

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
September 7, 1983
PB PARAS; MEDITATION**

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Meditation

SUBSUBJECTS: Contemplation, Attention, Ego, Void, Stillness, Devotion

CONTENTS:

WE START AS A SPIRITUAL SEED THAT IS ONLY POTENTIALLY CONSCIOUS OF ITS SPIRITUAL ORIGINS

DOES THIS SPIRITUAL SEED HAVE A BEGINNING IN TIME?

CAN THE UNPHILOSOPHIC MIND PROPERLY POSE THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT A BEGINNING IN TIME WOULD BE FOR SOMETHING THAT IS OUTSIDE THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCH A MIND?

THE SPIRITUAL SEED IS GENERATED, BUT NOT IN TIME—IT'S AN ETERNAL GENERATION

THE FULFILLMENT OF MEDITATION

AS A RESPONSE TO YOUR ASPIRATION TOWARD THE OVERSELF, SPIRITUAL ENERGY MAY COME INTO THE BODY, WHICH WILL MAKE THE ABSORPTION MUCH DEEPER

*THE SURANGAMA SUTRA* RECOMMENDS THE PRACTICE OF DISENGAGING ATTENTION FROM YOUR HEARING

WHEN YOU MEDITATE, ANY STRAIN, ANXIETY, AGITATION, OR HURRY WILL INTERFERE

IN MEDITATION, THE EGO IS DOING IT, BUT THE FUNCTION OF EGOISM ISN'T NECESSARY

CONTEMPLATION OF NATURE WILL GENERATE AUTHENTIC DEVOTION

WHETHER TO OPEN OR CLOSE THE EYES DURING MEDITATION

MEDITATION LEADS TO CONTEMPLATION, WHERE THINKING BRINGS ABOUT ITS OWN CESSATION

WHEN THINKING COMES TO A HALT, YOU'RE LEFT WITH THE ATTENTION, WHICH IS VERY, VERY INTENSE, AND IT IS THIS ATTENTION THAT IS VOID

HOW TO OVERCOME THE FEAR THAT ARISES AS YOU APPROACH THE STILLNESS

THERE'S TWO OBJECTS THAT WILL COME UP OVER AND OVER AGAIN AS YOU APPROACH THE VOID: FEAR OF DEATH AND LUST

WHEN YOU ARE LEFT WITH JUST PURE ATTENTION, THIS IS ALMOST THE SAME AS THAT STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WHICH THERE'S NO WORLD-IDEA, NO EGO

"IF HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN HOLDING HIS MIND SOMEWHAT STILL AND EMPTY, HIS NEXT STEP IS TO FIND HIS CENTRE"

YOU FIRST HAVE TO BE YOUR OWN SELF BEFORE YOU CAN TALK ABOUT HAVING YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

MEMORIZE ONE OF PB'S PARAS AND MEDITATE ON IT; REALIZE IT IN YOUR OWN MEDITATIONS

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*], published 1984-1988. Some Paul Brunton Notebook paras are, as of 2018, unpublished, and are noted as such.
- Plato, *Timaeus*
- Charles Luk (tr.), *The Surangama Sutra*
- Paul Brunton, *The Quest of the Overself*
- Bible, 1 John (4:18), 23rd Psalm, King James Version

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.
- Unpublished PB paras, even if sourced, should be proofread.

TRANSCRIBED Verbatim by IT 2019. Reformatted by JRM & JF 2019-2020, with Subheads and Table of Contents added by JRM. In 2023, IT fixes prefatory matter and footer, updates audio file name, fixes/completes Book List, adds new notes within transcript, fixes minor errors. In 2025, MW adds Subsubjects and alters Subheads to make more accurate. **Archival verbatim transcript – V14.1a.**

AUDIO FILES: 1983 0907a, 1983 0907b. [Note: "Tape" and "Side" refer to original audio cassette tapes that were later digitized into .MP3 Audio Files.]

1983 09/07 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Meditation
Archival verbatim transcript

[Audio File 1983 0907a Begins]

**# WE START AS A SPIRITUAL SEED THAT IS ONLY POTENTIALLY CONSCIOUS
OF ITS SPIRITUAL ORIGINS**

PB [unpublished, 26d-d.0 (R1/30/1), RC reading]: “An officer who had lived through and survived the great slaughters of World War I asked me afterwards: ‘The teaching that we are pure spirits come down from God to live in the mire of earthly life and the misery of earthly suffering only to return afterwards to the heavenly state we started from seems senseless. It is [RC reads: It’s] like banging one’s head against a stone wall in order to enjoy the relief felt after one stops. I [RC adds: do] want the meaning of life, but this? How can you believe in such an absurdity?’ ‘There are some who accept this doctrine,’ I replied, ‘and not only among Orientals as you believe but also among Christians. But there are others, myself included, who hold this to be an overly simplified miscomprehension of a different concept, which is the philosophical one. Each of us started [RC adds: out] as a seed, not only physically but also spiritually. We have had to grow and gradually unfold the latent human nature within us. But just as the seed of a flower does not have the full nature and appearance of the grown plant, so the human seed was not more than potentially conscious of its spiritual origins. What we are moving toward is fullness of development, a fullness which we did not have in the beginning. So your objection, reasonable enough as it is, is not relevant to the philosophic concept.’”

[16¼ second pause]

S: Randy, could you read the whole thing again now that it’s (outside) your cigarette?

RC: Ok.

[short pause]

PB [unpublished, 26d-d.0 (R1/30/1), RC rereads]: “An officer who had lived through and survived the great slaughters of World War I asked me afterwards [RC adds: the following]: ‘The teaching that we are pure spirits come down from God to live in the mire of earthly life and the misery of earthly suffering only to return afterwards to the heavenly state we started from seems senseless. It is like banging one’s head against a stone wall in order to enjoy the relief felt after one stops. I want the meaning of life, but this? How can you believe in such an absurdity?’ ‘There are some who accept this doctrine,’ I replied, ‘and not only among Orientals as you believe but also among Christians. But there are others, myself included, who hold this to be an overly [RC reads: over] simplified miscomprehension of a different concept, which is the philosophical [RC reads: philosophic] one. Each of us started as a seed, not only physically but also spiritually. We have had to grow and gradually unfold the latent human nature within [us]. But just as the seed of a flower does not have the full nature and appearance of the grown plant, so the human seed was not more than potentially conscious of its spiritual origins. What we are moving toward is fullness of development, a fullness which we did not have in the beginning. So your objection, reasonable enough as it is, is not relevant to the philosophic concept.’”

[9¾ second pause]

DOES THIS SPIRITUAL SEED HAVE A BEGINNING IN TIME?

LH: You know that-- that same point has come up many, many times. And every time it comes up I've got the same problem which is it seems to imply that the soul has a beginning.

[25¼ second pause]

RC: Well I guess the way that Anthony put it when he told Dickie how he should have asked in person with the Dalai Lama is, [short pause] does the perma-- does the possibility of Buddhahood, [S, faint: Yeah.] does that exist as a permanent possibility? But if you (see/say) that this-- that the human seed was not more than potentially conscious of its spiritual origins, then it seems if you step outside the time realm, you can say ok, that potential permanently exists. If you talk in terms of any historical stream, then that historical stream initiates time. And wherever it begins that's its beginning. But there's a transition in terms of-- It seems to be different to say that the soul had a beginning than to say that the evolution of this latent human seed is necessarily related to time.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S (faint): Randy? You know in the *Timaeus* he says there, there *isn't* a (beginning) or a first time is what you're saying. And it also says that we're all here [couple words inaudible] that is [one word inaudible]

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

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

[14¼ second pause]

PD: PB's quote though, is that the soul that started out in a point in time or the ego or the I-thought?

RC: What do you think?

PD: I would say it's the I-thought.

RC (faint): That's what I would say too.

LH: But if you say that then don't you then allow room for the-- the general's objection again?

AH: This-- the parallel (maybe) is with this body and the seed and the possibilities of the "I" as a seed. Or wasn't there a comparison or parallel, that just like the body begins as a seed also this process which Paul has called the I-thought is just a seed as well. That certainly the fellow in the quote knew better than-- than most the impermanence of it.

S (faint whisper): Gotcha.

TS (faint): Hm.

LH: Right so, and-- and what I said was, then to use that as an explanation that is not talking about the soul but just as the separate-- well not separate, but just as the individuality or I-thought, say, comes into time to realize the soul puts you right back into that same objection of well what's first.

RG: I don't understand that.

PD (simultaneously): Only if you grasp soul as one, you know-- if you grasp your being in an either-or situation then you've created the problem. If you say it's either-or.

LH: It's difficult.

S (faint): Right.

PD: That's how I would characterize it.

AB: Well is the analogy of the seed to suggest that the spiritual unfoldment is to be realized in experience or in time whereas a-- the philosopher's, you know, statement was that, you know, it's only when you go back to heaven that you re-experience the bliss of the soul. I thought PB was trying to say that we have to incarnate that into our experience in time so that there could be an unfoldment of the "I" which realizes the soul.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

PC/S(?): Well [couple/three words inaudible] that is if you qualify that quote. The Idea of Man comes to birth in the soul.

[short pause]

RC: It seemed to me at any rate the proper context to be talking about meditation. And, putting forth the effort and getting a look [S, very faint: Yeah.] in terms of these things being latent and having to be actualized.

[short pause]

LD: But then also when you said to Larry that the soul does not have a beginning but it is time that has a beginning when certain seeds from the soul comes into manifestation, then time begins. But before that there is no time to even speak of.

CDA: What-- wait, I-- How-- how is there-- there is manifestation but you cannot speak of a seed coming into manifestation, the soul is the principle of manifestation. There's no beginning or end to that. It's a process. I don't see what you mean by some beginning happening. There's this-- there's a-- there's a-- an-- a mode of being that time seems to be reality-- a reality that-- but it's-- I don't see how it's beginning(s) anywhere, how you can point to any beginnings.

LH: It sounds like what everyone's saying is that what begins, what-- what's going through this process is the I-thought, individuality, which is impermanent. [S: Yes.] So again I raise that same objection.

CDA (simultaneously): Well can you have a--

PD (simultaneously with LH): What do you mean impermanent?

CDA (simultaneously): What do you mean? Yeah, you can't speak of manifest-- the manifestation beginning or ending so how can you s-- how can you speak of a--

[short pause]

PD: It's-- it's a perpetual of manifestation.

[short pause]

LH: PB's answer to the objection seems to imply that it's not, that it does have a beginning.

PD: Within manifestation.

[short pause]

LH: I would-- I would say it would have to be within manifestation, wouldn't it?

PD: But if manifestation is a content to the consciousness, how can it have a beginning within that?

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

PD: If manifestation is the content of consciousness, how could consciousness have a beginning in the contents?

LH: Who said that consciousness had a beginning? You're talking about a thought.

PD: Talking about the experiencing knower.

PC: Yeah you're talking about the content within that Idea.

LH: That's what I thought you were talking about.

PD: I'm just trying to, you know, explore that word 'beginning' there. Because you-- [LH simultaneously: Yeah, yeah, I struggle.] you seem to have it, you know, stuck in a box, in a very temporal succession and maybe not that appropriate to interpret it that way.

LD: But each day I wake up and there is somewhat of a beginning of the manifestation for me and each morning when I go to bed there's an end. (laughter)

PD: Were you aware of the sleeping?

LD: No.

PD: How'd you know you slept?

HS: He didn't say he slept, he just said he went to bed.

LD: Um-- [couple seconds of faint background student talking] Ok, I would say there's a remembrance of having slept. But still the manifest world seems to-- I--

LH: I don't get what you're getting at Paul, would-- Yes, of course there is that-- that-- that permanent pure consciousness.

PD: Well I'm-- I'm not even getting-- going that far, I'm just speaking of the knower of all the contents of knowledge.

RG: But Paul that doesn't seem to be Larry's point, I mean he says it's the I-thought that's evolving and it's a content of that-- for the knower and not the knower itself.

PD: But I don't think you can characterize that I-thought in such strict objective terms, Richard.

AH(?): What's--

BS (simultaneously): And it brings spiritual development.

RG: Then you have to answer Larry's question.

AD: Larry's question is not a question.

RG (faint): Ok then tell me.

AD: Well no, we have to find out why it's not a question. (bit of laughter)

BS: Well I'd like to ask.

EM: No, let's [RG simultaneously: Well let's find out why it's not a--] find out why it's not a question!
(EM laughs, laughter)

S: Well, yeah.

BS: Well, [MB simultaneously: Because--] yeah. It's invisible.

RG: Are you going to answer why it's not a question? Go ahead.

BS: Well that's what I've been doing.

RG (simultaneously): Go ahead.

BS: Unless I'm wrong, Anthony. Are you going to answer that?

AD: I'll wait. (laughter)

VM (amidst laughter): No he won't answer that.

HS/S(?): Wait a minute, so that was the answer.

S (faint): Go ahead, Bert.

AD (simultaneously, faint): Try to answer it, sure.

BS: If it's a moving towards a fullness of development, isn't it the reference to a spiritual development?
And my question at that point, if that is so, how could that possibly take place in time anyway?

S: Yes.

BS: How do we speak-- what do we mean by historical?

RG: What do you mean by development?

BS: Why don't we ask? Now it's 'cause the spiritual is the-- have to be non-temporal [LH simultaneously: But Bert (a--)] to be a self-knowledge. What?

LH: It's within the context of that development, what's behind it.

BS (faint): Yes, (always/I'll wait).

DH (faint): What's the question?

TS/S(?) (faint): Can't tell.

AH: Would you-- would you state it again, Larry?

LH: Um-- [15¾ second pause] Well, that the point was made, has been made many times, that it's an incorrect view to think of the individual (as/that's) evolving out of spiritual fullness coming into life and growing and-- and then (evolving) back into that same spiritual fullness that-- that he came out of. And, um, the correction to that is that the individual begins as a seed and grows and develops to bring that-- that spiritual consciousness into life. But, my question is that seems to imply that the soul has a beginning.

PD: But why-- I-- see I don't understand why you say it's the soul that has a beginning.

LH: Well--

PD: But what-- he didn't use that term in-- in the quote.

LH (simultaneously): If it's not soul, if it's-- if it's just the individuality, just the ego, an I-thought, a content, then the same objection that you started with, it's-- arises again.

PC: But that's not true because you've added something to the soul by having that evolution take place in that.

LH: What?

PC: The manifestation of a divine Idea that's in the soul.

[short pause]

LD: And I think Peter's saying it's not this-- it's not the soul that he's talking about in that quote, it's the-- it's-- time is created in-- only in thought, in succession from one thought to another. And, PB did not use the word 'soul' descending and having a beginning. He said a seed-thought.

S: Can you just read it again (sometime)?

PB [unpublished, 26d-d.0 (R1/30/1), RC rereads a part of]: “[RC adds: That] Each of us started as a seed, not only physically but also spiritually. We have had to grow and gradually unfold the latent human nature within us. ... What we are moving toward is fullness of development, a fullness which we did not have in the beginning.”

LDS: Isn't that very similar to what we've read in Plotinus about how the soul has these powers that have to be unfolded and the way they get unfolded is-- is through manifestation. Without-- without the experience of the manifest environment to exercise and develop those powers the soul is incomplete in some way. And to have a full realization of full unfoldment of itself it *must* descend, because it has within it an innate or an inherent capacity or tendency *to* ascend, so to speak. That's part of its fulfillment, that's part of its-- its own being.

PD: But Louie you're taking the position that the s-- of the-- what PB's criticizing.

LDS: No I'm saying there's an aspect of soul that remains in the Nous as you're speaking. There's a s-- there's-- there's an aspect that has nothing to do with time, never descends. But there's also that aspect of soul that does *have* to involve itself with manifestation. And insofar that it-- it does and we speak of different levels of individuality, different levels of refinement, there had to be some kind of beginning or-- not for the soul itself but for that process of its incarnating. There had to be a beginning to that or how could you account for the difference in individuals? What does it mean to say one person is very primitively developed in terms of soul powers and another person is very, very advanced? How could that possibly be?

MB: And I'd also like to offer a different viewpoint. First of all it struck me that when he said each person begins as a seed, that it-- for each individual-- First of all, a seed is not a beginning. A seed is the outcome of a previous development. [student assents, faint] So that you can't really think of a seed as being from nothing. It doesn't start out of no place. Second of all, the difference in PB's answer to the approach that was taken by the person that's (imbibing/involved in) a war, the person said things are pretty bad down here and the only escape is to go to heaven. And PB is saying that, no, things may be pretty bad down here but there is some possibility of bringing a spiritual fulfillment into this level of manifestation and that's what we're trying to do. So that, there may not be a beginning, there may not be an end but there is a process taking place within the realm of manifestation that seems to be worthwhile and fulfilling ultimately.

LDS: To enhance that, Myra, isn't he saying that it's absolutely necessary for the unfoldment of spirituality that it go through this experience?

AH: And that's the way I heard the quote the first time, that the issue of the beginning or not didn't seem the-- the thrust of this quote but rather there was a purpose to the incarnation or a purpose to the life other than-- like the one where you stop hitting your head because it feels good when you do that. This-- the notion-- PB's point I think spoke to the purpose of this development. And that the other person was expressing a kind of-- a meaninglessness to life.

MB: I'm not sure that you affirm(ed) the necessity (underlying) the quote.

LDS (faint): Yeah.

LD: Yeah but, I don't see how any of these have answered that why a beginning is not a question at all.

S: I do.

CDA (simultaneously): Well explain time, Louis. What does time mean?

LD: I'm asking, Carol.

CDA: Well-- Then-- then I could-- I would ask, can you explain time? Can you explain what beginning means with the very (mind/knowing) [LD simultaneously: Just like I said before.] that is-- that is the very-- by-- can you explain what beginning means with the same mind that is subject to-- to conceiving its thoughts within time?

RC: Actually that's-- that's not the direction I would like to go in. (bit of laughter) Unless Anthony wants to go in that direction I would like to bring it back rather than to get off into speculations about the nature of time. I think he's putting this in a (context--) content framework here. He's saying as far as what you call you is concerned, you have to develop. And, basically that's the context to approach meditation from. You have to draw upon those latent powers within you. Alright, you're not already some perfected spiritual being who's going to go back where you came from no matter what you do. [12¼ second pause] And then go on from there with the meditation quotes. [14½ second pause] So, should that-- should we do that Anthony?

S: Uh-hm.

CAN THE UNPHILOSOPHIC MIND PROPERLY POSE THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT A BEGINNING IN TIME WOULD BE FOR SOMETHING THAT IS OUTSIDE THE EXPERIENCE OF SUCH A MIND?

AD: Do what you want but I-- I think Larry's entitled to an answer. [student assents, faint] Being such a philosophic group of students I guess you'd come forth with an answer.

S (faint): Yeah.

RC: Well he doesn't say that soul has a beginning.

AD: No, he says it has a spirit-- it's a spiritual seed as well as a physical seed. And the question Larry has to ask himself is, can the unphilosophic mind properly pose the question as to what a beginning in time would be for something which is outside of the experience of such a mind?

RG/S(?): Again please?

[short pause]

AD: Is it within the competence of the mind's functioning to decide whether time has a beginning or not?

S (faint): Yeah.

LH: I'm sorry, you said is it in the what of mind to (decide--)

AD (simultaneously): Is it within the competence of the mind's functioning to answer the question whether time has a beginning or not?

[11¼ second pause]

LH: Well, in that time--

AD: Of course not.

LH (simultaneously): --would be a presupposition to [AD simultaneously: Of course not.] my functioning, it wouldn't be able to do that.

AD (simultaneously): The mind cannot speak about those entities whose existence or being was outside of the space, time, causality which binds the mind and, you know, prescribes its functioning. Therefore to

ask a question as to what the nature of a spiritual seed is, which is outside of space, time, causality, is improper.

S (faint): Um-- (bit of laughter)

AD: You haven't [LH simultaneously: (If it's--)] studied Kant.

PD: Can I ask--

RG (simultaneously): But Anthony--

S (simultaneously, faint): (Larry's) talking (Paul).

S: [one/two words inaudible] (laughter)

LH: But we deal with those kind of questions a lot. (bit of laughter)

AD: You'll wear your brain down. (bit of laughter)

LD: Can I read this--

AD (simultaneously): You deal with them and you try to understand the nature of how the mind functions. Once you understand how the mind functions and you see the limitations that are imposed upon it, then you see that there are certain questions that cannot be answered considering the resources that that functioning mind is operating with. You don't try to understand the nature of Being with an unphilosophic mind.

S (faint): Well, true.

RG: But if you try to-- if you try to understand it with a philosophic mind, wouldn't you be able to answer that question with a philosophic answer?

AD: Yes, if you have a philosophic understanding then that question will be answered.

RG: Right. So since you do can you answer Larry's question? (laughter)

THE SPIRITUAL SEED IS GENERATED, BUT NOT IN TIME—IT'S AN ETERNAL GENERATION

AD: Well that takes us within to discussions we have had previously as to the nature of the eternal generation of the soul and, that wouldn't be-- that couldn't be done in a couple of minutes. [S, faint: Oh, ok, (yeah).] But it's enough to remind you I think that when they speak about soul being generated, this has no reference at all to time because it's an eternal generation. So the spiritual seed *is* generated but not in time, it's an eternal generation. The physical development is in time, that's something else. But the important thing here is to understand the nature of the questioning mind, if it is equipped to answer such a question. And if all the categories of thinking that you operate with are derived from the nature of the sensible world, you will not be able to answer questions that relate to something which is beyond any perception within the mind.

LH: So admitting that that is so, you just drop the question.

AD: I'm sorry?

LH: Admitting that that is so, then you just drop the question.

AD: Well, no, *you*-- I would drop the question in class but you have to pursue what I just told you: why the man-- or why the mind cannot answer such questions. Is there a beginning to time? Is there an end to time? Is the world infinite? Is it bound? In other words, [LH simultaneously: (couple words inaudible) though is in itself how the mind works, how thought works.] within the-- within the thoughts that are fabricated by the Dragonic life you're trying to answer questions which are outside of and beyond it.

[short pause]

LH: I'm-- I'm confused, I still don't get the task you've-- you've just set. Is it to look into--

AD (simultaneously): What is the nature, what is the nature of the soul, alright? In order to answer a question like that, if you take the premises that you will be able to find out the nature of the soul by examining the sensible world and all the categories that are derived from that sensible world, if you take that as the equipment with which the mind operates, it will never be able to understand the nature of a soul which is not of any sensible origin. Why do you have difficulty with that? [short pause] The thought is of a mind, the base--

LH (simultaneously): No I don't have difficulty--

AD: What?

LH: I don't have difficulty with that point. I think the difficulty is--

AD: Well if you understand that point then how could you ask the question about the nature of the spiritual seed?

[12 second pause]

LH: I thought that I had left-- that we had left that question behind and what we were talking about now was how to proceed in examining the limits of the way my mind functions.

AD: Uh-hm. So if you properly inquired into the conditions necessary for the arising of information and you find out what those conditions are, then those conditions will delimit the kind of knowledge that you can have. And if you're familiar with that then you would not ask the question as to what kind of nature Being has with a mind that is unphilosophic.

AH: Anthony, what do you mean by a philosophical mind? I-- I don't understand the big distinction between them.

AD (simultaneously): One-- one that has gone through critical reflection and understands the necessary presuppositions that are inherent in its operation.

AH: So a philosophic mind that speaks about Being or soul or something does so totally cognizant of its own limitation?

AD: Yes.

AH: So-- And it knows that it's operating with a certain set of presuppositions. Is that so?

AD (simultaneously): Yes. And knows the limits that are superimposed upon it by those presuppositions. Alright, let's move on.

THE FULFILLMENT OF MEDITATION

[9 second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:7.22, RC reading]: "The higher purpose of meditation is missed if it does not end in the peace, the stillness, that emanates from the real self. However slightly it may be felt, this is the essential work which meditation must do for us."

[9¾ second pause]

PB [V15, 23:7.212 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #52, RC reading]: "Contemplation is attained when your thinking about a spiritual truth or about the spiritual goal suddenly ceases of itself. The mind then enters into a perfectly still and rapt condition."

[10¾ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.346, RC reading]: "That alone may be called the fulfilment of meditation, and its real practice, which shuts out of the mind everything except the Overself."

LR: Again please?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.346, RC rereads]: "That alone may be called the fulfilment of meditation, and its real practice, which shuts out of the mind everything except the Overself."

[16¾ second pause]

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #30, RC reading]: "The body's position is not without its influence upon the beginnings of meditation. All muscles should be relaxed, all limbs at ease, all fingers at rest, and the jaw unclenched. Any physical tenseness hinders the onset of contemplation."

[short pause]

AD: By the way we might add that it's the contemplative mind that is philosophic, right Andrew?

AH: Per the definition of contemplation that we've been using as a meditative state?

AD (simultaneously): Yes, the way we-- the way we describe contemplation--rapt absorption. It is in this state of mind, which we might call the philosophic mind, which would understand the nature of that spiritual seed. It certainly would not be the doxic mind, the opinionated mind that could possibly understand the nature of Being.

AH: The philosophic mind must enjoy the perspective of insight or contemplation.

AD: Yes, has to be capable of contemplation.

AH: Or else it wouldn't know what its presuppositions were--among other things. [11¼ second pause] I think I understand that.

AD: Alright, let's continue.

AS A RESPONSE TO YOUR ASPIRATION TOWARD THE OVERSELF, SPIRITUAL ENERGY MAY COME INTO THE BODY, WHICH WILL MAKE THE ABSORPTION MUCH DEEPER

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #34, RC reading]: "It is not enough to lull the mind: the heart's feeling must be stimulated and directed in aspiration and devotion, warm and strong toward the Overself, which by reaction, arouses a certain force, the Spirit-Energy, which acts for a short time to prepare him for deeper, more concentrated contemplation."

PC: Again.

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #34, RC rereads]: "It is not enough to lull the mind: the heart's feeling must be stimulated and directed in aspiration and devotion, warm and strong toward the Overself, which by reaction, arouses a certain force, the Spirit-Energy, which acts for a short time to prepare him for deeper, more concentrated contemplation."

AD: He gives an example, for instance, I think it was (in) St. Catherine of Genoa who would be rapt and abs-- and absorbed completely in contemplation, and there would be beads of sweat coming down which indicated that the spiritual energy is operative in her. In other words this reflex that he's speaking about coming from the Overself. And sometimes that would happen to a person when he is in contemplation, you'd see beads of perspiration. But it isn't a perspiration that's brought on by physiological functioning, because as it was pointed out, you're perfectly still. These beads of perspiration are the result of that spiritual energy coming into the body and withdrawing the attention even more, or let's say deep-- deeper, making the attention and absorption much deeper. We'll probably come across that note, Randy will probably come across it.

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #23, RC reading]: "It is not possible to master the art of meditation without acquiring the virtue of patience. One has to learn first how to sit statue-still without fidgeting and without changes; second, how to endure the waiting period when the body's stillness is mocked by the mind's restlessness."

[11 second pause]

THE SURANGAMA SUTRA RECOMMENDS THE PRACTICE OF DISENGAGING ATTENTION FROM YOUR HEARING

PB [V15, 23:8.110, RC reading]: "[The] *Surangama Sutra* chooses, as the best meditation [method] for the present historic cycle, the one used by Avalokitesvara. It disengages bodily hearing from outward sound, then penetrates still deeper into the void beyond this duality, then beyond ego and its object, until all opposites and dualities vanish, leaving absoluteness. Nirvana follows as a natural consequence. In other words, disengage consciousness from the senses and return to pure Consciousness itself."

S (very faint): Yeah.

SD: Randy, am I right in understanding that that's using hearing as the-- as a vehicle? At what's-- at what point is it still hearing and when does it cease to be hearing?

[35½ second pause]

AD: I didn't hear the question, Severin.

SD: Well, maybe it would be better if the quote's read.

AD (simultaneously): Well, it would be better if one of-- one of the students here went to the library, picked out the *Surangama Sutra* and found that quote and reads it to us.

S (very faint): Fine, uh-hm.

LR(?) (simultaneously): No students here. (bit of laughter)

S (faint): We still have none.

AD: No but someone could assign himself that and next week have it ready.

CDA (faint): Oh boy. (bit of laughter)

S: What?

S (very faint): He's using somebody else. (bit of laughter)

S (faint): Thank you.

PD (simultaneously): You want it read? I'll get-- I'll get it next week.

AD: Yeah, ok, you do that for me. Ok, we got that for next week.

AH: Could we hear this quote again please?

[students assent, very faint]

PB [V15, 23:8.110, RC rereads]: "[The] *Surangama Sutra* chooses, as the best meditation [method] for the present historic cycle, the one used by Avalokitesvara. It disengages bodily hearing from outward sound, then penetrates still deeper into the void beyond this duality, then beyond ego and its object, until all opposites and dualities vanish, leaving absoluteness. Nirvana follows as a natural consequence. In other words, disengage consciousness from the senses and return to pure Consciousness itself."

AD: Herbie, they claim that's the easiest way to do it.

HS (faint): They're crooked with us.

S (very faint): Yeah.

[short pause]

HS: That's the application so it would have to be at the natural universe and to-- and to trace back from an empirical point in natural universe to something beyond the natural universe, its source? Is that the point?

AD: Well, yeah, the point is very simple: just disengage your attention from your hearing. (some laughter)

RG/S(?): Right.

S (very faint): Yeah.

AD: Bo wants to know why I can't do it with the air conditioner. (laughter)

S (faint): He would also like to know that about me. (bit of laughter)

AD: Alright, next week we'll read that quote. Go ahead, Randy.

[9½ second pause]

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 3 #44, RC reading]: "Saint John of the Cross, whenever he stayed at the monastery of Iznatoraf, would climb to a tiny attic room in the belfry and there remain for a long time looking out fixedly through a tiny window at the silent valley. When he was prior of the Hermitage of El Calvario, in Andalusia, one of the exercises he taught the monks was to sit and contemplate where there was a view of open sky, hills, trees, fields, and growing plants and to call on the beauty of these things to praise God. We know from his writings that he made imageless contemplation the last stage in all such exercises."

[short pause]

AD: Spanish Taoist.

[students assent, faint]

[23¾ second pause]

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #9, RC reading]: "The meditation has been successfully accomplished when all thoughts have come to an end, and when the presence of Divinity is felt within this emptiness."

[9¼ second pause]

PB [V15, 23:7.50, RC reading]: "The stillness is not a cold one: it is living, [RC adds: and] radiant."

[18 second pause]

WHEN YOU MEDITATE, ANY STRAIN, ANXIETY, AGITATION, OR HURRY WILL INTERFERE

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.305, RC reading]: "Any feeling of fret over results, hurry to finish the session and resume normal work [RC adds: or] activity, strained effort which makes meditation depend entirely on your own will and [RC adds: on] your own concern--as if the higher self had nothing to do with the matter--any of these things impede the practice and reduce the chances of bringing the meditation to success."

[short pause]

S: Would you read that again?

S (very faint): Yeah.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.305, RC rereads]: “Any feeling of fret over results, hurry to finish the session and resume normal work [RC adds: or] activity, strained effort which makes meditation depend entirely on your own will [and your own concern--as if the higher self had nothing to do with the matter--any of these things impede the practice and reduce the chances of bringing the meditation to success].”

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1983 0907a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

HS: Would you include in that the feeling to prolong the session?

RC: Say it again Herb?

HS: Would you include in that the feeling to prolong those which impede.

RC: I think it's [one word inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): No Herbie. [RC: I think--] No if you sit down with those kind of intentions, they won't impede it. As a matter of fact I recommend you sit down with those intentions.

[10 second pause]

RC: I thought the key in that quote was “as if the higher self had nothing to do with the matter”.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S: Right.

LR: So Randy what do you think that means in terms of strained effort of will? [S, very faint: Uh-hm.] I mean do you think there's a will that's calling upon a higher source or a will that one uses to meditate which is not? And could you distinguish?

PD: Before we go ahead understand Tony's comment to Herb, Linda.

AD: About prolong?

PD: Yeah well he's--

AD (simultaneously): If you sit down, if you sit down to meditate in a leisurely way, and it should always-- you should always approach it leisurely, alright, and you say, “Well, I'll meditate 45 minutes but if it runs on to an hour, so-- so much the better,” and you just sit down, alright, that won't interfere. But if you sit down and you say, “I got to get this 45 minutes over with right away,” (CDA laughs) you might as well go away. (bit of laughter) In other words, if you introduce anxiety, agitation, hurry, any of these things when you sit down, they will interfere. But, for Linda the point there is not the will. The word underlined should be *strained* [CDA: Strained.] will.

LR: And by that you mean?

CDA: The body's involved?

AD: Good little old ego is right in there, [student assents, faint] pitching for the World Series.

LR (simultaneously): But the guy just sits down and meditates (though).

AD: Huh?

LR: Strained will, you say the egotistical will?

AD (simultaneously): Yeah, egotistical.

LR: Do I know any other kind?

AD: I don't know Linda. (AD laughs)

LR: Well, I mean that *is* the guy that sits down to meditate.

AD: Yes.

LR: That good little old ego.

AD: Good little old ego, but sometimes he becomes kind of preposterous.

[short pause]

LR: You're not getting personal at all. (laughter, student words) [RG/S(?) simultaneously, faint: (This) consciousness (isn't) personal at all.] I mean is it that(--) isn't--

[short pause]

AD: Well there's such a-- I think there's a difference between perseverance and [LR simultaneously: And strain.] straining yourself, you know, and (you're/your)--

MB: But it almost sounds like PB is saying that if you sit down and say *I've* got to do this with the emphasis on-- on the *I've* got to do this, you're shutting the other "I" out. You're shutting out the Overself and the point is to sit down and try to remember the Overself.

LR: I don't agree with that, Myra.

MB: Well I think it's just a question of emphasis.

PD (simultaneously): Who does (it)?

S (very faint): Yeah.

LR: I mean I got to constantly remind myself that I got to do it and that no one else is going to do it. (LR laughs a bit) Well, maybe it's a personal matter.

MB: But-- I mean I think he-- if you keep saying that that you might be creating a dichotomy. [LR simultaneously: Yeah well when I tend to say this--] And he's trying to overcome that dichotomy by the power of positive thought or something like that.

LR: Well that may be true but when I sit down with the notion that my higher self is going to do it--

MB: Well no, and I don't either.

LR (simultaneously): --not a whole lot happens, (LR and MB laugh) you know. No, that's why I'm asking questions about it because [couple words inaudible] power can't--

MB (simultaneously): Maybe there's some middle ground between those two--

S (very faint): Uh-hm [one/two words inaudible]

LR (simultaneously): I see it as a real fine line, I mean-- To me it's the line, and maybe I'm importing personal affairs and that's why I say I could be stopping (at what he) meant by ego. But, you know, the-- it brings up the whole notion of passivity and activity when you sit down here, and how much of each is necessary. And for me it's pretty tricky. Because if I *don't* import something like "I've got to do this," then, you know, all hell breaks loose.

AB: Passivity and activity is not the same dichotomy as being strained or being relaxed and you could be active and be, you know, relaxed by the [one word inaudible] force of your will [LR: Ok Alan.] or you could be strained.

LR: I-- I think you're probably right, it's just that I'm not sure what relaxed willing means. (laughter) So, you know, I have a problem with that, maybe--

CDA: Well can't-- I don't [PD simultaneously: Well--] know if this is right but I keep thinking that-- that attention, if it's-- if it's a-- attached to physiological processes is tense but if it-- if attention is freed from the body, it's still-- it's still very powerful but it's not-- there's no tension in it.

[students assent, very faint]

LR: But this quote wasn't really talking about the body but you're saying it-- it is, that it--

CDA (simultaneously): Well, that's my im-- my impression seems to be that when attention is on-- on still-- 'cause our attention is involved with the body all the time so when we sit down to meditate it seems that the attention is still identified with the body. And as long as it is it's-- there's going to be a certain kind of tension when you're trying to-- when you're trying to increase it. But at the point when it stops being identified with the body, then it's just attention or-- or concentrated state, it's not strained. [AH simultaneously: Yeah, it's a--] I don't know if that's right but that's how it seems to me.

PD: Well I thought Tony's point was that the-- the difference between the two is the egotism being involved. And that's what Tony's asking us to distinguish.

S: Right.

LR: That is, that was his--

PD (simultaneously): In the activity of meditating, when the personal egotism is trying to meditate, you'll-- it's wasting its effort (to--) [S: I--] And that's only going to be-- the only way you're going to have to-- (be able/you have) to distinguish that is in the subtlety of your understanding, [LR/S(?) simultaneously: Or feelings.] because it's not going to come up with any flags or anything.

CDA: I think I might by-- when I say body, I think I mean that als-- you know, that I mean that too, yeah.

AH: It seems Paul the only way to avoid that in terms of an attitude would be a kind of neutral state, [LR: Yeah.] a kind of poise that's almost neutral. And I remember reading some of the Chinese texts on meditation. They try to describe this kind of poise and they use metaphors, one of the metaphors like

flexible hollow sort of tension, but not very tense. It's like a middle space that's almost neutral where that ego can't work in one way or the other. That seems to be the-- the tone of PB's instruction(s).

RC: Well he seems to be saying too like from the previous quote, that--

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #34, RC rereads a part of]: "...the heart's feeling must be stimulated and directed in aspiration and devotion, [RC adds: feeling must be] warm and strong..."

RC: (Put all his faith) this voice of the higher self. It seems that the only thing I would add to what Paul said would be that, not so much that if the ego thinks it's going to benefit so much as if the ego thinks that it's going to be an agent in the fruition of the meditation. [RG simultaneously: I don't know.] And when you sit down to meditate you're the one who wants to meditate but if you as holding on to the personal ego-thought think that you're going to--

LDS: Produce his own.

AH: Not let go of this.

PD (simultaneously): No I don't think it's a matter of holding onto the thought, Randy. In that sentence there he says anxiety, seeking to get the meditation over with. That's all-- Whenever there's anxiety that's implica-- implicating the ego's involvement in the activity. [RC assents, very faint] And that that's why the element of leisureliness is an attempt to negate the ego's presence a little bit in the-- in the-- At least for me I could only distinguish that very, you know, [RC assents, very faint] momentary times but I s-- it's when that anxiety and tension is there is where the ego's trying to appropriate the meditative reverence or the-- or the quiet mind or the concentrated mind. And as soon as it does that it dissipates it.

RC: Yeah. Well it's the ego that's got the schedules to return to and resume its normal work and so on. And, it seems to be saying very clearly that (at) that very mode of orientation is what has to be dispensed with for the period of the-- the meditation. And if it's a-- a job that you are going to sit down and do and have done then--

PD: Right, it's another bag of tricks the ego has accumulated.

RC: Exactly, yeah.

IN MEDITATION, THE EGO IS DOING IT, BUT THE FUNCTION OF EGOISM ISN'T NECESSARY

AH: So what are we-- how can we conclude something out of this? How shall we meditate without our ego interfering? (laughter)

LDS (amidst laughter): It's called practice.

RC: (Oh there/We've got) a lot of quotes on this, in meditation a lot of these quotes are about(--/.)

AD: Andrew, probably the easiest way would be to think of it, the ego is doing it, but the function of egoism isn't necessary. So you could-- you know, you could be doing something--you could be building a boat or a house--but as soon as you bring in "I am doing it," then it's like throwing a wrench.

AH(?): It's crooked anyway, it doesn't work right.

AD: So you could sit and meditate and you could do it without being aware that you're doing it. And as soon as you start becoming aware and say "*I'm* meditating," then you spoil the whole thing. So it's not that subtle, I think most of us experience that when we sit down to meditate and sometimes we *are* caught up and we're-- we are let's say meditating on something, everything is proceeding well and then you say, "Wow! Look at that! Isn't that nice," and blew it.

S (simultaneously): Right.

S (faint): Right. (bit of laughter)

AH: That's such a-- that's such a problem, you know, like Randy gave the example you should have like a devotional attitude and you sit down and you very vigorously press out these devotional feelings and say what a good boy I am. (laughter) You know, it always seems-- (more laughter) it always seems to be like doing brain surgery with a chainsaw. (laughter) This guy's always in there. He's always doing his pitch, you know. (bit more laughter)

AD: Yeah I think it basically comes down to the distinction between the function of egoism and the ego doing something. [RG, faint: Right.] So you could be (busy) doing something and not necessarily include egoism or self-reflective awareness about it. Or you could be doing something and be self-reflectively aware that you are doing it and generally spoil what you're doing. I think it comes down to that.

AH: But how about those feelings of devotion and--

AD: They're fine until you think that they're yours.

AH: Or how spiritual I am.

AD (simultaneously): Yeah, and as soon as you say how-- "Look how spiritual I am, look how-- how much bhakti I have." (laughter)

RC: I think if you think of it as like directed towards something that-- it's external, then it becomes a sales pitch and of course it doesn't work. [AH: Well--] But if you think in terms of like your own best moments and the feelings which you *do* have for what's present in you in those moments, that it becomes very easy to have devotional feelings toward whatever the source of that strength is, whatever the source of that temporary exaltation or uplift is. When you know what you can be, then it's very easy to have devotion and aspiration toward that which invests you with those qualities. It's very different than if you're like, you know, trying to make a sales pitch to somebody else.

CONTEMPLATION OF NATURE WILL GENERATE AUTHENTIC DEVOTION

AH: I feel compelled to mention, I had this conversation with PB when I had an interview. I just remembered that. And, I was asking him how to generate devotional kinds of feelings that were genuine. And he recommended the exercise that St. John [RC: Uh-huh.] just described, that in Nature-- [RC: Uh-hm.] contemplation of Nature will generate authentic devotion. Of course I've steadfastly refused to do that ever since but-- (bit of laughter) That was-- it was that exercise.

S: Yeah.

RC (simultaneously): Yeah I thought it was very interesting in that quote too or the way he put it was (there's/as) a--

S (very faint): Randy?

[9 second pause]

AH: Something about you ask the beauty to-- to address the Divinity. There was something unusual in the phrase or--

RC (simultaneously): Yeah. Sit and contemplate where there's this view--

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 3 #44, RC rereads a part of]: "...and to call on [RC reads: upon] the beauty of these things to praise God."

AH: Yeah.

RC: And I think-- you know, I-- the momentary exaltation where the appreciation of the beauty is there it's like the inner state itself is-- it's like a declaration of space or--

AH: How is that phrase again? Would you read it again please?

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 3 #44, RC rereads a part of]: "...he taught [the] monks [was] to sit and contemplate where there was a view of open sky, hills, trees, fields, and growing plants and to call on [RC reads: upon] the beauty of these things to praise God."

AH: Seems a-- a way of praising without the ego being involved, yeah.

RC (simultaneously, faint): Yeah.

[13¾ second pause]

JB: Beauty is called upon the beauty to do the praising, Andrew, is that how you want to-- [AH simultaneously: If it's-- I--] is that how you understand it?

AH: Yeah when I heard the quote earlier I didn't understand that phrase and I-- I guess I'm suffering under the illusion that I understand it now, that by calling upon the beauty to do the praising [RC, faint: Yeah.] as a way of disengaging from something.

[student assents, very faint]

JB (faint): Those things are (safe in that oven).

BS (faint): Is it-- I didn't follow. Well it's alright.

AD (simultaneously): All they mean Bert is [S: Right.] tonight [BS simultaneously: Is that what we just said?] you go home and listen to the last chorus of the St. Matthew Passion and see if he's praising Bach or praising God.

[students assent]

[short pause]

BS: Yeah but it's he who's doing the praise by calling on the beauty.

AD: You do it automatically when you-- you know, when you-- you are in the presence of something beautiful. It's a witness to the higher. Otherwise (you're/there's) not appreciation (there's/that) something higher.

LR: And also, it doesn't seem possible to appreciate beauty unless that beauty arises inside of you, too. And I think something of that is meant, you know. Then it makes it very easy to be somewhat devotional because in order to appreciate the beauty that you're looking at in Nature you have to be experiencing it.

AH (faint): Yes. Yes.

AD: How about this way, Bert: beauty in the eye of the beholder.

S: Uh-hm.

[few seconds of faint background student talking, bit of laughter]

S (very faint): Beauty.

AD: What's that?

S (very faint): Beautiful.

AH: Is that a private conversation?

AD: Well-- yeah, me and Bert, we're-- we're really musicians, you know. We said, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder."

[short pause]

S: In the eye.

AD: In the eye of the beholder. [CDA(?), very faint: Yes.] Now, what does that mean?

S: Uh-hm.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

JfL/S(?) (very faint): Uh-hm.

S (very faint): (Uh-hm.)

AD: Beauty is in your soul. [CDA simultaneously: Yeah. In the "I".] I hope you don't think he's talking about your physical eye.

CDA: In the "I".

AD: In the "I", the Intellect. It's always there, all you have to do is recognize it. At the bottom of every manuscript, Emanuel Bach [AD means Johann Bach] used to put down: "To the greater glory of Jesus the Christ," not "To the greater glory of Johann Sebastian Bach".

S (faint): Ok.

AH: Anthony, is-- could you say anything about the Nature--like the Taoists in PB's--

AD: (Well) St. John, you know, he was a Spanish Taoist, didn't you see-- didn't you hear what Randy just said?

AH: I was going to compare or contrast Nature with like say a beautiful painting or a piece of music. Is Nature different as an object of devotion than aesthetic-- so-called aesthetic artistic objects?

AD: Oh yes, (definitely). You know, otherwise instead of meditating on the porch I'd just put a painting up and have you all look at the painting.

AH: Why is it different?

AD: It's living.

AH: Living.

AD: It's the last of the Intelligibles. Or, we could say it's the last-- the-- the final Gods that are most directly related to us. The others are above Nature, but Nature is the closest to us. [short pause] It's a living presence. But I thought John-- I thought Randy was saying that John of the Cross was really a Spanish Taoist, a Taoist in disguise in Spain. [short pause] Let's go on, Randy.

WHETHER TO OPEN OR CLOSE THE EYES DURING MEDITATION

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #32, RC reading]: "What shall they do with their eyes during meditation?" (some laughter)

S: Which (eye/I), which (eye/I)?

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #32 cont., RC reading]: "It is best for beginners to shut them entirely and thus avoid distracting sight-impressions from the outer world. For moderately advanced practisers it is better to begin with shut eyes and at an appropriate point sometime later in [the] meditation, to half-open them, directing the gaze downwards and some feet beyond, and to keep it so until the meditation period is ended. But it is easiest for [RC adds: the] highly advanced proficient to pass quickly through the earlier positions of shut and half-shut and then, at a time prompted for them by inward guidance to keep their eyes open fully [RC reads: fully open] until the practice period is over, or until the guidance reverses itself. These are the general rules governing the three chief degrees."

[short pause]

DR: You read it again, Randy?

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #32, RC rereading]: "What shall they do with their eyes during meditation?"

AD: Randy, can I interrupt? For those of us that are beginners, they sell those "band-aids", you know, you put them in front of your--

S (simultaneously, faint): (What brand?) Ok.

AD: The beginners, you know, who want to keep their eyes closed and keep everything dark, and it's daylight and you can't close the windows, you go no shades. (AD laughing) So they sell these things that you can put around your eyes. They're very good.

S (faint): Yeah. They're not called--

AD: Huh? (bit of laughter)

S: They're-- they have another name besides band-aids.

S: Probably. (laughter, student words)

AD: I don't know what the name is. Whatever the name is but they're-- they're like goggles but they're black, you can't see through them and they cover your eyes, and they're very good for meditation.

LR: Like on "What's My Line?" (laughter)

S (amidst laughter): They get their (Sun/son).

S: Yeah.

AD: Why do you use analogies I can't respond to? (laughter)

S: Didn't use the one--

AD: Anyway, I just brought that in because I found it very useful, and I still do.

RC: PB used them whenever he wanted to try to rest in the afternoon, he put them on.

CDA: What are you saying though, are you saying-- (laughter) It seems like you're [RG simultaneously: Going to buy you a mask.] saying something a little different than is--

AD (simultaneously): Get dark glasses. (laughter)

CDA: --what he's saying.

AD: Let's go on Randy. (some laughter) Let's hear it again, Randy.

PB [*Persp.*, Ch. 4 #32 cont., RC rereading]: "It is best for beginners to shut them entirely and thus avoid distracting sight-impressions from the outer world. For moderately advanced practisers it is better to begin with shut eyes and at an appropriate point sometime [RC reads: somewhere] later in the meditation, to half-open them, directing the gaze downwards and some feet beyond, and to keep it so until the meditation period is ended. But it is easiest for highly advanced proficientes to pass quickly through the [RC reads: these] earlier positions of shut and half-shut and then, at a time prompted for them by inward guidance to keep their eyes open fully until the practice period is over, or until the guidance reverses itself. These are the general rules governing the three chief degrees."

LDS: One question I got, I don't know maybe Randy has come across it. What about blinking the eyes? If you're doing an ex-- an exercise with the eyes either half-open or fully open, what does he say about blinking during that time of the practice?

RC: I haven't seen anything in these notes but I know a lot of the other things I've read about meditation said every time you move the eyes there's a thought, and so if the idea is to reduce thought, you reduce any movement of the eyes (accordingly).

LDS: Yeah that was my understanding too but I didn't come across--

AD (simultaneously): In the beginning you'll blink somewhat, Louis, but after a while it should be steady. So even if you're doing the eye-gazing exercise, your eyes will blink, they'll tear, they'll-- they'll wander. But after a couple of weeks of intensive practice they remain very steady. So it's only for a while that that goes on.

LDS: But Anthony, what would you say would be the maximum time that it's-- that it's either safe or healthy to keep the eyes open or is there no limit? Let's say without blinking. I think PB gives a warning in the-- in the *Quest* about the gazing exercise that he gives in there, that it shouldn't be done for more than I think ten minutes at one time before you rest the eyes again.

S: Yeah.

LR: Doesn't he also, I don't remember it that well Lou, but doesn't he also distinguish between staring at something and just [CDA assents] relaxedly gazi-- gazing, and I think the warning is against staring-- staring?

LDS: Yeah but it's still, you know-- gazing or staring can be done either with blinking or without. And if the eyes are open without blinking--

AD: And you're not staring--

LDS: And you're not staring, how long can that be done, indefinitely?

AD: I would assume indefinitely. But if you're staring, then the optic nerve gets into trouble.

LDS: The optic nerve (gets--)

AD: Yeah the eyes, the-- the muscles in the optic nerve. I think the muscles tend to get fixed and then you have a problem.

LDS: Where the Sun exercise is a little different in term-- well a lot different in terms of a-- it's more of a relaxed gaze rather than staring at a fixed point.

AD: Well I think most people have noticed that if they're staring at something for any length of time, the eye muscles tend to fixate, and then after that a person may experience a difficulty in refocusing. But we're talking about the gazing exercise, that you're doing it properly. And that means that you're looking, you're s-- you're paying attention to the image in front of you, but it's not a forced gaze. [student assents, faint] And the other thing too is that if it's attended, that is, if the gazing exercise where you're fixing your sight on the image, if it is attended with the proper veneration and aspiration, it would be very unlikely that-- that the muscles get fixated.

JL: Why are there three different stages in this open and close?

AD: I can't hear you.

JL: Why the three different stages in this open and closing?

AD: The last -- the last stage is to-- it's like we-- we've got to-- it's a way of self-certifying the ability to know without any images. [short pause] It's knowing without any images.

JL (simultaneously): You mean so-- so there's no duality actually. I mean it's not a-- it's not a-- a re-- meditation is not a regression back into a subjective solipsism or a, (you know--)

AD (simultaneously): No, at-- at that third stage which is contemplation, you're in a state of knowing, and the world which would appear to the eyes if they were functioning, alright, will be an intrusion and an interference. [JL assents, faint] But if you are in a state of knowing, the images that are thrown on the retina are not picked up. As far as the first stage he said, I think Randy pointed out that it prevents a lot of distraction. The second stage, I think most people have begun to realize that if they are con-- if they are concentrating, it is wise to open the eyes every now and then and-- I mean I've closed them after too but-- and I've left them open, I've done both, and, it does prevent the-- the attention from flagging. It does prevent drowsiness. I mean if you really open your eyes it does prevent drowsiness. If you notice when drowsiness does overcome a person there's a tendency to shut the eyes and go to sleep, and to reverse that dire-- that tendency, I mean to reverse the direction is to undo the tendency somewhat.

[short pause]

RG: But, Anthony, are these supposed to correlate pretty closely with the three stages of meditation as you were just describing?

AD: Yeah, I think so. I think so.

RG: So what is the meaning of-- what-- is there a meaning that correlates with the middle level, say, of why-- of the half-opened eyes to the state of concentration?

AD: Uh-- [short pause] The-- the contrast between the theme in meditation and the perceived world becomes obvious.

S (faint): Ok.

[11¾ second pause]

PC (faint): What do you mean by that Anthony?

AD: It's almost like you can com-- it's almost like you're comparing two worlds: the world of thought and the sensible world. [S, faint: Yeah.] And the world of thought is fluid in comparison to the sensible world. And you're supposed to be able to concentrate intensely enough on the thought world, the world of thought, and completely ignore the sensible. If you can do that then you've succeeded.

[short pause]

RG: Would you say maybe in the third stage, Anthony, that to keep the eyes fully open is to try and re-integrate the presented world-image with the consciousness that's perceiving it?

[short pause]

AD: Well, I don't know, maybe you could say that. I won't-- I won't say that.

RG (faint): Ok.

LR: 'Cause Dickie you're saying you don't see anything, [RG simultaneously: But if-- but you--] your mind is registering no-- no images at all.

VM (faint): Uh-hm.

S (very faint): Right.

RG: Yeah right. But it's funny, then why would you even open your eyes? [S, very faint: Well-- uh-hm.] I mean what's the point?

S (simultaneously): Make sure you're really there.

PD: But the [S simultaneously: Sure.] third stage [RG simultaneously: No.] you're being guided by inner guidance so I mean it-- that right there says it's something of a mystery to us.

RG: Well, it may be a mystery, that hasn't stopped us from inquiring into it before.

PD: But the point is that the practitioner at the third stage can't predetermine what he's going to be doing.

RG: No I'm not talking about the-- I'm not [couple/three words inaudible] There's still-- there's still a *meaning* to it, why the person is led to that kind of practice.

S (very faint): Yeah.

RC: Well Anthony said it (quite) adequately. You say it's to certify the fact that you're knowing without images?

AB: Yeah, it's a way of self-certifying.

RC (simultaneously): So even with the eyes fully opened the images don't [one/two words inaudible]

AD (simultaneously): Yeah. Actually, at any rate, the way I understand it as of now, presently, is that even though your eyes are fully open you don't see anything, Dickie.

RG: Ok.

AH: So to succeed at the level of the mental world is to make the world disappear? I-- it's--

AD: Sorry. Sorry, I'm practicing the *Surangama Sutra*, go ahead.

RG: Uh-hm, (right).

AH (simultaneously): Well, it seems there's an inevitable conclusion that the way that this has been described that's incorrect-- conclusion that the world would disappear. Like, at the third stage with the eyes open the certification would be the verification of mentalism rather than a destruction of phenomena. It would seem that would be a conclusion that you could come (to). Like when you speak of verifying or certifying, what is it that's being cer-- certified, the fact that there is no world, no-- no--

AD: No, the certification would be-- is the self-absorption. Self-absorption automatically excludes the perception of an external world, even if your eyes *are* open.

AH: What about, Anthony, what about those examples that we've all read of-- of various kinds of enlightenment experience where the world is perceived in this special way?

AD: Yeah but, this isn't what we're talking about right now.

AH: Oh we're not talking about that.

AD (simultaneously): Well, we're talking about the third stage of meditation--the first is concentration, the second meditation, third is contemplation, which is really a state of self-- self-absorption. And if a person is self-absorbed and his eyes are open, there *is* no perception of an external world in that state. That doesn't mean that there aren't other states like the philosophic state or things of that nature, we're just speaking about this particular state.

AH: I see. Ok. I was confusing that third state with the vivid world or the real world.

AD: Well I think for instance if you look at some of the works, some of the Renaissance paintings for instance where they paint or they-- people portray the saints in contemplation, like Bernini's Saint Teresa or things like that, I think it would be obvious that even though their eyes are open and they're looking, they don't see anything there, but they're completely self-absorbed, self-rapt.

AH: Talking about trance?

AD: It's-- it doesn't have to be trance. [short pause] Trance is a peculiar state, it's a little different, you're really unconscious. And many, many very fine mystics have evolved to very, very proficient levels and never had trance. [student assents, faint] So trance isn't necessary.

RG: So Anthony, in your understanding of this, the level-- the fifth level that we talked about last week of phil-- of the philosophic discernment is the level above even this level of contemplation.

AD: Oh yeah, oh sure.

MEDITATION LEADS TO CONTEMPLATION, WHERE THINKING BRINGS ABOUT ITS OWN CESSATION

[12¼ second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.140, RC reading]: "What is so extraordinary about the practice is that [whereas] to meditate is correctly regarded..."

RC: Excuse me.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.140, RC reading]: "What is so extraordinary about the practice is that whereas to meditate is correctly regarded as concentrated pondering and sustained musing--in other words, producing more associated thoughts from the first original one--it leads, at its most successful end, to losing the capacity to ponder or muse. At the point where meditation becomes contemplation, thinking paralyses itself and brings about its own temporary death!"

AD: Randy, would you read that once more please? Because this is one of those frustrating ones, you know?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:1.140, RC rereads]: “What is so extraordinary about the practice is that whereas to meditate is correctly regarded as concentrated pondering and sustained musing--in other words, producing more associated thoughts from the first original one--it leads, at its most successful end, to losing the capacity to ponder or muse. At the point where meditation becomes contemplation, thinking paralyses itself and brings about its own temporary death!”

[short pause]

AD: Now this is also not only a kind of-- that you've had success but very often I experience it as frustration. [RG/S(?): Yeah.] Because I work so hard to get to a point where I can understand completely what I'm thinking about and thought stops. (bit of laughter) And I know I got the answer and I come out and I can't remember. (some laughter) And I know I had the answer when I was there!

S (faint): Poor Anthony.

S: Bummer.

AD: So I don't know if you want to always succeed when you're concentrating. (AD laughs a bit)

[short pause with bit of laughter]

RG: What? (laughter)

AH: Is that to suggest-- Anthony is that to s--

RG (simultaneously): Well I'm sorry I don't follow that. (bit of laughter)

AH: Is that to suggest that the answer, that-- is the negation of the looking for it?

AD: Of the looking?

AH: Of the looking for the answer? Like, you seem to describe a state where the answer that was so ardent-- ardently sought was a cancellation of that-- well--

AD (simultaneously): Well I'm just trying to paint the contradiction that I find in the experience. I ponder, I take a problem and-- and I ponder it very intensely. And I'm viewing every aspect of it: under, over, sideways, alright, every possible aspect. I'm approaching what I think is a-- the goal, the synthesis of all these aspects, alright? And then thought stops. And I don't remember when I come out what it was I did and I have to make an effort to recall what it was I did. So on the one hand, it succeeded in getting very concentrated, but on the other hand it deprived me of the solution to what I was working on. (AD laughing) But very often it arises as an intuition later on.

RG (faint): Uh-hm.

RC (faint): Yeah.

LrD: We should have this problem. (laughter)

S (amidst laughter): Yeah.

S (amidst laughter): Yeah right.

RG: Can (you/we) share those with us?

S (very faint): Yeah.

S (faint): Yeah.

PB [V15, 23:7.45 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #56, RC reading]: “It is not just ceasing to think, although it prerequisites that, but something more: it is also a positive alertness to the Divine Presence.”

[short pause]

NH: This brings me back to a quote a while back where you have to go through fulfilling meditation as a shutting everything out of the mind except the Overself. [RC, very faint: Uh-hm.] There he’s talking about meditation as also inclusive of contemplation, right?

RC: I don’t follow. Where?

NH: Much earlier tonight you read a quote.

RC (simultaneously): Oh in that earlier quote [NH: Yeah.] where he’s talking about-- Yeah I-- I mentioned it last week and I still think that it’s legitimate to say that there-- there are a number of places where he seems to use meditation as a generic term that includes the three stages and other places meditation is confined to the middle-- [NH assents] the middle stage only.

NH: So he had a fulfillment of meditation, it’s not just a fulfillment of the second stage, meditation, but meditation as-- as a general topic which would include contemplation.

RC (faint): Yeah.

S (faint): But if those quotes say-- if that’s the case that’s really backward(s).

RC: Meditation fulfills itself.

[students assent, faint]

[short pause]

HE (faint): Shut down the mind, only think of the Overself?

RG: Except the thought of the Overself, is that--

TS (faint): Well he also--

[14¼ second pause with some faint background student talking]

NH: Because sometimes--

RC (simultaneously): Yeah.

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.346, RC rereads]: “That alone may be called the fulfilment of meditation, and its real practice, which shuts out of the mind everything except the Overself.”

S (very faint): Yeah.

NH: Because he-- he talks about contemplation as having no thought, and yet there is this overriding thought of the Overself.

RC: He doesn't say thought there.

S (very faint): He doesn't.

NH: Awareness, I-(thinking)?

S (simultaneously, very faint): He says awareness though.

NH: Right but-- What is the “I” if-- if you are Being(--/?)

LR (simultaneously): That's the knowledge without images, Being.

RG (simultaneously): To know without images is to be.

NH (simultaneously): Of Being, of the Overself rather than the knowledge of it here (one of his--)

[short pause]

PC (faint): Randy, could you read that last one again? [RC: The--] “It's not just a ceasing to think...”

PB [V15, 23:7.45 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #56, RC rereads]: “It is not just [RC adds: a] ceasing to think, although it prerequires that, but something more: it is also a positive alertness to the Divine Presence.”

[short pause]

NH: An alertness *to*, so there-- there is a relationship (here/there).

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

[students assent, very faint]

RG: It's an alertness.

RC/S(?) (faint): It's an alertness.

NH/S(?) (very faint): Oh I know.

S (faint): Yeah.

RC: Well then your [NH simultaneously: Yeah.] mind finds its-- its own presence. There's this-- there's a positive alertness to the presence of something divine within your own attention, being. [short pause] There's an awakening to something very contrary--falling asleep.

[20¼ second pause]

PB [unpublished, 23g-psg.1, (3g/74/39), RC reading]: “Not many would-be meditators attain the uncommon experience of the Void. Most of those who reach the beginning rarely continue further. For when the ego finds itself being sucked away from its own familiar identity into a vast emptiness, it hesitates, then draws back in fear.”

NH (faint): Ok. I’ve been wondering about, (just waiting for the last one). (bit of laughter) Is that-- is the [one word inaudible] these three stages is that any point where meditation becomes contemplation?

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

NH (faint): Yes, wouldn’t--

PC (simultaneously): It would be referring--

NH: Wouldn’t there be a similar kind of experience although up on a lower level when concentration becomes meditation?

RC (faint): (No/Yes).

NH: Because when he talked about concentration becoming meditation he talks about a sense of-- of the body dissolving and awareness of the senses dissolving. And it feels like--

RC (simultaneously): Yeah but that’s different than the total absence of any content including even the thought of absence. [9¾ second pause] And, it’s different than being-- feeling yourself like being sucked away.

NH (faint): Because in one you’re still-- you dissolve (opposite) and in the other (you wake up). [short pause] (And Tony) you better pray for them. That’s what they think.

AD: Randy, would you read those last two again please?

PB [unpublished, 23g-psg.1, (3g/74/39), RC rereads]: “Not many would-be meditators attain the uncommon experience of the Void. Most of those who reach the beginning rarely continue further. For when [the ego finds itself being sucked away from its own familiar identity into a vast emptiness, it hesitates, then draws back in fear].”

[Audio File 1983 0907a Ends]

[Audio File 1983 0907b Begins]

PB [V15, 23:7.45 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #56, RC rereads]: “[It is not just ceasing to think, although it prerequisites that, but something more: it is also a positive] alertness to the Divine Presence.”

[27½ second pause]

AB: Anthony? If you have-- if you’re meditating with aspiration or devotion, wouldn’t that act as an antidote to this fear reaction of the ego?

AD (quietly): No. Still come up. Although there is a saying by one-- one of our, you know, revered authorities, Christ, he said, "Perfect love casteth out all fear." [Note: Bible, 1 John, 4:18.] But I don't think we're capable of that perfect love that he speaks about. But it does make it easier; the fear isn't so overwhelming.

[13¾ second pause]

JA (very faint): Well let me ask-- I'm not sure if I still feel as far as-- I have a question about the Void and concentration (difference). [RC assents, very faint] What did you think about (grades/Grace)? [short pause] I mean [couple/three words inaudible] imagine different grades of form at different times, different [one word inaudible]

RC (faint): Well if it's a meditation on [one word inaudible] then I don't think you'll have any contact with the Void, I mean, switch over from concentration to meditation.

S (very faint): (Talking) to me?

RC (faint): If it's a meditation which depends-- whether it be a thought or a feeling or whatever, that what's going to happen is that the entirety of your attention is going to be permeated with what you started out concentrating on. You're not going to have an experience of being sucked away into a vast emptiness.

JA (faint): You don't think there's some sort of transition here?

RC (faint): There's a momentary lapse but, you can't account for the transition from one state to the other, (but--) [JA simultaneously: But-- but--] But I certainly wouldn't say that that gets filled with fear.

JA (faint): Well-- But a lapse might imply some sort of emptiness then.

[short pause]

TS (faint): You're saying that there's a specific meditation which ponders the Void and which is a contemplation of the Void that's undertaken as a-- an object of an-- an exercise, and the way that exercise is being (perfected) that achieves egoless [couple words inaudible] by the ego.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

S (faint): What?

S: Couldn't hear you.

S (faint): We couldn't hear you [one/two words inaudible]

S (simultaneously): Couldn't-- couldn't hear you at all.

S: You what?

S: (Start over) please.

PD (very faint): Tim, they're speaking to you.

PC: Tim are-- are you saying by that that you could go directly from the contemplation--

AD: But could we hear what Tim [RG simultaneously: Yeah.] said?

S (simultaneously): No.

PC/S(?) (very faint): [couple words inaudible]

S (simultaneously, faint): I want to hear what he said.

S (simultaneously): He asked me.

TS (faint): Well I thought I was just saying what Randy said. I-- (laughter, student words)

AD: Say it-- say it again. That's alright, say it again.

WHEN THINKING COMES TO A HALT, YOU'RE LEFT WITH THE ATTENTION, WHICH IS VERY, VERY INTENSE, AND IT IS THIS ATTENTION THAT IS VOID

TS (simultaneously, faint): That the medita-- that the Void as an experience in meditation is-- there's a deliberate exercise of contemplation on the Void which is undertaken by the meditator that's different from the lapse or transition from concentration or meditation to contemplation. And the stoppage of thought and the realization in the presence of the Overself, transition from meditation to contemplation would be one exercise. But the exercise of meditating on the Void when it becomes a contemplation of the Void is a unique exercise which is undertaken. And I thought it was fairly advanced.

LR: But Tim I thought Anthony countered that a little bit before by talking about how he'd be trying to think about something and then thought would be just taken away, all thoughts.

TS (faint): Yes, but I didn't think that was the same as this idea of medi-- a contemplative-- making the Void itself a contemplative object.

LR: No, I'm saying-- no I don't think it's the same either but I think in either case one would encounter that emptiness. In other words--

TS (faint): Well we would have to ask Anthony.

LR: I don't have any idea what I'm talking about. (laughter)

AD: Well let's try to see if we could make it clear. In the second stage, meditation, let's say you're meditating on a theme, a un-- a universal theme. Generally if you're meditating, that's what you're doing. And the sequence of thought is very rigid and logically ordered. And remember we're speaking about a state where you're not aware of the body. You've lost body awareness and you're just contemplating ideas. Now there's an intense attention accompanying that meditative exercise. The-- the thinking might come to a halt, alright. Now you're entering the third stage when thinking comes to a halt, thinking commits suicide. But you're left with the attention, which is very, very intense. And it is this attention which *is* void. This *is* the Void. [short pause] You're rapt, so to speak, it's a kind of self-absorption that's taking place. There's nothing there. I mean there's no *content* to the atten-- intense attention, alright. That *is*-- you might-- you might almost say that *is* like Being. You see there's not an *acquaintance* with your own inner self. There's an *immediacy* of your own inner self, immediacy in the sense that there's no--

nothing in between you and the attention. So to that extent it is like void, it is like empty, ok. There are states beyond it but I'm just speaking of this state.

S (faint): Yeah.

HOW TO OVERCOME THE FEAR THAT ARISES AS YOU APPROACH THE STILLNESS

LR: And there was a time that-- you know, I'm sorry I don't recall this Anthony, when you were speaking about the same thing and you gave suggestions about how-- what to do with the fear that arose. And I don't remember what those suggestions were.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

AD: Well, Alan mentioned a couple, you could try to develop the necessary understanding--metaphysical understanding is very important--that what fears here is the ego. If you remember the quote-- Remember that quote [S, faint: Randy.] where it said that the ego is-- goes all the way up to the Stillness. [students assent, faint] It's excluded from the Stillness, ok. So up to that point you-- its operations are going to be there, it's going to be-- it's going to be noticeable in the sense that there will be waves, so to speak, or a wave now and then, some kind of fear coming in inundating you. You-- it may not even be clearly formulated as a thought but it would be enough to cause you to, you know, back off. The other, the other thing of course is that, well like Alan pointed out, if there's an intense aspiration and love towards the being that you really are. And I found that quote by Jesus to be really quite [slight pause] a life-saver at that time, you know? I don't know where it came from--I'm quite sure it wasn't the ego that thrust it into my consciousness--but it was really quite appropriate. "Perfect love casteth out all fear." [S, faint: Yeah.] Alright then, things like that would help. Whatever-- whatever preliminary or whatever, well, work that you do in the sense of refining the emotions, of purifying your ethics and your character, all those things are all part of the necessary requisites to help you overcome this fear.

AH: Anthony?

S: Is that-- is that what's meant by the 23rd Psalm? And would that also be what he is referring to in the 23rd Psalm?

AD: I'm sorry, go on.

S (faint): "(Even though) I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..." [Note: Bible, Psalms, 23:4.]

S (very faint): Oh (Jesus).

AD: Well, yeah I think that refers to something. [short pause] Oh, "Though thou shalt walk-- though I shall walk through the valley of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art [S simultaneously: Thou art with me.] with me..." Yeah, yeah, I guess something like that could be used, yeah. Yeah. [AH simultaneously: Anthony--] But there again that's a piece of metaphysical knowledge, the recognition that Being is the ultimate substratum and that you can always depend on it and call on it. I suspect that's what that statement means, "perfect love"--perfect love of your own higher self will cast out all fear. Not just perfect love, you know, indiscriminate perfect love. That's-- that's not perfect love. But a complete, wholehearted surrender.

LR: So what do you think the rod and the staff would be there?

AD: Ah, wouldn't you like to know.

RG/S(?): Right.

S (simultaneously): Right.

S: Yes.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

AD: Uh-hm.

LR: I'm trying to just sneak it in there. (laughter)

S (amidst laughter): [few words inaudible]

S (faint): Right.

AD: Let's go on to something else.

S: [couple words inaudible] (student laughs)

AH: Anthony, would you take one more question?

AD: For instance, that's a beautiful psalm that you could use for meditation. Yeah, (uh-huh).

AH: In regards-- in regards to that state of complete and total attention which you've described as void, as-- you couldn't-- you couldn't speak of fear there because there's no content there. But, is it-- is the fear just the last vestige of-- of thinking activity, or does the fear come *after* the experience?

THERE'S TWO OBJECTS THAT WILL COME UP OVER AND OVER AGAIN AS YOU APPROACH THE VOID: FEAR OF DEATH AND LUST

AD: There's two objects that come up. When you're at that state there's two objects that can come up and do come up, over and over again. And they'll be one, fear, fear of death; the other, lust. One of those two will come up. Don't tell me that it's not there. They're there. The ego is there up to the point of Stillness.

AH: Well that's-- that was the question, I-- it's up *to* that point.

AD: Up to the point of Stillness.

AH: And as you get very very very close to it--

AD: Then when-- when you're in the Stillness you're in a state of being where there *is* no ego; it *is* egoless Being. That's what you mean by Stillness. So there there won't be any fear. But up to that point, it'll be there. And in most of the sacred texts of the Hinduism, you'll see that those are the two main problems that are faced with conte-- in contemplation: lust or fear. One of those two will come up. If you're lucky, maybe both.

S: Both. (laughter)

AH: Well, I suppose it's possible to see them as the same thing really, so--

AD (simultaneously): No, they're not the same thing. (bit of laughter) Don't tell me hot is cold and therefore I can drink iced tea and call it warm.

S (faint): Yeah, ok. (bit of laughter)

[short pause]

WHEN YOU ARE LEFT WITH JUST PURE ATTENTION, THIS IS ALMOST THE SAME AS THAT STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN WHICH THERE'S NO WORLD-IDEA, NO EGO

PB [V15, 23:7.162 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #51, RC reading]: "If he wishes to enter the stage of contemplation, he must let go of every thought as it rises, however high or holy it seems, for it is..."

AD (simultaneously): And you know what you'll say, you'll say "No, no, no, just one little bit more!" (bit of laughter)

PB [V15, 23:7.45 & *Persp.*, Ch. 23 #56 cont., RC reading]: "...for it is sure to bring associated thoughts in its train. However interesting or attractive these bypaths may be at other times, they are now just that--bypaths. He must rigidly seek the Void."

PB [V15, 23:7.226, RC reading]: "Letting go all thoughts--the ego-thought, the world-thought, even the God-thought--until absolutely none is present in [RC adds: the] mind: it is as simple as that!"

S (faint): Yeah.

AD: Do you still have the quote you brought me yesterday?

LR: The one in [couple words inaudible] like that um--

RC: Yeah I-- (some laughter)

S (very faint): Oh no.

S: Oh no. (some laughter)

S (faint): That's ok. (bit more laughter)

AD: It's alright Randy, it's alright.

RC: I mean it's like my paper but I could probably find it.

AD: It's alright, next week.

RC: Ok.

AH: Could we hear that last one again?

S: Uh-hm.

AH: That simple--

RC (simultaneously): “Let...”

PB [V15, 23:7.226, RC rereads]: “Letting go all thoughts--the ego-thought, the world-thought, even the God-thought--until absolutely none is present in [RC adds: the] mind: it is as simple as that!”

[short pause]

S (faint): So the God-thought is gone but there’s that ability to be able to [one word inaudible] (thoughts still alone)?

RC: We have to take the changes of that (thought).

AH: How can it be gone [S simultaneously, faint: Yeah.] and still alone? (AH laughs)

S (faint): I don’t know. That’s what I’m-- (AH laughs) I know you were saying before was that the guiding awareness of the Overself is still there or it becomes [one/two words inaudible] if you say it-- it is nothing in the world [few words inaudible]

S (faint): The awareness of the Overself. (If/But) the Overself is the awareness itself that is the Void, that’s it. Maybe that then could lead itself. That’s what it is.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

RC (faint): But it’s interesting, Andrew used to really like to talk about one formulation of emptiness that the Buddhist use is--

AH (faint): Oh yeah, just (take/fake) it Randy.

RC (faint): Emptiness of self-nature.

AH: Yeah like it’d seem that when thought stops and goes in the Void, (laughter, student words) it’s receding, you know, and there’s nothing. That’s really-- I mean from any-- any understanding, total misunderstanding. [RC assents, faint] It’s not nothing.

RC (faint): Can you imagine like trying to approach that from a subjective side and talking about empty of ego? [couple words inaudible] [S simultaneously: What Randy?] is empty of ego?

S (very faint): Yeah.

AH: It’s like, I don’t-- In this quote when you speak of Void, the cessation of thought. But it’s thought’s conclusion that that’s nothing. It would-- you know like, the only way we have attempted to understand what that Void might be is the notion of nothing from the point of view of thought.

RC: I agree with you that that’s a-- a superimposition from the side of ego to call it nothing.

AH: And the--

S (simultaneously, faint): Well, that might be [one word inaudible] and I just said nothing is an appearance.

BS: You know the--

AH: But tonight it's been described as that state, as an-- as intimate association with your own interior self. But it's experienced rather than known in any way. But not as any kind of content.

S (faint): Right.

RC: Rather than knowing it immediately.

S (faint): So it's not within the Void over here, kind of like it's (embarrassing). It's following that you talk about it enough. [student assents, very faint] You say you're in the Void.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

AH: You can say I might be starting at three or at two o'clock in the afternoon I was in the Void. (laughter) Definite-- an occurrence in time. But there's also an aspect of trance that you couldn't describe from the point of view of time, [S, very faint: Ok.] again.

RC (faint): Yeah. I think in a way, I don't know how-- I think if you really want to do about the semantics that it seems like to say "I was in the Void," there's no communication. It might be more correct to say that, "All-- all that I knew was absolutely voided, and there was something else."

BS: And there was what?

RC: There was something.

AD: Randy, another way of saying it is to say that-- to say that "I was in the Void" is redundant. (laughter)

S (very faint): Good.

S (very faint): What do you mean?

S: Uh-hm.

S (very faint): He's always (in the) [one word inaudible]

AH: In the sense that "I was" is adequate?

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

S (faint): No.

AH: You don't need to say "in the Void"?

[short pause with bit of laughter]

AD: That's a private joke, Andrew, you have to figure it out. (AD laughs a bit)

S: Uh-hm.

[short pause]

PB [V15, 23:7.113, RC reading]: “In this state the world is not presented to consciousness. Consequently none of the problems associated with it is present. No ego is active with personal emotions and particular thoughts. No inner conflicts disturb the still centre of being.”

[23 second pause]

AD: Would you repeat it, Randy?

TS/S(?) (very faint): Would you repeat it, Randy?

PB [V15, 23:7.113, TS rereads]: “In this state the world is not presented to consciousness. Consequently none of the problems associated with it is present. No ego is active with personal emotions and particular thoughts. No inner conflicts disturb the still centre of being.”

[short pause]

AD: Well Andrew let's do something like this, alright, because we'll be wasting (years). Imagine you go through a very profound analysis of the external world. You're a good scientist. And you finally reduce that external world to where Vic Mansfield is, you know, when like between the electronic gun and the openings in the hole we don't know what's going on, there's nothing there! (CDA laughs) When it goes through the hole and splatters on the sensitive plate then you get a wave or a particle. But we're not talking about that part, we're talking about that-- that point where the electronic gun releases a photon, and between that point, alright, and the hole it goes through, we don't know what's there, there isn't a *thing* there. So let's say with the scientific know-how and the tremendous profundity of analysis you reduce the whole of the external world to nothing. Now, you reverse the process and apply it to your subjective states. And you reduce the entirety of your *internal* world to nothing. Now instead of all this being a concept in your mind, imagine this to be a state of your consciousness. In that state, there won't be any problems. [student assents, faint] Ok? [students assent, very faint] But you-- you see the difference here. As we were talking, everything was conceptual and then I asked you, well try to imagine such a state of consciousness, alright. The same way like, in between the realm of the electronic gun and the openings, and when a person has found and analyzed what constitutes his own inner being and reduced that to nothing, alright, this-- this conversation or this discussion is still in the realm of a concept and although you've reduced everything to the Void, it's still a concept in your mind. Now there is a state of consciousness which corresponds to what the concept is talking about, and in that state there *are* no problems.

S (faint): I don't think I follow.

AH (simultaneously): But it's the concept or the-- the series of concepts leading up to that state are superseded or canceled by that state. Is that so? Like the two can't exist simultaneously. There can't be a concept in that state. May I ask another question regarding that specific description? It would seem, Anthony, in order for that to be successful as an exercise in-- in meditation, if you had-- you-- you'd have to use an extraordinarily rigid set of concepts that lead inevitably to--

AD: No, not a rigid set of concepts, you would have to use a-- a very strict methodological procedure.

AH: I think that's what I was trying to say.

AD: Ok.

AH: Like an analysis that would lead inexorably to a concept turning upon itself like “know the knower” or something like that.

AD: Yeah, it would require that *all* thinking comes to a halt.

AH: I guess I’m-- I guess I’m trying to understand what kind of a metho-- method is applied to thought because it always seems to me in my own attempts at this that there’s a *dispersal* of thought rather than a *narrowing* of thought.

AD: No, it’s not a dispersal, it’s a concentration of thought. Your thought gets more and more concentrated. And as you follow-- as you try to follow experientially the-- what the thoughts are suggesting, the-- that is the Void as the basis or the substratum of the apparent world, alright, this is going to require a procedure, technique, not thought, not thinking anymore. You know what-- what the thought is; now you have to follow the implications in terms of the actual practices.

AH: I don’t understand the last.

AD: It means dropping all concepts.

AH: Is it-- is it as if--

AD: And even the tendency to have concepts has to be dropped. Otherwise you don’t experience a state of consciousness which is in itself Void, but you’ll always experience thoughts *in* that consciousness.

AH: Is there some kind of a momentum that makes that transition?

AD: It will take a lot of momentum, yeah.

AH: A kind of psychic centrifugal force or something.

BS (faint): Yeah.

AD: No it’s-- it’s part of the development that takes place when you learn concentration and then meditation and then contemplation. It’s part of that development. [short pause] It’s like we’ve said before. When you were meditating very intensely on something, whatever the idea was, and then the idea is dropped, the content is ignored, canceled out, obliterated, and you’re left with just pure attention, this is the same, or almost the same, as being empty, or being in that state of consciousness which he described as there’s no idea, no World-Idea, no ego, there’s nothing there. [10¾ second pause] Alright let’s-- let’s have another.

[short pause]

PB [V15, 23:8.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #64, TS reading]: “If he has succeeded in holding his mind somewhat still and empty, his next step is to find his centre.”

[9 second pause]

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.338 & *Persp.*, Ch. 4 #38, TS reading]: “The ego is so taken up with itself that the time of meditation, which ought to be its gradual emptying-out, remains merely another field for its own activity.”

RC: I thought that one was important, related to that-- when we talked about sitting down as if the higher self didn't have anything to do with it.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

AH: Could you read the last one again please?

PB [V4, Part 1, 4:2.338 & *Persp.*, Ch. 4 #38, TS rereads]: “The ego is so taken up with itself that the time of meditation, which ought to be its gradual emptying-out, remains merely another field for its own activity.”

[17¼ second pause]

RG: Anthony, why-- why do you say “almost”? That's important. “Almost” that attention is the Void in term--

AD: You don't know that till you plunge in.

RG: Why it's almost?

AD: Yeah. I'm saying it's “almost” because you don't know that till you plunge in. But, this quote, I thought, was very instructive for me because you remember I made the remark that I experience that also as the inability to come to a conclusion in my meditations when I am working out dramatic-- (cinematically) some material. That experience of frustration just shows to what extent the ego can [possibly one word inaudible] interfere. Instead of experience it-- or one should at least experience it as a kind of happiness that no thought is there, alright, there's very often the experience of frustration that I didn't reach the conclusions that I was working towards. But being free of thought is also a very happy state. So these two contradictory things of-- very often arises in me. When I come out I'm on one hand happy and on the other hand frustrated that I don't have the--

CDA: The Virgo brain.

RG: And it's only [couple/three words inaudible] (laughter)

RC: There's one-- there's one-- there's one quote that's not in-- it's not in this batch but he does say that when that happens, when the-- when the thoughts are directed and lapse, that if you can drop the topic, later on another train of thinking [one word inaudible] will lead to a conclusion. I guess that's what you meant by saying later on it comes?

AD: Yeah. Yeah very often later on a happy intuition arises and I see the solution I thought I was deprived of before. But, very often it doesn't come in time. (laughter)

S (amidst laughter, faint): Desperate.

S (amidst laughter, faint): Uh-hm.

S (faint): That's what I thought.

TS (laughing, faint): So what?

AD: Everyone's mad at me! (laughter)

HS: Tim, there's two quotes that [one word inaudible]

S (faint): We should do that one.

TS: "In this state the world is not represented-- is not presented to consciousness"?

HS: No the one where the-- in the still mind you look for the center there.

TS (very faint): Oh, that's the one with the--

S (very faint): Yeah.

S (very faint): Yeah right.

"IF HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN HOLDING HIS MIND SOMEWHAT STILL AND EMPTY, HIS NEXT STEP IS TO FIND HIS CENTRE"

PB [V15, 23:8.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #64, TS rereads]: "If he has succeeded in holding his mind somewhat still and empty, his next step is to find his centre."

[20¾ second pause]

HS: I would ask what that means now.

S (very faint): Uh-hm.

LR: Go on, ask what it means, Herb.

HS (faint): I already have.

AD: No comment!

HS: Ok.

RC (faint): Ok.

S (faint): Uh-hm.

AH: I don't even understand what it means to be "somewhat still and empty," (some laughter) let alone find the center.

RG: Right.

[11½ second pause]

AH: Maybe the center is absolutely still and empty.

[short pause]

AD: Well, obviously he's not referring to a geometrical point, right?

[10 second pause]

LR: Yeah but, if he sees in a-- in a-- I mean, I don't know. [few words inaudible] I thought it was in a-- In a lot of the quotes it seems like when the mind is brought to a halt, then that I AM consciousness suffuses it. We had this discussion once before I think about whether you expect that to happen automatically or whether not. But in a lot of the quotes tonight it seems that when the mind *is* still and empty, then that is automatic. So to find its center as the next step is puzzling.

S (very faint): That's what I thought.

S (faint): Yeah.

AD: Uh-hm. No comment.

LR: No comment because (bit of laughter) [couple inaudible CDA words simultaneous with LR] it's puzzling or no (comment)?

AD: Well do you want me to add a comment to the no comment now? (laughter)

LR: Yeah. No comment because we have to figure that out by ourselves or no comment because--

LDS (simultaneously): Yeah, that might be the point.

LR (faint): Oh. No comment 'cause then I could figure that out.

RG (faint): Write that down, Linda. (some laughter)

S (faint): Yeah.

[11¼ second pause]

S (faint): Go ahead.

YOU FIRST HAVE TO BE YOUR OWN SELF BEFORE YOU CAN TALK ABOUT HAVING YOUR OWN THOUGHTS

PB [V15, 24:3.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #61, TS reading]: "Only he is able to think his *own* thought, uninfluenced by others, who has trained himself to enter the Stillness, where alone he is able to transcend all thought."

[15½ second pause with faint background student talking]

LR: Is there more?

PD (simultaneously): And until then you're living out your natal chart, or you're thinking out your natal chart.

HS: This is amazing.

S (very faint): Right.

LR (faint): Tim, is there more?

TS: Well--

AD: Pretty interesting.

S (faint): Yeah.

S (very faint): Go ahead.

PB [V15, 24:3.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #61, TS rereads]: “Only he is able to think his *own* thought, uninfluenced by others, who has trained himself to enter the Stillness, where alone he is able to transcend all thought.”

S: Uh-hm.

RG/S(?) (faint): Right.

JfL (faint): Well it sounds as though the-- to the mystic the-- from that Stillness is where he could attempt to (concentrate) [couple/three words inaudible] [short pause] until all thought [few words inaudible] to reality [few words inaudible]

S (faint): Yeah.

[18 second pause]

S (faint): Yeah.

S (faint): Yeah.

S (faint): Yeah.

S (very faint): Read it.

S (very faint): Read it.

AH: Yeah, read it again.

[short pause]

PB [V15, 24:3.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #61, TS rereads]: “Only he is able to think his *own* thought, uninfluenced by others, who has trained himself to enter the Stillness, where alone he is able to transcend all thought.”

AB: He must be-- when he said the previous quote about finding one's center [TS, faint: Yeah.] because one who has found his center is not influenced by other thoughts. And in order to find one's center, he must penetrate into and beyond the Void in the Stillness.

TS (very faint): Well [couple words inaudible]

AB (faint): That's the key.

S: Well--

S (faint): But isn't it (still-- can he reach) the Void?

S (faint): Yeah but I wouldn't understand it, Crystal.

S (very faint): Yeah.

S (faint): [couple/three words inaudible]

S (simultaneously): But the Stillness is the center of the Void?

S: (Stillness.)

TS/S(?) (simultaneously, faint): Yeah, yeah.

S (simultaneously): I mean not necessarily.

S: Oh.

RG (faint): Well there seems to be something else in that quote, that thinking is real-- is only real-- is real thinking only when it unfolds itself from that Stillness, and that somebody could only say I truly think when you can-- when thinking springs up from that source.

TS (faint): In that that-- that would be where you would be able to say that thought has been-- you have mastered thought rather than saying it mastered you.

RG (very faint): Uh-hm.

JfL (faint): I had a feeling in that quote that he's referring mostly to Stillness. Essentially nothing there, I wouldn't see it. [few words inaudible] I mean contradicting the-- trying to penetrate with the-- the I AM, I think he was going-- starting from that (point).

RC (faint): You're talking about the (other/end of the) quote.

JfL (faint): Either-- either one. If-- [student assents, faint] if you could read the last one again.

PB [V15, 24:3.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #61, TS rereads]: "Only he is able to think his *own* thought, uninfluenced by others, who has trained himself to enter the Stillness, where alone he is able to transcend all thought."

RC (very faint): Is this it?

JfL (faint): [couple words inaudible] he started his real contemplation from the point of that Stillness and then penetrating there into the Absolute.

S (faint): I didn't [couple words inaudible]

RG (simultaneously): What does that have to do with the first part of the quote Jeffrey, thinking is (an idea), the quality of being able to think his own thought, how do you relate that to what--

JfL (faint): How do you explain this? Well I was thinking that he was the I AM and he was his thought. Or that at that point he could then go on thinking for what is instead of [few words inaudible] introduce a-- another one.

RC (faint): Yeah.

[short pause]

PC (faint): Would you mind rereading the other one, Tim?

[short pause]

PB [V15, 23:8.6 & *Persp.*, Ch. 24 #64, TS rereads]: “If he has succeeded in holding his mind somewhat still and empty, his next step is to find his centre.”

[short pause]

S (faint): Anthony you--

HS: This seems to be different. It seems there's a question of how do you know when you're-- if thought's your own? You know, and I think-- Just in a simple level it-- (it's your) thought that you have decided to--

AD (simultaneously): Well you first have to answer this question though.

PC (very faint): Ok.

AD: What does that mean?

RG (faint): What does what mean?

AD (quietly): You first have to find your center. Doesn't he mean there that you have to find yourself?
[student assents, very faint] And if you find yourself, then that means you're all alone--utterly, completely all alone. This is what you are. And until you are *this*, you can't have any thoughts of your own.

[short pause]

HS (faint): Well--

AD: Buddy, I didn't make it up. (bit of laughter) Why do you look at me so? (bit of laughter)

S (faint): Fine.

S (very faint): Yeah.

S (very faint): Ok.

S (very faint): Yeah. (laughter, student words)

AD (amidst laughter): Oh.

AH: Anthony I don't mean to-- I don't mean to be glib but whose thoughts am I having?

AD: I'm sorry?

JB/DB(?): Now?

AH: Whose [LR simultaneously: You have these thoughts.] thoughts-- whose thoughts am I having?

AD: (Again/I can't).

S (very faint): Who has the thoughts.

S (simultaneously, faint): Who has the thoughts.

AD: When you are yourself, then you could have your thoughts. [short pause] Until that time, they will not be *your* thoughts.

AH: Is it as if the thoughts have me?

AD: Well you could put it that way.

[students assent, faint]

[15 second pause]

LDS: Anthony, you're saying that [S: Yeah.] thoughts that we now experience--the ego's made up of this matrix of thoughts that come both from my ancestry, my culture, my own past--I can't call my own.

AD: You first have to be your *own* Self before you can [LDS simultaneously: Yeah.] talk about you having thoughts. I don't know why you want to elaborate the obvious. [students assent, very faint] [short pause] It's like a phonograph machine, alright, announcing through the loudspeaker that it is playing *its own music*. (laughter, student words)

AH: Oh yeah, I don't get that. (laughter)

AD: You first have to be a person. You know what persona means?

S: (Initials.)

LDS (simultaneously): Well, I could give you the Jungian definition.

AD: No, it doesn't [one word inaudible] (laughter) That's-- that's Jung's [LDS simultaneously: No.] translation--mask.

CDA (simultaneously): God, God.

LDS: But you're saying it's a spiritual-- it has a spiritual (meaning).

AD (simultaneously): Per-son-a. What does it mean?

LDS: I don't know.

AD: One in and through itself. Now if you understand that that's a person, now you can say he can have his own thought. But if you're not a per-son-a, the thoughts aren't yours, you don't *have* thoughts. [short pause] You're just reciting lines that were given to you.

LR/S(?) (faint): Riding breath.

[9¾ second pause]

AD: Is this (attempted perversion)? If someone told you to get to your center, what is he telling you? (some laughter) [S: I don't know.] Make measurements of your body and try to figure out geometrically and arithmetically what the center of your body is? And if you can't do that, then how could you do it with consciousness? How would you find a center of consciousness? If consciousness is an uncircumscribed circumference, where's the center to this? But when you recognize yourself to *be* that consciousness, alright, then we can speak about you having found your center, having found yourself. Then you can speak about you having thoughts. [short pause] That's enough. Alright, let's go on to a couple more. (AD laughing)

S (faint): This is under contract.

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC reading (simultaneously with S above)]: "If he does not..."

AD: Well go ahead, go ahead.

S (faint): I'm fine.

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC reading]: "If he does not practise..."

S (simultaneously): You said to keep going?

AD: Oh, no, keep it going.

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC reading]: "If he does not..."

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1983 0907b Ends; Side 2 Begins)

MEMORIZE ONE OF PB'S PARAS AND MEDITATE ON IT; REALIZE IT IN YOUR OWN MEDITATIONS

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC reading]: "[If he does not practise keeping himself--his body and mind--still, this presence which emanates grace is not given the chance to activate his consciousness. Here is the first secret of meditation--Be still! The second secret is]--Know the I am, God! The stillness will have a relaxing and somewhat healing effect, but no more, unless he has *faith*, unless he deliberately seeks communion with God."

CDA (faint): Can you please do that once more?

S (very faint): Yeah.

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC rereads]: "If he does not practise keeping himself--his body and mind--still, this presence which emanates grace is not given the chance to activate his consciousness. Here is the first secret of meditation--Be still! The second secret is--Know the I am, God! The stillness will have a relaxing and somewhat healing effect, but no more, unless he has *faith*, unless he deliberately seeks communion with God."

[short pause]

AH: Is that possibly a-- an explanation or another way of speaking about a transition from the Stillness to the Void, the center?

AD: Well my honest opinion on this one is that you should write it down and meditate on it for a few days.

DH (faint): It's alright.

S: I know but in this case--

AD: It's a very beautiful [couple/three words inaudible] very much to the point when we were speaking about what Jesus said, "Perfect love casteth out all fear," perfect love of your higher self will cast out all fear, and will also bring the Overself to you. [students assent, very faint] Or at least will, you know, be receptive to the Overself's influx and grace.

PB [V15, 23:7.167, RC rereads slowly]: "If he does not practise keeping himself--[RC: Then there's a dash.] his body and mind--[RC: Another dash.] still, this presence which emanates grace is not given the chance to activate his consciousness. Here is the first secret of meditation--[RC: Colon.] Be still! The second secret is--[RC: Colon.] Know the I am, God! The stillness will have a relaxing and somewhat healing effect, but no more, unless he has *faith*, [RC: Underlined here.] unless he deliberately seeks communion with God."

[12 second pause]

AD: I think that most of you are aware, many of these notes are nuggets, and you memorize one occasionally, meditate on it, have a few sessions on it. I'm not happy in explaining too many things, because I know that you have to realize them in your own meditations and then they'll be quite significant. So why not experiment? Let's try an experiment from now to next-- next Wednesday. Memorize this little note, have a few sessions with it and see what you come up with next week. Try it. [short pause] Thank you, Randy, that was very beautiful and we'll call it a night. You know, union Guru.

[bell rung]

S: Who's that?

[Audio File 1983 0907b Ends]