

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
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PB PARAS; MEDITATION**

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Meditation

SUBSUBJECTS: Concentration, Contemplation, Ego, Intuition

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*

- Paul Brunton, *The Quest of the Overself*
- Paul Brunton, *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*
- Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: VI.5.7

NOTES:

- Pat Campbell transcript from 1983 exists; other, earlier transcript versions exist, including one done in 1993 from audio cassette tapes by hp, jf, et al.

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1983 08/24 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Meditation
Archival verbatim transcript

[Audio File 1983 0824a Begins]

RC: --starting to compile some of these quotes now into the first book to publication. And the way that I'm approaching this book is to think of it as being addressed to a more general audience but also on the assumption that the only audience that these things have does consist of sincere and somewhat intelligent people. So, even though it's not a large audience it is going to be much more general than what we do here. I'm thinking of it as the sort of book that you can give to a person who says, "What exactly is it that you're into?" And basically you would give this as a survey that would touch on-- touch on all the essential points of what you're doing and would also give them more than enough material to get started if they wanted to get started. And each section will probably have 12 to 15 pages on each of the categories. So, we're going to go through first some of the quotes that we're thinking of using for the meditation section. In class we'll go on and go into much more detail about meditation but the first batch will be [one/two words inaudible] about these first [one/two words inaudible] In terms of how to go about it quite a few people have actually mentioned, since we did it that one night, that they really like the hand-raising not interrupting thing so we have a consensus on that and I would-- I would like to do that in here. Try some of these out.

S: [couple words inaudible] (bit of laughter)

RC: As long as you're facing that way it's good. (bit of laughter)

S: Do it again. (bit of laughter)

PB PARAS ON MEDITATION

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #5, RC reading]: "Meditation is merely a form of simple practice [RC adds: that] most Western people are [RC adds: either too stupid or] too unfamiliar with to understand." (bit of laughter)

S: I'd hate [RC simultaneously: So that one might--] to put that one in there. (laughter, student words)

RC (amidst laughter): That one [couple/few words inaudible] (laughter, student words)

S: Maybe that [couple words inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Maybe you had an opportunity to talk about (them). (laughter, student words)

RC: That's not the whole quote. (bit of laughter)

S: This isn't in the order in how they're going to appear, is it?

RC: No. (laughter)

S (amidst laughter): First one in the book. (more laughter, student words)

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #5, RC reading]: “What could be simpler than saying this: if you will look into your heart and mind, deep enough and long enough to penetrate beneath the tumult of desires that daily distract your attention, you then [RC reads: then you] may discover peace.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:4.5, RC reading]: “It is not merely an intellectual exercise. All the piety and reverence and worship gained from religion are needed here too [RC reads: also]. We must pray constantly to the Soul to reveal itself.”

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.370 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #20, RC reading]: “He should fully understand and accept the importance of being punctual in keeping his unwritten appointment when the meditation hour comes round [RC reads: around]. If he is careful to honour his word in social or professional engagements, he ought to be at least not less careful in honouring it in spiritual engagements. Only when he comes reverently to regard the Overself as being the unseen and silent other party with whom he is to sit, only when he comes to regard failure to be present at the prearranged time as a serious matter is the practice of these exercises likely to bear any of the fruits of success. It is a curious experience, and one which happens too often to be meaningless, that some obstacle or other will arise to block the discharge of this sacred engagement, or some attractive alternative will present itself to tempt him from it. The ego will resent this disturbance of its wonted habits and resist this endeavour to penetrate its foundations. He must resist this resistance. He must accept no excuse from himself. The decision to sit down for meditation at a stated time is one from which he is not to withdraw weakly, no matter what pressure falls upon him from outside or arises from inside. It may require all his firmness to get away from other people to find the needed solitude or to stop whatever he is doing to fulfil his promise to himself, but in the end it will be worthwhile.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.231 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #18, RC reading]: “The only way to learn what meditation means is to practise and keep on practising. This involves daily withdrawal from the round of routine and activity, of about three-quarters of an hour if possible, and the practice of some exercise regularly. The form which such an exercise should take depends partly upon your own preference. It may be any of the set formal exercises in books published, or it may be a subject taken from a sentence in some inspired writing whose truth has struck the mind forcibly; it may be a quality of character whose need in us has made itself felt urgently, or it may be a purely devotional aspiration to commune with the higher self. Whatever it is, the personal appeal should be sufficient to arouse interest and hold attention. This being the case, we may keep on turning over the theme continually in our thoughts. When this has been adequately done, the first stage (concentration proper) is completed. Unfortunately most of this period is usually spent in getting rid of extraneous ideas and distracting memories, so that little time is left for getting down to the actual concentration itself! The cure is repeated practice. In the next stage, there is a willed effort to shut out the world of the five senses, its impressions and images, whilst still retaining the line of meditative thinking. Here we seek to deepen, maintain, and prolong the concentrative attitude, and to forget the outside environment at the same time. The multiplicity of sensations--seeing, hearing, etc. [RC reads: and so on]--usually keeps us from

attending to the inner self, and in [RC reads: at] this stage you have to train yourself to correct this by deliberately abstracting attention from the senses. We will feel in the early part of this stage as though we were beating against an invisible door, on the other side of which there is the mysterious goal of your aspiration.”

[15 second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.213, RC reading]: “The stages of deepening meditation may be progressively differentiated from each other thus [RC reads: as follows]: first, [RC adds: there is] a general, feeble, and vague fixing of thoughts upon the aspiration or object; second, a general withdrawal of attention from external things on all sides; third, a definite but intermittent concentration of thoughts upon the aspiration or object; fourth, a continuous and unbroken concentration upon the same; fifth, the object [RC adds: is] dropped from focus but the concentrated mood [RC adds: is] still successfully maintained in pure self-contemplation.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.214 and V15, 23:7.53, RC reading]: “The differences between the first and second stages are: (a) in the first there is no effort to understand the subject or object upon which attention rests whereas in the second there is; (b) concentration may be directed to any physical thing or mental idea whereas meditation must be directed to thinking about a spiritual theme either logically or imaginatively.

“In the third stage this theme pervades the mind so completely that the thinking activity ceases, the thoughts and fancies vanish. The meditator and his theme are then united; it is no longer separate from him. Both merge into a single consciousness. To shut off all perceptions of the outer world, all physical sense-activities of seeing hearing and touching, is the goal and end of the first stage. It is achieved when concentration on one subject or object is fully achieved. To shut off all movements of the inner world, all mental activities of thinking, reasoning, and imagining, is the goal and end of the second stage. It is achieved when the subject or object pervades awareness so completely that the meditator forgets himself and [thus] forgets even to think about it: he is it. To shut off all thoughts and things, even all sense of [a] separate personal existence, and [RC adds: to] rest in contemplation of the One Infinite Life-Power out of which he has emerged, is the goal and end of the third stage.”

[10¼ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:4.29, RC reading]: “The difference between the first stage, concentration, and the second stage, meditation, is like the difference between a still photograph and a cinema film. In the first stage, you centre your attention upon an object, just to note what it is, in its details, parts, and qualities, [whereas] in the second stage, you go on to think all around and about the object in its functional state. In concentration, you merely observe the object; in meditation, you reflect upon it. The difference between meditation and ordinary thinking is that ordinary thinking does not go beyond its own level nor intend to stop itself, whereas meditation seeks to issue forth on an intuitional and ecstatic level whereon [RC reads: whereupon] the thinking process will itself [RC reads: itself will] cease to function.”

[12½ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.232, RC reading]: “Meditation must begin with lulling the physical senses into quiescence. We cannot [begin to] put the mind at ease unless we have earlier put the body at ease; and we cannot make the intellect inactive unless we have earlier made the senses inactive. The first reward and sign of success, marking the close of the first stage, is a feeling of lightness in the body, of numbness in the legs and hands, of having no weight and being as light as air. This shows a successful detachment from the thought of the body. After this, the second stage opens, wherein a deep intense half-trancelike absorption in the mind itself is to be achieved, and wherein the body is utterly forgotten.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.255, RC reading]: “You may, by force of will, bring about the first and second stages, concentration and meditation, but you cannot bring about the third stage, contemplation. All you can do is to prepare the prerequisite conditions for its coming...then, when it does come, it will seize [you] and swallow you. As it comes in, the strength of that which resists it, of the personal ego, begins to go out.”

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.259, RC reading]: “The second stage is man’s effort; the third stage is the Overself’s response to that effort.”

[short pause]

PB [V15, 23:7.242, RC reading]: “[RC adds: At the third stage] The period of active effort is at an end; the period of passive waiting now follows it. Without any act on his own part [and] without any mental movement of his own, the Grace draws him up to the next higher stage and miraculously puts him there where he has so long and so much desired to be. Mark well the absence of self-effort at this stage, how the whole task is taken out of his hands.”

[short pause]

PB [V15, 23:7.250, RC reading]: “His own efforts at this stage will consist [RC adds: only] in removing from the field of concentration every mental association and emotional influence which distracts him from attaining the stillness. When he has succeeded in removing them, he is then to do nothing at all, only to relax.”

[21¾ second pause]

S (possibly part of background): See (the--/that.)

[short pause]

S: Tony--

VM: No but seriously, see that confused me 'cause it talked about five stages and then three and I couldn't quite make the transition there or know how to map three into five. But they're two different quotes. Maybe that's not necessary.

[33 second pause, very faint background student talking]

EM: No because he's talking-- three he called intermittent concentration, that's-- [student assents, very faint] in the first-- in the first group of five the third is intermittent concentration. Sounds a lot different

from what [VM simultaneously: It's absorption, yeah, which is contemplation.] he's calling the third stage, he uses like contemplation. Sounds like the fifth stage in the other one.

S: Ok.

[13¼ second pause]

RC: I would say that the one that refers to the five-- [short pause] Yeah.

THE FIRST FIVE STEPS IN CONCENTRATION BRING YOU TO AN UNINTERRUPTED STREAM OF CONCENTRATIVE INTENSITY

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.213, RC reading]: "The stages of deepening meditation may be progressively differentiated from each other thus: first, a general, feeble, and vague fixing of [RC adds: the] thoughts upon the aspiration or object; second, a general withdrawal of attention from external things on all sides; third, a definite but intermittent concentration of thoughts upon the aspiration or object..."

S: Please speak up.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.213, RC reading]: "...third, a definite but intermittent concentration of thoughts upon the aspiration or object; fourth, a continuous and unbroken concentration upon the same; fifth, the object dropped from focus but the concentrated mood still successfully maintained in pure self-contemplation."

VM: That's the end of that quote too, right? Ok.

S: What's the problem Vic?

VM: Well, it wouldn't-- it wouldn't seem to match up, you know, he-- simple way, that's-- 'cause I didn't realize there was several quotes so that's why I've been so clueless.

S: But--

S: Yeah.

S: Sounds like concentration was divided up into A and B, meditation was divided up into A and B and five was three. (bit of laughter)

S: C.

RC: Yeah. (bit of laughter)

S: Right.

S: I didn't follow that.

S: (Sorry/It's alright).

JB: He meant C and D.

S: So the concen-- or the three parts, in the three part, the concentration, meditation, and contemplation. In the fivefold part it looks like he gave two phases of concentration, two phases of meditation, and then again contemplation was the last.

PD: Hm, I thought all five were [S simultaneously: In that, yeah.] just at concentration. (bit of laughter)

VM/S(?): Why don't you just (read).

S (faint): I mean it does say [couple/three words inaudible]

HS (simultaneously): Why don't you read the quote, they're stages of meditation.

PD: But you can't make the-- you can't bring the third one about or you-- as a threefold. The second-- the-- the second stage in the threefold classification was mental absorption. The senses, the body were dropped from consciousness.

AH: Paul, here's a guess again. The five are within the one, right?

PD (simultaneously): Yeah.

AH: Yeah, and that's--

PD (simultaneously): They're stages of concentration.

AH: That's the way I understood it.

RG: But they could be within meditation because meditation also evokes the will. Why-- why would you limit it to just the first, going along with the idea of a third?

S: Oh. (bit of laughter)

PD: Well, he made the explicit point that in the second stage the body and the senses are-- are blocked out of consciousness in the [student assents] three stages.

RG: Yeah this fifth one here is "the object dropped from focus but the concentrated mood still successfully maintained in pure self-contemplation."

PD: Yeah, that's a transition into the next stage.

VM: Yeah, it sounds pretty high.

RG: Sounds pretty concentrated.

AD (simultaneously): That's simply self-absorption, Dickie.

RG: Excuse me?

AD: That's simply self-absorption, the-- the end of the concentration [RG: Right but isn't it--] ends in self-absorption.

RG: Right, so you'd say that last one in number five related to level of concentration.

AD: Yeah.

RG: Right.

AD: Yeah. It's-- it's the last of those five steps that take you to the stage of self-absorption or what you would call concentration.

RC: Ok. You think we should change that then to make it the stages of deepening concentration instead of meditation?

AD: It [RC simultaneously: Ok.] shouldn't, it shouldn't, that last shouldn't be "self-contemplation" because it'll mislead.

RG: Right. Well, the first level in the three is meditation or concentration?

AD: He usually, [S simultaneously: Concentration.] he usually works with concentration, meditation, and contemplation. I think that's the system he works with. And in the first one, concentration, the first five steps, he describes how you get to that state of concentration. It's-- it would be almost equivalent like for instance if you were intensely listening to music and you dropped the music but you remained self-absorbed, that's the state he's speaking of, alright. Of course you can say it's a kind of self-contemplation, but then that throws you off right away, you'll start thinking of the third stage.

RG: Now how does that last stage differ from concen-- from meditation?

S: Right.

AD: Well, read the next part. [RC: Uh--] He speaks about a continuous--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.214 and V15, 23:7.53, RC reading]: "The differences between the first and second stages are: (a) in the first there is no effort to understand the subject or object upon which attention rests..."

VM: Excuse me, could you back up even earlier than that so we can lay down the first three again? And these are the A, B, C if you want to call them that or whatever it is. Concentration, meditation, and contemplation, is that the quote you're going to do now?

S: Uh-hm.

S: Yeah Vic.

S: Well, uh--

S: I guess Randy what confused me was just that the five were presented before the three. It made it absolutely confusing. [RC simultaneously: Ok.] Had the three been presented first maybe the five would be clear.

RC (simultaneously): Yeah. Now these haven't-- I haven't put these in any order.

AD: Well, just read the second part Randy now, part that deals with meditation because-- you're self-absorbed now, you're in a state of concentration. The next step is a continuous and uninterrupted reflection *on* that object.

[21 second pause]

JfL: But doesn't he say that for meditation the object-- didn't he also say that in meditation the object has to be spiritual? But in concentration the object can be virtually anything.

RC: Yeah. Well this is the one I would follow up with. I don't know if it's [one/two words inaudible]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.214 and V15, 23:7.53, RC reading]: "The differences between the first and second stages are: (a) in the first there is no effort to understand the [subject or] object upon which attention rests, whereas in the second there is; (b) concentration may be directed to any physical thing or mental idea, whereas meditation must be directed to thinking about a spiritual theme either logically or imaginatively.

"In the third stage this theme pervades the mind so completely that the thinking activity ceases, the thoughts and fancies vanish. The meditator and his theme are then united; it is no longer separate from him. Both merge into a single consciousness. To shut off all perceptions of the outer world, all physical sense-activities of seeing hearing and touching, is the goal and end of the first stage. It is achieved when concentration on one subject or object is fully achieved. To shut off all movements of the inner world, all mental activities of thinking, reasoning, and imagining, is the goal and end of the second stage. It is achieved when the subject or object pervades [RC reads: pervade] awareness so completely that the meditator forgets himself and thus forgets even to think about it: he is it. To shut off all thoughts and things, even all sense of a separate personal existence, and rest in contemplation of the One Infinite Life-Power out of which he has emerged, is the goal and end of the third stage."

[10½ second pause]

RC: Was that-- was that the one?

AD: Uh-hm.

S: Ok [possibly one word inaudible]

[short pause]

RC: So that was-- those were hopefully something of an overview that wouldn't be too difficult to understand. Big change in that one quote to concentration.

S: That was helpful.

RC: I was really helped, yeah.

MB: Randy, did--

S: Raise your hand.

MB: I'm sorry, did this--

S (simultaneously): Got to raise your hand.

MB: Oh.

S: Very good.

S: (Do I/You want to) promise?

RG: Louder. (laughter)

S (amidst laughter): Come on.

S: How old are you?

MB (simultaneously): The-- the five stages of that first quote, it seems to me that by the time you have gotten *to* the fifth stage you're no longer in concentration. I mean that already sou-- starts to sound like meditation because by then the object is already gone. And when he describes the concentration or the goal of the first stage in the second quote, it's talking about just concentrating on the object I think, I can't remember exactly how he [one word inaudible] it.

RC: Let's see--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.214 and V15, 23:7.53, RC reading]: "To shut off all perceptions of the outer world, all physical sense-activities of seeing hearing and touching, is the goal and end of the first stage."

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.213, RC reading]: "...fifth, the object dropped from focus but the concentrated mood still successfully maintained..."

MB: So then now those correspond.

[11 second pause]

JC: What was the fourth stage again?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.213, RC reading]: "...a continuous and unbroken concentration upon the same..."

JC: Which is before [couple words inaudible]

RC: The aspiration or object.

JC: Which doesn't have to be sensible, right, it could be a mental object.

S: I don't think so.

JC: I would argue for Myra's point that, I think that the five stages go as far as meditation because you're left with the concentration either on the subject which he says or the object which is what is given as the goal, the meditation stage. [RC assents] And he doesn't take you as far as whereas the Overself comes in and then begins to be the driving force in the meditation.

RC: It seems to me in any case that you could better leave this one out.

MB: The five stages you mean?

RC: Yeah.

S: Uh-hm.

S: [one/two words inaudible]

RC: It seemed to bring in a confusion.

VM: On the other hand if you had talked about a general audience, you want that variation.

VM/S(?): That's certainly a place to start.

AB: (Some) confusion.

VM: Confusion, you're right Al. (laughter)

[short pause]

MB: It does-- I mean it does seem like the five stages are relating more to concentration, all of them relate more to concentration but that there's some overlap. When you get to the successful conclusion of concentration it do-- it's-- it overlaps a little bit with what he's calling meditation, especially because he also draws the distinction that ordinary concentration is-- can be on any object but meditation is on a spiritual object. [student assents] By the time the object is dropped in concentration it's no longer just an object, it's almost, I mean--

RC: But it does seem to me that it's concentration both outward or inward in either case but-- In any case at the end of it the person is ready to start meditating.

MB: Well but by then-- it seems by then he's begun to meditate a little. If-- there's not like a definite point at which this one ends and (meditation) begins.

RC: Yeah.

[short pause]

S: So you can only describe meditation?

RG: It would seem so.

CdA: Can't hear you at all.

RG: Carol, the stages of-- passages he described where meditation was taken for [few words inaudible] and concentration [couple words inaudible]

LR (simultaneously): Dickie, talk up, we don't hear you.

S (simultaneously): [one/two words inaudible] talk to me, I can't hear a word you're saying Linda.

LR: Oh.

S: (What?)

AD (simultaneously): It's hard back here, [RG: Right.] so you have to speak up and face us. Don't face him.

S: Yeah.

RG: I just wanted to review the section on meditation.

AD (simultaneously): Well, you got the first part, the concentration, that those five steps are to bring you to a state of an uninterrupted stream of concentrative intensity. You got that first state. Ok, you

understand that. [RG simultaneously: We understand that, right, (right/yeah).] Now if you got that, you go into the second stage. Now everybody says that they're meditating.

S: Yeah.

S (faint): Yeah, that right.

RG: And now you're going to accomplish it.

S: Uh-hm.

RC: This is the one that Dickie wants.

IN THE SECOND STAGE (MEDITATION PROPER), YOU'RE IN THE REALM OF REFLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS; YOU'RE A DISEMBODIED MENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:4.29, RC reading]: "The difference between the first stage, concentration, and the second stage, meditation, is like the difference between a still photograph and a cinema film. In the first stage, you centre your attention upon an object, just to note what it is, in its details, parts, and qualities, whereas in the second stage, you go on to think all around and about the object in its functional state. In concentration, you merely observe the object; in meditation, you reflect upon it. The difference between meditation and ordinary thinking is that ordinary thinking does not go beyond its own level nor intend to stop itself, whereas meditation seeks to issue forth on an intuitional and ecstatic level whereon the thinking process will itself cease to function."

AD: Now Dickie, taking the first step for granted, now what happens?

RG: I guess you can really start to think he's saying.

AD: Yeah.

RG: And without that first stage you--

AD (simultaneously): Yeah now-- you're saying now you really are first starting to think.

RG: Right.

AD: And more precisely, you're in the mental realm. There is no object anywhere. This is all mental now. Because by definition the first stage released you from all sensual imagery, you know, from the organism--all memories, reflections, the external world, the body--all that's out of the way. Now, if you can imagine that, the next step is when you start thinking and that means you're in the mental realm. And if you have developed uninterrupted, you know, and focused concentration, now you can dwell on a spiritual theme without letting go of it. [short pause] That kind of dwelling, you know-- I-- I wouldn't even call it reflection but basically it is reflection. But there it's like mixing air and light.

RG: Right, that-- it is a strange word to use "reflecting on".

AD: You're still in the reflective consciousness. As a matter of fact maybe more than anything that would define it: that you're *in* the reflective consciousness and that reflective consciousness is at your disposal.

[student(s) assenting, faint]

RG: (It's a) very unusual way to define the second stage traditionally.

S: What do you mean?

AD: Well, if the trying to think which is taking place at the second stage succeeds, alright, he says it evolves into ecstatic thought. [students assent] So you can-- you'll see what's happening there. You're at the level of absolute Willing or Knowing or Feeling. [RG assents] But in the second stage it's really that you're in the realm of reflective consciousness, that's *all* you are, alright, you can't think of yourself as anything else, but just purely as disembodied mental consciousness.

RG: That's tot-- that's totally focused (at this).

AD: That-- yeah.

RG: That's totally concentrated.

AD (simultaneously): Yeah, if it's not you'd be dismembered.

S: Uh-hm.

VM: Anthony, is it correct to think of this second stage, this meditation stage, as being one where we could use the terminology of a two-fold epistemic presentation or is it totally inappropriate to try and bring that in?

AD: Yeah, you can use the two-fold. You could think of it that way.

VM (simultaneously): I mean there's still a presentation but--

AD: You could think of it that way, sure.

VM: There's still a presentation but not this normal bifurcation that we usually operate with.

AD: If that helps you, sure, use it.

VM: Ok. I got (to use it). (laughter, VM laughing, student words)

AD: But, those of us who have-- who have experience with reflective consciousness knows how-- know how difficult it is to keep it at a point, you know, continuously and uninterruptedly, and in that realm even, yeah, you know, that's even more so. You've got nothing to anchor yourself in, except the developed intensity of concentration. And that evolves into the third stage, intuitive awareness. But like he says, you can't force that.

AH: Anthony could-- could you say that the second stage would presuppose the meditator knowing the truth of mentalism?

AD: No. He doesn't have to know that.

[short pause]

AH: I was curious because he describes it--

AD (simultaneously): The-- the Catholic church, the Catholic Church has the same three-fold division and doesn't know anything about mentalism and doesn't *want* to know anything about mentalism.

AH: Perhaps I misspoke, I-- maybe 'knowing' was not the right word but, mentalism would be experientially validated at the second stage?

AD: You-- yes, there, there you're more accurate. That would be an experiential verification of the mental processes that are constructive of the object.

[11¼ second pause]

S: Linda--

LR: I'm confused about what thinking is. [student assents] Because to even arrive at meditation you had to stop thinking, you had to stop the thoughts, the flow of thoughts. [RG: Right.] And so now, you're in a stage of meditation and you're reflecting, [RG assents] and the word 'thought' is being used in both cases but I don't understand how to, you know--

RG: It seem-- yeah, there's--

LR (simultaneously): Are there other words?

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S: [one word inaudible]

RC (simultaneously): He says that--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.214 and V15, 23:7.53, RC reading]: "To shut off all movements of the inner world, all mental activities of thinking, reasoning, and imagining, is the goal and [RC emphasis] *end* of the second stage."

LR: Wasn't it--

RG (simultaneously): Yeah I think he would say in the first stage you're not talking about thinking or imagining but you're always tied to sense images and therefore not properly thinking or imagining at all in the sense of pure mental phenomena.

LR: I'm sorry, I didn't follow.

AD: In the first stage there's no thinking, what you call thinking he wouldn't call thinking.

RG: Right, he would call it fantasy or tie-- any-- mental activity tied to the sense organs.

LR: Ok, so we could say the first stage involves shutting down of mental stream, just closing down the normal flow of-- I know-- undirected thought, undirected fantasy. [students assent, very faint] So that shouldn't be thought-- that shouldn't be called thought at all then.

AD: Well, unfortunately that's the word we use. [LR and another student assent] You know, contemporary English, everyone [RC/S(?) simultaneously: That is (it).] uses the word 'thinking' and thinks they know what they mean by it.

RC/S(?): Uh-hm, it is.

LR (simultaneously): Well let's say undirect-- could we use the word undirected rather than directed, controlled?

AD: No, the point I think he's making here is that in the first stage what ultimately takes place is the elimination of all illusions which arise from that illusion of all-- you know, the greatest of all illusions is the ego, and it is constantly producing images which are more illusory than it itself is, alright, and this whole process has to be brought to an end before we can talk about thinking.

[short pause]

LR: So when we-- when-- let me talk. (bit of laughter)

RG: Yes, you are.

S: Yeah, right.

S: We're missing (another one)?

PD (simultaneously): No.

S: Ok.

LR: When we-- when he uses the word 'reflection' now, the reflection is synonymous with directed thought.

RG: Uh-hm. Yeah.

LR: Um--

[13 second pause]

PC: Would it be appropriate to say that the first stage, the goal of the first stage is to take you out of the psychosomatic organism; the second stage takes place within the rational sphere? [10 second pause] Would that be right Anthony?

AD: Oh, I'm sorry, but yeah. (bit of laughter, student words)

RG: If [few inaudible student words simultaneous with RG] the other-- the other thing though is not-- he says not only thinking but ima-- but imagin-- imaginative activity also. So it's either directed thinking or directed imagination which would be a-- a meditation exercise at that level, say.

LR: You'd be beyond the psychosomatic organ?

AD: At the first stage you're beyond it, but not beyond its influence. The second stage, you're beyond its influence--[possibly: at] the end of the second stage, when you're practicing that intense passivity. [11¼ second pause] Let's go over the whole thing, that whole second part, you know, the steps.

S: Yeah, (reread it/read it again).

AD: This is very valuable, you know, straightforward English.

EM: Would you say that the practicing of intense passivity was beyond the second stage?

AD: It is the end of the second stage.

EM (simultaneously): It's the end of the second stage, ok.

AD: Prior-- prior to that, if you practice passivity prior to that, you're usually subjected to subconscious impulses and influences that can be quite harmful. [short pause] Randy, you know where (he/you) started with the-- [RC simultaneously: Yeah. Yeah these are--] the itemization, it's worth going over this.

RC: This is a series of about seven or eight different quotes but they seemed related enough to at least follow one another.

[10 second pause]

INTENSE CONCENTRATION ON AN INSPIRED STATEMENT CAN TAKE YOU TO THE END OF THE SECOND STAGE (MEDITATION)

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.232, RC reading]: "Meditation must begin with [RC adds: the] lulling [RC adds: of] the physical senses into quiescence. We cannot begin to put the mind at ease unless we have earlier put the body at ease; and we cannot make the intellect inactive unless we have earlier made the senses inactive. The first reward and sign of success, marking the close of the first stage, is a feeling of lightness in the body, of numbness in the legs and hands, of having no weight and being as light as air. This shows a successful detachment from the thought of the body. After this, the second stage opens, wherein a deep intense half-trancelike absorption in the mind itself is to be achieved, and wherein the body is utterly forgotten.."

RC: That's one quote.

RG: Yeah, could I just ask a question? But Anthony, when you said-- when you say, well you take a-- take up a problem and think about it in meditation, is it that you want-- you're attempting to start in the first stage of this non-thinking thinking and get to a state where you're really concentrated on that problem?

AD: Yeah.

RG: And that would be in the second stage.

AD: Uh-hm. If you took-- you know, if you took a statement, "To know without images is Being," that would take you right up to the end of the second stage. [Note: Plotinus, VI.5.7, "to know without image is to be".]

RG: So you start-- I mean that's an exercise that seems to be able to catapult you, if you could do it, I mean if you could really get concentrated [AD simultaneously: Yeah.] on the problem.

AD: Yeah because you'll see the absolute-- well, you'll see the more intensely you're involved with the problem you'll see all these stages that he's talking about, you know, you'll see it as though you're on a train passing them by, you know. You'll see that the body's forgotten, the imagery that comes from the senses is forgotten, alright, and the activity and the motion of even these influences has gone by and now

you're in the second stage and you're getting-- you're getting to that point where you have to become intensively passive to realize that-- that statement. In other words, you *can* take one theme and go right to the end with it. And you won't be able to exhaust it, I mean if you take something of inspired significance, you know, something like "Thou are That". But I prefer mine (from the West). [Transcriber note: (From the West) is from PC version, not on this audio file.]

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1983 0824a Ends; Side 2 begins)

AD: --organism operates with. And there'll be memories and associations and you have to eliminate all that stuff as you-- and as you start getting concentrating-- concentrated on that, you *will* eliminate that. And you can get so intensely absorbed in that statement, alright, that you'll find yourself just in a mental realm. That's the second stage. I mean, it's obvious there's no [RG assents] signs along the way, you know, first stage, second, third, fourth, fifth, I mean, you can zoom right through or you could suffer through, it depends on, you know, if you-- (bit of laughter)

RG: Now let's say you're thinking hard about this problem and the thinking just sort of takes over and you don't-- you're not really doing it any more. Is that in the second stage?

AD: You're doing it.

RG: You-- but you don't feel like you're doing it.

IN THE SECOND STAGE, ANY IMPULSES ARE CONSIDERABLY MAGNIFIED AND HAVE ENORMOUS POWER, SO ONE MUST BE VIGILANT

AD: Yeah there's-- there isn't the familiar strain and stress that you ordinarily experience when you're thinking, you know, you feel the tiredness and the fatigue that the ego, the constant resistance of the ego has brought about that strain and, you know-- you don't feel that in the second stage. It's not-- you know, it's not that strong anymore. But you're actually in the world of ideas. And it would be equivalent to what we understand when we say taijasa consciousness, you know, [RG assents] like work-- waking up in a dream world, but you're there and you're manipulating it, you're controlling it. Otherwise the-- the meditation-- I mean he tells you you have to consciously reflect on the item from all sides, from all angles, so that means you have to be there. But on the other hand if you enter that realm and you don't have that, alright, that's-- there's always a certain amount of danger there--dismemberment mostly. (bit of laughter)

CdA: What do you mean by that?

S: Good question. (RG laughing)

AD: It's perfectly good English.

RG: Yeah.

CdA: Excuse me but--

RG: Louder Carol. (laughter)

CdA: I said excuse me. Dismemberment within the mental realm of what? (bit of laughter)

S: The mind.

AD: Well, there could be certain influences that will dominate you and because of the state you're in these impulses are considerably magnified and have enormous power there.

CdA: Now these are not the-- you've already left the realm of the ego's impulses or have you not?

AD: No, [CdA simultaneously: No?] I said you're still subject to the influence but you're-- you left behind most of the images that arise from the psychosomatic organism, images and memory traces and things like that but you're still-- they're-- they're still capable of influencing you. You have to remember that the only place that the ego's presence is *not* is when you get to the Stillness. But all the way up to there it's always there. Thinned out, yeah, but it's there.

CdA: So what would be dismembered?

AD: Well honey I just told you it's--

CdA (simultaneously): It would be-- No, the--

AD: In that state where your mind has reached a level of intensity, an impulse coming there gets magnified considerably and it'll work havoc on you. You'll be doing something which might be unethical or which is coming from your baser nature, but it's-- [CdA: I see.] it can be-- it can be very painful.

And that's why the-- in most of these traditions they always insisted that meditation be accompanied with self-purification [CdA assents] and moral re-education, because that danger is always there. You might think yourself 99% gold but when you get in that area you find out that there's impulses still pretty active enough to take over completely.

But anyway, that second stage is difficult. Nonetheless, I think Andrew made the point that there more than anywhere else I think you could experience the mentalness, you know, of ideas. It would be like if you woke up in your dream consciousness and you experienced that all things are ideas. But you can't let a dream consciousness take over.

S: Yeah.

AD: I'm sorry Randy, would you finish, uh--

RC: Ok, this is-- this is another quote.

IN THE STAGE OF MEDITATION, THERE IS NO EXPERIENCE OF SPACE, BUT THERE IS TIME INsofar AS THERE IS A SEQUENCE OF THOUGHT

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:4.29, RC reading]: "The difference between the first stage, concentration, and the second stage, meditation, is like the difference between a still photograph and a cinema film. In the first stage, you centre your attention upon an object, just to note what it is, in its details, parts, and qualities, whereas in the second stage, you go on to think all around and about the object in its functional state. In concentration, you merely observe the object; in meditation, you reflect upon it. The difference between meditation and ordinary thinking is that ordinary thinking does not go beyond its own level nor intend to stop itself, whereas meditation seeks to issue forth on an intuitional and ecstatic level whereon the thinking process will [RC adds: of] itself cease to function."

[short pause]

AH: Could-- could this transition be described with regards to the cha-- change in the subjective referent? Like, ordinary thinking proceeds with a very rigid kind of restraint in regards to the subject and the object. In the case of this higher thinking or reflection, the subjective referent is not restrained in the way that it was. There's still a thinker and an object but no longer restrained to space and time or materiality. Is that-- is that an appropriate way of seeing the transition with regards to the subjective side?

RC: You know how when we've done the divided line, we've said that that dianoia or even the reflection of dianoia in our psyche can either-- it-- it tries to deal with the essence but it has the option to either return to being concrete or it could go beyond into the Idea. I would say that you're talking basically about the same subjective focus, that-- in both cases, but something about the attitude is different in the sense that ordinary thinking does intend to remain bound to the concrete object. But, when that same function is used with the intention of going deeper inward, that-- then you're trying to get to the idea which is not an image, which is not bound to the senses and-- more like the direction of that subjectivity is-- is different.

AH: Yes I understand that, but I was trying to see it specifically in regards to the subject. You say perhaps that ordinary thinking, the subject is bound to the body-thought, which-- which leads to the imaged world as we know it. In the second case, the subje-- subject is no longer bound space and time, body-thought or the ego.

RG: I think there's still space and time there, Andrew.

AD: Not space.

RG: What?

AD: No space.

RG: No? But time.

AD: Yeah.

RG: Yes, time. Yeah 'cause thought just-- what--

AD (simultaneously): Even now, even now thought is not in space.

S: Oh.

RG: Ok.

RG: But there is a temporal-- there still is time because if there's any thinking there's got to be time.

AH: Time as we know it, conventional?

S: Uh-hm.

S: (Right/Yeah).

RC: Sequentiality.

AH: Sequentiality.

AD (simultaneously): No, not the way we know it now. But there is time insofar that there is sequence of thought. But there is not the experience of space the way-- I'm afraid to say it, I got Vic in the class but-- Most physicists think that space is infinite--that's nonsense. The very-- the very fact that there are forms of manifestation that don't require space is proved to you by your thinking. Your thinking is not taking place in space.

RC: You'd say the reference to extension is what gets taken out?

AD: Yeah, extension, sure. That's one of the reasons why you experience the mentalism in that second state so intensely.

AH: Are there images there?

AD: No, it's abstract, the thought is very abstract, I'm assuming that you're meditating on a spiritual theme.

AH: There are no images?

AD: Well, there may be images but you're supposed to bring creative imagination to a halt.

LR: Anthony, doesn't the time-- doesn't the thought create the space?

S (faint): [one/two words inaudible] is time.

LR: I mean--

AD: But, then we're not speaking of space, are we?

RG: This isn't that thought Linda, this isn't *that* world-creating thought he's talking about I don't think, he's still speaking about an activity of an individual-- directed thinking within-- that's why it's reflective. It's not the thinking that creates the world experience for him yet...I would argue. I don't think that's the level of second stage here.

VM: No but couldn't you say the second stage *unfolds* in the third stage as spaced and timed images? Those-- that realm of ideas is unfolded by the mind as the space-time world that you're struggling with to control in the third-- in the first stage.

S: What do you mean?

RG: Well because it--

VM (simultaneously): Well then what does it mean [RG simultaneously: No because I think-- I--] to say that you experience the veracity of mentalism in the second stage?

RG (simultaneously): I think then you're shifting to a-- to a cosmic mentalism at the second level and I don't know that he implies that here.

VM: Alright, then I don't understand the point that was made several times that at the second level you appreciate the true mentalness.

RG (simultaneously): Individual mentalism.

VM: Fine, the individual mentalism, but still it's *my* individual mind which creates *my* space and time for me.

AD: Well, this is a difficult point Vic because the experience there is not that of space. There's [VM simultaneously: Oh.] no space there.

VM (simultaneously): No I understand that Anthony, I was saying, isn't the second-- the content, if you can speak about the content at the second realm, unfolded in the-- in the first stage as space-timed images?

AD: Uh-hm.

VM: Ok, that's all.

AH: Vic when you said that before you didn't say first, you said third stage, which confused the--

VM (simultaneously): Oh I'm sorry, I-- I said it backwards then.

AH: I understand what you-- at least I think--

VM: Yeah I-- well, I was going the wrong direction.

RG: Uh-hm.

AD(?): No.

[2¼ second pause with faint background student whispering]

AD (faint in background): (People are drinking (one word inaudible) some people.)

S (faint in background): Yeah.

S (faint in background): Uh-hm.

RC: Want to do more of them or go on?

AD: No [couple words inaudible] along.

S (simultaneously, faint, possibly part of background): Fred, ask Tim.

RC: Yeah, the ones that follow seem to be very helpful.

THE SECOND STAGE IS ABSOLUTE QUIESCENCE, NOT A MENTAL BLANKNESS

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #12, RC reading]: "The mere making [RC adds: of] one's mind a blank, the mere stopping of thoughts for a few minutes, is not by itself, unaccompanied by [the] other endeavours of the fourfold quest, sufficient to bestow any mystical state. A high official of a mystical order who practised this mental blackout of [RC reads: for] several years standing, confessed privately [RC adds: to me] that he has [RC reads: had] not had any higher consciousness as a result. The general effort in meditation should not be to make the mind a blank but to make it concentrated, poised,

and still. If blankness supervenes sometimes, as it may, it should do so of its own accord, not as a result of our striving. But then this would mean the cessation of thinking, which is a very advanced stage at which few arrive [original reads: that few arrive at]. A positive attempt to induce blankness might induce the wrong kind, which is negative and mediumistic and has nothing spiritual about it. If, however, it comes by itself as a by-product of correct meditation, then it will not be mere emptiness but rather [an] utter serenity which is satisfied with itself and regards thoughts as a lower disturbance.”

[short pause]

RC: Related quote.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:3.63 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #10, RC reading]:

“Philosophy does not teach people to make their minds a blank, does not say empty out all thoughts, be inert and passive. It teaches the reduction of all thinking activity to a single seed-thought, and that one is to be either interrogative like “What am I?” or affirmative like “The godlike is with me.” It is true that the opening-up of Overself-consciousness will, in the first delicate experience, mean the closing-down of the last thoughts, the uttermost stillness of mind. But that stage will pass. It will repeat itself again whenever one plunges into the deepest trance, the raptest meditative absorption. And it must then come of itself, induced by the higher self’s grace, not by the lower self’s force. Otherwise, mere mental blankness is a risky condition to be avoided by prudent seekers. It involves the risk of mediumship and of being possessed.”

[13¾ second pause]

LH: How does the-- some people familiar with the Hua T’ou exercise, how is that different than what he’s saying about (blankness) here?

RC: I don’t think it is different, it says--

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #12, RC reading]: “The general effort [in meditation] should not be [RC reads: be not] to make the mind a blank but to make it concentrated, poised, and still.”

[short pause]

CdA: Blank is not concentrated.

S: No.

AD: You sure now?

RG: Hm?

RC: One kind of blank isn’t. (bit of laughter) Excuse me. Do you follow that, Larry?

LH: No.

S: [one word inaudible]

RG (possibly part of background): Yeah I think there’s anything else there.

S (possibly part of background, faint): I don't think so.

RG (possibly part of background): [couple words inaudible] any more?

S (possibly part of background): It's in the front.

RC (simultaneously): He seems to be saying that if you sit there and by force you just try to like have a blank mind, that that's-- that's not what he's recommending. That he's recommending that you try to be "concentrated, poised, and still" and the stillness seems to be-- that as the mind comes up-- as the thought comes up, it's a disruption of any stillness; insofar as it's a disruption of any stillness, it's discarded. But if you would like hold onto either the thought or the image of a blank, that that would be different.

AD: Larry, the Hua T'ou does not produce a blank mind, produces *extreme* alertness. [student assents]
Which is quite different from being a blank mind.

[12¾ second pause]

S (faint): Well, David's--

S (faint): Go ahead.

DB: Well, I was-- I was just wondering, this wrong kind of blankness, this wrong blank mind seems to be the result-- I mean he spoke of it as being bad insofar as it was mediumistic and what little I've read about that there's a specific kind of practice which doesn't involve that-- an attempt to, you know, look directly at the mind the way the Hua T'ou exercise seems to demand. It almost sounds as if they're two completely different mental states that have the same word. Is that so, I mean that the-- this mediumistic blankness is of a completely qualitatively different nature than the-- [RC: Yeah.] the kind of stillness that you work at by [RC simultaneously: You know--] smashing every thought or what?

RC: I don't know if this is a good way to put it but since Anthony's here and can say otherwise if it's false. Maybe if you thought like, when you try to make your mind a blank you're really holding on to what you ordinarily conceive of as your mind and you're just trying to make it blank. And you s-- you really don't change levels at all. Whereas, the kind of blankness he's talking about which comes of its own accord, it's more like what you ordinarily would take to be your mind is cancelled.

S: Hm. Hm.

AH: I'd like to respond to Randy's description, I think that there's another way of describing that. Say that the blank state is objectless and without attention. The correct state is objectless *with* attention. [short pause] So the first state is truly a blank one. There's no object, there's also no attention. In the second stage the object is gone but the attention remains. I think that's another way of saying that.

[student assents, faint]

[15½ second pause]

JfL: Well I-- I like the way Randy said it 'cause you see that the one sounds like it's still a thought-- First case is like this is a thought, in the second case that there *isn't* thought. He said it's the mind at first and then it's the mind itself in the second [one word inaudible]

S: Ok.

AH: What's the thought of blankness?

JfL: Your mind is still perceiving what this idea of blank-- I don't know-- black-- I don't know, whatever you would think of to bring on a blankness that's still being constructed by the mind.

AH: You think it's dangerous to think about blankness or is it-- is it more dangerous to be in a blank state?

JfL: It sounds like (there's/it's) a receptive kind of energy. (laughter) It sounds almost like it's a thought that you're thinking that leaves you receptive to these things rather than a blankness that is-- that transcends the thought (so you can have one).

AH: No it is-- I'm quite sure there is a blankness that transcends the thought.

JfL: Well it do-- doesn't arrive-- I was trying to clarify it but I guess it doesn't.

DB: My mind on this matter is not entirely fixed but it's getting there. Could you read the quote again please?

RC: Yeah, there are two. Now the first one--

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #12, RC reading]: "The mere making [RC adds: of] one's mind a blank, the mere stopping of thoughts for a few minutes, is not by itself, unaccompanied by the other endeavours of the fourfold quest, sufficient to bestow any mystical state. A high official of a mystical order who practised this mental blackout of several years standing, confessed privately that he has not had any higher consciousness as a result. The general effort in meditation should not be to make the mind a blank but to make it concentrated, poised, and still. If blankness supervenes sometimes, as it may, it should do so of its own accord, not as a result of our striving. But then this would mean the cessation of thinking, which is a very advanced stage at which few arrive [original reads: that few arrive at]. A positive attempt to induce blankness might induce the wrong kind, which is negative and mediumistic and has nothing spiritual about it. If, however, it comes by itself as a by-product of correct meditation, then it will not be mere emptiness but rather an utter serenity which is satisfied with itself and regards thoughts as a lower disturbance."

JB: Can you fit into the two problems we have now the cessation of thinking which is an advanced condition? Is that one of the two or yet a third thing?

RG: One of the two what?

JB: The-- [VM simultaneously: That sounds like the third stage.] I mean between Jeff and Andrew.

VM: Oh, oh, I thought you were talking about the first, second, and third [one word inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): See, I think-- [JB simultaneously: No, no, I don't mean in that count but--] I would-- I would interpret this-- I would say it a little differently because it's very confusing. That second state is quiescence, it's not a blankness. That's the quiescent mind, and it only comes about after extreme effort at meditation. Whereas the other one is a sort of auto-suggestion or a ho-- a-- a kind of self-

hypnosis that you practice when you believe that you're going to produce a vacuum mind. I mean I-- I would-- I would reword that, I mean if I wrote that I would reword it because-- I-- the other one, it's not a blankness. It's not a blankness, it's an absolute quiescence. And it's never experienced as blankness, it's experienced as a quiet mind. I wouldn't call it a blank mind. [short pause] Well anyway, let's have the second one, the second quote.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:3.63 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #10, RC reading]:
“Philosophy does not teach people to make their minds a blank, does not...”

AD: It doesn't have to! (laughter)

S: Oh we are? (bit of laughter)

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:3.63 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #10, RC reading]: “...does not say empty out all thoughts, be inert and passive. It teaches the reduction of all thinking activity to a single seed-thought, and that one is to be either interrogative like “What am I?” or affirmative like “The godlike is with me.” It is true that the opening-up of Overself-consciousness will, in the first delicate experience, mean the closing-down of the last thoughts, the uttermost stillness of mind. But that stage will pass. It will repeat itself again whenever one plunges into the deepest trance, the raptest meditative absorption. And it must then come of itself, induced by the higher self's grace, not by the lower self's force. Otherwise, mere mental blankness is a risky condition to be avoided by prudent seekers. It involves the risk of mediumship and of being possessed.”

AD: I hate to ask you, Randy, would you read that second one again, that--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:3.63 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #10, RC reading]:
“Philosophy does not teach people to make their minds a blank, does not say empty out all thoughts, be inert and passive. It teaches the reduction of all thinking activity to a single seed-thought, and that one is to be either interrogative like “What am I?” or affirmative like “The godlike is with me.” It is true that the opening-up of Overself-consciousness will, in the first delicate experience, mean the closing-down of the last thoughts, the uttermost stillness of mind. But that stage will pass. It will repeat itself again whenever one plunges into the deepest trance, the raptest meditative absorption. And it must then come of itself, induced by the higher self's grace, not by the lower self's force. Otherwise, mere mental blankness is a risky condition to be avoided by prudent seekers. It involves the risk of mediumship and of being possessed.”

[24 second pause]

THE TRANSITION BETWEEN THE SECOND AND THIRD STAGES OF MEDITATION

AD: Pick it up from the seed-thought again.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:3.63 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #10, RC reading]: “It teaches the reduction of all thinking activity to a single seed-thought, and that one is to be either interrogative like “What am I?” or affirmative like “The godlike is with me.” It is true that the opening-up of Overself-consciousness will, in the first delicate experience, mean the closing-down of the last thoughts, the

uttermost stillness of mind. But that stage will pass. It will repeat itself again whenever one plunges into the deepest trance, the raptest meditative absorption. And it must then come of itself, induced by the higher self's grace, not by the lower self's force."

AD (quietly): Well, here's that delicate thing, you know, that we discussed at the beginning, between the second state and the third state. And if you follow the seed-thought "Who am I?" to its root, and you're in the meditative state-- [short pause] When-- [short pause] when you get completely absorbed in that seed-thought or that "Who am I?", complete absorption in that brings about the cessation of any-- any more thoughts, there are no other thoughts, and there isn't even the thought "Who am I?" Alright, and this is that transition that we had difficulty understanding before between the second state and the third state. When this quietness or this trance-like condition settles on the mind, that's-- that's coming from the Higher Self, you haven't brought that about. And that's the thing that you have to keep repeating until meditation becomes contemplation. It's at that level--that's why that's so tricky. Let alone that meditation itself is tricky, you got to get the feeling that, you know, from what we were speaking about before, that you're in the world of ideas, just ideas, not-- not the ideas you have now but the ideas as they are there. [student assents, very faint] [12 second pause] I don't know-- I don't know if you got confused, go ahead. Go ahead (Dennis/David).

DD: I think-- I guess something I don't [one/two words inaudible] is is then it's thinking in words, thinking in English, meditating in English. I'm just wondering, meditating, how does one go beyond that?

AD: (Alright) [possibly one word inaudible]

DD (simultaneously): How does one become absorbed in (a/the) thought that isn't framed in words?

AD: Well the best example I can give you here is: you're reading a book. You're intensely absorbed in what you're reading. And I do mean very intense, alright. Take away the book, drop the topic completely, but retain that self-absorption. Ok? Now, direct that self-absorption, you're in the second state, you're in meditation. Direct that self-absorption, you're in the second state, you're in meditation. The culmination of that is contemplation where there is a cessation of even that activity. Now you wait. [9½ second pause] I don't know if that helped you Dennis but, I want you to tell me, I can't (know/tell).

You're at the level of self-absorption, alright, the book is taken away and you're just completely self-absorbed. You've had that experience, right? [student assents] Now that self-absorption is directed on a topic, a topic or a spiritual theme of some kind. You direct it to its *goal*, which means that it is brought to an end after the full exploitation of all thinking upon that. When that full exploitation of all thinking upon that reaches its culmination--by culmination we mean that it has reached the end of its searching and is now identified with it. Ok?

Now the level of abstraction here is tremendous. Because, usually we think-- we think that we're abstracted when we're self-absorbed, we're reading a book or something, alright, and you're absolutely self-absorbed. And, you would say well that's the height of abstraction. And here's where meditation begins, when you think you're at the height of abstraction, alright, this self-absorption is what you have to *direct* on to the spiritual theme, to a spiritual topic, whatever it may be. Let's say compassion, you know. Whatever. Not until the-- the complete exhaustion of the meaning of that--and the meaning here is not conceptual, because the realization of the idea here is much more alive and real. You know, it's like the living person and not a *picture* of the living person. In the first state you have a picture of the living

person. In the second state you're experiencing the living person himself. So when you're concentrating on compassion, I mean when you're meditating on compassion, the experience of compassion from all points of view is a *felt* reality. It's not a *conceptual* reality. [S, faint: Ok.] Alright. When this process reaches culmination you come to--I call it a standstill, you just stop. Everything comes to a stop. Now you don't do anything except to remain passive. But again, this passivity is an intense alertness. I mean you're intensely alert. It isn't as though you're in the womb of your mother again, or that you're meditating at Wisdom's Goldenrod. (laughter)

RG/S(?): That's right.

RG: Anthony, in the context of i-- Dennis' question though, in the second stage let's say you're directing your thinking to a problem. The-- the form that that direction takes, the form of that thinking, I-- I think Dennis was asking, does that form of thinking take place in word-images?

AD: It may in the beginning, [RG simultaneously: It may, right.] it may in the beginning, but it drops away.

RG: Right.

AD: Drops away.

RG: And then there's just thought.

AD (simultaneously): Because you'll see that word-images are always associated with the imagery that has been picked up by phylogenetic and ontogenetic development of the organism. [student assents, faint] [RC simultaneously: But that-- that might be a very--] So, those associations are dropped.

RG: But what-- ok, go ahead.

RC: I was saying that might be a very interesting place to like distinguish, say the-- say the artist from the mystic. The-- the mystic at that point will let go of the-- whatever imagery it is that's actually echoing the idea and let that drop, whereas the artist will hang on to it and just try to make the imagery as true an echo as possible.

AD: Yeah I see your-- I see your correspondence (Dickie).

RG: Yeah. No but An-- Anthony then, so in this second s-- you know-- you have a level where you're directing thinking in this mental level, it seems to start with the-- take the form of words. And then you have where that passes out of the level of words and seems to become a stream of intuitive understanding. Right? Which is not yet the third stage but still within the second, would you say, or is that flow of intuitive understanding come in for the third stage?

AD: No I would say the flow of intuitive understanding is the third stage.

RG: I thought so.

AD: Yeah. Because the third stage is almost equivalent to the glimpse, you know. Third stage is-- When we speak about intuition, at least the way PB speaks about it, if an intuition is prolonged, you have a glimpse. As a matter of fact, even a short intuition, short as it is, is a glimpse--if it's a true intuition.

RG: So-- so directing your thinking on a spiritual theme, when it gets stabilized as a flow of intuitive understanding is the third stage.

AD: Yeah. When the intuit-- intuitive understanding comes in you know that that Higher is coming in to help you. But basically it's the direction of the will, the intentionality is what's being directed in the meditative state. [RG assents] Because the understanding after awhile you begin to disregard, in comparison to getting to the essence.

[short pause]

MEDITATION IS PROFOUNDLY IMPORTANT BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THE REALIZATION OF THESE TEACHINGS TAKES PLACE

AS: Anthony? [couple words inaudible]

RG (simultaneously): Go ahead.

AS: There's a-- there's a few quotes, you probably have them picked out anyway but they're immediately to this point but I don't want to take-- I don't know if I'm taking-- taking off somewhere. They're from that volume 4.

S (faint): Did you find (it/them)?

S: Yeah.

S (simultaneously): No?

AS: Yeah, I have them here but I-- Anthony I don't-- they--

AD: Well go right through, yeah go through it.

AS: You read from this before, I think these are the most-- he's got a whole section [couple words inaudible] all, the whole thing is on that point that you're saying, they're the most marvelous one of his [one word inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Well, that would be [AS assents] good Avery, that would either supplement or correct our understanding.

AS (simultaneously): Well these are-- they're-- You've read some of them before. Example, this one--

PB [V13, 20:4.66 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 20: What Is Philosophy, #44, AS reading]: "Continued and constant pondering over the ideas presented herein is itself a part of the yoga of philosophical discernment. Such reflection will as naturally lead the student towards realization of his goal as will the companion and equally necessary activity of suppressing all ideas altogether in mental quiet. This is because these ideas are not mere speculations but [are] themselves the outcome of a translation from inner experience. While such ideas as are here presented grow under the water of their reflection and the sunshine of their love into fruitful branches of thought, they gradually begin to foster intuition."

AD: That's very good Avery, that's marvelous, yeah that's right to the point.

AS: There's-- there's a whole [AD: Yeah.] [LR: Can we hear it again?] series of those ones together.

AD: Because that's exactly what we have to [AS assents] do to really, you know, become mentalists. You actually have to go through this.

VM: Well said.

LR: Avery, could we hear it again?

AS: Yeah.

AD: In other words, that's the level where mentalism gets realized.

[short pause]

PB [V13, 20:4.66 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 20: What Is Philosophy, #44, AS reading]: "Continued and constant pondering over the ideas presented herein is itself a part of the yoga of philosophical discernment. Such reflection will as naturally lead the student towards realization of his goal as will the companion and equally necessary activity of suppressing all ideas altogether in mental quiet. This is because these ideas are not mere speculations but [are] themselves the outcome of a translation from inner experience. While such ideas as are here presented grow under the water of their reflection and the sunshine of their love into fruitful branches of thought, they gradually begin to foster intuition."

[short pause]

S (very faint): Can you read more from the [one/two words inaudible] more.

AS: He has little ones like--

PB [V13, 20:4.111, AS reading]: "The thinking of thoughts no longer veils spiritual being from him. Instead it is now an activity which acts as a transparent medium for that being."

AD: Let me try this way, just to supplement a little bit what he's saying, alright. Let's say that we discussed in class that-- that notion of nonduality, alright, which is basically that all thoughts can be reduced to mind, consequently the whole world can be reduced to mind, alright. Now, at the level that we discuss these things, sometimes hotly debate them and all that, it's fine, alright, but it's preliminary. Where this *really* has to be taken is at this level of meditation. That's where it is realized. See over here it isn't realized, although sometimes you can get a glimpse, I mean no one's going to deny that. All of a sudden, you know, like I'll say "You can't know knowing" and somebody's head'll pop off, you know. He got a glimpse, alright, but the work that we have to do is after we understand these conceptually is take some of these ideas, bring them into medi-- It's a spiritual theme, I mean, you're trying to understand what nonduality means, so nonduality *must* mean that all thoughts are reducible to Mind, alright, and you bring that into meditation. Now, remember, we said meditation is a state where you're completely ignoring now the body and the memories and the-- all that's over with, you know, you're not concerned, you're just-- you're just trying to experience this in the depths of your own understanding. And that's where the realization: "My God, this is true!" you know. [AD snaps fingers] It's actually a felt, living experience. The problem is when you come out, you try to explain it to someone else and you stammer. But that's the level at which the realization of these teachings take place. And that's why meditation is profoundly important, because unless a problem is brought there, we really are-- we-- we skirt the outside, you know, we're at the periphery, we're not inside yet. You had another one.

S: (Uh-hm./Hm?)

AS (simultaneously): Yeah, I know, [couple words inaudible] this is one more, just [one word inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Yeah, please.

AS: We've read this before but I'm not sure.

PB [V16, 28: 2.99 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 28: The Alone, #2, AS reading]: "The topic with which all such metaphysical thinking should end after it has pondered on mentalism is that out of which the thinking principle itself arises--Mind--and it should be considered under its aspect as the one reality. When this intellectual understanding is brought within one's own experience as fact, when it is made as much one's own as a bodily pain, then it becomes direct insight. Such thinking is the most profitable and resultful in which he can engage, for it brings the student to the very portal of Mind where it stops activity by itself and where the differentiation of ideas disappears. As the mental muscles strain after this concept of the Absolute, the Ineffable and Infinite, they lose their materialist [AS reads: materialistic] rigidity and become more sensitive to intimations from the Overself. When thinking is able to reach such a profound depth that it attains utter impersonality and calm universality, it is able to approach the fundamental principle of its own being. When hard thinking reaches a culminating point, it then voluntarily destroys itself. [AD: Commits suicide.] Such an attainment of course can take place deep within the innermost recesses of the individual's consciousness alone."

AD: Alright, you got good reason for burning the midnight oil, in case you're interested.

TS (very faint): Yeah, uh-hm.

S: Would you mind re-- rereading the beginning part of that passage?

[Audio File 1983 0824a Ends]

[Audio File 1983 0824b Begins]

[few seconds of background student talking]

AD: Well, we did these, we did these.

VM (simultaneously) (faint): Yeah. Yeah I remember those quotes (too).

AD: Now, you'll see when you do them again then-- then they get better, I mean, (bit of laughter) you know, they get better and better as you go along. (VM laughing)

VM: It's the point of your quote, isn't it?

AD: You remember the remark, you remember that fellow told me, "You know, you're getting smarter. You say things more clearly now." (RG laughing, some laughter, student words)

VM: Maybe it's true.

RG: Was it PB?

WHAT MAKES A SPIRITUAL THEME APPROPRIATE FOR MEDITATION?

AH: Anthony, may I ask a question regarding what is meant by a spiritual theme that we talked of. Could we say that-- may I say that a spiritual theme is any theme that leads toward the root of thinking?

AD: Well, I wouldn't say *any* theme, I would say that certainly is. You know, when we say spiritual here we mean, you know, Mind, [AH simultaneously: But--] something that leads you into the nature of Mind more and more.

AH: You're not thinking of a religious object.

AD: No, no.

PD: But it's gonna demand all the love and devotion that a religious object would.

AH: Would have had.

S: Yeah.

AD: No, so in a sense, you know like if you take a thinker like Kant or Berkeley or something, you know, I would say that they were basically phil-- you know, mentalistically or philosophically orientated, that they were approaching what we would say would be spiritual reality, because they were searching for the truth. And as close as they got to it to that-- to that extent it was certainly a spiritual theme, even though in the case of Kant for instance, you know, he never had any mystical experience at all. Yet his preoccupation with the a priori conditions of, you know, our experience of the sensible world, he got so involved in it that for ten years he couldn't let go of the problem. So I don't know, 1770 or 1780, something like that, for ten years he couldn't let go of the problem, he was just preoccupied with that. To me the man was contemplating a spiritual theme, although we certainly don't call him Saint Immanuel Kant. (laughter)

AH: I was just very curious what the definition of a spiritual theme was.

AD: Yeah, I think, I think in terms of the context we-- we use the term, it would be basically Mind or Truth or Reality. Now, I'm not objecting to the religious approach, I'm just saying that that's a different way. We'd-- a person like Kant wasn't concentrating on an icon, you know, or a Black Madonna, he was concentrating on a problem that related to your-- you know, your own reality. And that's spiritual. Alright Randy, why don't we do it again.

RC (simultaneously): Do you have that black-- that black notebook that I gave you at lunch?

AD: Yeah.

RC: Do you have that with you?

AD: No I don't. Do you want (read the/me to) [RC simultaneously: No, I remember (all of it).] (fore) start one?

DON'T SUPPRESS THE HIGHER GRADE OF THINKING, PHILOSOPHIC DISCERNMENT, RATHER EXHAUST YOURSELF AT IT

RC: Submit-- yeah. (bit of laughter) No not that one, I was thinking of the one where he says: "Thinking must stop, but if it stops at the level of the little ego..."

AD: It stops prematurely, yeah.

RC (simultaneously): Right. It won't produce anything.

AD: Uh-hm.

RC: But if it-- if it stops after having being sufficiently deepened and purified, then the emptiness of the mind that ensues can be a receptacle for the irradiation of your Overself.

[Transcriber note: The above was RC's paraphrase of the PB quote which he did not have at hand, but which is typed as follows.]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.280 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #57]: "Thinking must stop, but if it stops at the level of the little ego only a psychological experience or a mediumistic possession may result. If, however, it stops at a deeper level after right preparation and sufficient purification, the mind's emptiness may be filled by a realization of identity with the Overself."

AD: Yeah, now-- now the mind or let's say the-- that principle in us is been trained, you know, and prepared to understand the experiences that it will have. But if a person prematurely cuts off thinking, and that-- You know, in a sense-- Somewhere he refers to Patanjali's yoga as a lower form, you know, and he tries to point out it's necessary, you know, for the thinking that the ego is preoccupied with, that that has to be suppressed. [student assents] But then there's a higher grade of thinking, which he calls philosophic discernment, where you have to understand what it is you're doing, and that kind of thinking shouldn't be suppressed. I would say it has-- you have to *exhaust* yourself at it. When you reach a point where you've done it so-- so intensely and sufficiently, it just dies away naturally. [RC assents] And now the mind is ready for the experience, you know, you're ready for the experience of Mind. But, again, that would be right to the point. However, a person has to keep in mind that although we say Patanjali's a lower form of philosophy, you know, you have to be honest with yourself: "Well have I been able to bring to a halt the formation-- or the formation of thought on the part of the ego, have I been able to do that?" And if you can't do that then you can go on calling it a lower form of yoga, but try to remember where you're functioning.

A PRELIMINARY DISCIPLINE OF CHARACTER IS NEEDED BEFORE MEDITATION CAN BE PRACTICED CORRECTLY AND SAFELY

RC: Uh-hm. Well in terms of the-- the quotes that I'm going through tonight, you've probably all seen the outline, that there are two sections in the outline that refer to different stages. One is called elementary meditation. That's that section that I'm trying to work on now. And then much further down the line there's a section called advanced contemplation. So, that's the context-- the context that I'm putting these quotes in is more in terms of the elementary. We're trying to make some-- some basic points clear without getting into too many of the fine points. I mean, we bring them up later when we get into talking about the more advanced stages. Let me just say more why I've got these quotes here. [short pause] The idea is to present the basics in terms of an elementary, rudimentary understanding of how to begin.

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #43, RC reading]: "It is [RC reads: It's] necessary to pronounce certain words of caution to the novice in meditation. He is trying to penetrate the unknown parts of his being with a vehicle not only fashioned by himself but also fashioned out of himself. If the

material is defective or the method inaccurate, the result will be disappointing and may even be harmful. Moreover, the journey itself is beset with certain risks and dangers for the man whose emotions are undisciplined, whose passions are ungoverned, whose ambition is to exploit other persons, whose critical judgement is poor, and whose knowledge is small. Therefore the traveller must safeguard himself by sufficient preparation and adequate equipment before beginning his journey, by a preliminary discipline to fit his mind and character for the effort.”

[10 second pause]

RC: That’s one quote. There’s a few more on the same line (in this--)

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #39, RC reading]: “It is necessary to warn the beginner in meditation against the mistakes and perils into which he is liable [RC reads: likely] to fall. The greatest mistake is to fail to realize the contributions of the ego to his own mystical experience; the greatest peril is to let himself be overcome by a mediumistic passivity under a belief that it is a mystical passivity.”

[short pause]

AD: Well we have to try to keep these things in mind because what we have in mind I think is in a little while to start intensifying meditation, and it would be risky to do so unless you keep these things in mind, and start taking upon yourself-- you know take inventory of what you’re like and what needs to be corrected. And you have to start working on those corrections. Otherwise it’s not wise to engage in three, four, five meditations a day. [11½ second pause]

And I experimented a little bit the past week and I noticed the end of the fifth meditation other things were stronger than I was and that it’s not up-- I mean-- I thought I could pick the time and the place, I found out I couldn’t. So, you’ll have to keep these things in mind as we read them. Try to keep them in mind, it’s very important. Third or fourth meditation and you become victimized by the-- what, you know, I refer to as these lower impulses or these influences that sometimes you might notice which are around you. You become much more receptive to them. So, we’ll keep this in mind as he’s reading this and when we go on to a, you know, a lengthy meditation session, it will only be-- and I can’t, you know, sit at the door and tell you come in or not to come in, you have to do that yourself. To the extent that you’re willing to undertake a few of the disciplines necessary, I don’t think it’d be wise to meditate more than, you know, what you normally do. So let’s have a few more, ok Randy?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.459, RC reading]: “Meditation is a very delicate technique and incorrectly done may do harm as well as good. Moreover there are times when it is even necessary to abandon it, in order to strengthen weaker parts of the personality which might otherwise affect the meditator adversely as he becomes more sensitive through the practice.”

[14¼ second pause]

S (very faint): I would-- could you repeat?

S: Yes.

DB: Could you elaborate a little bit about what is meant by strengthening the weaker parts of the personality? It seems like the ability to defend oneself psychologically or-- [student assents] well what exactly do you think he means here?

RC: Well an obvious one seems to be, if you're going to get an influx of negativity, you're going to be disciplined enough in terms of your relationship to your personal emotions to be able to insulate yourself from this-- that negativity when it's going to come up. [student assents] That's an obvious one. If a person is sort of inwardly passive to their emotions, it could be dangerous. That would seem to be one thing in terms of a non-developed rational relationship to the emotions. Another thing would seem to be that if you're say particularly susceptible to other people's thoughts and feelings and you become more sensitive and you haven't developed an ability to distinguish your space from their space, that any hostility that's directed to you would be very harmful. Basically any emotion that anybody directs to you you might not be able to distinguish from your own.

AH/RC(?): Quite a skill to [one/two words inaudible]

DB: Right.

AH: I think also Randy, like aren't there-- there's deficiencies. But if you are fortunate enough to [one word inaudible] that mental realm, those things can-- they can manifest or could be-- there could be an influence in a much more powerful way than they-- they would at this level of consciousness.

RC: Exactly. If you have certain ambitions that are not exactly altruistic, you could definitely be a prey to forces within yourself and from others that would give you illusions of being more powerful than you are.

AH: Would you think there are like dangers that are ontological rather than produced by psychology?

RC: Yeah. You mean are there "bad guys"?

AH: Yeah.

S: Uh-hm.

AD: They're not ontological though. (laughter)

BS: Hope not.

AH: They're ontological?

S (faint): No Andrew.

AD (simultaneously): It's usually that middle realm.

RC: Tim of course found one. (laughter)

PB [V11, 16:12.32, RC reading]: "It is by trying, aspiring, daring, that the latent creative forces in us are called into activity. Occultism teaches that all kinds of hindering and hostile forces surround us to drag us down. But if a man believes an influence or [RC reads: the] person or [RC adds: a] thing or environment to be hostile, if he thinks it will make it impossible for him to progress, then it may well be so; he will not

progress. What occultism teaches is true, but it is not necessary to burden oneself with doubt and pessimism. There is also a higher truth.”

[short pause]

AH: What was the first sentence, I missed the first sentence.

PB [V11, 16:12.32, TS reading]: “It is by trying, aspiring, daring, that the latent creative forces in us are called into activity.”

[15 second pause]

RC: Yeah, I think the thing that we read early on too, it was one of the first essays that we read Andrew, I don’t remember, but PB was talking about evil, it was an essay on evil. And he mentioned how if you start to progress to a certain point and actually do get control over negativity from within, the next step will be that it will attack you from without and that other people around you might become unwitting vehicles for adverse forces that are trying to-- Like it seems like you have to be fairly differentiated to be able to distinguish how to relate to people in those circumstances, your personality would have to be pretty-- pretty well developed to see the difference between, you know, somebody getting [student assents] provoked to be hostile to you not for any reason of their own. [student assents] In that case, what you (going to do/can do) about it(?/.)

AH: That danger or those dangers are more dangerous as the person becomes more sensitive or as the practice [half/one word inaudible] doing the practice of meditation. [student assents, faint] That was suggested I think. Like certain openness to those forces.

RC: And also-- well this quote seems very-- lots of quotes about the stronger your light gets the more it would attack the darkness it wants to bring out.

AH: Attack or attract?

RC: Attract. [short pause] It seems basically you just can’t afford to be naive.

[student assents, faint]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.458, RC reading]: “All aspirants should be warned that self-development in meditation without some co-equal effort and development in morality, intellectuality, and practicality may easily lead to a state of unbalance which would unfit them for the ordinary obligations and duties of life.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.518, RC reading]: “People with acidulated tempers or [RC reads: and] gross selfishness, with serious neuroses or wild hysterias, are required to improve themselves until they are sufficiently changed, before attempting to penetrate the deeper arcana of meditation.”

AD: What (does/is) that acidulated temper mean? (bit of laughter) Does that refer to excessive acid? (laughter, student words)

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.518, RC reading]: “For the result would be morally or in...”

RC: This is an interesting--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.518, RC reading]: “For the result would be morally or intellectually harmful to them. Yet it is unfortunately the case that so many among those attracted to mysticism are psychoneurotics [RC reads: psychoneurotic]. (laughter) It is worse still when they are half-educated [persons]. They are often incapable of absorbing its [RC reads: the] moral disciplines, or are unwilling to do so. The well-educated, who might be expected to be more balanced, are also more sceptical of it.”

[10¼ second pause]

AD: Just in case you thought he left you out, huh? (laughter)

S (very faint in background): Exactly.

[short pause with faint background student talking]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.306, RC reading]: “If the wrong mental attitude...”

RC: This is a long one.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.306, RC reading]: “If the wrong mental attitude is brought to the practice of [these] meditation exercises, if tension is introduced in the beginning and frustration later, then how can the further stage of contemplation ever be reached? If the ego is tightly clung to all the time, if its motive and desire in undertaking [RC reads: understanding] the practice is to acquire more powers for itself, more status in the human situation, more results of being “spiritual” without paying the price involved, then the merger of self into Overself in the final stage cannot be attained. For the ego will either fail to stop its thinking activity or, succeeding, will be lulled but not mastered, will enter a psychic not a real spiritual condition, will achieve pseudo-enlightenment. While trying to follow the usual instructions on meditation, what is actually done defeats its ultimate purpose and prevents its getting beyond a certain point. For the mind is being used wrongly simply because it is habitually used in that way. By “wrongly” is meant: “[RC adds: wrongly] for the purposes [RC reads: purpose] of meditation,” however right and long-established it may be for all other and ordinary purposes. The alternative to this predicament is to take to a different road from the start, to do at the beginning what will anyway inescapably have to be done at the end. The easiest method for this is to “affirm the divine Presence, Reality,” and not to let go of the [RC reads: that] affirmation. This turns attention away from the ego and directs it to the thought-free Infinity which can swallow it.”

S: Hm.

[short pause]

PC: Would you read the last couple sentences?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.306, RC reading]: “The alternative to this predicament is to take [to] a different road from the start, to do at the beginning what will anyway inescapably have to be done at the end. The easiest method for this is to “affirm the divine Presence, Reality,” and not to let go of the affirmation. This turns attention away from the ego and directs it to the thought-free Infinity which can swallow it.”

AH: Did you say *not* to let go of the affirmation?

RC: Exactly.

S (simultaneously): That's right.

S: (That's right.)

[short pause]

S (faint): Well is [couple words inaudible]

DB: Is the predicament then that is spoken of the appropriation of aspiration by the ego so that the individual thinks he's doing the right thing and so on, so forth, but the motivation behind what [one word inaudible] of actions are being taken is for the purposes of self-aggrandizement on however subtle a-- a level [student assents] one happens to be operating?

RC: Yeah, it says--

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.306, RC reading]: "...if its motive and desire in undertaking [RC reads: understanding] the practice is to acquire more powers for itself, more status in the human situation, more results of being [RC adds: so-called] "spiritual" without paying the price involved..."

DB: Price being-- what does that mean? (bit of laughter)

JA: Randy?

RC: Yeah Jeanne.

JA: Seems like there would also be dangers involved in meditating on a spiritual theme, you know, if-- because it would seem very easy to do that as an intellectual exercise, it seems that that would be one of the dangers of that practice, so that there would be an acquisitiveness always behind the exercise waiting, you know, like to reap the rewards of ideas like-- you know, or understanding [one word inaudible] [short pause] I wonder if we've come across anything (about that).

S (very faint): Yeah.

RC: Yeah, there are quotes. I'm not sure if I have any of them right here. But there are quite a few quotes that talked about the need for the person trying to meditate to lose the fascination with their own discursive intellectual activity.

JA (simultaneously): Uh-huh. Yeah.

AH: Randy, didn't one of the earlier quotes suggest that one of the-- one of the prerequisites or one of the qualities of the exercise was to have-- I don't reme-- interrogative-- Like-- like you take up a spiritual theme like-- like any one that you've mentioned. It has to be approached with an extreme kind of inquisitiveness-- inquisitiveness.

RC: Yeah, I said either interrogative like "What am I?" or-- or affirmative like "The godlike is with me."

AH: But, in regards to what Jeanne said, that inquisitiveness or interroga--

JA (simultaneously): I said *acquisitiveness*.

AH: Acquisitiveness you--

JA (simultaneously): Yeah.

AH: In other words, the inquiry is directed toward [S simultaneously: No.] having some acquisition of more knowledge.

JA: Yeah.

S (simultaneously): Uh-hm.

AH: The spiritual theme would be one that didn't lead to that(--/.)

PD: How come?

AH: It (certainly) would not lead to more knowledge but to intuition.

[student assents, faint]

JA: If-- right.

AH: [one word inaudible] a spiritual thing.

JA: Yeah, it's not wrong, again, I was just trying to think of-- you know, he was talking about, you know, some of the dangers in a wrong approach to meditation in terms of (acquisitions) of power or, you know, like intense [one word inaudible] like through spirituality or something. And I was just making a corresponding (major) one that-- between meditation and spiritual theme.

AH: Yes it just-- it was what you said sounded so correct I had to justify it against that earlier quote where the admonishment was to have an interrogative attitude toward the spiritual theme.

JA: Yeah. Because you thought I said inquisitiveness?

AH: No. (bit of laughter)

CdA: Jeanne I've heard quotes where he says that it's-- that it's [one/two words inaudible] to distinguish what is-- what is coming from the ego and the imagination in those kinds of exercises.

JA: Yeah.

CdA: That it takes-- and-- and the emotion(s).

JA: Right.

S: Yeah.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

RC: But that's not [one word inaudible] of a theme (or related--)

CdA: No, no, that's just thinking of-- of dangers of delusion, you know.

PB PARAS ABOUT ELEMENARY MEDITATION

RC: Here's a real nice bunch. There's actually quite a few of these. Most of them come from volume 3, I've only got a few of them here.

LR: Randy, have you been reading from volume 3 all along?

RC: Most of them are from volume 3. Not necessarily the red book. There's also-- some of them will be from 2 and some of them from 28, some from 17. There-- these are actually spread out pretty well, some from 12. But most of these are from the 3 series.

PB [V3, 3:1.4, RC reading]: "If you begin the day with love in your heart, peace in your nerves, and truth in your mind, you not only benefit by their presence but also bring them..."

LR (simultaneously): Reread those again, I'm sorry. (laughter) It's alright, reread.

RC: Such a shock. (laughter)

PB [V3, 3:1.4, RC reading]: "If you begin the day with love in your heart, peace in your nerves, and truth in your mind, you not only benefit by their presence but also bring them to others--to your family or [RC reads: and] friends, and to all those whom destiny draws across your path that day."

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.4, RC reading]: "By beginning each day with [RC adds: a] meditation on the Divine, a man begins well. This act helps to give a spiritual background to the work, duties, and meetings of the day. It comes every twenty-four hours as a reminder that his life has a higher purpose to which his worldly purpose must be subordinate. It refreshes his dedication and renews his self-discipline. Above all, it attracts grace and this may give him moral restraint or support or even a feeling of inner peace at relaxed moments later in the day."

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.7 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #25, RC reading]: "The [RC reads: An] aspirant who is really determined, who wants to make rapid progress, must make use of the early hour of morning when dawn greets the earth. Such an hour is to be set aside for meditation upon the Supreme, that ultimately a spiritual dawn may throw its welcome light upon the soul. By this simple initial act, his day is smoothed before he starts. Yet of the few who seek the [highest] Truth, fewer still are ready to make this sacrifice of their time, or are willing to forego the comfort of bed. Most men are willing to sacrifice some hours of their sleep in order to enjoy the presence of a woman and to satisfy their passion for her; but exceedingly few men are willing to sacrifice some hours of their sleep to enjoy the presence of divinity and to satisfy their passion for God-realization."

[22¼ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.1, RC reading]: "Of all the day's activities [RC reads: activity], this non-activity, this retreat into meditation, must become the principal one. It ought to be the centre, with all the others circling round [RC reads: around] it."

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.276, RC reading]: "In this period, when meditation will take the place of action, the remembrance of God should become paramount."

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.236 and *Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #31, RC reading]: “Because of inferior auric magnetism of other persons picked up during the day, [the] washing of hands and feet and face is prescribed in Islamic religion before prayer and recommended in philosophic mysticism before meditation.”

[short pause]

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #21, RC reading]: “You begin your meditation by remembering its spiritual purpose and consequently by putting away all thoughts of your own affairs or of the world’s affairs and paying attention only to the single thought of the Overself.”

[12¾ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.35, RC reading]: “Since meditation forms an essential part of the Quest’s practices, a part of the day must be given up to it. It need not be a large part; it can be quite a small part. The attitude with which we approach it should not be one of irksome necessity but of loving eagerness. We may have to try different periods of the day so as to find the one that will best suit us and our circumstances. This, however, is only for beginners and intermediates, for one day we shall find that any time is good enough for meditation time just as every day is Sunday to the true Christian.”

[10¼ second pause]

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #11, RC reading]: “Meditation in one sense is an effort. It seeks first to approach, by actively cutting a way through the jungle of irrelevant thoughts, and second to enter, by passively yielding to its outlying influence, the very core of oneself, the very centre of one’s psyche, which is indeed the divine spirit. In the first stage, a resolute will is required to overcome and banish the eager intruders who would destroy his chances of success. In the second stage, the exercise of will would itself be just as destructive, for an opposite attitude is then called for--total surrender of the ego.”

[9¾ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.366, RC reading]: “He is not asked to devote more than a short part of the day to these exercises. If he advances to a stage where it may be necessary to desert active life for a time, the Higher Self will bid him to do so by [RC adds: an] inward prompting and will arrange [his] circumstances in a way which will make this possible for him. But until it [RC reads: this] happens it would be a mistake on his part to anticipate it by premature action or impulsive emotionalism.”

[short pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.302, RC reading]: “Until one has become adept in the art, invoking the presence of the Overself through sitting in meditation calls for considerable patience and the capacity not to stop through depression or irritation because good results are not immediately apparent. In this point, the art is likened by the ancients to sitting in the antechamber of a palace while waiting for an audience with a [RC reads: the] reigning monarch. A man may have to wait the monarch’s pleasure for hours, perhaps, before he is able to see him. Or he may not. But if during the waiting period he rises in annoyance or despair or impatience and goes away, then he will certainly lose the chance of seeing the king, whereas by curbing

these [RC reads: those] emotions and sticking to his aim, he may eventually succeed in it. Again, the practice of meditation is like the digging of a well. You keep on boring downwards into deeper and deeper ground. Yet although the work is arduous and irksome, you see no water until you are nearing the end. In just the same way, you meditate day after day apparently without results; but lo! one glorious day the water of spiritual life suddenly appears. Every time he sits for meditation and faithfully sticks out the allotted period despite its dryness and despite its apparent barrenness of result, the student is working on deep-rooted materialistic habits, tendencies, complexes, and extroversions within himself. The advance which he makes is consequently slight and slow at first, but it is there. If it is so inconsiderable in the early stages, the cumulative effect begins to show itself as considerable in the later stages. In the end, it will be as difficult for him not to meditate--or even to bring each individual period of meditation to an end--as it was difficult to continue it during the [RC reads: his] novitiate. However, to overcome this problem of dryness and barrenness pertaining to the earlier stages, it will be wise for the beginner to remember that it is unnecessary [RC reads “necessary” and then corrects himself] for him to tax his strength and patience by over-long practice. He may begin with a fifteen-minute period and should increase this only when the desire, the urge, and the encouraging feeling of progress inspire him to do so. Even then the increases should be quite small and at intervals, so that if he rises to a three-quarter-hour period it may happen only after a whole year’s daily effort. When the aspirant is sufficiently advanced he will, however, do better by dispensing altogether with the thought that he should limit himself to a particular length of time for [his] practice. The fact that he is seeking what is ultimately a timeless consciousness should now begin to affect his practical approach and mental attitude, should now free him from any feeling he unconsciously assimilated from [RC reads: from any feeling unconsciously legated to him by] the breathless haste and restless tumult of modern conditions.”

[short pause]

JC: [few words inaudible] (You’re being carried by it.)

[short pause]

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #35, RC reading]: “An aid is *bhakti*, love. Love is essential to meditation; it is a binding force comprised of devotion and reverence. The aim is to become united. Success in meditation is to become one with the Higher Self (unity). Meditation should be a yearning to come home to one’s place in the universe.”

[short pause]

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #22, RC reading]: “No matter how limited the period available may be, whether five or fifty minutes, approach it with the deliberately induced feeling of complete leisureliness. Bring no attitude of haste into the work, or it will thwart your efforts from the start.”

[short pause]

DB: Of those last two quotes it seems a good deal easier to bring the latter attitude you’ve mentioned of leisureliness into the meditation first. I don’t know if this is the proper place for that but-- you know, for this particular question, but since it was mentioned I’d like to ask. Sometimes it seems as if that question

of bhakti is a gift from what-- than something that you could actually will, say well, alright, I'm going to feel devotion now and you somehow do it, it's-- And so I don't really understand how you go about doing that.

PD: It's very-- you can cultivate your emotion, you can cultivate your devotion, just like you cultivate taste in music.

RC: David, that section in--

DB (simultaneously): That's always-- but that's-- I'm sorry? What?

RC: There's that section in the *Quest* which he called "The Cultivation of the Finer Feelings". It's pretty great-- it's a good section and it's oriented toward exactly that, bringing up the finer feelings that can be the source of devotional recognition of the Higher Self. [short pause] It seems pretty clear he is saying that you're gonna-- you're gonna have to have that in order to really progress in meditation, so-- [short pause] There's also a lot of stuff about how to develop it but those things are on here. Those things are in a different section. But that there is a lot of material on that.

DB: Uh-hm.

RC: 6 is a good volume. 1 is also. [short pause] And also this leisureliness for him is really a loaded word because-- In other places he-- he does take fairly elaborate pains to distinguish between an attitude of leisureliness and an attitude of carelessness. And the leisureliness is more like an awareness (of/um) in the core of your being having all the time in the world. Um-- [13 second pause] Eternity being as long as it takes or whatever. [short pause] So you want to do more?

BS (faint): What was your name? (bit of laughter)

S: [couple words inaudible]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:7.1, RC reading]: "Although everyone must begin by making meditation something to be practised at particular times only, he must end by making it an essential background to his whole life. Even under the pressure of inescapable outward occupation, it ought to be still continuing as the screen upon which these [occupational] activities appear."

[students assent]

[19 second pause]

HOW BEST TO STRUCTURE THE VOLUME OF PB NOTEBOOKS ON MEDITATION

RC: Ok, those were the quotes that I have now at least and they're-- are meant to give a basic like outline and basic spirit of what meditating is about. The next-- the next (quotes/groups) to come would be more specific. The next group that comes-- be coming under-- like there's a subheading that says "Practise concentrated attention" and he's got specific quotes about "This time concentrate." There's another section about "Meditative Thinking" and those would have quotes that would be talking about taking a particular idea and-- and doing something with it.

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1983 0824b Ends; Side 2 begins)

S: Yeah.

[few seconds of background student talking]

RC: But-- let's go back to the beginning I guess, if someone said to you well, you know, what's meditation about, you think that the quotes that we gave tonight would serve as like a general package? Without going into any specifics this is basically what it's about.

VM: And I also wonder, this is a question [couple words inaudible] so much, is it appropriate in these chapters like this to have pointers to the places in PB-- "He writes about it in some of his previously published books"? That may be a fairly laborious task but maybe if you point out the chief sections. I don't know if you want to go that way or if that's a good idea or not.

[students assent]

RC: Actually--

VM: Because a guy says "Gee, you know, that's good but I want more and where do I go." Well, the obvious place to send him would be to some of PB's books and I wonder if [few words inaudible]

RC (simultaneously): I'd actually want to-- I'd actually want to send him to the volume that's going to be in the set that's going to have all the (stuff).

VM: That's-- that's-- he says he wants it now, I want something quick.

S: [couple/few words inaudible]

RC: He definitely will approach [one word inaudible]

S: He shouldn't be so [possibly one word inaudible]

VM: I think it would be worth doing, I don't know. And you don't have to make an exhaustive index [few words inaudible] but you could point him to the elementary and some of the more advanced discussion(s). Unless you feel that PB has evolved to the point where to go back into his previous [few words inaudible]

RC (simultaneously): Well that's what he told me. He said I-- [VM simultaneously: The discussion maybe is inappropriate.] I consider this new and--

[short pause]

VM: The other thing, some of the sections in the *Wisdom* are-- they're [couple/three words inaudible] (*Quest*/quest).

S: But did you--

[couple students at once, few words inaudible]

RC (simultaneously): There-- some of the quotes give references to other things too like, there's one here that picks up on--

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #62, RC reading]: “In *The Wisdom of the Overself* there was given a meditation exercise to be practised just before sleep.”

RC: And so on.

PB [*Perspectives*, Chapter 4: Elementary Meditation, #62, RC reading]: “Here is a further exercise which is akin in character...”

RC: And it goes into a specific exercise. Some of them refer to “I spoke of this in *The Quest of the Overself* and now I can develop it further.”

[student assents]

AS: This is kind of a side point but since you brought it up. [RC/S(?) assents] Some of those notes at least in the red *are* from the period of 1940 to 45.

RC: Uh-hm.

AS: And I-- sometimes it's hard to dis-- I mean, I suppose one (can do it), the discerning, could distinguish them but-- Sometimes, you know, like I mean just on the point of this being recent-- the re-- you know, his recent work. Some of it seems maybe-- it (wouldn't/would) seem obviously there, but some of it definitely is from this period.

RC: Right.

AS: I mean you could see there are-- there are crossings out in places where he says “In my next work” and then it's been crossed out like everything he did, yeah. In whatever, you know, you can see it, it makes [student assents] reference to the *Hidden Teaching* and it says, you know, “In my next work this would be further clarified and (cause I--) just so and so.” And it's right in the same kind of type-face with all kinds of other things.

RC: Uh-hm.

AS: Hard to differentiate.

MB: Besides the o--

AS (simultaneously): I'm just wondering if that was a-- I don't think it's a problem, I was just--

[student assents]

S: (Ok.)

MB: The more recent-- the more recent writings don't necessarily supplant the published writings anyway.

RC: Oh no, no, I just meant in terms of work that I personally would want to get involved in doing. Like I'm more interested at this point in moving ahead with getting these things together first than like making a cross-reference to earlier works, it just--

VM (simultaneously): Yeah, I didn't mean it in any way exhaustive. I would say you could point to two or three places where [student assents] further amplification, some [one word inaudible] (and) some other ideas about meditation can be found in these writings.

RC: Uh-hm.

VM: You know, like three lines, I wasn't thinking of an exhaustive cross-referencing.

RC: Uh-hm.

MB: It's-- you know it's-- it does seem a little odd to me to the idea of picking up this book of PB's as the first book to ever come across of PB's, just because, you know, we've-- we've read them all first. It seems-- to me it seems like these are additional to the ones that he already wrote.

VM: But they cover the whole *range*, from the most rank beginner all the way up to the most advanced sort of student so--

[students assent]

MB (simultaneously): I know, it's a little bit like the-- you know, it is-- it's-- it summarizes everything but it doesn't go into-- to things in-- in great depth in some instances. In some instances it does.

RC: What is?

MB: I mean *these* writings--

RC: These ones that I read tonight.

MB: Well, just in general, the PB notes, some of them are very brief and some of them are very long.

LR: I disagree though, Myra. I don't think-- [S simultaneously: I do.] [S simultaneously: Yeah.] I don't think any prerequisite in terms of reading his other books is necessary at all to read all (these/his) notes.

MB: For whom?

LR: For *anybody*. [student assents] I don't-- I think they're so complete. The references, the framework is right within it. You can, I mean-- I just-- I see it a real different way than you. I don't-- I don't feel that a background is necessary for anyone interested in [couple/three words inaudible]

TM (simultaneously): Yeah but do you really feel that when you read them you can discount the background you already have really or you can [three/few words inaudible] Because it seems to me that they-- they do them-- I mean, the way we read the para [couple inaudible student words simultaneous with TM] it does imply some background.

S: Uh-hm. It's a new day.

JA: I think Tom's right Linda, that it would be very difficult to discount-- [few inaudible student words simultaneous with JA] to discount material background. What?

AD: Well, Randy, well you're thinking of putting them in that order that you mentioned--elementary, intermediate, and advanced?

RC: No, um-- I just follow(ed) like his outline. In section I was working on tonight, I would file those things in elementary and part of elementary for me would mean getting a *picture* of the three stages, but not going into any details about the third, and having most of the quotes in the elementary stage be referring to the first and second stages. And then another section entitled “Advanced Contemplation”, and it would be in that section that I would deal with the differentiation of the third stage.

AD: Would you proceed, would you start it off by the moral, ethical disciplines, the [RC simultaneously: Yeah. Definitely.] prerequisites to meditation, and then start out with the elementary?

RC: Yeah.

S: Ok.

AD: Well, of course, the first one you read is very difficult.

LR: Yeah.

RC: By the first one you mean--

S: Five stages of [one/two words inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): The long one.

S: That was the first.

S (faint): Yeah.

S (possibly part of background): [few words inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Three stages of meditation. It's true, it gives you a picture about the thing.

RG: I don't think anyone would know what thinking may be there if they say--

VM: Reflection.

RG: Yeah.

LR: I kind of think the last ones you read tonight [S: Yeah.] [S: True, uh-hm.] were a good way to start the whole topic of meditation.

AD (simultaneously): Yeah that-- that's why I said, start out with the moral and ethical prerequisites necessary in order to get involved in meditation. Because most of us, if you remember, are looking into meditation.

RC: Well that's interesting because--

S: (I know.)

AD (simultaneously): Try(--/.)

RC: The ones that I read on the stages, I haven't-- I haven't put in the notebook, they're in a separate binder for now, and we've just been classing them as stages of meditation, stages of contemplation. Where would you think of putting them?

AD: Putting the moral prerequisites?

RC: No, the quotes about the various stages, that there *are* three stages, and--

AD: Well, I would make that category into four, you know. I would start out, the preliminary prerequisites--the moral purification, the emotional discipline, etc--that would be to start off meditation. And then, you know, have the first, second, and third follow [RC: Ok.] that way. [RC: Uh-hm.] But I would start out with the moral prerequisite.

RC: Good.

AD: Yeah, so (keep going).

LR (simultaneously): If you were to do it [S simultaneously: Right.] over again. (LR laughs a bit)

AD: Huh? No I mean, he's going to have some order in the category, I mean he's not going to-- he's not going to take the most difficult and put them first and the easiest put them last. I assume he's going to try to make some order in it, and it seems very natural to start off that way, you know, the re-- prerequisites and then first second and third stage. [student assents] And there's nothing wrong to let's say taking that very long quote and start the whole topic of meditation with that long quote, alright, and then go into that kind of an order.

RC: Well the first subheading that he has is "Place and Conditions", and I've been sort of thinking that these moral prerequisites are a part of the-- the condition(s), and putting them right in the first-- first place. And the taking places meaning not only the physical place that-- that one meditates, but also the place of meditation in the quest.

AD(?): Yeah, uh-hm.

LR: Ok.

RC: So all these that we read tonight, [short pause] the ones that I would be thinking of [short pause] putting in and-- at the beginning as an introduction to the basic form and spirit of sitting down to meditate, and then others would be specific thing(s)--specific things about concentration, um-- Under the section that-- on Meditative Thinking we've been putting-- there's a lot of material on that self-analyzing exercise, self-examination exercise. There's a great deal of that. We could probably spend four to five weeks just going through that material. I thought we'd just mention the exercise as an exercise.

[short pause]

AD: Well, I-- Better let them go.

[Audio File 1983 0824b Ends]