (25.3.552 & Persp. p. 357) (quote reread)

(At * above: AD: Could you reread that? TS: There’s more.)

PB: “When he has fully accomplished this passing-over, all the elements of his lower nature will then have been fully eliminated. The ego will be destroyed. Instead of being enslaved by its own senses and passions, blinded by its own thoughts and ignorance, his mind will be inspired, enlightened, and liberated by the Overself. Yet life in the human self will not be destroyed because he has entered life in the divine Overself. But neither will it continue in the old and lower way. That self will henceforth function as a perfectly obedient instrument of the soul and no longer of the animal body or intellectual nature. No evil thought and no animal passion can ever again take hold of his mind. What remains of his character is therefore the incorruptible part and the immortal part. Death may rob him of lesser things, but not of the thing which he cherishes most. Having already parted in his heart with what is perishable, he can await it without perturbation and with sublime resignation.” (25.3.168 & Persp. p. 349)

PB: “An illumined being would better describe his inner status by the phrase “God am I,” than by “I am God,” as his first thought is not “I” but “THAT.”” (25.1.161) (quote repeated)

PB: “Although fully deserving it, he is too humble to demand and always too embarrassed when offered any special reverence.” (25.3.246)

PB: “He is too humble to make a parade of the power he could exercise at will.” (unpublished, 12v/113/59)

PB: “Negative thoughts may seek to assail him but never again can they succeed in penetrating his consciousness.” (unpublished, 12v/113/62)

PB: “Such an illumined man understands well enough that this mysterious power which emanates from him is not really his own at all. It belongs to his higher self. Without the latter he would be powerless. It was the Christ-self in Jesus which said: “Without me you can do nothing.” John XV, 5.” (unpublished, 12v/113/64)

PB: “He alone is free and competent who has his hand and heart and head and ego under perfect control. But where can you find such a man?” (unpublished, 12v/113/66)

PB: “His ever-present calmness is not a mask for secretive emotions, inner conflicts, mental tensions, or explosive passions.” (25.3.164)

PB: “His is indeed a life full of paradoxes. Outwardly he may be a millionaire. Inwardly he owns nothing, begs at the door of God.” (25.3.397)

PB: “The existence of the sage as a type is hard to prove simply because the existence of the sage as an individual is hard to confirm. He is almost unique on this planet. He is, for practical purposes, an Ideal rather than an ACTUALITY.” (25.3.59) (Q: In the Red 12 volume in the library (p.112), Anthony underlined the words ‘almost unique on’ and noted in the margin ‘unique=at most one’.)

PB: People sometimes ask why anyone should give up even a part of his time to unpaid service. But the truth is that the sage is always paid by the friendship and gratitude, the trust and affection, which those he has helped return him. And if it be further said that these are mere intangibles which do not pay for the time and energy he gives, the answer is that they often are convertible into the most tangible of things. For if he is in real need of a home, a machine, a piece of domestic furniture, or a form of personal service, he has only to express that need and those whom he has helped will provide it. Nay, there are times when he need not even express it, when the silent magic of thought will prompt someone to offer the provision quite spontaneously and voluntarily. Anyway, the sage does not give his service with any thought about the getting or non-getting of rewards. He gives it because he thinks it right to do so and because he enjoys the satisfaction of giving a helping hand to the spiritually needy. In short, he is doing what he likes.” (25.4.9)

TS: One day I was rather exhausted and I was AMAZED at the amount of energy and productivity that PB operated with. I said, “I came here and I thought that there would be periods of rest in the sage (inaudible). Anthony works ten times harder than I do, you work ten times harder than he does, where does this end?” “Well, that’s as it should be.”

PB: “No one has ever brought a full report when he emerged from tunnelling in that mystic silence, and no one can.” (24.4.207)

PB: “In this hour of supreme comprehension, in this transition to a new and higher life he finds supreme liberation.” (unpublished, 12v/111/67)

PB: “To one observer such a man seems to live inside himself, to another outside himself. To the first, he is held fast to some internal power; to the second, he is constantly practising self-identification with others.” (25.3.505) (quote reread)

PB: “The spiritually stronger a man becomes, the less he needs to lean on other men. Consequently advanced mystics have little or no need of joining any society, fraternity, or community. All talk of the adepts and masters themselves being members of such associations, living together in Tibet or elsewhere, is nonsensical fantasy.” (25.3.25)

PB: “Cryptic and enigmatic his conduct may be at times to the ordinary observer’s eye, but good and wise it will always be to the spiritually discerning eye.” (25.3.410)

PB: “What this harmony means is that the hidden centre of consciousness within the other person will be alike to the centre within himself.” (22.3.109)

(Student discussion = 1-2 minutes)

THE SAGE IS GUIDED BY THE LOGOS OF THE PERSON HE’S RELATING TO

AH: Remember last week that long and very interesting description of how a sage works with a student? Like he imagines him as his higher self, maybe this relates to that quote.

TS: It would seem to, that he takes the other person's center into harmony with his own--or with the centralized consciousness within him.

AD: You're right, Tim, for the sage, the guidance that he gets is the other person's self, that guides him in his behavior to that other person. (pause)

PB: "The illuminated man's conduct in this world is a guided one. His senses tell him what is happening in the world about him, but his soul guides him to a proper evaluation of those sense reports. In this way he lives in the world, but is not of it. Of him alone is it true to say that his is a spiritual life." (25.3.166)

PB: "Whatever greatness the world looks up to him for possessing, vanishes utterly from his mind in the presence of this infinite greatness." (25.3.260)

Laurie Dam: What part of the aspirant's higher self does the sage connect with, in that quote about the identity? When he connects with that higher part of the aspirant, does he connect with the part that's guiding the person's life in the world?

AD: You're back on the other one?

He's guided by the Logos in the other person's soul, how to relate to that person. That's what guides him in this behavior, that's the basis of harmony. He's not guided by the ego's proclivities, this, that, and the other thing. He's guided by the soul of that person, as to how to relate to him--that brings about the harmony.

Did I answer it, Laurie?

LrD: Um. In other words, I'm thinking of the distinction between the Soul in the Intellectual and the soul as it's guiding the person's life. And I'm wondering which part of that--

AD: We won't make those fine distinctions--they're unnecessary here--all he's simply saying is--if you have--if you talk to him, he doesn't tell you what you want to hear, he tells you what you NEED to hear. (pause)

Got a few more, Tim?

TS: Yes.

AD: Let's hear them.

MORE PB PARAS ON THE SAGE; CERTAIN QUESTIONS CAN ONLY BE ANSWERED BY REFERENCE TO THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE SAGE; BUDDHA'S FIRST DISCIPLES

PB: "Those who do not understand and appreciate this great control of feeling, and especially those who are highly emotional themselves, will see him merely from the outside and consequently misunderstand his character. They will consider him to be a cold, shut-in type." (25.3.518)

PB: "The man who finishes the Way must necessarily be solitary inwardly, for he has torn himself away from the common illusion." (20.5.150)

PB: "He accepts his inner isolation and learns to live in it, realizing that he can do nothing about it. The compensation for such acceptance is that his serenity remains impregnable." (20.5.162)

PB: "He is among the great solitary spirits of mankind, yet he can never be called lonely for in himself he is always sufficient." (25.3.442)

PB: "Even in the outer life, he and his kind must be reserved and withdrawn; it cannot be helped. He cannot descend any more to the residence of the inwardly shabby, the intuitionally destitute." (25.3.425)

PB: "He can take no credit of his own for the service rendered, and call no attention to himself. How could he honestly do so when he is fully aware that it is only by ceasing from his own activities, by being inwardly still, and by abandoning his own ego that the power which really renders the service manifests itself?" (25.4.269)

PB: "He who has got to this stage has a serenity and self-rulership which abides with him at all times and in all places." (unpublished, 12v/108/214)

PB: "At the end of all its adventures, the lower self may indeed have to go, but the indestructible higher self will not go. In this sense there is no utter annihilation of the individual, no complete mergence of it into an all-swallowing ocean of cosmic consciousness, as so many Western critics of Eastern wisdom believe to be the latter's last word." (22.3.389)

PB: "It will suffice for him to be what he is and thirsty seekers will draw from him in a mysterious, silent way, what they need of his power and wisdom, his love and serenity. The beautiful statement of Bishop Phillips Brooks is worth quoting here: "It is the lives like the stars, which simply pour down on us the calm light of their bright and faithful being, up to which we look, and out of which we gather the deepest calm and courage.'" (25.4.268)

PB: "Such a man cannot be really known by those who have not themselves touched his height; part of him--the most important and precious part--must always remain an inscrutable stranger to them." (25.3.504)

PB: "People have these men of the spirit among them and do not know it, often do not care to know it." (25.3.396)

PB: "The adept has his limitations, like other human beings. He is subject to the same vicissitudes of fortune that they are. He is liable to the natural changes of life, to sickness and death. He is certainly not as powerful as so many credulous and superstitious believers imagine him to be." (25.3.371)

PB: "They are the best men of our age yet they are not pretentious or condescending, not arrogant or conceited." (unpublished, 12v/106/174)

PB: "He lives every moment in the awareness of his higher self. Yet this does not oppose nor interfere with, the awareness of his lower one." (25.2.208)

PB: "There are some questions which, because they pertain to a plane of living beyond the familiar one, are so difficult to answer that they can be correctly answered only by reference to personal experience rather than to speculative theory. We must refer to the biographies of the adepts themselves and find out

what they felt in their own lives, and thought in their own minds about these questions.” (unpublished, 12v/105/163)

St: . . .

TS: One association that arises to my mind, was that when PB first began reading Plotinus he very, very carefully went through the Porphyry biography, and then he went through all of Plotinus looking for--examining all references to personal experience--mystical, practical, aesthetic--he selected those out, and he was very interested in all the mystical experiences that were implied in the *Enneads* for example. And there are certain specific questions--about health, after-death states, and so forth. He was especially interested in Plotinus' thinking on them. I would think that in being in reference to this, and he would ask questions in that very careful way that indicated that there were subtleties.

CdA: Is that implying that because these specific questions cannot be answered in any normal way? . . .

TS: I think that's what he's saying, yes, that it's only the experience of the sage that can answer certain subtle questions.

PB: “The goodwill which he shows to all men is devoid of any self-seeking motive, is a natural expression of the love which he finds in the innermost chambers of his soul.” (25.4.49)

PB: “Those who are sensitive enough to be able to do so, become by faith and sympathy sharers in his own divine perception of the world. But whereas theirs is a glimpse, his is abiding.” (25.4.169)

TS: It spoke to David's question earlier.

PB: “Those who are sensitive . . .” (reread)

AD: Oh, no, David was talking about when we got close to him and we felt a little peace--he's talking--they are two different worlds. People who are sensitive to the sage and participate in the divine speculations that he perceives--that's nothing like the petty little peace that we feel when we were next to him. Let's go on to the next one.

PB: “Intimate communion and personal converse with the higher self remain delightful facts. The Beloved ever companions him and never deserts him. He can never again be lonely.” (25.2.302)

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1982 1124a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

PB: “The idea took possession of the Buddha that his doctrine was too deep for man's intellect and so he thought he would not teach it. However Brahma, the Lord of the World, came and begged him to have mercy on the erring* world, for “the advent of Buddha is as uncommon as the flower on a fig tree.” Then Buddha reflected as to who would be a proper person for him to teach.” (25.4.34)

(At * above, TS says “unerring”; corrects himself. AD: That's better.)

JG: Is it over? (laughter)

TS: He hasn't even begun. You want that one again?

(Student comments = 1 minute)

PB: "The idea took possession . . ." (reread)

AD: Is that the end?

TS: Yes.

AD: Well, who were the first to appear? (Q: referring to Buddha after his enlightenment)

AH: (inaudible)

AD: Who were the first people to appear?

RC: The five people he practiced yoga with before? (inaudible)

AD: Those people who were his teachers and who taught him--they were the first to appear, and so he taught them first.

RINGS BELL

AD: Thank you both. We have something to be thankful for. We continue the celebration (inaudible).

[Audio File 1982 1124a Ends]