

CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
October 30a, 1983
HINDUISM; ATMANANDA; MEDITATION

TOPIC: Hinduism

SUBJECT: Atmananda

SUBSUBJECT: Meditation

CONTENTS:

Reading Atmananda quotes from PB's unpublished *Notebooks*
"A Secret Rite"
"You Love Only Yourself. How?"
"To Know That You Are The Witness And To Be A Witness"
"I Am Pure Consciousness"
"Methods of Contemplation To Establish Oneself At The Centre"
"The Different Sadhanas To Be Adopted After Realization For Establishing The Natural State"
"Who Takes The Thought That He Is Consciousness?"
"How To Retire To Bed, And To Wake Up"

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *The Notebooks*, unpublished

NOTES:

- This is **1983 10/30a, the evening Hinduism; Atmananda; Meditation event, and the first of two entries associated with this date. 1983 10/30b is the Atmananda seminar from earlier in the day**, for which no audio survives — only JF notes.
- This is a SUNDAY Meditation Event, for which there'd sometimes be quotes read or a short discourse before meditation.
- All quotes are from PB's unpublished *Notebooks*, "Asiatic Notes 4", and have been made to conform to the way PB typed them, even if misread by the reader or mistyped in the text searchable version. See <https://www.pbarchives.org/archive/document/writing/12>.
- This is **NOT** an Astrology class, even though Atmananda's Horoscope was being studied in the Astrology classes during this general time period.
- Atmananda also known as Sri Krishna Menon.

TRANSCRIBED Verbatim by IT prior to 2018 (V11a). This is **V12a** (2023) and has: one more pass with listening errors corrected; all quotes made to conform to material on PB archives site;

updated prefatory matter, footer, and audio file name; Book List and TOC completed; new notes within transcript; new formatting to accord with new conventions. **Archival verbatim transcript – V12a.**

AUDIO FILES: 1983 1030a.

1983 10/30a at Wisdom's Goldenrod Hinduism; Atmananda; Meditation

[Audio File 1983 1030a Begins]

[faint background student talking, AD begins 0:00:28.1]

AD: We're going to read from PB's notes something on Atmananda today because we're working on him, and I thought we bring it together. Many of you have heard of him. PB considered him a Sage. So, let us have a little bit of a problem trying to understand him because we have so little date to go by but, we'll read some things by him. But there's one note in PB's notes that I thought we'd read together. It's called "A Secret Rite". Since I can hardly see, maybe you could read it.

[short pause]

[Transcriber note: The following quotes are from PB's unpublished *Notebooks*, "Asiatic Notes 4", and conform to the way PB typed them, even if misread by the reader or mistyped in the text searchable version. See <https://www.pbarchives.org/archive/document/writing/12.>]

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, p. 697, quote 657-1, in text searchable version; p. 657 in original version, JC reading]: "In the extreme southwest corner of India the landscape is bordered by the Ghat Mountains on one side and the Indian Ocean with white and black sands on the other there is a town with the pleasant sounding name of Trivandrum. Palm trees grow thickly in the area around here with their small bananas and round coconuts. Winding inland lagoons stretch out into the interior country giving, with the sands and fronds, a South Sea-like aspect. Here I came, past the characteristic white wall red striped temples, to a pre-arranged meeting with Shri Krishna Menon, otherwise called by his spiritual name of Atmananda. Escaping the sultry afternoon and beginning to feel the exhilaration of a mild breeze from the sea I reached and entered a long, brown compound, fenced with trees, quiet, adjoining a one-storied house. The guru received me in the upper apartment..."

[short pause]

JC: I don't know, some-- I don't know, some of the typing here is funny, it says--

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 697-698, quote 657-1, in text searchable version; pp. 657, 659 in original version, JC reading]: "We creatures dwelling in time, talked of the Timeless.

"He allowed me, not at my request but at his invitation, to participate in a rite which was performed only once a year, as a darshan, or grace, in which he played the principal role. It was a secret one and none were present save certain disciples. It was a musical, symbolic slow dance where each step was taken as an accompaniment to some mysterious rhythm of his own consciousness, which seemed to be plunged in a half trance. He moved forward in rhythmic steps, then fell back a somewhat lesser distance, each step, each gesture of the hands, the pose of the hand, all movements were made to harmonize in measured rhythm with the handbeats on a small tabla-drum, the shrill accompaniment of a flute and the twang of a zither. In this way he made a very slow progress in the ceremonial and liturgical dance. Motion and sound seemed to be moving by degrees towards some ultimate emotional event, thus creating a pleasant tension and arousing an exciting expectancy.

“The strange gripping emotion of the classical music, the Master’s solemn exquisitely rhythmic movements now forwards and now backwards, the intense blackness of the night, the encircling tall palm trees which themselves encircled us, the hushed air of expectancy and gravity which pervaded the little group of disciples -- all created an eerie impression at first but a higher one succeeded it. I knew what the participants in the ancient Greek mysteries must have felt.”

[short pause]

AD (quietly): That’s it.

[37¾ second pause, flipping of pages]

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 412-413, quote 391-4, in text searchable version; pp. 391, 393 in original version, AD reading]: “You say that you love your wife. But suppose she passes away, and that you are left alone near her dead body [and] at dead of night. It creates in you not the feeling of love as before but of horror. This shows that before her death you were not extending your love to that inert body-part still lying before you, but only to the Life Principle in it, which seems to have escaped. This “Life Principle” is supposed to be changeless and beyond birth and death. It could only be pure consciousness and love, or the real “I” -- this “I Principle” -- in the form of other objects or persons.

“... You love an object because it gives you pleasure. So it is evident that you love pleasure more than that [AD reads: the] object itself. This pleasure, devoid of the object, is objectless -- and therefore is love itself. All your feelings rise and set in peace. So this peace is the background or substratum of all your feelings, including the feeling of love. It is the nature of the “I Principle” or the Self.”

“1. [AD adds: So] The Self is objectless love itself, or peace.

“2. It [first] gets degraded into love for the self.

“3. [AD adds: Then] This gets further degraded into love for body and objects.

“So, to reach your real centre, the “I Principle,” you have to retrace the whole course from body and objects to the self in the reverse order.

“You love things for yourself. So, you love the self more than anything else.”

[30½ second pause, flipping of pages]

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 416-417, quote 397-1, in text searchable version; p. 397 in original version, AD reading]: “To Know That You Are The Witness And To Be A Witness: are two entirely different things. Do not mix them up. You are always the knower without object. But you need not try to know that you are the knower. Both together are impossible. Your knowership is objectless and can never be objectified. You are always the witness. But you need not deliberately attempt to take the role of a witness. Only take note of the fact that you are always the witness. You are asked to strengthen the thought that you are the knower, in order to counteract the old samskaras that you are the doer, enjoyer, etc., whose substance is effaced, but whose shadows still remain and might misguide you when you are not aware of it.

“You are only to argue in your mind how you are the Absolute Knower always, and repeat this argument over and over again. The time will come when the arguments will become [AD reads: be] unnecessary, and a mere thought will take you to the conclusion. After some more time you will find that, even when you do not think about the Truth, and whether or not you are engaged -- [engaged] in all kinds of activities -- you are Absolute Reality itself, [and] this is the Natural State.

“Witnessing its silent awareness, do not try to make it active in any way. Consciousness never takes any responsibility for proving the existence or the non-existence of an any object.”

[1 minute 38¾ second pause, flipping of pages]

AD: He also has here a running commentary on the *Ashtavakra Gita*. I think I’m going to have it-- I’m going to pull out and put with the-- the one that we just typed out. It’s going to be xeroxed. [19¾ second pause, flipping of pages] Here’s a statement by one of his better students.

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 457-458, quote 439-1, in text searchable version; pp. 439, 441 in original version, AD reading]: “I am Pure Consciousness. [I am.] It is evident that I am. It is the only evidence which does not need any proof. I can deny the body, the senses, the mind, the entire world, but I cannot deny myself. And even if I should commit such a nonsense, there would be always somebody who denies. There would be always “I am.” I am that which cannot be even for a moment thought as non-existent. This is the Sat-aspect [AD reads: And this is the Being aspect] or Existence Absolute, if one can speak about aspects of Pure Consciousness, because the [AD reads: these] three “aspects” of the same are [AD reads: “aspects” are the same] in reality one and indivisible. “I am Consciousness.” Here Consciousness means the Chit-aspect [AD reads: the intelligence] or Knowledge Absolute. “I am” or to Be, is also to know that “I am.” To be Consciousness is to be Knowledge. To be is to know. That which is not I, is its objects. That which is not Consciousness, is its objects. As between I and Consciousness neither of them can be object of the other. Therefore it is clear that I and Consciousness are one and the same. “I am Pure Consciousness”. Consciousness is Pure because it is indivisible, because it is not compound. It has no [AD reads: not] parts and therefore it has nothing outside Itself. There being nothing outside Myself, nothing can leave in Me a mark or impression: Being Pure as I am, I am Happiness Itself... This aspect of Consciousness is Huanda-aspect or Peace Absolute. I am that element, pure and indivisible. One without a second whose Light is the only one which shines by itself and is its own glory. Without Me, nothing is and all that is, is by my Light. I am immutable because I am beyond time. The change is produced within time. Besides producing a change there must be multiplicity. What can be changed if I am without parts, indivisible and completely whole? I have nothing to know because I am Absolute Knowledge. What can I know if outside Myself nothing is? To know something is necessary an object of knowledge, the subject who knows and the art of knowing. I am objectless and I cannot even be called the subject of knowledge. I am the Knowledge itself, beyond both [AD reads: both beyond], subject and object. Besides, to know something, mind is needed and I am beyond mind. I am the Knowledge itself, and Knowledge has nothing to know. I am That which once known, there is nothing more to be known. Because once I have known or “realized” Myself the multiplicity is abolished for ever. I am One without a second and there is never a second to be known. There is nothing than I, the ultimate and only Reality which can only be lived but never well expressed in words, because the words bind, and I have no limits, form [AD reads: forms] or phenomenal expression.”

[17 second pause, flipping of pages]

AD (faint): Well, what else did we bring?

[1 minute 37¼ second pause, flipping of pages]

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, p. 412, quote 391-2, in text searchable version; p. 391 in original version, AD reading]: “Methods of Contemplation To Establish Oneself At The Centre:

“(a) Trying [AD reads: Try] to visualize the interval between two actions, thoughts, feelings, [states, etc.]

“(b) Contemplation of the essence of a thought or a feeling.

“(c) Trying [AD reads: Try] to discover the source of every thought or feeling.

“(d) Examination of the three states and discovering the changeless principle pervading all three.

“(e) Trying [AD reads: Try] to eliminate the “I Principle” from the body, senses and mind, and ultimately finding that they are nothing other than yourself.

“In this last method, you start with the idea that you are the body, senses and mind as manifested, and end with the same idea that you are the body, senses and mind, not as manifested before, but as the background or the reality behind them all. [Or], in other words, you start seeing ignorance in the world, and end seeing Light or Truth in it.

“The only difference between the actions of a layman and those of a Gnanin is that the former, after the actions emphatically claims to have done them himself, and lays his claims for the fruits thereof, but the Gnanin after the deed never claims to be the doer or the enjoyer thereof.”

[40¼ second pause, flipping of pages]

AD: Another way.

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 415-416, quote 395-2, in text searchable version; pp. 395, 397 in original version, AD reading]: “The Different Sadhanas To Be Adopted After Realization For Establishing The Natural State: Take the thought that:

“(a) I am not the body, senses or mind, but pure consciousness alone, as in deep sleep.

“(b) Emphasize the consciousness aspect [AD emphasizes rest of sentence] in all your perceptions.

“(c) You are never a doer, perceiver, thinker, feeler, or enjoyer -- but that you are always the knower in the relative sphere, or that you are consciousness itself in reality. Every one of the activities dissolves [AD emphasizes next two words] in knowledge, which is the Absolute “I”, or knowledge dawns when function expires. So knowing is really no function at all. Thus, you are a knower or a witness. You are explained as the witness from the position of the witness itself. The world appears as mere illusion not affecting you in the least. Take this line of thought for at least some time every day. It establishes you in the natural state in the course of time. [short pause]

“(d) When you are moving about you perceive, think and feel objects. Thoughts, feeling, sense perceptions and actions [are] [AD emphasizes next word] none [of them] [AD adds: are] self-luminous. They require something other than themselves to light them up. This is within the experience of all. [AD adds: And] This is consciousness itself, and this again is your real nature. Therefore, all these activities point to you. [short pause] [AD: Again--]

“(e) After the enjoyment of any pleasure take the thought that, with necessary arguments to prove, it is my real nature of happiness or peace that was expressing itself as the pleasure enjoyed; [AD emphasizes rest of sentence] it was not derived from the object.”

[short pause, flipping of pages]

AD: One more and uh--

[28½ second pause]

AD: And this is a strange one but I'm going to read it.

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, p. 417, quote 397-3, in text searchable version; p. 397 in original version, AD reading]: "Who Takes The Thought That He Is Consciousness? ... Gurunatham replied: [AD reads: He replied-- Atmananda replied:] It is the Ego that takes this thought. The Ego is a mixture of consciousness and the material part. When this Ego takes the particular thought that it is consciousness, the material part drops away, [and] Consciousness shines alone in its own glory. [Thus] the Ego itself gets transformed into pure Consciousness."

[21½ pause, flipping of pages]

AD: There's no in-between for this man.

[38¼ pause, flipping of pages]

PB [Asiatic Notes 4, pp. 422-423, quote 405-1, in text searchable version; p. 405 in original version, AD reading]: "How To Retire To Bed, And To Wake Up: When you go to bed take thought that you are returning to your home to take rest in your own real nature.

"And, waking up, think that you are going to witness the activities of the body, senses and mind, not losing your centre in your real nature."

"Here, happiness is something beyond mental pleasure. It means tracing the source of happiness enjoyed to your real nature. The incessant pursuit of objects of pleasure by man [AD reads: men], and the real source of that pleasure are clearly explained by the simple story of a dog. The dog got a dry bone and began to crunch it hard for blood. This crunching bruised his own gum and a few drops of blood came out. The dog immediately tasted the blood and thought it came from the bone. So he began to crunch the bone harder, [and] more blood came out of his own mouth. This again the dog drank, until at last he became exhausted and left the bone. Exactly similar is the condition of the man who hunts after objects of pleasure, encouraged by the glimpses of pleasure he occasionally enjoys immediately after contact with them. Just like the dog, the man also takes the object to be the source of the pleasure enjoyed, and pursues it with still greater zeal. But the moment he comes to understand aright that it was his own real nature [of happiness] that he was enjoying all along [AD reads: alone] in the name of pleasure, pursuit of objects stops altogether, and he becomes self-centred and [eternally] happy."

AD: Well, that's the kind of man Atmananda was. No in-betweens. You're here, you gotta get right out. Don't waste no time. And we're doing enough of that so-- Let's sit. You want a few minutes to go to the bathroom [one/two words inaudible]

S (faint): Uh-hm.

S (very faint): (Get ready.)

[Audio File 1983 1030a Ends]