

CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
March 14, 1984
PB PARAS; PHILOSOPHY; FALLACY OF DIVINE
IDENTITY

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Philosophy

SUBSUBJECTS: Fallacy of Divine Identity, Overself, Mystical Experience, Plotinus

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives*.
- Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself*
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)
- Vyasa, *Bhagavad Gita*
- Ashtavakra, *Ashtavakra Samhita*

NOTE: Earlier transcript versions exist.

TRANSCRIBED from Audio Cassette Tapes (and also using the original Pat Campbell 1983 transcript as a basis) by HP, et al. in 1993 as part of the set for *Living Wisdom*. V11 version 2018. Reformatted from V11 version by JRM & JF 2019-2020, with Subheads and Table of Contents added by JRM. In 2024, IT updates prefatory matter and footer, replaces tape markers with audio file markers, expands Subsubjects, alters Subheads to make more accurate, completes

Book List, corrects typos/errors, reformats to accord with new conventions. **Readable edited transcript – V14.1r.**

AUDIO FILES: 1984 0314a, 1984 0314b. [Note 1: “Tape” and “Side” refer to original audio cassette tapes that were later digitized into .MP3 Audio Files. Note 2: In 2024, REP Studio separates off Sun Soul class fragment from file b.]

1984 03/14 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Philosophy; Fallacy of Divine Identity
Readable Edited Transcript

THE FALLACY OF DIVINE IDENTITY; UNION WITH THE OVERSELF, NOT THE WORLD-MIND

[Audio File 1984 0314a Begins]

(LR/AS/TS/= 3 min.)

RC: First quote.

PB: "The danger of men's deifying themselves afflicts the mystic path. This mind-madness must first be frankly admitted as a danger, for then only can it be guarded against." (Perspectives p. 342 & 25.1.93) (repeated)

(RC/DB = 3 min, Discussion of self-deification leads to next para.)

PB: "It is a fallacy to think that this displacement of the lower self brings about its complete substitution by the infinite and absolute Deity. This fallacy is an ancient and common one in mystical circles and leads to fantastic declarations of self-deification. If the lower self is displaced, it is not destroyed. It lives on but in strict subordination to the higher one, the Overself, the divine soul of man; it is this latter, not the divine world-principle, which is the true displacing element." (Perspectives p. 344 & 25.2.198) (repeated)

(RC/HS/DB/RC/AD requests rereading of quote/quote reread/= 5 min.)

AD: And the question?

RC: The question seems to be . . . would it be appropriate to say that the ego knows its relationship to the soul, or, if the knowing is going on at a higher level, would it be more appropriate to say that the ego is known from a higher perspective, rather than what the ego knows?

AD: Well, if we take it apart sentence by sentence, I think the first sentence he's saying that that principle which overshadows the man is not the infinite World-Mind, but the soul or the Overself of that individual. I think the second point he was saying was that egotism may die, but the ego remains. However, it is completely subordinated to that Overself. And third, is that the union that takes place is between the man and his higher self. That is the union that takes place. So that someone like Al-Hallajah who declared "I am God" was mistaken, because what he really meant was "I am the Overself." He achieved union with his Overself, not that he achieved union with the infinite World-Mind. I think that is the gist of that.

And the point here was--we remember what we did Friday night (Q: see 03/09/84) when we tried to show that the Soul is in the World-Mind and the World-Mind is in the Soul, that the Soul is the summit of our being and that's as far as we can go. If we remember what we said about that then one should be able to draw the consequences that the utmost that can be achieved is union with his own Overself. Union with the World-Mind--and he'll point this out again and again is a mistaken idea. You CANNOT get united with God in that sense. You cannot unite with the infinite World-Mind. What you may unite with is your own Overself, or what we call that principle in us, the I AM, or whatever term you want to give it. I thought that was the gist of that.

The point here of course is that if in your reading in mystical literature you'll come across these things: among the Christians they'll speak about union with God, and the Sufis of course are the example I just gave you, and the Vedantists who say, "I am Brahman." If we understood what we did Friday night, any such declaration is unphilosophic.

It's easy to understand, because under such a condition, one does feel that he is God. If the experience is authentic, one does feel that he is God; there's no denying that. But that's a misinterpretation. The point here is that the highest that we can go is to the very summit of our own being, which is the Soul, the unity of the Soul.

MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE WITH AND WITHOUT IMAGES

LR: Are all images about the unification of being, given by the individual's own subconscious? . . .

AD: They'll all be given to you by your own mind. Any kind of images-- Even the penultimate stage, the images will be coming from within your own mind.

LR: And when you say "your own mind," what accounts for the fact that so many of the mystics or saints that you read have kind of identical visions?

AD: I wasn't aware of that, Linda, I mean the Buddhist or the Vedantist doesn't have images of himself as Christ. But if, let's say, we're speaking about Christian mystics, generally the unification would be with Christ, with that principle. That's because their mind is conditioned in the sense that the cultural context within which they study these things, and their mind's been imbued with that.

But you have to remember that there's a kind of a rarification or etherealization of the imagination that takes place in those states. That is, it's not the imagination like, you know, when you sit down and you have fantasies about something; these are very ethereal images. They do sometimes suggest that they're coming from some other plane of existence, but they're not; it is because the imagination is so refined and so subtle, and also of course that you're getting the flavor or the quality of the mind itself that you begin to think that there's some reality to it. But ultimately they're derived from the past of the-- (Q: Anthony is interrupted at this point.)

LR: I'm thinking of accounts of visitations by sages. (AD/LR question clarification) It's very much clearer to say it's always the Overself; it can never be outside of your Overself. The images take many forms, but it's always the higher self. You read about these experiences where so and so was visited by such and such a sage, or Ramana came and felt the presence and how would one distinguish those kinds of images (of visitations by a sage) from--

AD: I'm very skeptical about those things. A visitation would be the sheer presence; it wouldn't be an image. You would have an awareness of the BEING of the entity. But as soon as they bring in images, they're going to fall back on the cultural mores of their, you know, particular locality.

BetsyA: . . . Even when the images appear as very archetypal, very different from anything you'd normally experience as your imagination, they would come from the individual's past, not from another plane? It's totally within the individual?

AD: Yes. It's within the individual. They're images; you're making them. You're having images of angels, with two big wings, and archangels, and whatnot. The experience of an archangel wouldn't be a

picture of a man with two wings. It would be an electrifying presence. You wouldn't see anything. After that, you might see something, but that's because the mind gets to work on it.

(AD/RC question clarification)

RC: Are you saying the presence itself is also delivered to the individual by the Overself?

AD: Yes.

RC: That electrifying presence itself?

AD: Yes. Even, for instance, if someone were to speak about a visitation of the World-Mind, the presence of the World-Mind, it would come through his Overself. That means it would have--if it's a pure visitation, then the assumption here I would make would be that the person's identified with the Overself and has direct perception or, what we might say, Knowing-Being without any images. But once you descend and start coming down the ladder and start speaking about what happened to you, the mind's going to get into the act.

BA: . . . When an image is a symbol explaining a universal phenomenon which was not consciously known to the person having the vision at the time, how did that knowledge reside in the individual in a symbolic form? Is that from the past understanding?

AD: I don't know if I followed you. You're asking me how--that there is a formulation of some principles that govern phenomena, and that this formulation is something you're unaware of that the mind is presenting you with? Is that what you're saying? I'm not sure.

BA: Yes. In a symbolic form, which afterwards you understand (inaudible) symbol is a known symbol to man. Like you see it afterwards in books and things like that. But when you've seen it before you knew what it was, and then it would be presented with its meaning and it would be, it would have to do with universal images. Where does that reside, I mean where does that come from that knowledge? (Paraphrase = "Symbol is presented with its universal meaning--where did that come from?")

AD: Well, there could be a mixture here in what you're speaking about. It could be a mixture in the sense that, on the one hand, you're speaking about the mind, which is a storehouse of images. Images come from the mind. All that the mind has ever experienced, it stores away, and these images are available to it. And in certain cases, for instance, there are--under, let's say, like certain psychological examples, persons throw up images and symbols which they never even saw, but which is portraying some phenomenon which is going on within them. And in this case we could say, well, that it is the individual who is presenting to himself--or the mind of this individual is presenting to itself--through the use of the intermediary of images, an understanding--its understanding of the way it sees things.

Now, when there are some truths that are being enunciated--spiritual or universal laws, laws that regard to manifestation, things like that--then you have a mixture. You have, on the one hand, the Overself operating, delivering the spiritual truth, but on the other hand, the individual supplying the images through which the Overself can present itself to the individual. So it would require, you know, an analysis of the individual experience that you're speaking of. It wouldn't be possible to make a general rule about these things.

You could read, for instance, some of Swedenborg's experiences, and I think you'll walk away amused. And yet he was an extraordinarily brilliant man, a scientist; he understood many of these things in a scientific way. But nonetheless, when the mind worked and delivered some of these pictures, he himself even had to laugh at them. So it depends on the individual.

You do not exhaust the limits of the mind by what you consciously understand of mentation.

I think it was Jung who very often was able to diagnose the kind of illness a patient was suffering by the kind of imagery, images of different animals, that would appear under analysis. And he would know, roughly, what the person was suffering from. Now, the individual had no idea that the image of a certain animal or a certain insect represented a certain illness, he had no idea; but the mind nonetheless presented it, and the analyst was capable of reading it. There again, I think, you do have to go by individual cases.

I think one of the things that we have begun to notice in an analysis of the astrological chart when we get to the fundamental ideas that in their totality constitute what we're calling John Smith or John Doe, (we/you) begin to see that the ideas will reveal themselves or manifest themselves through the person's writings or work, whatever it may be, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER. It must do so, because that's what is being manifested is the Ideas. (Q: Ideas capitalized in PC transcription.)

RC: It seems that the point so far is that whatever's going on in the individual you trace that to Overself and not to World-Mind.

AD: But remember, the point we made was that it's possible, like in the case of PB, one could have a visitation, (of the) World-Mind, but it will be through his Overself. It must be through his Overself.

RC: Does this . . . say something about the difference in, first the essential nature and then second the definition of these terms is the way that PB uses them is that the Overself DOES bear a relation to the individual unit of life, whereas World-Mind as it's used isn't characterized by relationships to individuals, that it's essentially operating in a super-individual mode. (pause)

AD: It's really complex.

RC: Next quote.

THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING THE DOCTRINE ALIVE

PB: "This condition is commonly said to be nothing less than "union with God." What is really attained is the higher self, the ray of the divine sun reflected in man, the immortal soul in fact--God Himself being forever utterly beyond man's finite capacity to comprehend. However the mystical experience is an authentic one and the conflict between interpretations does not dissolve its authenticity." (Perspectives p. 343 & 25.1.72)

(HE/RC = 2 min.)

CdA: . . . If a well-advanced mystic was not ever given this doctrine, if this was not presented to the ego's understanding, would the discrimination of these realms of the Overself and the World-Mind be possible?

AD: I don't know, frankly. The actual experience that some people may have is so absolutely overwhelming and inundating that you can't think of this as being anything BUT God. And it certainly is an error which in a sense is justifiable, because of the grandeur, the sublimity of it all.

Evidently, one of the reasons why the tradition has to be kept alive is to keep, you know, a knowledge of the various possibilities that are contained--in other words, that there is the possibility of union with your higher self and then the possibility of knowing more about the World-Mind, in the sense that you can make contact with it, or it visits you--something like that. But I don't know if a person without any background, without a tradition to guide him and help him, I don't know if he would be able to distinguish. As a matter of fact, the tendency is, on the part of most mystics, to say "this is it, this is the end, there's nothing further." (inaudible) As a matter of fact, you can hardly speak to those people, and you dare not tell them that they're not God.

CdA: But (inaudible) it seems that this particular doctrine, with such fine discrimination between these different mystical states is not really in that many traditions.

AD: Yes, but it's always appearing. I have no doubt, for instance, that Plotinus reappeared for that purpose: to keep it alive. And I'm quite sure that that's happened all over the world: that these very exceptional people every now and then re-appear and annunciate or announce the doctrine, and deliver all the subtle points about the doctrine, and then go back to their star and say, "That's enough of this!"

But even very advanced mystics or sages are known to have gone to others to confirm their enlightenment.

CdA: When you say "to confirm their enlightenment," do you mean union with their Overself?

AD: Well, how far they've gone. On any level, how far they've gone. So you may not have reached the ultimate, and the sage will inform you of that.

CONTACT WITH THE INTELLECTUAL-PRINCIPLE WITHIN THE SOUL

PB: "Philosophy rejects decisively all those Vedantic pantheistic notions and Western mystical naïvetés which would deify man and identify him with God. It asserts that the phrases in which these beliefs are embodied, such as the Indian "That thou art," the Persian "I am God," and the medieval European "union with God," are exaggerations of the truth, which is that God is immanent in us, that through realization of our higher self we become more *like* God, but that God never ceases to be the Unattainable, the Incomprehensible." (Perspectives p. 342 & 25.1.150)

(Conversations about subordination, mysteries, knowing and unknowing, traditionalists. Participants:

DB/RC: Does the Overself have conscious awareness? relationship with World-Mind? Participants: AB and RC. TS tells story about "missing" a train with PB and going the "wrong" direction on the next train, and the sun.) (Q: Tape turned during Tim's PB anecdote)

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1984 0314a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

TS: But another thing that has been striking me the last couple of days is the memory of PB speaking about the World-Mind. Whenever he spoke of the World-Mind--I'd ask the question and we'd talk about categories 26, 27, and 28--there was such an egoless humility, such an overwhelming presence and reverence in the way in which he spoke--with barely expressible devotion. It was, made one realize how

flagrant our conceptual use of that is. When the sage is reluctant to speak about it seems we haven't . . .
(fades too much to hear)

(AH/RC/TS/RC/= 6 min approx.)

MB: . . . Leaving the person out for the time being, if that may be allowed, can you say anything more about what the relationship of Overself is (to) the World-Mind? Can you speak of it as an identity or would you leave it just saying that is World-Mind immanent in the Overself?

(RC/TS/RC/TS/)

MB: The reason I was asking about--if we could refresh our memory on the relationship between the Overself and the World-Mind is because these quotes talk about the relationship of the INDIVIDUAL and the World-Mind, and the quotes are talking about how the individual cannot be identified with the World-Mind but the individual can identify himself with the Overself, at least--

RC: He can achieve union.

MB: He can achieve union with the Overself and yet he cannot achieve union with the World-Mind and in the quotes within this quote that you read "That thou art," "I am God" and "union with God."-- it's possible in other contexts to interpret those quotes as referring to the highest part of Overself achieving some kind of union with the World-Mind.

RC: . . . But that highest part of Overself doesn't have to achieve anything. Whatever its relation to the other two hypostases are, it seems to be an unchanging one.

MB: Well, that's ok. Whether or not it has to achieve it, whatever that relation is, that's why I was asking the question. You see what I mean? Whether or not it's something that's achievable or something that's permanently THERE, it is conceivable to apply these quotes to that level and would that be correct, I don't know.

But what PB is saying here at any rate is that it's not correct to say that the human being as HUMAN can achieve unity or union with the World-Mind.

RC: He says PB is rejecting decisively anything that would deify man and identify him with God.

MB: "Man." But we're not here talking about the highest part of the Overself.

(PC/MB/)

AD: What has to be understood here, Myra, is what we spoke about Friday: that the Intellectual-Principle is within the Soul. It's with THAT Intellectual-Principle that you can speak about visitation or union with the Intellectual-Principle or the World-Mind. That's what you are talking about. That's why it's so important to understand this concept of the Overself.

MB: But when you use the term 'visitation,' you're referring to a particular instance that takes place within a certain time sequence, in other words, within a human life, a visitation can take place. You're not necessarily referring to an eternal state of identity.

AD: I don't see what your point is. The point I was making was that the World-Mind is in the Overself; the Overself is in the World-Mind. When a person achieves union with his Overself, alright-- or let me put it this way, when the Overself working through a person reaches an understanding of the World-Mind as within him, and he seeks out that Intellectual-Principle which is within the Soul, this is as far as it can go. It doesn't contact, it doesn't come into the World-Mind; it doesn't go into the World-Mind, Intellectual-Principle, or the Hypostasis beyond the Soul. But the Hypostasis of Intellectual-Principle which is within the Soul is what it has union with. Go over your notes on Friday night.

MB: Is it correct to say that Intellectual-Principle is in turn in some kind of permanent relationship with its higher?

AD: Try again.

MB: That Intellectual-Principle within the Soul is in turn related in some way to ITS higher principle--

AD: Yes.

MB: And that's sort of what I was asking about, because the contact that the human has with that Intellectual-Principle is intermittent; a "visitation" from the point of view of the human.

AD: Yes, it's temporary.

MB: But from the point of view of that principle, there's some kind of eternal relationship that it has, if 'relationship' is the right word.

AD: Yes.

(MB/RC/LR/= 1 min.)

PB: "If the claim of complete merger is valid, if the individual self really disappears in the attainment of Divine Consciousness, of whom then was this same self aware in the experience of attainment? No--it is only the lower personal self that is transcended; the higher spiritual individuality is not." (Perspectives p. 342 & 25.2.210)

(Student discussion, mostly on the issue of individuality = approx. 30 min. RC/AC/MB/AH/RC (para above reread))

OVERSELF AS ONE AND MANY; EVOLUTION OF THE WITNESS-I

PB: "The unit of mind is differentiated out and undergoes its long evolution through numerous changes of state, not to merge so utterly in its source again as to be virtually annihilated, but to be consciously harmonized with that source whilst yet retaining its individuality." (Perspectives p. 342 & 25.2.204)

(DB/RC/DB/RC/LR/RG/PC/JL/TS/CdA/PB: "The unit of mind" reread/AH/MB/)

AD: I would've asked PB this question if I was in Tim's place, and that was something like this: In the realm of Being, I experience your bliss. You experience my bliss. How many numerically distinct entities are here?

RC: 'Numerically' becomes a really hot word.

AD: Yes. Is it one, or is it many? If you say “one,” then how can you speak about my bliss and your bliss?

RC: But suppose the reply would be something like, “Number would not be operative at that level.”

AD: Aha, but we’re not speaking of number quantitatively. We’re speaking of number essentially, number in the sense that you’re speaking about ontic beings; you’re speaking about authentic realities. Now, how would you answer?

RC: How many numerically distinct?

AD: Yes.

RC: It would seem to be at least two.

AD: Is Being one? Then why not leave the question up in the air rather than think it’s answered?

RC: . . .

AD: Well, I know it’s a question that preoccupies Dickie.

Why do people BALK at infinitude of Souls? Why do they get scared of that? In the experience, for instance, of the presence of Ramana, when PB was in the state of Being, wasn’t it Ramana he was experiencing, the Being of Ramana? Not the Being of Ashtavakra, not the Being of Shankaracharya. You think about it.

PB: “The unit of mind is differentiated out and undergoes its long evolution through numerous changes of state, not to merge so utterly in its source again as to be virtually annihilated, but to be consciously harmonized with that source whilst yet retaining its individuality.” (Perspectives p. 342 & 25.2.204) (Para read during previous student discussion, not here)

AD: And the other quotation, here I think he’s simply saying that the Overself sends forth from itself its progeny, and that progeny will eventually learn to be in harmony with the Overself and work with the Overself. I don’t see any difficulty in that other quote but maybe I didn’t hear it. So, can we try for a third?

PB: “The unit of mind is differentiated out and undergoes its long evolution through numerous changes of state, not to merge so utterly in its source again . . .”

AD: In other words, there he’s saying that there would be no sense in the transcendent Overself which is beyond all relationships to project forth from itself this entity which is part of itself and have it evolve through the whole of the World-Idea and then reabsorb it. He himself would object to that, right? Alright, so then?

PB: “. . . but to be consciously harmonized with that source . . .”

AD: So then this entity which is projected from the Overself has to eventually learn to work in cooperation with this higher self. And of course, that would mean ultimately with the World-Mind.

PB: “. . . whilst yet retaining its individuality.”

AH: Is the “higher individuality” the Overself?

AD: Well, he does use it like that, but over here, I think by ‘individuality’ he means the Witness-I. In other words, the Overself projects this entity, which evolves through all the kingdoms of Nature, achieves a certain status in the sense that it has a certain ontological expediency, if I could coin a phrase, and that is what, so to speak, lives in the world, or has its becoming in the world, alright, and learns to cooperate with or work in harmony with his own Overself. But (in cooperating with/= PC transcript, not on tape) his own Overself, which is, let’s say, a particle of the World-Mind, he would be also cooperating with the World-Idea. I don’t see any difficulty in that quote. Sooner or later you’re going to learn to cooperate with your own higher Self, which is already cooperating with the World-Mind.

(AH/AD question clarification)

AH: There seems to be a problem as to how to delineate the limits of the lower self. (= paraphrase from PC transcript)

AD: Well, I’m only going by this quote, Andrew, and in this quote it seems very obvious that what he’s calling the emanant or the sequent or the progeny of the Overself, that that’s what he’s calling your individuality. In other words, the Witness-I has a certain kind of individuality. That’s where we can speak about historicity. But I can’t see how we can speak about historicity in terms of relationship to a transcendent Being such as the Overself is.

AH: . . . Would the Witness-I be a lesser individual than the true Self?

AD: Yes.

AH: So it would be possible to understand the lower self as including the Witness-I in relation to its prior, which is the true individual?

AD: Yes. That’s the way I’d understand it, because I think of the Overself as individual; I think of it both: as one, and many. And I’m not going to budge from that definition; otherwise I’m going to be involved in a lot of difficulties later on. Let’s try another one.

[Audio File 1984 0314a Ends]

[Audio File 1984 0314b Begins]

IS MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE ONE POSSIBLE

RC: But just in terms of using the word “higher individuality,” there is stuff on that.

PB: “No mortal may penetrate the mystery of the ultimate mind in its own nature--which means in its static inactive being. The Godhead is not only beyond human conception but also beyond mystic perception. But Mind in its active dynamic state, that is, the World-Mind, and rather its ray in us called the Overself, *is* within range of human perception, communion, and even union. It is this that the mystic really finds when he believes that he has found God.” (Perspectives p. 343 & 25.1.71)

AD: That’s an easy one. (laughter) (pause)

(MB/DB/PB: “The Godhead . . . even union.”)

AD: What do you think, Dickie?

Can the Overself have a mystic perception of the One according to this remark?

RG: Not and remain human.

AD: He says “the Overself,” doesn’t he?

RG: No mortal, “no mortal.”

AD: Right after that?

PB: “No mortal may penetrate the mystery of the ultimate mind in its own nature--which means in its static inactive being. The Godhead is not only beyond human conception but also beyond mystic perception. . . .” (Perspectives p. 343 & 25.1.71)

AD: What does he mean, “beyond mystic perception”?

RC: He follows up by saying here, but the Overself “*is within range of human perception, communion, and even union.*”

AD: In other words, the Overself, I can reach the Overself.

RC: And that reaching of the Overself, I think, would be characterized, I think as a kind of mystic perception.

AD: I thought what he meant there was that I can have a mystic perception of the Overself and even more, let’s say union with it. But in what way does that illuminate the problem: does it have a perception of the One?

JfL: It couldn’t have a perception because there’d be nothing to perceive or apprehend--

AD: I’m not using the word perception in the sense that it’s something you can taste, touch.

RG: PB does seem to differentiate the One in its active and its passive mode in this quote. In its passive mode, there’s no possibility of directly apprehending it. But maybe in its active mode . . .

AD: As the Intellectual, yes . . .

RG: The Overself can have some experience of it.

(DB: Para discusses what is available to unit life./ AH: expresses confusion of giving human qualities to the Overself, i.e., how can the Overself experience, know, etc. Discussion involves RG, DB, TS, AB.)

AH: . . . Anthony, did you have a question for us?

AD: If this was so, what he says here, then when Plotinus speaks about identity or union or the supreme experience of the One itself, that would be wrong.

LR: Haven’t you said that it’s not the HUMAN that can have that experience?

AD: Yes, but that’s not the point.

LR: But he says, “no mortal.”

AD: Yes. I'm speaking about the Oversoul. Can the Overself have the experience of the supreme identity with the One? That's what it comes to.

CdA: In the past, when you've referred to this, you've referred to it as a revelation, not as experience or not as any act on the side of the Soul itself.

AD: That was in regard to some of the remarks he makes about the One.

CdA: . . .

AD: We did speak about the way Plotinus would conceive about that identity or the supreme experience. We did speak about it Friday. I'm just curious.

CdA: If I understood what you were saying Friday night, . . . it was through tracing that life essence that the One of that life essence was reached, and that life essence was not different than the One itself, but it was the way that the One itself was within the Soul.

AD: Yes. So Plotinus would then disagree with that, wouldn't he?

RC: Well, it would seem that if that experience could be formulated as-- that the life becomes self-gnostic as purely, simply life, that that would not be an experience that any mortal would have.

AD: We're not talking about the mortal. We're talking about the Soul.

RC: . . . If what is experienced is the "wellspring of life," then what are we saying is being added to that life that wasn't present in it prior to that being an experience? It seems that some sort of knowing has been added, that somehow that life has become self-gnostic.

AD: What has been added? Speaking about the Supreme, Plotinus' reference here is to the supreme identity with the One itself. Now either we misunderstand Plotinus, or we misunderstand PB. But there is the notion that Plotinus was speaking about union with the unity of the Soul; that was one possibility. And the other possibility is that he was speaking about unity with the One itself. Most commentators take for granted that he's speaking about the unity with the summit of the Soul, but he makes very clear references to the fact that he's speaking about the One itself--not the unity of the Soul. He makes that very clear. Well, I didn't want to get into the easy quotes.

RG: . . . After the mortal reaches the summit of the Soul what the summit of the Soul then has access to is left open. That doesn't seem to be revealed in the quote.

AD: Alright, let's read it once more; it's one of the easy quotes.

PB: "No mortal may penetrate the mystery of the ultimate mind in its own nature--which means in its static inactive being. . . ." (repeat)

AD: In other words, I, the I, this I cannot know the One in itself.

PB: ". . . The Godhead is not only beyond human conception but also beyond mystic perception. But Mind in its active dynamic state, that is, the World-Mind, and rather its ray in us called the Overself, is within range of human perception, communion, and even union." (Perspectives p. 343 & 25.1.71)

AD: There, what is he saying? He's saying that I could be in communion with the World-Mind. A mortal could be in union with a ray of the World-Mind which is the Overself.

RG: . . .

AD: So if we took a person, anyone--no, not anyone--someone like Gandhi for instance, would you say that he always felt the presence of the World-Mind guiding him? I would think so. He's guided by it, so that (Gandhi/down here) as a mortal he felt this presence and the direction that was offered. Not only the presence, but the actual guidance of the World-Mind as to how to handle certain problems, how to work them out. So over here we're at the level where we're speaking about a mortal feeling the presence of the World-Mind in his daily life, and not just in the closet hours, but in his daily life he feels the presence of the World-Mind; naturally, it is through his own Overself. Yeah. OK.

PB: “. . . It is this that the mystic really finds when he believes that he has found God.”

AD: How would you go with that?

RC: This ray of the World-Mind, or the World-Mind as operative in this individual, is what he calls “God.”

AD: Yes. So then I think Dickie's right. He leaves that question unanswered and doesn't go into it. That would be interesting, wouldn't it?

RC: That is quite a question. Because speaking of it in terms of experience, rather than in terms of principle, it really makes a problem.

AD: Alright, Randy, give us another easy one.

THE SAGE IS NOT OMNISCIENT; IMPORTANCE OF THE OVERSELF CONCEPT

PB: “God, the World-Mind, knows all things in an eternal present at once. No mystic has ever claimed, no mystic has ever dared to claim, such total knowledge. Most mystics have, however, claimed union with God. If this be true, then quite clearly they can have had only a fragmentary, not a full union.

“Philosophy, being more precise in its statements, avers that they have really achieved union not with God, but with something Godlike--the soul.” (Perspectives p. 343 & 25.1.74)

(first sentence of above PB para repeated/DB/RC/BS/= 2 min.)

AD: Remember where, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna opened his mouth, and Arjuna saw worlds upon worlds? Remember that? That was the cosmic vision of everything that was going on at that time. And Arjuna told him, “Please, close your mouth; I can't stand it!” That was just a fragmentary vision of the cosmic vision; it lasted a few moments. And it's only given to one or two persons a century to have that kind of experience. But imagine the World-Mind, alright, that has that knowledge CONTINUOUSLY, no beginning, no end; all of it is included within it. Now, when a mystic claims that he's achieved union with the Divine Mind, does he have that knowledge? Does he have anything near that knowledge?

He's just bringing up the fallacy of this notion that a person can be identified with the World-Mind, because then you would be in possession of that infinite knowledge. And even the sage, very often, you'll ask him something and maybe five years later the truth of his answer will come out. But if you ask

him enough questions, you'll see that there'll be times when he won't answer you, and there'll be times when he'll just disregard what you're talking about. He's not omniscient--the sage. He may be a mouthpiece for the World-Mind, but he doesn't have that omniscient knowledge. So when they use the word 'omniscience' in a lot of these texts, take it with a grain of salt.

LD: . . . PB seems to keep pounding at the idea that there's this unbridgeable chasm between the Soul and God. Even in this quote he seems to be saying that there's somewhat of an essential difference between them. If you maintain this, how can you get back to a non-dual position? . . .

AD: Well, Louis, right now my concern is not so much with the non-dual position, that ultimately and finally there's only Absolute Mind. My concern isn't that right now. My concern right now is much more with driving this concept home, the concept of the Overself, the unitary character of the ultimate intellectual Being that you really are. That's right now my concern. I could answer that, but it would take a bit of time; I'd rather not get into that right now. I'll do it in Plotinus, ok, because he starts out with the One or Absolute Mind. Everything hierarchically emanates from it. Or you could use another metaphor: everything is within it; the differentiations within pure Intelligence are still differentiations within Intelligence.

But right now, this is the important concept, because I think you'll find that in most mystical literature and most philosophic mystical literature that this is the key concept that is NOT understood, the concept of the Soul. He calls it the Oversoul, the Overself, and that concept really has to be understood. And the nature--something about the nature and content of that Overself so that the-- let's say many of the quotes here are really for advanced mystics, mystics who are having experiences and cannot distinguish and understand that they're not experiencing Absolute Mind, but they're experiencing their Soul, which is godlike.

Don't underestimate this experience of the Overself. It is godlike. It's utterly shattering. So I don't want to underestimate that, but at the same time I do want to make this distinction. And I think you'll find that if you read some of the best writers on the subject that this concept is not available. You won't find it. And so, because of the lack of this knowledge, they will immediately assume that when they have this kind of experience they're identified with God. And then the consequences of that is a philosophy which is, you know, mistaken and could misguide the person. So when Al-Hallajah went around speaking and saying, "I am God," it's inevitable that they were going to crucify him, burn him at the stake for saying things like that. Now, I'm not justifying them, but there was something in them which said, "This man is wrong." Because Al-Ghazali, for instance, enunciated the doctrine of the unique, unknowable Godhead and made that very clear. And he wouldn't raise a hand to help Al-Hallajah.

LDm: Mystical literature includes the *Ashtavakra Samhita*, Samkara, and they seem to go to the other side of the fence . . .

AD: There you're asking me how do you understand the *Ashtavakra* and how do I understand it. That's why I don't want to get into the question now. But I'm simply going to have to repeat myself. Understand this concept because it is worth all the effort that will be required. Understand this concept.

LDm: One more thing on this quote--this distinction he's talking about, there is an essential identity. He goes into it in the *Wisdom* that the Overself and the World-Mind are ESSENTIALLY the same--their only difference is in power . . .

AD: He points out that the experience of the Overself you do get something of the flavor of what the World-Mind is. You could get something of the grandeur, flavor, but NOTHING of the fullness, the infinite sublimity. You don't get any of that. You can't. You can only receive as much of an illumination as you're prepared for. (inaudible)

Again, like I'm saying, these are very subtle distinctions that will exist only for a very advanced mystic. When a mystic has these experiences, he has no safeguards because of the absolutely, overwhelming inundation that takes place. You can't help but coming out saying, "I'm God; I'm God; I'm God; I'm God." You can't believe otherwise, either.

CdA: Wouldn't you include the doctrines of annihilation and absorption in this lack of understanding of the Soul? . . . (= paraphrase)

AD: Yes, definitely.

CdA: That is primary in those doctrines.

AD: Yes, because, you see, strange things happen in the development of mystical philosophy. One school will make a certain effort, will have an effort, towards a certain point; and they'll elaborate that point to the point of nausea. So finally when the Buddhists get finished with the doctrine that there is no ego, you're still left with the fact that you've got sixty years of living with it, or seventy years, or whatever you have to do. And that this ego, so to speak, is a progressive entity, a karmic stream, a life which is continuous, and you have to deal with that problem in these other words that they're using, rather than using the word 'ego.' See what I'm getting at?

So the consequence of that would be, fundamentally, to have a mistaken notion about the ego, a mistaken notion about the ego can be a disaster if, let's say, he's following a spiritual path. The experiences that come to you, you're going to negate--"they only belong to an illusory ego." Whereas the whole point and purpose of your development is through the World-Idea, and to call them illusory doesn't make sense. To say the ego's going to be absorbed or is going to be, you know, annihilated either of these things are not going to answer a very fundamental question. So it's worthwhile to grasp this concept.

LD: These concepts . . . are not metaphysical concepts, are they, but are from our point of view? . . . This is from a very contingent point of view.

AD: Louis, I must disagree with that point of view, because to understand the nature of the progressive entity, that entity which the Soul sends forth, which will not be dissolved or absorbed, I consider that a metaphysical principle. And the fact that we don't grasp that will lead to metaphysical absurdities. I DO regard it as a metaphysical point of view. Guenon may refer to it as 'contingent,' but I don't. How could it be contingent? Let's say perpetual.

RC: It could only be contingent if you conceive of the Overself as ONLY transcendent . . .

AD: Well, if we looked up the word 'contingent,' what would it mean? It could be, doesn't have to be. There's no necessity involved. But if that were so, then you would say that there is no necessity on the part of the Overself to project part of itself, the re-embodying Soul. Is that true? So how contingent is it?

You see why I want you to understand this concept? If you're going to deal with some of the really brilliant intellectual minds of our time, you're going to have to be able to discern among all this

writing that's coming out how much of it is true, what part of it is true, what isn't true. You're going to have to learn to do that for yourself. Sooner or later, you're going to have to say, "I've got to understand this for myself." And then, of course, you take these people, you read them, you study them, what they have to say. Ultimately, you've got to think it out for yourself. You get to a state where, for instance, I'll pick up a book, read it, "Hmm. That's interesting." But I don't HAVE to pick it up.

We have time for one more. One more easy quote.

THE BEAUTY OF THE DOCTRINE

PB: "There is some kind of a distinction between his higher individuality and the Universal Infinite out of which it is rayed, whatever the Vedantins may say. And this distinction remains in his highest mystical state, which is not one of total absorption and utter destruction of this individuality but the mergence of its own will in the universal will, the closest intimacy of its own being with the universal being."

(Perspectives p. 342 & 25.2.200)

AD: There's not only precision and accuracy here, but there's beauty in what he's saying.

(para reread, and a few student comments)

AD: You see the doctrine has to be also beautiful. It can't be only good and true; it must be beautiful. But that's the Greek in me. Thank you.

[Audio File 1984 0314b Ends]