

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

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Philosophy

SUBSUBJECTS: Philosophic Mysticism, Glimpse, Ego

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives*.

NOTES:

- PB paras from original WG library volumes Red 5v, 6v, 18v.
- Earlier transcript versions exist.

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1983 12/21 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Philosophy
Readable Edited Transcript

**# A SPIRITUALLY EDUCATED PERSON KNOWS THE TRUTH ABOUT ONESELF,
ONE'S WORLD, AND ONE'S GOD**

[Audio File 1983 1221a Begins]

(Student discussion for 20 minutes, no AD)

PB: "There are three things man needs to know to make him a spiritually educated man: the truth about himself, his world, and his God. The mystic who thinks it is enough to know the first alone and to leave out the last two, is satisfied to be half-educated." (Perspectives p. 257 and 20.4.95)

(3 minute student discussion)

LR: He says 'HIS God' and not God, and from the quotes we read earlier that seems to be the Overself.

HS: Which you would differentiate from his self in that quote?

LR: Because he doesn't say that his self and his God are the same, I would think "his self" is not the Overself and "his God" would be the Overself. Maybe it's just semantics and it's not worth going into that.

AD: No. But you should go into that. You should go into that.

(10 minute student discussion including:)

PC: Another possibility might be that "himself" would be his I AM, his Overself, "his world" would be the World-Idea manifesting within that, and "his God" would be the Absolute as the source of both of those.

PD: It seems to be that Linda was closer to the point because he says HIS God.

PB: "There are three things man needs to know to make him a spiritually educated man: the truth about himself, his world, and his God. The mystic who thinks it is enough to know the first alone and to leave out the last two, is satisfied to be half-educated." (Perspectives p. 257 and 20.4.95 (repeat))

AB: Anthony, would you care to comment on this?

AD: I think it has been said--the truth of the self--that's not capitalized, right? What's the truth about that uncapitalized self? I think somebody said that it was illusory? That it was illusory, that you have to realize the non-existence of the ego? But even with that insight, with that understanding, you're still only one-third of the way. The next thing is to understand the nature of the World-Idea. Then, the third thing is the identification with your I AM, with your God. (inaudible)

RC: What is it about the possession of the first that would make a man a mystic?

AD: Would make a man a mystic? That you can see through the illusory nature of your ego makes you a mystic. I don't think if you're a non-mystic that's available to you. Because that's an initiation, that's a mystical initiation.

LDm: If you see the illusoriness of the ego, doesn't that by implication say that you are seeing from a position other than the ego, which indicates that you're seeing from a higher point of view?

AD: You may have had a glimpse of the fact that the ego is illusory, that it doesn't have a reality, but that doesn't mean that you're established in that standpoint. So you could have a Glimpse wherein the illusory nature of the ego is revealed. And the consequence of that is that from then on you identify with it less and less. But it is a mystical experience. Ordinary people just don't come up with the realization that their ego is illusory. --Unless that 's' was capitalized or something else-- (inaudible)

I can't accept the other thing that he was saying, HIS God-- He's talking about YOUR God, YOUR Overself.

PC: And knowing that is really a whole different thing from knowing the illusoriness of the ego.

AD: Yes.

(AD/RC question clarification)

RC: Then how would you say the middle term, the "his world" is the world that appears as the objective pole presented to the ego. Is he to know that as a false construction by his false ego? Or as an instantiation of the World-Idea?

AS: (He has those) three levels of the individual. The second level is the Witness position. It's a higher position about knowing the falsity of the ego. It's knowing the truth about that World-Idea, the world image, whereas the third one is (inaudible) . The truth about the world . . .

RC/AS/

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1983 1221a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

(RC/LD/other students/= 5 min.)

AS: He's not saying they're sequential there, Andrew, I think he's just distinguishing these three different things that you have to get to know about. Seeing the illusoriness of the ego is still not understanding the nature of the World-Idea.

AD: Because when the nature of the illusory ego is seen, the world that's concomitant with it collapses. It's only now that you can get to know the nature of the World-Idea--after this happens. You can't know the nature of the World-Idea while you're the ego.

So the mystic comes to the realization that both his ego and the world that that ego perceives are illusory. That's the first realization for the mystic, the illusory nature of the ego and the concomitant world. Then the idea of the world that's given to him is what he has to investigate, and investigating that World-Idea he finds out something about the World-Idea. That would be the second level. And the third level would be his I AM, the God within him. I'm just summarizing what people were saying.

EXPERIENCING WORLD-MIND

PB: "The first step is to discover that there is a Presence, a Power, a Life, a Mind, Being, unique, not made or begot, without shape, unseen and unheard, everywhere and always the same. The second step is to discover its relationship to the universe and to oneself." (Perspectives p. 257 and 20.4.133)

(8 minute student discussion)

AD: Could you read that quote again? (Quote reread)

(AD/RS question clarification)

RamS: The first step makes you a mystic and the second step makes you a philosopher. Two steps make you complete. He is talking about a very high level. Realization of Overself first and then from there to go on to become a philosopher. Find out his relationship to the rest of the world and God and everything.

(PD/RS/=1 min.)

AD: Tell me, what do you think is that Being, that Power, and Life, that Mind, that Presence, that he's talking about might be?

RS: The realization of Overself.

(AD/RS question clarification)

AH: I thought it was the realization of Mind.

PD: I thought it was the realization of your Self.

RS: . . .

AD: You think it's Mind, Andrew, and Ram, what did you think?

RS: I think it's Overself, which includes Mind, Being, everything.

AH: . . . When I use the notion Mind, that would include Overself, like universal Mind, or Mind in Itself.

AD: So then you're saying that insofar that the person is the Overself, he can have this realization of the World-Mind.

AH: Not World-Mind, but Mind. Consciousness. Soul.

AD: So would you say that that quote presupposes that you're in that situation?

AH: . . .

AD: No, read the quotation. . . .

(AB reads quote)

AB: Presence, Power, Life, Being & Mind are all capitalized?

AD: Yes.

AB: So, Anthony, were you suggesting that when you experience the Overself, then you're in a position to realize that Life, Power, Being, Mind which is the World-Mind?

AD: Yes, the unique Mind (is present now).

AB: . . .

AD: We would have to say something like this: that the World-Mind, or Mind, the unique Mind, is the same ONE in all Overselves. Or if you want, you could say all Overselves, each and every Overself, is a point within the World-Mind. The being (in the) position of the Overself is where the recognition of this unique Mind can take place. Where else can it take place?

AH: Why have you described it as "World-Mind" rather than "Mind"?

AD: I just accommodated you, I said "unique Mind."

CdA: Isn't it because--

AD: . . . Because he used the word 'Power.' So then the second part of that?

PB: ". . . to discover its relationship to the universe and to oneself." (repeat)

AD: So that would be the next step, then?

AB: You realize this unique Mind. Now you have to find out what this unique Mind has to do with you, and what it has to do with your world.

AD: Yes, primarily what it has to do with the world, that it's the substratum of the world. And then within that you locate your self, self with a small 's.'

JB: How could positioning yourself in the Overself be the first step?

AD: I don't think it's meant chronologically. The only way you can come across the notion of Mind, unique Mind, is when you are situated in the Overself. You certainly can't know of it when you're in the ego.

KD: Could you say again what it is you know when you are in the Overself?

AD: (spoken with much feeling) You become aware of this immense Power, this unique Being, this unfathomable Mind, this shoreless bottomless ocean, the World-Mind or Mind. You won't discover that Mind unless you are situated in the Overself. You can't know anything about that Mind except from the point of view of being identified with the Overself or being in the Overself. "Being in" makes it sound dualistic, but you know what I mean.

KD: You're saying that all those attributes that were described--Power, Life, Being--belong not to the Overself--but are experienced as a result . . .

AD: No, but look at what he says. It's unique. The World-Mind is unique. It's one and the same Mind in ALL Overselves.

KD: That's what I don't understand.

AS: You're saying that the Solar Logos is the knower within all--

AD: Yes, within all Overselves. This is what all unit souls become aware of.

AS: Sometimes he distinguishes these two stages, between Stillness and then he says beyond that there's this Power, there's the experience of Power. In this context, would you say that the Stillness is like being established in that Overself, but then the further stage of the recognition of this Power is of that Solar Logos?

AD: Yes. There's the arising of this mighty Presence, a Presence that suffocates you, and you feel as though all the forces of the universe are converging on you, and you can hardly breathe. And after a while you begin to get a feeling of this Presence. And anyone who has had the experience of the Overself or has gone into that Stillness, not anyone but very often, then this arises, this Presence of Power.

JG: How can you stand it?

AD: You'll even like it. You'll even enjoy it, you'll want more. You could stand it. The ego isn't there. (inaudible) Let's read another one.

MS: This is a whole different order of experience than the three experiences we had associated with the previous quote, you know: seeing the ego as illusory, the Witness position, seeing the I AM, or recognizing the nature of the I AM. It's not like--

AD: Mark, I've mentioned this: I'll mention this again, but I don't read these quotes or aphorisms in any kind of order. I take each one as an aphorism complete in itself. It's like at 5/12 he had Jupiter sextile Mercury. Alright? At 5/13 it's over and that's it. Then at 5/18 he has something else going on, another complete thought comes. That's the way I take these things.

I don't work with consecutiveness or anything like that. Except in certain instances, where you know like he'll speak about for instance--in one quote, for instance he speaks about Huxley becoming a mystic and preferring to be in non-action and he writes a novel called *Raya*(?) where he shows the mystic interfering in state politics and makes a mess out of it. Then the quote following he would say, "Well, he could also have written another novel where he would describe Joan of Arc, and show how because she was a mystic and because she did interfere, she brought about unification of France and etc." So he says you can see two sides. So in two quotes like that I can see them connected. Because there's one quote where he speaks about great immanence and the way Huxley's taken that point of view and the next quote he says, "Well, Huxley could have taken this point of view." Then I can connect those two. But I don't connect aphorisms.

Now what was it you were saying I was going to chop your head off--

LIFE RIPENS: EXPERIENCING THE ILLUSORINESS OF EGO

RC: I have a hard time thinking that seeing the illusoriness of the ego necessarily makes someone a mystic.

AD: Well, I should have qualified that and added "makes him a mystic or a nut!" (laughter)

RC: Or skeptic or a cynic or a nihilist?

AD: No, you become a mystic. Because the whole world collapses on you.

RC: Would you accept that a person could become a nihilist on the basis of that?

AD: No, you don't have that experience of the illusoriness of the ego without the freedom of releasement.

RC: . . . Does it depend on the individual soul's level of evolution whether or not he'll be able to recognize that that sense of release is the truth about himself? Or--

AD: Let me try this way. Let's say you were a native or inhabitant of the Fiji Islands. They have no Sanskrit texts, no mystical literature. You have the experience of the illusoriness of the ego, and the release from that ego, and the lifting of the burden. And then, let's say, it comes back again, and again you think of yourself as the ego. But that interval-- You can't go around asking people, "Well, what does this mean?" because you're living in the Fiji Islands, and all they do is drink coconut (milk) (inaudible).

But I'm going to try to say--perhaps not quite adequately--that the experience is absolutely self-validating and doesn't need a commentary by somebody else, or that you have to read it in a book. Because once that's happened, it inevitably has altered your outlook, your attitude towards life. You may have been a man at that time who believed, let's say, in the material world, that objects exist because sense functioning presents you with them, but after that occasion you'll never accept that, or there'll always be doubts about that.

RC: . . .

AD: I don't see the distinction.

RC: . . .

AD: Because basically what we're saying, when the experience occurs, we're saying that life has reached that level of intelligence, which is Self fulfilling itself. And it doesn't need a text by anyone, and it doesn't need certification from any source outside of yourself, to know that this is the way it is. It will be intrinsic to you as an individual from now on, that the ego is not real, is illusory.

RC: Will it also be intrinsic that the ego is not what I really am?

AD: That's why I say (inaudible)

RC: . . .

AD: To say that "I am not really the ego," we're making the words referring to an experience. To say, "I am not the ego," in the truthful and factual sense that the words are being said, is mysticism. Now there are other approaches that will make a person a mystic. I didn't mean to say that this is the only way you can become a mystic. That's why you have to be careful not to chop any heads around here.

PC: So when a person has that experience, in what sense does he not yet know the truth of the I AM?

AD: Because that's a long, arduous, difficult process, maybe twenty, thirty incarnations yet to go.

(AD/PC question clarification)

PC: Would this mean that the ego has gone through a death of some sort but he is not yet in any kind of union with his higher Self? Is that what you're saying?

AD: It was a temporary glimpse. And for whatever length of time it lasted, whether for five minutes or five months, when it's over, it's over. And it's only the beginning. And it might vary. In some people, it might take one or two incarnations, but I would say the average is pretty long, to achieve the identity with the Overself.

RC: . . .

AD: (inaudible)

AH: . . . We're speaking about the negation of the ego. There's a contradiction between this experience and the ego. After the experience, the ego tries to reclaim what was once its own, and it can't quite do that in the way that it used to.

AD: Yes.

AH: That fact, that the ego no longer has that kind of blind security in its own autonomy leads to this long drawn out process.

AD: Yes. You have to remember that even if no books were ever written, there are no gurus, no teachers, no sages, no texts available, no companions to talk to, and this thing operates. It's a natural process. It could do so, and does so, regardless of whether you have flags flying, books written, or not. This is what I meant when I was speaking about life reaching out through experience to understand itself. And this is independent even of the cultural mores of the environment. This is a natural process. An apple or a pear on a tree ripens naturally. You don't have to go there and read to it, you know, the genesis of the process of its growth, budding, and maturation! (laughter) It just happens. And the pear has no notion that it's Norwegian or Finnish or American, or anything like that.

AH: Some of the mystical experiences that I've read about use the expression "I am not" rather than "I am a grander self." It seems that notion of a grander self is the conclusion of the philosophic work--

AD: Yes, it's a very long drawn out path. But the important thing to understand is that this is a process in nature that's going on. You CAN be born in the Fiji Islands. You've got nobody to talk to. Everybody would be carrying a stone weighing 200 pounds and you wouldn't be carrying any.

(AD/AH question clarification)

AH: What about the example of Brother Lawrence's illumination?

AD: Any example we take will always be in the context of a certain culture, a certain society, nationality, texts that have been written, all these things. I'm saying, wipe away all of this and the process of life understanding itself, reaching maturation, goes on just the same. If there's no Buddhism, no Hinduism, no Platonism, etc., it still goes on.

Now that doesn't mean that they're worthless, that these traditions are worthless. They're not. They carry their own weight, and they're quite useful because they shorten the path somewhat, and they

give us direction and afford a quickening of the pace. But I'm saying that this process would happen just the same.

KD: "That process" referring to life understanding itself?

AD: Yes, life ripening. Life ripens, just like a pear ripens, or an apple, or a banana. They get ripe. If they're in the sun long enough, they get ripe. So very often sometimes people have had so many incarnations that in one of those incarnations they suddenly say, "This is it. No more. I'm not interested. Picture's over. Goodbye."

KD: Then, in other words, it's part of nature itself to have that thought process begin to investigate itself? . . .

AD: In the case of people that are over-satiated with experiences of life, it just cuts off. It reaches a point and just cuts it off. Just turns around, goes in. Because there's no sense looking out there any more. It's the same picture. It's a rerun. Let's try another one.

KD: Life understands that it's empty--just the fullness of life itself leads to its--

AD: --its maturation, yes. You have to watch out that you don't get what they call "rotten ripe." (laughter) Let's try another quote.

PHILOSOPHY KEEPS AND ENLARGES RELIGIOUS WORSHIP AND MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE

PB: "The faith in and the practice of reverential worship into which he was initiated by religion must not be dropped. It is required by philosophy also. Only, he is to correct, purify, and refine it. He is to worship the divine presence in his heart, not some distant remote being, and he is to do so more by an act of concentrated thought and unwavering feeling than by resort to external indirect and physical methods. With the philosopher, as with the devotee, the habit of prayer is a daily one. But whereas he prays with light and heat, the other prays with heat alone. The heart finds in such worship a means of pouring out its deepest feelings of devotion, reverence, humility, and communion before its divine source. Thus we see that philosophy does not annul religious worship, but purifies and preserves what is best in it. It does annul the superstitions, exploitations, and futilities connected with conventional religious worship. In the end philosophy brings the seeker back to religion but not to *a* religion: to the reverence for a supreme power which he had discarded when he discarded the superstitions which had entwined themselves around it. Philosophy is naturally religious and inevitably mystical. Hence it keeps intact and does not break to pieces that which it receives from religion and yoga. It will, of course, receive only their sound fruits, not their bad ones. Philosophic endeavour does not, for instance, disdain religious worship and humble prayer merely because its higher elements transcend them. They are indeed part of such endeavour. But they are not, as with religionists, the whole of it. The mystic must not give up being religious merely because he has become a mystic. In the same way, the philosopher must not give up being both mystical and religious merely because he has become a philosopher. It is vitally important to know this. Philosophy does not supersede religion but keeps it and enlarges it." (Perspectives p. 258 and 20.1.454)

(pause)

AD: (quietly) I don't think we should comment on that.

PB: "Faced with the mystery of his own existence, man finally finds an answer in religion or mysticism. If he adds the mystery of the world's existence, he must look for his complete answer in philosophy." (20.1.405)

PHILOSOPHIC DISCIPLINE LEADS TO CLEAR KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUL

PB: "It is not enough to attain knowledge of the soul; any mystic may do that. It is necessary to attain *clear* knowledge. Only the philosophic mystic may do that. This emphasis on clarity is important. It implies a removal of all the obstructions in feeling, the complexes in mind, and obfuscations in ego which prevent it. When this is done, the aspirant beholds truth as it really is." (Perspectives p. 257 and 20.4.168)

[Audio File 1983 1221a Ends]

[Audio File 1983 1221b Begins]

(10 minute student discussion, including:)

PB: "... emphasis on clarity . . . implies a removal of all the obstructions in feeling, the complexes in mind, and obfuscations in ego . . ." (repeat)

LR: I still have a question about clear knowledge. . . . I'm wondering if there are many ways in which the ego admits to the clear knowledge of the soul, or if that reference to clarity is specific.

(Students)

RS: I don't know if you remember, a couple of years back Anthony read a letter from PB explaining (that). And that letter said, 'The path (inaudible) is just like mountain-climbing; every time you see a peak you think that's the final state. When you reach there, you find it's not so, there's still higher. You keep going up, you reach there, you find there's still higher, you keep going.' . . .

(Students)

AS: Linda, aren't you asking does the clarity come because he's brought in the reason, and the understanding?

LR: I'm asking if that's the only way that--

AS: Or does it mean some deepening of the insight? The first one, when he says he has knowledge of the soul, he doesn't mean a theoretical knowledge, he means he's experienced it. But that's not a CLEAR knowledge. It's not clear, for example, because he hasn't completely gotten rid of the egoism and so on, and he comes back from that and he loses it, so it can't really be clear.

AD: So then he has to go through a philosophic discipline.

AS: So he has to really employ his reason, to clear away all of the obstructions to a full clear knowledge of that.

(Some discussion = 5 min.)

AH: We have to hold the distinction that knowledge of the soul is unique to all other kinds of knowledge, even clear knowledge.

(AD/AH question clarification)

AD: No, you don't hold to that distinction, Andrew. The first experience that you might have of the soul is not clear knowledge. Maybe at later times you might have more understanding of what's going on, but it's not clear. Clear knowledge of the soul requires psychological purification, ontological wisdom and understanding. It requires the whole philosophic discipline. The beginning experience or the first experiences are fitful, and there's a lot of coloration going on.

AS: Like muddy water.

AH: I can't understand how you can have an experience of soul or mind in a partial way. From the point of view of the experience itself, you wouldn't speak of having had insight into partial mind, or dirty mind.

LDm: But to the extent that the ego is involved in any experience, to that extent would an impurity arise.

AH: But that experience is a negation of the ego.

LDm: But going into the experience, there is an ego experiencing presence of mind. In the pure total experience, there's a total negation of the ego, but--

AH: I think I have a tendency to see it in a very absolute sense and that's probably incorrect.

AD: That's your problem, right now. You make it very clear, black and white, but it isn't just like that. As a matter of fact, most people who do have a glimpse, the first time they have a glimpse, are just about as confused after the glimpse as they were before.

(More discussion by students = 5 min.)

AD: Andrew, when you come out after having a glimpse--we're not talking about the glimpse now--but you come out AFTER you have the glimpse, you have knowledge that you have a soul. In that sense, he's using the term 'knowledge.'

AH: I see.

AD: Now, what kind of knowledge do you have?

AH: Knowledge of my absence?

AD: You have knowledge of the soul. What kind of knowledge is that?

AH: Knowledge of my absence.

AD: No, it's not of your absence. That's only one of the aspects of the knowledge that you (had), that the ego wasn't there. But you have had this experience, you come out, and you know you've had this experience. Now you try to understand what is this that you experienced. And you will find out that you're very bewildered. That's not a clear knowledge. In order to clarify and understand what that glimpse of the soul was, when you were identical with the soul, will require a long psychological purification and philosophic discipline. Don't complicate the thing.

AH: This quote is referring to CONCEPTUAL knowledge of the soul.

(AD/AH/AS question clarification)

AD: The way you formulate what happened to you? No. I think it's a little more than conceptual. I mean, if you had a piece of fruit that no one had ever come across, and you ate it, and then you tried to tell me what it was about, I wouldn't say it's a conceptual knowledge. I think there's more than just a concept behind what you're saying. Let's have another one.

THREE STAGES OF PROGRESS ON THE PHILOSOPHIC PATH

PB: "In the first stage of progress we learn to stand aside from the world and to still our thoughts about it. This is the mystical stage. Next, we recognize the world as being but a series of ideas within the mind; this is the mentalist-metaphysical stage. Finally, we return to the world's activity without reacting mentally to its suggestions, working disinterestedly, and knowing always that all is One. This is the philosophical stage." (Perspectives p. 257)

CdA: Is that second stage the experience you described before of the soul having an experience of the World-Mind? . . .

AD: The second step, he says, is when you understand and realize that the nature of the world is an idea--

CdA: --a series.

AD: --is a series of ideas, yes.

CdA: It doesn't sound that way to me. If the first realization is mystical, and the last one is that coming back and being able to live in the world, it sounds like that middle stage is the realization of the World-Mind.

AD: But the quote where he was referring to the World-Idea--he was saying that there is there's a Power, Being. He said the first step is that you recognize it as a Power, a Being. Now you want to equate that with the realization that the everyday life--the recognition that the world is a series of ideas. You want to equate these two.

CdA: I'm asking because he made the last step, both the first and the last step, very high level(s).

AD: But you see, in the other quotation when he says the first step, the recognition of this Power--outside of having the cosmic vision--I would place that experience, of the Presence of a Power, in a trance state or a mystical reverie. I wouldn't place that in the everyday experiences that you have.

(Student discussion = 2 min.)

CdA: I would like to ask what kind of realization the second step is.

AD: He didn't say realization, he said recognition, didn't he?

PB: ". . . Next, we recognize the world as being but a series of ideas within the mind; this is the mentalist-metaphysical stage. Finally, we return to the world's activity without reacting mentally to its suggestions, working disinterestedly and knowing always that all is One. This is the philosophical stage." (repeat)

CdA: Is this the philosophical stage of mysticism?

AD: After the mystical and mentalistic understanding that the world is idea, then the next level is to apply that, to recognize the fact that it's mind.

CdA: Now, is this the application of an ordinary mystic or is this the application of the philosopher-sage?

AD: No. If you're following this path, the philosophic mystic path, then this is the third level of activity or practice.

(A bit more student discussion)

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