

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

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Egotism, Negatives, Self-will, Thought/Thinking, Revulsion, Surrender, Mystical Death

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BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives* [*Persp.*].
- D.T. Suzuki (tr.), *The Lankavatara Sutra: A Mahayana Text*

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1984 03/28 at Wisdom's Goldenrod
PB Paras; Ego; Negatives
Readable Edited Transcript

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN TRUE AND COUNTERFEIT ILLUMINATION; THE EGO CAN TAKE YOU OFF THE PATH

[Audio File 1984 0328a Begins]

RC: Ok well this will just be entry--entry level negatives . . . Is that ok with you? Would anything else be better?

AD: The ego.

RC: The ego. Ok.

AD: But that too deals with the ego.

RC: Ok.

(Q: quotes read)

PB: "The ego's interference shows itself in practical life no less than in mystical life. Under its influence, people create a false and favourable mental picture of a situation or of a person. They then expect one or the other to yield results that by their very nature could not be yielded. This leads to disappointment and unhappiness within themselves. Or the same people create a false but unfavorable picture and then severely criticize another for faults which do not exist outside the picture itself. This leads to disharmony and friction with others. From this simple instance we may see that the elimination of egotistic interference--a goal that philosophical discipline sets for itself--is not merely a theoretical affair for dreamers or hermits with nothing else to do, but is a practical affair promising great practical benefits for everyone who has to live or work in the world. The charge that philosophy is useless can only be made by those who have failed to inform themselves sufficiently about it." (11.2.11) (Para reread)

PB: "The root of all the trouble is not man's wickedness or animality or cunning greedy mind. It is his very I-ness, for all those other evils grow out of it. It is his own ego. Here is the extraordinary and baffling self-contradiction of the human situation. It is man's individual existence which brings him suffering and yet it is this very existence which he holds as dear as life to him!" (11.2.22//Persp. p. 139) (Para reread, then student discussion)

PB: "The ego not only obligingly provides him with a spiritual path to keep him busy for several years and thus keep him from tracking it down to its lair; it even provides him with a spiritual illumination to authenticate that path. Need it be said that this counterfeit illumination is another form of the ego's own aggrandizement?" (8.4.321//Persp. p. 99)

(Para reread, then student discussion about true & counterfeit illumination.)

DB: . . . How do you differentiate . . . between true and counterfeit illumination? (Q: paraphrase)

AD: Did you ever listen to some of these preachers on television? There the ego, so to speak, has provided them with a spiritual path and also with a spiritual illumination. I mean, that's one example. In this matter, there is no spirituality. The ego's going to trick you, doesn't want you to get on to the path. It's going to trick you and it's going to provide you with enough--could we say--thrills and exaltations to make you think that you are ON the path. It's got nothing to do with being on the path.

JnL: What differentiates them?

AD: What differentiates them?

JnL: . . . The counterfeit illuminations from the real ones, or are all illuminations phony? . . .

AD: Well, qualitatively they're quite different. The exaltation that one experiences when his ego's going to provide him with some kind of thrill, you know--"Look at the great work I'm doing: That man dropped his crutches and walked over to me"--and then the following week there is no such man, and you pay somebody to drop his crutches and walk over to you. We're talking about that kind of path that the ego can provide (you with.) (Q: last two words not heard on tape) But the differentiation of an authentic experience: That's given, that's a given thing that's outside of the ego. As a matter of fact the precondition for it is that the ego isn't there.

JnL: Even afterwards?

AD: No, it comes back. You can see the difference between the two: what has been given to you by the higher Self and how the ego usurps that. The very first thing that you'll say is, "I had the experience." Right away the ego gets into the act.

But I think there are many good examples. If you make a study of some of these preachers that have a million dollar radio station and a five million dollar stadium from which to announce their "startling" discoveries. I'm not going to mention any names; I don't want to get into that.

One of the things you'll also notice is that usually these people are more or less AFFIRMING the ego, not denying it. If you listen to those people carefully, they're always in the process of affirming their ego.

JnL: When you have a mystical experience . . . and there's a lot of psychic stuff that goes on, and there's the emphasis on the psychic part even when there's something genuine behind it . . . how do you differentiate between the so-called phony illuminations and the real in that realm?

AD: One of the basics, I would say, is a feeling of humility. If that's not there, then be suspicious.

But we don't want to get into a criteria right now as to what is authentic experience and non-authentic. What we want to understand is that the ego has enough craftiness to create divergences or side issues and have you follow them up and, as it goes along, even to bring about a reaffirmation that what it is doing is spiritually correct. In most of the cases, you're going to have to use your reasoning.

You'll taste it. The ego has a very peculiar flavor. You can recognize it, if you have any self-awareness, that is.

AH: . . . Is this path that aggrandizes the ego a standard situation?

AD: Oh yes, sure.

AH: Everyone who gets interested in the path has to be interested via the ego.

AD: Yes.

AH: It's the way it is for everyone until you see through that.

AD: It's true for everyone that it's through the ego that we become interested in these things. But it would follow upon that that--and some of us can recognize, I don't know what to say, but--if a person's sincere, he can see the phoniness; he can see when he's being phony.

AH: Could this quote be interpreted as a description of the prerequisite for going on the quest . . .

AD: You could be on the quest and it could take you right off of it too. It can supply you with all the necessary ingredients to make you think you are on the quest.

AH: It would seem that there is an attitude of ambition that one would point to the ego in regard to spiritual things.

AD: Yes, but don't restrict it to ambition. It would vary with individuals, you know.

SELF-CONCEIT IS BUILT INTO THE EGO; SEEING THE EGO AS YOUR WORST ENEMY; THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD

RC: Do you want another one?

AD: Yes.

PB: "Take it as a truism that nearly every man is in love with himself. . . ." (see below)

AD: I didn't hear that! (laughter)

(Q: above PB sentence reread)

AD: It's an axiom.

PB: "Take it as a truism that nearly every man is in love with himself. If the divine influence is to enter and touch him, much more if it is to possess him, he must be deprived of this self-love." (8.3.134)

EM: It's interesting, because it seems like you have to be deprived of your self-hate as well.

AD: Well, I don't think he means by here "self-love" and "self-hate" in that sense. See, (t)here they're opposites, when we speak about "self-love" and "self-hate". I think what he's referring to is something in the nature that--(pause)--I don't know; I can't express it. You do follow this point: we're not talking about the opposites here when he says "self-love." It's like something that's built in its very nature of the ego that it cannot consider anyone else. It's built into the very structure of the ego. That I-ness, that self-infatuation, that self-conceit, is not something other than the ego: It is the ego. So how could you possibly get rid of it? By hating it? That shows just another way of loving it. Because if you're going to be attached to it you've got something there to hate so you'll be preoccupied with it. If you love it, then you're still preoccupied with it. So it's not at that level; it's something much deeper than that.

As a matter of fact, a person is not truly and really on the quest until he has that self-hate, unless he sees the ego as what it is: his WORST ENEMY. There couldn't be a worse enemy. But to see that, you

have to be ready, because the world is going to have to come in and really deal you a crushing blow, one way or another. And when that happens: You remember the old saying, “When the heart is broken, then Christ can come in.” It’s some sort of situation like that. The world or a situation or some circumstances, some events, just comes in and shatters you, and in that moment you can see what the ego is really like, because you’ve been humiliated. It won’t last very long, believe me, because it’ll will come around picking up the pieces and putting them together right away. But at that instance, it would be enough to see that that’s who your enemy is. That’s what has to be overcome.

And that’s what I think the Buddha was referring to when he said that a man who conquers a thousand men a thousand times is not as great as the man who’s conquered himself. The man who’s conquered himself has overcome that self-conceit, has seen into the very nature of his ego and overcome it.

They have a lot of stories and tales about that, you know. The dweller at the threshold is supposed to be like an amalgamation of your past, and this picture that is presented is like a picture or, what we call, a summary of what your ego is like. And I don’t know of anyone who has ever found the so-called “dweller” very handsome or alluring. They’ve usually been frightened by it.

So basically, I think we have to understand that the self-conceit that’s built into the very nature of the ego is almost difficult to get rid of because the ego reaches a point where now it recognizes that it is itself its own worst enemy. Now what do you do?

You wait. It’s very good for the weekend; let’s have a few more.

PB: “When the ego is brought to its knees in the dust, humiliated in its own eyes, however esteemed or feared, envied or respected in other men’s eyes, the way is opened for Grace’s influx. Be assured that this complete humbling of the inner man will happen again and again until he is purified of all pride.” (8.4.430//Persp. p. 98)

AD: This is very good stuff to read in the morning when you wake up. It starts your day off perfectly.

(Above para reread/student discussion)

PB: “So strong and deep is the hold which the ego has over him, that the flattery which condones that hold is accepted smilingly, whereas the criticism which weakens it is rejected irritably.” (8.3.113)

AD: Well, we all have that experience: as soon as we get criticized we can notice the bristles.

SHOW FAITH IN THE HIGHER – STOP THINKING; THE EGO PREOCCUPIES ITSELF WITH NEGATIVES

PB: “Until it is brought to his attention, he may not know that the idol at whose feet he is continually worshipping is the ego. If he could give to God the same amount of remembrance that he gives to his ego, he could quite soon attain, and become established in, that enlightenment to which other men devote lifetimes of arduous effort.” (8.4.153) (reread)

LG: What does it mean to remember God?

PD: Forget yourself.

RC: That's part of it . . . the actual energy that you invest in that ego is what's to be directed towards the Overself.

AD: Well, when we sit down to meditate--or (Q: but?) you don't even have to sit down to meditate--but if you watch your mind, there's almost an incessant chattering going on. Thought follows upon thought, endlessly. And these thoughts are usually about something from your past--either some memory, some pleasant memory or occasion or some expectation--but it will always be about yourself, you know.

And you say to yourself, "Well, I had enough of this. I don't want to listen to this fellow any more." And you become very determined that every time an idea or thought or memory--whatever--springs up, that you will resolutely push it out. Now if you do that, that's equivalent to showing and expressing, IN ACT, your faith in the Higher. But every time that a thought comes into your mind and you give it heed, then you are expressing faith in the lower self, and you believe in your ego. Do you see that?

Like a thought comes up: "Oh, twelve years ago on a certain day I had this beautiful occasion. Somebody gave me \$150 dollars and I had a good day . . ." and etc. And that thought will come up; that memory will come up. And you'll look at it: "Yeah, yeah, yeah, sure. I remember." Well, that shows--all these images as they keep coming up, and they suck your attention--it's like a preoccupation with those images. And you could refer to the totality of all these images as what is known. And you could see that it's this faith in the lower self that you're expressing.

But if you deny these things, if you do not let them come in, if every time a thought arises in my mind and I cut off its head--I cut it right off--then I'm expressing faith in the Higher. That's a real remembrance of the Higher. Try for an hour--or, better still, ten minutes, five minutes. Try it. And see who you believe.

AH: It seems that you described, Anthony, that by rejecting the lower, you don't replace it with thoughts of the Higher.

AD: No.

AH: You just plain reject the lower.

AD: Just reject the lower; don't replace it with more thoughts, because they too will be known.

AH: So this faith is really a faith by negation of the lower.

AD: Your lower self.

AH: So Paul's comment seems to the point: Remember God by forgetting oneself.

AD: Forget about yourself, and that will be the remembrance. This, of course, is something you have to practice, not talk about.

Now that doesn't mean that if you have a problem that you shouldn't work out the problem, whatever the problem may be, that requires your attention. We're not saying that, so there shouldn't be any reason for a person to excuse himself: "Well, I forgot to pay the rent; I didn't think about it." We're not talking about that. Those things that require your thought have to be given thought, but once done: over with it.

And you'll see that the negatives are basically an expression of the ego.

JG: (inaudible)

AD: This is basically the negatives. The negative emotions is always the way the ego could keep you preoccupied with itself. See, by sending this smoke screen up, it keep you preoccupied with itself. All the time that's all you're thinking about is, "me, me, me, me." As a matter of fact, there's a lovely cartoon in the New Yorker. It was this door--like the president of the bank has a door, and he has his name on the door--well, this fellow only had the word, "Me, me, me, me!" (laughter)

LG: . . . This is very different from the "practice of the presence" that Brother Lawrence talks about . . .

AD: Yes; he eventually would have to stop practicing the presence of God by thought. This is very direct, very direct. You don't substitute bad thoughts for good thoughts. (Q: means 'good for bad'). Because you want to get rid of thoughts, period, good or bad. You just want to get rid of thoughts. And all thought will constantly preoccupy you with itself, and the ego will have its way. That's the way the ego keeps you under its thumb. But once you decide to start struggling with your thoughts, you've got a conflict, a long one.

You know many of the Japanese paintings of Zen Masters? They have the Zen Master sitting with this stick? That's to chase away the thoughts. It's not to hit people with.

Well, anyway, you get the opportunity every day when you sit down; you see the thoughts that come up into your mind and you see how they, so to speak, preoccupy you and how they keep you away from what you want to do. That's why meditation always in the beginning phases is so painful; it's a constant struggle with these thoughts.

It is so difficult to believe that something so flimsy, so invisible and intangible, like the thoughts that we have can keep us in bondage forever. You would expect big chains wrapped around you: That's going to keep you in bondage. No, it's so much subtler, just thoughts. Every thought we have is like a nail on the box. You don't have to write this down. Let's have another one.

GIVING UP SELF-WILL

PB: "The readiness to surrender his lower nature to the higher one, to give up his own will in obedience to God's will, to put aside the ego for the sake of the Overself, puts a man far in advance of his fellows, but it also puts him into certain dangers and misconceptions of its own. The first danger is that he has given up his own will only to obey other men's wills, surrendered his own ego only to fall under the influence of other men's egos. The first misconception is to take lesser voices for God's voice. The second danger is to fall into personal idleness under the illusion that it is mystical passivity. The second misconception is to forget that although self-efforts are not enough of themselves to guarantee the oncoming of Grace, they are still necessary prerequisites to that oncoming. His intellectual, emotional, and moral discipline are as needed to attract that Grace as are his aspirations, yearnings, and prayers for it. He cannot expect God to do for him work which should be done by himself." (8.4.210) (reread)

AD: So what does it mean to give up the self-will? I hope you don't think of it as something that you could do with one stroke. This is what we spoke about. To give up the self-will is to no longer allow it or permit the lower mind or the lower self to perpetually occupy you with its own . . .

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1984 0328a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AH: . . . How does enthusiasm for being on the quest separate itself from self-will?

AD: Well, you had the enthusiasm when you first went on the quest, right? And you wanted to get on with the quest. And one of the things that's going to be required to get on with the quest--is this idea we just spoke about--to give up the self-will or the preoccupation with the lower self. And how could a thought arise about what to do? I mean, you're doing it. You're actually doing it when you're involved in this particular effort.

But again, like I pointed out, it doesn't mean that you have to become myopic or intellectually blind. You could see what's going on. As a matter of fact, you'll probably see better what's going on when you stop reacting to what's going on . . . Do you see what I'm saying, Andrew?

AH: I don't understand.

AD: You're of the opinion that a reaction is required in order for you to proceed on the quest.

AH: A self-effort is required.

AD: Well, yes, you're making the effort insofar that you're keeping the lower thoughts at a distance. You're making the effort. But the point I'm getting to is that again, I'll repeat--you're of the opinion that a reaction is required on your part in order to get on with the quest. You have to react to something; you have to be enthusiastic; you have to know what you're doing: These are all reactions. If you keep the thoughts at a distance and you prevent them from coming in, you'll also get guidance, too. (pause)

I think we should dwell just a moment or two on that notion of the self-will. Examine it. What does it mean?

AH: . . . effort was made from the perspective . . .

AD: I'm sorry.

AH: If effort, or reaction, is taken from the perspective of individuality, that's the self-will. If there is one who is acting, then it's self-will.

AD: Andrew, let's try being very practical, alright? You or I, it doesn't matter the example we use-- Most of our duties are prescribed for the day. You get up, you have your breakfast, you go to work: Most of these duties are prescribed. Now, what we're talking about here is what accompanies that is unnecessary, the constant series of reactions to every little incidence that occurs in your life. You get up in the morning, and you've had toast for ten years: This morning, you react to toast, "Well, I didn't cover that piece of toast with the butter!" Just watch the numberless thoughts that are absolutely irrelevant and utterly meaningless and worthless. You can live your life very perfectly without them.

So if we start right there, start just at that level. Does that mean that you're not going to go to school and start teaching or do whatever chores are required? Can't you carry wood, so to speak, or chop it and carry water without all those thoughts? Go on, answer me.

AH: Yes.

AD: But have you noticed the occasion where you chop wood and carry water and you didn't have the thoughts?

JG: How would you notice?

AD: Oh, you'll notice. Your mind will be quieter. You won't be always agitated, restless, going to Florida, or Labrador, or Greenland, or wherever you can go. I don't see why you find that difficult, Andrew, that you can take most of the mental activity that goes on in your life during the day and I'd say chuck 90 per cent out of the window and be so much the better for it.

AH: It seems that much of that useless activity is oriented towards MY preferences.

AD: Yes, there's always the "I" behind it. But notice the tremendous psychical dissipation that's going on. It's like you've left the electricity on, and you don't need to. You're just wasting it. It's a dissipation that comes through extroversion and goes on all the time.

The thing has to be practiced to be appreciated, and then a lot of the questions, which are really theoretical, get answered in the very doing of it. And it's not going to stop you from doing the things you have to do. So if a person, let's say, you're building something, and you've got to make plans--we're not talking about--don't think there. We're not saying that, because there you can see that it's a thinking that's attached to a very specific object; you're trying to make a door; you're measuring it; you have to think, "Well, let's see. Two times two is twenty-four; two times two is...no, four!" You have to think, sure!

AH: The distinction between HAVING to think for practical necessity and the useless thinking, and how are you using those examples in regards to the definition towards self-will?

AD: That's part of the way we gradually learn to surrender our self-will. It isn't a dramatic event that all at once you give up your self-will and say, "Well, I gave it up." It works in this way, this very slow way, that every time you turn out a thought or you refuse to give it recognition, that you're giving up something of your self-will. In other words, if I'm irritated, and I feel like saying, "You...", and I DON'T do it--and there's nothing wrong with suppressing these things; don't let the analysts scare you; there's nothing wrong with saying, "I'm NOT going to do that, period." Because it's right in the stage, the stage of your consciousness; it's illuminated. It won't be a repression. As a matter of fact, it will be something worse than a repression. It will be an open conflict. "You're not going to have your way. Out!" And every time, let's say, a negative emotion comes up and wants to express itself and you refuse to acknowledge it. Well, this is a little bit of surrendering of self-will.

LG: It sounds like the APPLICATION of will in a certain sense, though.

AD: If you want to change the wording around, fine, just go ahead and do it.

LG: I don't want to. I want to understand what you're saying.

AD: Well, what I'm saying is that every time you refuse to acknowledge what the lower self wants you to do or wants you to think or wants you to feel, you are surrendering that self-will.

LG: The . . .

AD: And now your comment is going to be, "This seems like you have to make an effort, that you have to apply the will." Yes, you have to apply the will to get rid of the will, but then you get rid of both of them, because it will be as automatic a habit as any other habit. But if you believe that it's going to be an

application of will, and now you see a logical contradiction on it, that'll save you the trouble of trying it out. He goes on there with that quote--there's a little bit more to that quote.

I just want you to understand: I'm thinking of self-will at this very practical, everyday, every moment level. I'm not thinking of being hung up on a cross and saying, "I'll give up my will." I'm thinking of this every moment, moment by moment, life.

RC: . . . "To give up his own will in obedience to God's will, to put aside the ego for the sake of the Overself," that there's still willing going on, but the origin of the willing is a different level of the person. It seems at the deeper level of a situation you know what's right, or at least the higher will knows what's right for you, but the lower nature reacts to that and constellates a secondary willing of its own that you're saying is quite dispensable.

AD: Well, I can understand what you're saying, I think you're following up the point, but I haven't experienced it as will. Perhaps if I put it this way, a little differently:

What I say, you may intellectually understand, but if you have not perceived it, you have not grasped my meaning. When a person actually perceives, perceives the way this process is constantly involving you in what we would call life and death, the everyday world, then there is no choice; it isn't a question of will. You just don't want to go that way. No will: You just say, "I see that's not the way."

Now, it is a habit; it will persist; it will constantly keep occurring; instant by instant thoughts will keep coming up. But something in you has changed; something in you has turned away from that. That's what I mean when I say you perceive this. It isn't understood intellectually. Because you won't do it from the point of view of just intellectually understanding something.

You know, intellectually you can understand that "Honesty is the best policy," but you won't do it. In the same way, this thing could be understood intellectually, but until it's perceived as the actual mental processes that are involving you in this constant state of inner agitation, pain--until then, you won't do it.

And when you do see it--but I won't say it's effortless, because the habit will persist--but then there arises from this knowledge the need not to give heed any more to that lower self. So I could interpret it that way: That it's the result of a true perception, true understanding. And then the person just can't help but ignoring the thoughts as they keep coming at him.

You know, it's like sometimes when you've seen a picture 20 times: You just don't want to look at it no more. You're bored. It just is so meaningless.

I think you have the experience when you sit down and just meditate, and you watch the thoughts: They'll be the same now as they'll be ten years ago or ten years from here; they'll be the same merry-go-round.

AH: Anthony, this perception that you describe is not intellectual . . .

AD: Well, it's more than intellectual. It's not that it's not intellectual; it's a little bit more than intellectual.

REVULSION

AH: I was wondering if that's equatable to the Buddhist idea of revulsion.

AD: Yes.

AH: And where one experiences a revulsion of one's self?

AD: Pravriti, is that what they call it? And they speak about it in the *Lankavatara*. And you have to work very hard to bring that moment about, that moment of revulsion which is like a 180 degree turn, turn away from yourself. But the person that experienced revulsion, it doesn't mean that the thoughts have stopped. You'll see that they'll still continuously be regurgitating his past, because it's a machine. It just keeps going on.

You have to work very hard for that. I don't know--I think there's enough references in Suzuki about that revulsion, and he speaks about how hard they have to work to get it. Because if it's just an intellectual insight, you won't do it.

AH: As I remember, it's spoken of as a very important stage, actually a prerequisite for any serious spiritual growth.

AD: Yes. It's a turning about, 180 degrees.

JG: What would it mean to work very hard for that?

AD: Try to see it for yourself. Like you have to constantly turn your eye inward to try to catch the mind doing these things. And that means that there has to be almost a microscopic scrutiny going on all the time. Now, all the time may not succeed, but one instant may, and you suddenly see that. And you see that this is the way the mind is constantly working. This is a real seeing: It's when you're not thinking, you're not making any kind of judgments, you have no mindset, anything like that. And that instant, you may see it. And it will bring about a kind of revulsion.

Let's say, we'll take an instance where a person enjoys doing something very much. After that revulsion takes place, like he may go on doing it, but the desire to do so has been cut away. That's not there; that's not compulsively binding him to it. So they work very hard to bring about this state.

But nonetheless, the important thing here is to bring it down to this very practical level, where every instant you look at your mind, and you keep watching your mind, and you keep trying to eliminate the thoughts that come to it: You keep doing that. That's a kind of preparation for it. The revulsion might come that way. There's tremendous difficulty in trying to predict what the result of any spiritual discipline is. It may never be what you set out to do. But he goes on a little more with that quote, doesn't he?

ASPIRING TOWARDS THE HIGHER; MORE ON THINKING, NOT-THINKING, REVULSION

(Q: RC rereads middle of quote)

PB: "The second danger . . . the oncoming . . ."

AD: He keeps those two things in balance: You have to make the effort to keep the thoughts out, but at the same time there should always be an aspiration towards the Higher. But also they have to be kept in balance. It's not enough just to keep pushing the thoughts out, but also every now and then prayer, worship, and devotion of the Higher, and aspiration has to find a root, has to find a place. And these two things together make it possible, as he says, for influx of grace to occur. You cannot force grace, but, on

the other hand, it can't come as long as you're always preoccupied with your business or your farm or whatever preoccupation you may have. It can't come in.

RC: Suppose I take this attitude that I'm not going to have any thoughts--I'm going to push them out and I really take the perspective of the will. It seems like I can do that as an exercise for a certain length of time in meditation but it seems also that some of those thoughts that are imposed on me, are imposed on me because I really DO NEED to attend to the things that they're hounding me about. It's very easy to sit down and take that position in the I, that the rational ego-I and say that "I am not going to have any thoughts," and still stay grounded right in that same I and not move an inch, and be persistently willing that very same self, that's the self's will that you're trying to get rid of. (Whereas) some of the thoughts, some of the hounding is really pointing out that there are certain things you need to take care of. What I'm trying to get at is the difference between a strictly yogic approach and what seems to be a deeper approach. In the second half (Q: of the quote) where he comes in in terms of you DO have to make these self efforts, you DO have to make these disciplines and so on. There are certain thoughts that I can't keep out because there are changes in me that are required that those thoughts are making me aware of . . . I'm not trying to be counter productive to what you're saying, I'm trying to elaborate it more clearly.

AD: Well, I will have to pay my electric bill, and tomorrow I'll sign a check and put it in the envelope. And as I sign the check--and let's say it's \$128--I don't have to say, "This is a rip-off!" I DO have to sign the check; I DO have to mail them the money that they have coming to them, and I could do that without all the extraneous matters: "This is a rip-off; the utility companies are robbing us left and right, and I know the chairman, and he's living in the lap of luxury..." and that can go on and on. You do have to sign the check; you do have to think, "I've got to sign the check and I've got to mail the letter." The rest is not necessary. I'm telling you: Your workload will be reduced to about 85 per cent, just in terms of the psychical energy that you have at your disposal. You have to understand that as soon as I say it's a rip-off, it's a reaction. And the whole of the organism, with all its memories, is involved. And so that keeps the ego in control, as soon as there's the slightest reaction.

AH: You're suggesting that's an appropriate attitude towards all possible thoughts.

AD: I'm just suggesting that there is an approach to life where the necessary things that have to be done can be done, and the extraneous reactions and considerations can be left alone, could be left aside. There's no way I can convince you except for you to try it.

AH: . . . Certain kinds of thoughts that need attending to.

AD: Well, there's certain thoughts, like, for instance, when we are discussing certain ideas, and we have to think certain ideas, sure. I'm not disagreeing that you have to think thoughts at certain times.

RC: It seems we're talking about self-will.

AD: Self-will?

RC: It seems we're talking about trying to undermine self-will. It seems some of these thoughts, thinking about these thoughts, entertaining them, reflecting on them, are also effective in undermining self-will.

AD: Yes, because there you're not preoccupied with the ego and its problems. If I'm trying to understand the nature of something, I'm certainly not preoccupied with the kind of contents that the ego would be interested in.

(LDam/RC/LD/RC/LD/RC/JanneH/LD/etc student discussion for 2-3 minutes.)

RC: I think that this self-will can insert itself just as much in improperly doing this exercise as it can invest itself in other places.

(More student discussion--approx 2 min., then RC rereads end of PB para: "The second danger . . . by himself.")

AD: And what do you think it is that you have to do for yourself that He won't do for you?

CdA: What you said before, that you have to make the effort.

AD: Yes, could you be more specific: what is it that you specifically have to do?

JG: Refrain from reacting.

AD: Refrain from thinking. You have to look at a thought right in the face and see it for what it is, and you'll see a hydra-headed beast hidden in it. We're hypnotized by thought, and we think it is something worth looking at. But someday you'll see: That thought--you know like the way a snake hypnotizes a bird?--it has that one function to hypnotize you, to make sure you don't get anywhere near reality or even think about reality. That's its preoccupation.

(Student discussion, approx. 2 min.)

RG: Anthony is saying all thinking is willing. If you talk about understanding it's another kind of thinking.

AD: You see that, Dickie, that all thinking is self-willing? Could you put it that way? That's the whole point. And certainly, consequently, when I pay my electric bill, it isn't that kind of self-willing. It's not involved. But as soon as the thought comes, "You remember you had coffee with that beautiful dame the other day?": That's self-willing. Thought is willing itself. And you have to see it; you actually have to see it. And until you do see it, thought will always exercise its endearment, glamour, hypnotizes us. Every now and then, stop, and just look at you mind and you'll see the way you've been hypnotized for an hour or so with all kinds of thoughts.

RC: All I was trying to do was to put the success or failure that one has with that exercise into the context of their whole life.

AD: Into the context?

RC: Into the context of their whole life. That their whole life may be such that they cannot succeed at that exercise until certain changes are made.

DB: I don't see how that the only change that needs to be made is an understanding that and a recognition of what the enemy is, and the applications of some techniques towards it. At a certain point, you can think about that, and elaborate it . . . In terms of stopping it, I think that's just another way of encouraging it. I

think that's what Anthony was saying . . . if I understood properly . . . you can't (inaudible) fight this thing by talking to it, or talking about it . . . it's something that you individually have to stop doing. It doesn't seem like it would . . . which is not to say you shouldn't try to understand it, there are a lot of quotes about that--but as far as this particular technique in terms of dealing with self-will, you're either going to stop it or you're not.

AD: Perhaps, Randy, we could put what you're saying this way: Is there (Q: or 'You take') a series of intermediate steps that lead up to this recognition and which you have to make note of as you're going along? That might be a possible way of understanding what you're saying. In other words, before the arising of this moment of perception, which we're calling revulsion, takes place, there are certain things about my character or characteristics that I work with, that have to be made available to me. And these glimpses into my own psychology will eventually provide a sufficient scaffolding on which, or by which the revulsion can happen. If you express it that way, I'm not trying to put words in your mouth. That might be one possible idea you're trying to express--that the revulsion doesn't occur out of the blue. There was a series of steps leading up to it, whether we consciously or unconsciously recognized these steps in between that lead to that position.

RC: That exercise is an exercise which takes place in an overall environment of self-purification, and one simply cannot succeed at it unless a certain amount of that purification has taken place.

AD: One might notice, for instance, at various times in his life, a certain disgust or nausea overcoming him, and he traces it to its origins, psychologically he recognizes something about the almost monotonous repetition that is going on in our daily lives and which we consider to be so important. A few of these recognitions will eventually help a person to struggle to get to the insight or the understanding of what revulsion is. That's a possible way of looking at it. We've all at times had that experience: Where we get nauseous; we've done something so many times that it's lost its novelty, its glamour; it's become meaningless. And this is like a little taste of what that revulsion is. (pause)

But the other thing--I'm fanatic: Once you sit down to meditate, take out your sword or your battle-axe or your mace, whatever you've got, and no matter what it is, no matter how glorious the intuition, cut it off. You must be a fanatic when you sit down--up to a certain point. After that, the intuitions will tell you what to do. Well, let's try one more.

THINKING INQUIRING INTO ITS OWN NATURE; CULTIVATION OF A QUIET MIND

PB: "There would be no hope of ever getting out of this ego-centered position if we did not know these three things. First, the ego is only an accumulation of memories and a series of cravings, that is, thought; it is a fictitious entity. Second, the thinking activity can come to an end in stillness. Third, Grace, the radiation of the Power beyond man, is ever-shining and ever-present. If we let the mind become deeply still and deeply observant of the ego's self-preserving instinct, we open the door to Grace, which then lovingly swallows us." (8.4.417)

(Para reread, then student discussion)

BS: You have to stand at that point just before embodiment and see that the ego . . .

[Audio File 1984 0328a Ends]

[Audio File 1984 0328b Begins]

BS: No instant required. That would be superimposed on it.

AD: Yes that's very true, Bert. That's quite an accurate perception. Although, I wouldn't use those words the way you put it. I would say that the Mind is whole and undivided. And before it gets divided, you don't have those things like instinct, self-preservation, none of that exists. As soon as the Mind divides itself into thinker and thought, then all those things come into existence, all those things come into being. So if you could stand at the point where the Mind is whole, undivided, you're outside that conflict. That's why it's so important to try to cultivate a quiet mind, because a quiet mind is a mind that's whole and undivided and isn't preoccupied, so to speak, with the thoughts of the ego. There it stands, so to speak, in this way prior to, let's say, part of it identifies with the body and in that identification with the body's sensation (then?/that?) thinks itself as the body.

So, of course, that's the thing that all the great teachers hammer away at. Try to get to the quiet mind, the mind that IS, when thinking ceases. And if thinking inquires into its own nature, it is eventually forced into that position where it's quiet; it actually ceases functioning when it tries to understand its own nature. And at that moment, like he said, it's like before being embodied.

But you see, we're talking about very practical things now. Last week and the week before was much more theoretical for many of us. But here we're talking about day by day. We're talking about what has to be done EVERY day.

CdA: When you say that thinking has to understand its own nature, is that the same as what you said as "perceiving," when you perceive clearly the actual nature . . .

AD: (It's) a little bit different; there wouldn't be any perception there. It would be more the nature of an intuition. When the thinking principle inquires into its own nature and tries to confront it, it's reduced to silence. THEN an intuition arises.

CdA: That would be a perception of--?

AD: That wouldn't be a perception, you see. Whereas what we were speaking about before, when we were speaking about an actual perception of the way the mind functions--the way the mind functions can be perceived, but when we speak about the undivided Mind, there's no functioning there; there's nothing to perceive there; you can only intuit that.

CdA: What do you mean when you say "the thinking principle inquires into itself"? What do you mean by the thinking principle there--that functioning of the ego itself?

AD: I mean thinking, I mean thinking: (the thinking in you that's) (Q: last phrase very hard to hear) constantly going on.

CdA: That's what I meant. The thinking of the empirical ego that's going on . . .

AD: No. The thinking is going to produce the empirical ego.

Look, just drop (it?) away; just stop for a minute. You know that you are a thinking being. You're not going to be preoccupied with the external world; you're not going to be preoccupied with the internal

images or pictures. Thinking is going to be preoccupied with itself, and only itself. Now, if you proceed in this method, eventually what happens is thinking halts; thinking ceases. You get quiet. Because there is no answer to that.

CdA: Ok.

AD: Now, that cannot be a perception. It's closer to a feeling, an intuition. "Ah! This is what I am: I'm mind." Now, of course you can see that's wrong; you can't say that because that's a thought. (inaudible) Whereas when I tell a person, "Try to perceive the fact that the mind is constantly creating," that can be done.

It's something like in the order of, let's say, I know I dream. Now, could I stand outside and watch the mind making the dream? That would be a perception. You'd have to actually perceive--take a look at--the way the mind is weaving all these things together and projecting an image. That can be perceived; the other thing cannot be perceived.

You want to have a good weekend, so let's have some more of this. I want you to be so fed up with your ego that you're actually going to say, "I don't want you around, brother, SCRAM." And he'll come back twice as strong. Usually after the third meditation, I notice quite a few people here, their ego starts weakening, and they can get quiet. But I don't know if they get quiet, because that they were persisting, or that the ego just got tired and worn out. We'll find out.

JG: How do you know . . . ?

AD: I don't know, I'll have to experiment, Johanna, I have to experiment.

As soon as I start increasing my meditations to four and five a day, I started getting wobbly knees, broken ankles, stupid information of the nerve, everything comes out (Q: up?). The ego's right there, pitching in. "I'm going to stop this guy, no matter what." (AD laughs)

AP: So it must be possible to have a still mind even though the body is disturbing.

AD: Yes. Of course.

LR: We have living proof.

AD: Otherwise it wouldn't be worth very much! I can only have a still mind when I'm sitting still, and then the body moves around . . . No, the ideal is to have a still mind even when you're in the midst of a lot of trouble--I mean, activity! (laughter)

There's a beautiful statement there where PB says, "Be calm. Make that your talisman." [Note: See PB, *Notebooks*, Perspectives, p. 153.] No matter what, be calm. Isn't that also, Om, isn't that when they invest the Brahmin with the thread, that's the only advice they give him? --"Be calm"?

Om: (inaudible)

AD: Just curious . . .

AP: This calmness, it can include even a disturbed mind, can't it?

AD: Can include what, can include the thoughts that you have?

AP: Say you have a feeling or something, or that your body's disturbed, it goes with it--

AD: It still is the background, all the time. It still is the background all the time.

AP: It can be there in the depths--

AD: It's always there as the background.

AP: --even though your surface mind is not still--

AD: The surface mind could be noisy, and that could be quiet, and you could see your mind is noisy and agitated. And usually when you recognize the fact that you're in a state of agitation, it's information coming to you from the quiet part, telling, "Hey, hey, look at that! It's a real burlesque going on."

CdA: That's something peculiar to me, you know.

AD: Tell us what it is.

CdA: That very fact that you can have a quiet mind and that quiet mind could perceive all the noise that's going on.

AD: Of course, it's preferable not to have the noise going on.

CdA: There's a point that's implied there in that statement that you reach some point--you have your revulsion, you've also realize that your mind is whole and one and you've actually been able to maintain that realization. But the fact that it is not a constant state does not negate the awareness of the wholeness of the mind.

AD: It is a constant state, but there's four levels to that state. There's quiet mind one, quiet mind two, quiet mind three, and there's REALLY quiet mind.

CdA: So this is quiet mind one?

AD: Quiet mind one. We're satisfied with that. If we get that, we'll say, "Ok for this life!"

I think Randy read a quote some time ago where PB speaks about the window is dirty, and you clean a little bit, and that's the first level of the quiet mind; and then you clean it very good--second level of quiet mind entered. (Q: ref. is to 25.2.97//Persp. p. 347) And usually it stays with you unless you do something extraordinarily in opposition to it, and then you may lose it. And sometimes people do have it--have it for six months, a year, or a certain time--and then it's lost. And they have to go back and try again. But generally it tends to stay with you once you get established in it.

CdA: So . . . if the mind is noisy, the quiet mind is going to be aware that the mind is noisy and it is not that mind.

AD: And this is one of the reasons it is so highly recommended to practice this, because it could happen, like after a couple of days or a couple of weeks, although I may be exaggerating a little bit. But if a person makes a persistent effort to reduce the conceptualizing mind to its barest necessity, he will actually at times feel the quietness around him and in him. And he'll see when a thought comes in--even if it tiptoes--it no longer is silent. It's like a big noise coming in. So you begin to recognize that your mind is getting quiet, and you begin to enjoy some of it.

Like I said: in some instances, in most instances--even if you have it for a little bit--then you have the flavor of what that is, because it's so subtle. It's very subtle. Your higher Self isn't going to come over and say, "Now you're going to have the quiet mind. Listen." Nothing like that is going to happen. But all of a sudden you're going to say, "Gee, how quiet it is." And then you realize that it's just your mind that has stopped thinking, is quiet, thought is calm. And another nice thing is: Thoughts come, and you let them go, too. You don't hold on to them. They come, and they go. Most of us, thoughts come "Wait a minute!"--and you want to know their history, their genesis, their biography. And you get involved: "Alright, next one." And he comes along, and the same thing. And it goes on and on. But with quiet mind, they come, they go. "Hello, Goodbye."

LR: Would you distinguish between the quiet mind and the blank mind?

AD: Well, a quiet mind is intensely alive. The blank mind is usually very dull. We notice dull minds.

LR: I'm coming back to something you said the other day, that to attain a quiet mind is not necessarily to lead up to that illumination. I remember a lot of [PB] quotes in the meditation quotes about blankness of mind--

AD: Yes.

LR: --and that that was really very undesirable. In fact it was leading one to a psychic openness that was very bad. I think it's important to hang on to the notion of awakesness or aliveness, because otherwise it's very easy to confuse the two things you're talking about. I mean, I have a dull mind most of the time and sometimes it makes me think I'm being very quiet. And I think what you're saying is not THAT. I think it's important to distinguish those two things very carefully, because that's another trick the ego can play.

AD: A quiet mind is also a very observant mind.

LR: . . . Somehow quiet mind goes hand in hand in most people's minds with lack of judgment or lack of discernment . . .

AD: No, as a matter of fact, I would say that you're capable of a fairer judgment. I think you can, and usually are, much more objective. See, we're not talking about ultimate stages.

A quiet mind, like I said, is very observant and its observation, very often, is very encompassing, because it observes subtleties that you can't ordinarily, with a mind that's in a state of agitation. And that's what I mean when I say it's intensely alive: Not that it's vibrant and dancing about like some lunatic, but it is very observant, very penetrating, and it does very often, so to speak, it can see subtle truths that the ordinary mind will never be able to grasp--or see, let me put it that way. They can be communicated to it, but it won't be able to observe them for itself.

LR: So the point then is that the still mind is not necessarily contentless.

AD: Yes. Not necessarily. Perhaps you could try, like, the weekend, when we do a sunset meditation. Your mind can get very still, if you watch the sunset, and you'll go on seeing the sunset, but your mind can get extremely quiet, especially at that moment when the sun pauses and then hovers and then sinks. At that moment your mind can get extremely quiet. The contents will be there. The contents will be there. Let's try a couple more.

DON'T QUIT

PB: “When the ego fails to detain him in formal weaknesses, it will disguise itself anew and direct their strength into subtle and even spiritual channels. If it cannot hold him by his more obvious weaknesses, it will do so by his subtler ones; if not through his shortcomings then through his alleged virtues. It does not find much difficulty with all its craftiness and cunning in perverting his most fervent spiritual aspiration into disguised self-worship and his spiritual experiences into undisguised vanity. Or it will use his sense of remorse, shame, and even humility to point out the futility of his attempts at moral reform and the impossibility of his spiritual aspirations. If he yields to the duplicity and perversity of such moods, he may well abandon the quest in practice and leave it in the air as a matter of theory. But the truth is that this is really a false shame and a false humility.” (8.4.314) (reread)

DB: This is almost a guarantee that no matter what level of spiritual aspirations or experiences--the ego will twist them and use them for its own purposes . . .

RC: He says these fervent aspirations are THERE but the ego perverts them into self-worship and vanity. The ego tries to disguise a weakness as a virtue, the virtue of humility. (false humility . . .) Says “I can’t do it; that’s for more advanced people.”

PB: “. . . use his sense of remorse . . . impossibility of his spiritual aspirations. . . .”

AH: . . . That refusal, that impossibility is to take, once again, a stand in the ego: “it’s too hard,” “the cosmic forces are against me!” etc, etc.

RC: That very weakness is presented as if it were a virtue.

AH: This quote is very austere to my mind. It seems he is asking for the absolutely heroic attitude towards the ego--no compromise whatsoever. Every possible compromise is another way of the ego aggrandizing itself.

DD: I think he’s also saying you’re going to get defeated in a battle, but don’t quit the conflict. You’re going to lose the battle all the time, but you’ve got to come back.

AH: You can’t quit--until you really lose.

AD: You don’t lose unless you quit. As long as you’re in there fighting, you’re not losing. But if you quit, you lose!

AH: But you have to REALLY quit.

AD: If you really quit, you really lose. But even if you ARE losing, and you don’t quit, that’s alright, because it’s going to be like that anyway. (laughter) The point here is very simple: As long as you do not admit you’re defeated, even if you are losing, that’s what counts, that you don’t admit defeat.

AH: It’s a kind of pride, but it’s not egotistical.

AD: It’s not pride; it’s endurance.

AH: . . .

AD: No matter how many times you get knocked down to the canvas--and you WILL get knocked down enough times--you keep getting up. Even if you take a count to nine, but get up. Don't quit.

AH: I remember they taught us when we were little kids, in Catholicism, every sin would be forgiven except despair.

AD: Yes, in some religions they consider that negativity, despair; in other words--that's the ego.

AH: . . .

AD: It's a very subtle thing we're involved in, very subtle. Like I said before, when you recognize that your greatest enemy is the ego, you're on your way.

BS: What precisely do we mean by "the spiritual life"? . . .

AD: Well, you can get a variety of definitions, Bert. The spiritual life is basically an attempt to get back to the wholeness of life, life as a whole, not as a separative thing, to recognize that the life in you is integral, is universal, and not to make the separative ego dominate that or think that it is separate from the rest of life.

BS: Wouldn't thinking, willing, and feeling all fit into that wholeness?

AD: No, the wholeness would be above that. The wholeness of life would be beyond willing, feeling, and thinking. Willing, feeling, and thinking would divide, bifurcate, fragment that wholeness. If you're using those functions, you still have not achieved the wholeness of life. That doesn't mean that if you've achieved the wholeness of life, you can't use those functions. One or two more . . .

THE SIMPLE CONSCIOUS MIND IS NO MATCH FOR THE CUNNING OF THE EGO

PB: "Although the ego claims to be engaged in a war against itself, we may be certain that it has no intention of allowing a real victory to be achieved [*] but only a pseudo-victory. The simple conscious mind is no match for such cunning. This is one reason why out of so many spiritual seekers, so few really attain union with the Overself, why self deceived masters soon get a following whereas the true ones are left in peace, untroubled by such eagerness." (8.4.316/Persp. p. 98)

*AD: (comment in middle of para above) It's going to be a real fight. (Q: hard to hear)

LG: What kind of intelligence is this ego that has so much precision in its veiling the Overself or keeping us from it? We talked about it in a quote before as this fictitious entity, the ego, and yet what sort of intelligence is present through it that it can be so vitally again us, vitally in opposition to...

AD: If you think in an ontological way--or I should say in a historical way: Think of the vast eons of time in which this evolving entity has learned to survive regardless of what the conditions were. Think of it that way. Now this evolving entity, through periods of time that are unimaginable, has learned to survive through any and every condition. Think what it has at its disposal. It'll outwit you any time, any day, any place, anywhere. It has learned every possible trick how to survive, even into the twenty-first century. As soon as it is threatened in any way, it already has this vast reservoir of how it's outwitted previous circumstances, situations, events, animals, people--whatever--all at its disposal to use against you.

JG: . . . fictitious entity?

AD: What can you say to such an entity, Johanna?

JG: (inaudible)

AD: Study more philosophy.

LG: But PB calls this a “fictitious” entity?

AD: Well, by that he means it has no real permanence, because if we think of it as a life that is continuously flowing and that it isn’t any static entity...if you think of it in that way. But the gist that you’ll get as you read through these notes on the ego--if you say it’s “illusory,” you’re going to put big quotation marks around it.

AH: Isn’t that what’s meant by its “survival” is to prevent perception of it as illusory?

AD: Yes, of course.

AH: So it has to be real good at what it does . . .

AD: I’m quite sure, Andrew--speaking man-to-man, we’re acquainted with that.

AH: My old trusted friend . . .

AD: That’s why I used to sometimes tease you: Anyone who tells me the ego is illusory is out of his mind. He hasn’t even encountered it yet.

BS: But that’s required for the revulsion to take place.

AD: What’s required?

BS: The encounter with the fullness of this fictitious entity. Otherwise, what’s to be revoked?

AD: What becomes repulsive about it is its nature, how it can completely disregard the consequences of any activity it might engage in, whether to its owner or to anyone else. Remember the other quote where he says it lies to itself, it lies to others, and it lies to the owner. (Q: ref is to 8.3.83//Persp. p. 100) Little by little, as you begin to pick up pieces of what the ego is like, you’re not going to be exactly enamored with it.

AH: We talked frequently about the refinement of the ego and the necessity for its evolution and development. There’s something honest and almost acceptable about a permanent ego, but there’s something absolutely disgusting about a refined one. It has these subtle and perverse ways of calling itself something other than itself.

AD: Yes, but a refined ego would be one that recognizes its own illusory nature.

AH: It has to be a refined one in order to get to that perception. But before it does, it’s especially unbearable . . .

AD: Well, it depends on how many encounters you have.

AD (aside): This is of course our favorite topic, right, the ego. (laughter) Yes, Anna . . .

AP: You have to keep striving for the higher, but isn't there a point when you come to an end of that?

AD: Don't worry about that. Don't worry about when you're going to stop trying, when you give up. You'll know. Well, one or two more.

MYSTICAL DEATH

PB: "Those who succeed in reaching this point in their meditation often withdraw just there, overcome by terror or gripped by panic. For the prospect of utter annihilation seems to yawn, like an abyss, beneath their feet. It is indeed the crucial point. The ego, which has lurked behind all their spiritual aspirations and hidden in disguise within all their spiritual thinking, must now emerge and show itself as it really is. For where, in this utter void, can it now conceal itself?" (23.8.38)

(student discussion)

DB: Is--its proper nature, when it shows itself, apparent abyss of annihilation and so forth, is that what's meant by fear?

TS: I doubt one would be concerned whether it was fear or not at the moment it occurred.

AH: I think that quote could be understood as an actual experience.

TS: That's sort of what I thought.

AD: That IS an experience; when you get to the Void, there's no place you can hide any more. How could the ego get into the nothingness?

AH: Is that the stage where it would be possible for the ego to concretize or manifest as "the dweller"?

AD: Oh, no, you've gone past "the dweller."

But I guess what you're saying is something to the effect: this is the stage where the ultimate nature of the ego comes out. Here you see the ROOTS of fear. It's here and here only you will see where fear really is--where it has sprung from. And it is probably the most basic emotion in the ego complex's history.

Well, thank you . . .

Students: One more?

AD: One more? Sure.

St: Can we hear the last one again? (Q: para reread)

AD: The utter annihilation that he speaks about here is not like the annihilation that we experience when we're going to die. Because when you're going to die, there's almost a hidden certainty that you won't die, something like the ego knows it won't die ; it'll just reappear, come back again in a different way. But the other annihilation he speaks about here is that the very root nature of the ego faces its own extinction. It's a different kind than when a person dies. A person dies with hope; there, there's no hope.

AH: PB said he had two friends that committed suicide as a consequence of practicing a koan meditation, the implication being that suicide is preferable to that kind of annihilation.

AD: To that utter annihilation. Most of us hear about annihilation--a person dies--but I think buried deep in our heart everyone is aware of the fact that one way or another he'll turn up, whether it's as a carrot or an apple or an orange (or a turnip) (Q: last phrase very hard to hear); he'll turn up again. (laughter) Here, he cannot turn up again . . . So the word here is very precise: UTTER annihilation. The ego is dismantled at its very root. That's why those people who have this experience and come back in a sense have no ego, as we understand it. We just don't know what that is the way we understand it. I mean, they don't experience it and feel it the way we feel it.

See, like the perception Richard made before when he recognized that thought is a kind of self-will. These are things you begin to perceive after awhile. You're mind is like an organ; just like your eye can see the pole, see colors, after awhile your mind gets like an organ. It sees these thoughts and perceives the actual functioning.

And that is always the better way, because it's easier to do something once you understand that this is what has to be done. That's why when we spoke before about the fact that you perceive the imbecilic situation that you're in, with this ego always chattering away: When you perceive that it's actually this way, then it's easier to make the effort to stop the chattering. Whereas if someone tells you, "Stop thinking" and all that, it's much harder, because you're just taking it on his say-so that it's going to lead to something. But if you see for yourself, then you will more readily and easily do it. You'll be self-convinced: This is the way.

Well, what do you think of that: he says the ego is too crafty and too cunning for the puny little conscious being. (AD laughs) Well, you go home and dream about your ego.

[Audio File 1984 0328b Ends]

[Note: There is nothing on Side 2, but what follows below is from the PC version of this transcript.]

S: Re: The PB quote about taking calm as one's talisman also calling us to patience.

AD: I think they're pretty much the same. You can't be calm unless you're patient, and if you're patient, you're calm.

[Note: References to "next weekend" in this transcript are to the following weekend's "Sesshin"--the last one that Anthony held.]