

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

TOPIC: PB Paras

SUBJECT: Ego

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CONTENTS:

FERRETING OUT THE SOURCE OF EGO

THE SOURCE OF EGO IS MISTAKEN THOUGHT

WATCHING THE MIND PUT TOGETHER EXPERIENCE; BECOMING PURE OBSERVATION;
OFFERING THE EGO TO ITS SOURCE

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL – SERVICE AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF MANKIND

MISTAKEN THINKING AS THE SOURCE OF EVIL; EGO VS. EGOTISM

REMAIN AS UNFRAGMENTED CONSCIOUSNESS

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

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- Bible, Proverbs (23:7)
- Shantideva, Marion L. Matics (tr.), *Entering the Path of Enlightenment: The Bodhicaryavatara of the Buddhist Poet Santideva*
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- John Milton, *Paradise Lost*

NOTE: Earlier transcript versions exist, including Scan File 1984 0404C2-24R27.PDF.

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1984 04/04 at Wisdom's Goldenrod

PB Paras; Ego

Readable Edited Transcript

FERRETING OUT THE SOURCE OF EGO

[Note: Dialogue on tape begins in middle of third AD comment below; beginning of transcript is from PC version.]

PB: "Everything we do or say, feel or think is related back to the ego. We live tethered to its post and move in a circle. The spiritual quest is really an attempt to break out of this circle. From another point of view it is a long process of uncovering what is deeply hidden by our ego, with its desires, emotions, passions, reasonings, and activities. Taking still another point of view, it is a process of dissociating ourselves from them. But it is unlikely that the ego could be induced to end its own rule willingly. Its deceptive ways and tricky habits may lead an aspirant into believing that he is reaching a high stage when he is merely travelling in a circle. The way to break out of this circle is either to seek out the ego's source or, where that is too difficult, to become closely associated and completely obedient to a true Master. The ego, being finite, cannot produce an infinite result by its own efforts. It spins out its thoughts and sends out its desires day after day. They may be likened to cobwebs which are renewed or increased and which never disappear for long from the darkened corners of a room, however often they may be brushed away. So long as the spider is allowed to live there, so long will they reappear again. Tracking down the ego to its lair is just like hunting out the spider and removing it altogether from the room. There is no more effective or faster way to attain the goal than to ferret out its very source, offer the ego to that Source, and finally by the path of affirmations and recollections unite oneself with it." (8.4.393//Persp. p. 95)

AD: How would you ferret out the source of the ego? What would you do?

S: Observe it in action.

AD: If you observed your mind very carefully, all day long, what would happen? Let's say you listen to a piece of music very intensely.

S: There is a freeing.

AD: Why? You become the music. If you watch the field of consciousness very intently, you are observation.

[Audio File 1984 0404a Begins]

AD: Now the next thing that you're going to see is the resurgence of the observer and the observed. And you're going to see something very curious--you're going to see that whole, that unitary consciousness, get bifurcated. You're going to see part of it identifying with the ego, or what we would call the organism. In other words, what we're saying is, you'll see that consciousness get fragmented, bifurcated; you'll see it identify with a portion of the whole perceptual field.

HS: When you now see it identified with a portion of the whole perceptual field, you've made an advance?

AD: You will have made an advance in the sense that you notice the way the consciousness has identified with a certain cluster of sensations.

HS: You juxtapose that identification with the previous experience of the wholeness, right?

AD: And then, of course, you begin to see that--when you're observant you'll see that this identification with this cluster of sensation is an identification with thought, memory, etc. So then what does it come to, basically? In other words, what is the source of this ego?

DB: Doesn't it amount to something like the ego is something that we do, I mean that in the bifurcation we started out with this notion of impersonal consciousness, the ego is the functioning of that impersonal consciousness associated with a particular clump of sensation.

AD: I'm sorry, repeat that.

DB: The ego is the association of that impersonal consciousness with a particular arrangement of sensations. It's something that this consciousness does. It doesn't have any kind of existence independent from that consciousness' functioning. The particular mode of that consciousness' operation, the ego is created or sustained. If that's correct, then that would imply that the ego is something that we're intimately responsible for.

AD: That's not to the point.

Pat A: It seems that the more that one is able to attain this kind of, if you don't want to call it witnessing, but kind of standing back, that the real place to find the ego will be in its re-identifying after that state. You'll watch it come back in and identify. And even if you've reached a higher type of awareness it'll try to assimilate that. And then each time you come back it'll keep trying to assimilate it and that'll be the point where you'll see it working.

AD: I didn't understand when you said assimilate. Which was assimilating what?

PA: The ego.

AD: Is trying to assimilate that impersonal consciousness?

PA: Right.

AD: Yes.

PA: And in watching it working there that's when you'll get a real view of it, you know, kind of its arising.

AD: But then if I could ask a question, what would be the source of the ego?

PA: The source would have to be, it would seem that the source would be, is somewhere in that impersonal stance, because it is arising from that in a way.

AH: It has its own source. Insofar as it is bifurcated it has its own source. In so far as it's unified, you could speak about the impersonal level. It seems that ego is the source of itself. It's synonymous with bifurcation. If there's a subject and an object you have an ego. It's its own source. I don't see why you would want to speak of another source other than itself.

RG: But that begs the question, Andrew. If the ego is a collection of thoughts and then you're saying the source of thought is thought. It doesn't make any sense. The source of thought is something that's prior to thought.

AH: Yes, Richard, I agree but Anthony made a distinction between bifurcation, subject and object, observer and observed--and pure observation. Those are two terms or two levels of speaking that aren't connected.

RG: But they are, one arises from the other. The bifurcation which is an act of thinking, it seems that it would have to arise from the source of that thinking or the mind when it's not thinking.

PD: I differ with you Richard, from what Tony was saying. That that state of observation doesn't produce the egoity. That's the whole mystery involved there. That there's no productive causality between those two states.

RG: Just because it doesn't produce it, doesn't mean the ego doesn't have its source in it.

DB: Isn't it something like, you've got this impersonal consciousness and you've got this functioning of the World-Idea, these sensations. When they're associated, when that impersonal consciousness associates with the World- Idea, the way in which it associates is in functioning as this ego.

THE SOURCE OF EGO IS MISTAKEN THOUGHT

AD: Look, let's try a really very very simple...we said before that you're listening to music, and there's a moment when you're identified with the music, and there's only the music, and there is no one listening, and there is no thing listened to. It's the same thing as when you are watching something very intently; a moment supervenes where there is nothing but pure seeing or pure observation; there is neither the observer nor the observed. Now if you take this example--the moment when the person is nothing but pure seeing or pure observation, what will bring about the observer and the observed?

LdS: "The slightest preference..."

AD: Don't give me a quote. Give me YOUR remark.

LdS: Any...

AD: Any what?

LdS: Any localization.

AD: Any what?!

LdS: Any point of view.

AD: Any WHAT!?

Students: Thought.

AD: Any thought.

LdS: That's what I meant! (laughter)

AD: So then the source of the ego is WHAT?

Students: Thought.

AD: No, MISTAKEN thought.

Students: What?

LdS: Mistaken because the ego is not really any entity at all. We're speaking of the ego as if it has entitativity. And really what you're saying is this process of thoughts that can or cannot be identified with, or wrongly thought about, is just that process. It doesn't really have any identity.

AD: Try again, Louis. I knew I shouldn't have let you people chop up this logic.

LdS: There's this process of thought...

AD: What did he say there? It's very hard to ferret out the source of thought, the source of the ego, because it requires an acute analysis of your field of consciousness or the perceptions that are going on. It requires an analysis that is so acute that you actually get immersed IN the perception, and you experience--again, the word 'experience' here is just being transposed analogically--but there's what we could refer to as the experience of pure observation. In that instant of pure observation there is only one thing that will produce an ego, and that is the MISTAKEN HABIT OF THINKING. That is the source of the ego.

Johanna G: Mistaken habit of thinking?

AH: That cannot be attributed to the Overself, to a higher principle or would you do so? Would you attribute that mistaken habit to the Overself?

RC: Who makes the mistake?

AD: Can we go on to the next one, Andrew? Can you, first of all, see that this is so? That the ego arises from the mistaken thought, mistaken thinking?

AH: Actually I can't SEE that that is so.

AD: Then why worry about who produces it?

AH: That seems to be about half of our discussion.

EM: Is there any thinking that I do, for example, that isn't mistaken? I just don't exactly understand what you mean by "mistaken." I could imagine someone thinking in a way that is, let's say, very pure and egoless. I could IMAGINE that, but I've never had that experience, and so is all my thinking mistaken thinking?

AD: Is all your thinking preoccupied or related to a center of reference which you're going to refer to as an ego?

EM: I think so. It's hard for me to think of any that isn't.

AD: Then you've answered your question. (pause) If we can go back to the original idea...If we want to ferret the source of the ego, and we analyze the contents of our consciousness, or we're LOOKING at what's happening to us, at what it is, what's right in front of us, that is the perceptual field, and you intensely and very carefully analyze it; you're preoccupied with it; you get to a point, like he said, where YOU are immersed in it, to the point where there IS neither the observer nor the observed. Then we could speak about just pure observation, pure seeing, that's a kind of self-absorption. What's going to break that? Again, you start thinking, and the whole thing starts all over again. There's a fragmentation, there's a division in the mind between subject and object and if you have this division in the mind of a subject and an object you have the consequences. Can you hold on to this point before you run away?

CdA: You described before, that the thinking as a modification that is going on in the body, the bodily organism, the psychosomatic organism...

AD: The consciousness that permeates the brain cells, yes...

CdA: It seems that when we say identification with that thinking process is very mysterious to me. It's like an instant that you can never really find, that instant of identification with the thinking. We can't tell whether the Witness is identifying with the thought or the thought is like grabbing hold of the consciousness. Is that irrelevant?

AD: (?) . . . you know that sentence?

CdA: Is it that thought, the power inherent in the brain cells is grabbing hold of the consciousness? Is the consciousness identifying with those brain cells? Is that even relevant to wonder about that? Because that instinct of identification, it seems, is very crucial in this process. Maybe it's not. Maybe once the identification's taken place it's too late.

LR: It's interesting what you're bringing up. For a second there, there's nothing.

CdA: Less than a second, yes, I means you can't find it.

LR: There's a nothingness.

CdA: And you find yourself immersed in thought.

AD: Let's speak of the self in another way. You remember we spoke about the Self, that sensations can only exist for a mind, right? So the sensation of white which is on a cloud a hundred miles away is something which exists within my mind, and the sensation of having an itchy toe exists within my mind. Why does my mind identify with the itchy toe and not the white cloud?

HS: Because of the habit of previously identifying with toes. (laughter)

AD: I think I gather what you're saying. From its previous history: It's been doing that all along for millennia; it's conditioned to do that and will go on doing that. Now, we're not going to be concerned about the origin of all this, right?--we want to know how to END it. And that means that we have to try to find out where is the source of the ego. And if we go through this process of analyzing the entire perceptual field, and then we get immersed in it, we experience ourselves as pure observation, then the next instance we SEE, all of a sudden, that we have identified with a certain part of that perceptual field,

which brings about the conflict, or the observer and the observed. And so the whole round is started again.

But in that instant, alright, and this is not important--how you identify; the fact is, you DO identify. And that too is a process of thought, of mistaken thought.

CdA: You mean the identification itself is a thought?

AD: Yes, of course. What else is it?

CdA: That's the body thought.

Kathleen D: Why do you say "mistaken" thought and not just thought? Is the mistake because of the lapse of attention? Another way of putting the question is, can you maintain that observation and still think?

AD: The perceptual field will continue; it will not stop. The changes in the perceptual field go on. There's the white cloud moving; now a black one comes. The perceptual field goes on, moment after moment. So we don't have to worry about the changes in the perceptual field, because we're just going to assume they're going on. We go back to the original situation: In this state where you are pure seeing, just looking, observation, why all of a sudden do you choose to identify with a certain part of that field and say, "That's me"? And as soon as you say "That's me," then the other is going to exist, and as soon as the other exists, *samsara* is there. What went on? What went wrong?

KD: You lost your attention.

AD: No, your attention is always there. What happened? What went wrong? Outside of saying "mistaken thinking," "wrong thinking," what else can you say brought about the ego?

Paul D (or Bert): An intrusion of memory?

AD: But that's again the same thing: You're identifying with thought.

JCox: What about mistaken feeling?

S: Same thing.

JC: No, I'm serious. A sympathetic response.

AD: No escape is there. I mean for me.

JC: By "thought" you're including any kind of...

AD: Any kind of cognition and non-cognition, which could be emotional. What went wrong? You were in a nice state, beautiful, alright.

AH: Mistake.

Myra: Is it necessary to analyze the mistake itself?

AD: He gives you two alternatives. He says either you ferret out the source of the ego or you attach yourself to a master. Now the latter is very hard to come by. They're queer birds. You don't find them any more. They're extinct. And if there is one or two, I can assure you he will make sure you do not find

him! So then that leaves us the other choice, right? We have to analyze and ferret out for ourselves the very source of our ego. That is a long, laborious work. Which means that you will constantly observe, watching the field where the content of consciousness is operating on a certain content, and you keep watching it very carefully. You've got to NOT intellectually understand what I'm saying; you've got to PERCEIVE what I'm saying with your mind. Then you say, "There I am again. Here I am all over again. Joe Doe, started up again."

MB: Anthony, actually in what you're saying there's reference to two ways of looking at the source. One of them is the mistaken thoughts which you have to analyze. The other way of looking at the source is that the observation itself is the underlie for the ego and its whole field of activity, that pure observation. And so in one sense that pure observation is the source in a different meaning of the source, a different kind of a cause maybe, as the underlie.

AD: Don't you see, don't you see what you people are doing every time you try to parry my remarks? It's like if we were fencing, you'd be an expert and make sure that I'd never get to you. Because all I want to do is drive home one point and if I had a rapier long enough I'd stick you with it, and that is: what is the source, what is the origin of the ego. That's all I want you to zero in on.

MB: Well, we're not going to give our ego up to that mistake, the way PB says. In other words, in the quote, PB refers to the source in the other sense and I'm trying to relate what you're saying back to this so I don't get hopelessly confused.

AD: Well, that's better than someone who told me as soon as the class is over, he forgot everything.

KD: Could we zero in on the ego again? Could we go back to what you said, "mistaken thought"?

AD: Have you at times noticed, for instance, for yourself, or a child or a person who is in a state of self-absorption, like you've seen your kid--you call it day dreaming. He's just (staring off into space), (Q: last phrase from PC version, but inaudible on tape) and then you say, "Eat your dinner!" And all of a sudden, at that moment, he's got to come out of it. At THAT MOMENT he's got to create an object, the dinner, and a subject who's got to eat that. (laughter) Haven't you had lapses of memory where you just enjoy BEING without doing or thinking? We ALL have these occasional lapses of memory where we just ARE. At that instant, we just are. It only takes ONE thought, and the whole of heaven and hell is produced. All the conflict, anxiety, misery that we're going to know is produced by that thought. And that's why I call it "MISTAKEN THINKING," because the thinking can go on, the thinking can go creating, go on creating the whole of the perceptual manifold, but it doesn't have to identify with a portion of that manifold.

CdA: So what you're calling the mistake is the bifurcation.

AD: Yes.

CdA: Because if you are continually observant, of the manifold, the thoughts may be of the very same nature as they might have been if you had identified with it, but there's no subject and object.

AD: And do you know what kind of world that might be?

CdA: I imagine it would be quite bright and luminous.

AD: Well, it would be quite different than the kind that we ordinarily experience in the state of fragmented or divided consciousness. Because originally, this is what we're like. We're that consciousness that's undivided that way. But once that division takes place, and then the next step follows to further continue in this mistaken way of thinking that you are THIS, now you see the consequence is going to follow. Now Louis made the remark, he said it's because it separates, the ego is that which separates itself from the universal life. But that's a nice general statement. I want you to go through the laborious process of thinking this out for yourself every time and every moment that you have the opportunity. Because that's the only way it's going to happen. It can't happen by parroting someone, but you have to actually watch the mind doing this.

RC: It seems, too, in the sense that you are speaking here of ego as egoism, restrictiveness, being in the bifurcation and so on, that the cluster of sensations in itself is not adequate for that.

AD: Yes.

RC: This impersonal consciousness has to actually go in there and limit itself to that.

AD: That's what I meant when I said if you're looking at the white cloud which is a hundred miles away, and here's something itching your toe, but the identification is not going to take place with the white cloud--although it can, it can. Like you read about the great Masters in art: They'll sit down and they'll look at a bamboo for a month before they finally paint it, because they're trying to achieve that state, divert the attention, identify with the objective. That's why generally I'm inclined to believe that Eastern art tends to be much more objective. You look at the Zen paintings; to me it seems much more objective. So in that very act of identifying with the toe rather than with the white cloud, it isn't an inherent necessity in the toes themselves. It's the preference, the thought, which misidentifies, which wants to identify. So that's what I mean when I say that the ego is basically going to arise because there is mistaken thought.

AH: Anthony, this is spoken of in the quote and in other places as being extremely difficult. It's so very difficult, it's like the ego would rather die than actually do this, is the way we spoke last week about it. Perhaps an inappropriate level of questioning, but just the psychological one, this is a disaster to actually consider doing this. I mean it's experienced as a disaster, a catastrophe, to actually begin to do this. Is that not so?

AD: Yes, but you'll be forced, sooner or later, to do it, when the despair and the misery gets intense enough.

LR: The surprising thing is that it doesn't do it more often. If you're going from a place of utter peace, contentment, serenity, wholeness, it's surprising that you wouldn't want to spend more effort staying there. The force of habit is overwhelming.

AD: Well, of course, you should capitalize and in red letters "the force of habit." That's why I call it mistaken thought, mistaken thinking, because people think that they could rectify that by an intellectual recognition of it. That's not so at all. An intellectual recognition is one thing, but to bend the mind to think correctly is going to require an intense period of training and preparation and constant application.

LR: And what's called the force of habit, isn't that the way you describe the dragon? . . .

AD: Well, you certainly could use that language, but you can also think of it as an historical conditioning that's been going on for millenniums and gets harder and harder the more we participate in it. That's why it's always easier to break a habit in the beginning than after ten, twenty years.

WATCHING THE MIND PUT TOGETHER EXPERIENCE; BECOMING PURE OBSERVATION; OFFERING THE EGO TO ITS SOURCE

AH: Anthony, would you mind speaking a little more about the distinction between an intellectual grasp of this issue and the seeing of it or the perceiving of it?

AD: I'm just trying to think of an example, Andrew. (pause) Let's use an exaggeration. Suppose we said something like this: that the mind puts together the perceived world or whatever is manifested out there for you. You say, "Well, I understand that," so I'll say, "Fine." Now suppose it was possible for me to give you a drug, where the processes of the mind are so slowed down, that you can actually witness the mind put together the variety of all its mnemonic deposits and make an image. And now you watch this whole process. In the first case, it was an intellectual understanding. "Oh, sure, I understand what you mean when you say the mind puts the World-Idea together for you." In the second case, you actually WATCH the mind get all the ingredients it needs, put them together to make the picture for you. That would be to actually perceive the truth of the statement. The other would be an intellectual understanding.

AH: In the second case, the ego itself would experience a kind of disorganization. It would see itself as being put together, rather than as having a self-standing position.

AD: Yes, but the ego won't see that, because the ego is part of the thing that's being fabricated, put together.

AH: The ego can't see that.

AD: No, it can't see that. That's why a glimpse always brings about the understanding of the illusory nature of the ego.

AH: I missed that last sentence, I'm sorry.

AD: A glimpse will always give you the actual perception of the illusory nature of the ego, that you could actually be conscious, be consciousness, and there is no ego, no structured ego there, shows you that it doesn't have any reality, that it's only a series of thoughts. You can actually perceive that. The ego can't perceive that. That's why that's one of the most fundamental issues of mystical experience: the recognition that the ego is illusory. That is fundamental. That is one of the reasons that the Buddhists make such an issue out of that.

CdA: When you said before that if you could slow the mind down you could actually perceive this process of the mind making an image.

AD: Yes, we used that as an example.

CdA: That's all subconscious and that all happens before we are conscious of having a thought. It's the thing that "the image is first." The mind actually goes through this process of putting all the sensations together.

AD: That there is a process of mentation going on of which you are unconscious of is generally accepted now as a truism.

CdA: That's the point that we're speaking of that you can't find when you're looking, when you're watching for that moment of identification, because it happens prior to your conscious state.

AD: Yes, that's true, but there will be enough intuitions to show you and to assure you that that's exactly what's going on. It would be a kind of--a species of intuitive knowledge, when you are just pure observation or pure seeing, and then the subject/object comes into being. You intuit that.

CdA: You're saying that you don't actually have to have that experience of the mind slowing down to the point where you perceive...

AD: You don't have to have the experience of watching the mind fabricating, bringing together all of these things. The process is too fast for us to observe it. But the intuition of it is very, very definite.

CdA: That intuition is an intuition of the beginning of that activity...what is that intuition?

AD: That intuition is about the fact that there's a process of unconscious mentation going on, and that you're going to project that out as the perceptual manifold, and that you're going to identify with a portion within that; the toe.

CdA: This is an intuition you have when you're in the state of Witness consciousness.

AD: No, we said the moment that there arises the subject-object relationship. You won't have an intuition when you ARE in that awareness.

CdA: When you've already identified, it's within the identification that you're going to have the intuition of the process that got you identified.

AD: Well, it's that intermediate realm, or even before it.

CdA: But are you saying that this is an intuition that's necessary in order for you to become established...

AD: No, what I am saying is that it requires for you to be pure observation, pure seeing, to recognize that the arising of the ego depends upon mistaken thought. I got a one track mind.

CdA: I got that part.

RC: Good. Anna?

Anna: Can't you see when that happens, see the powerful source...?

AD: I said, Anna, that that happens too fast to see. You can intuit but it happens too fast. You have to remember that you've been doing this for millennia. The process of bringing together all the necessary component parts of the perceptual field is so fast that you can't see it.

AP: But I don't understand, because you said before that the perception sees-- you have perceptions in that state of observation and they are fabricated by the mind, but that's not what brings the identification with the thought.

AD: No. It's just a question that now your attention--if I could speak of it this way--is MORE on the unconscious mental processes that are going on rather than on that perceptual manifold. When you get the intuition of the way the transposition is going to take place--in other words, the arising of the imaged world.

AP: Even when it is THERE.

AD: But the world is NOT there; the world is always BEING there; it's always in the process of being PUT there. It's not there as something FIXED.

AS: So when the thought stops, you ferret out the ego, what would you say is the practical way to do that? There seem to be, you're saying, too, there's a complementary practical thing. On the one hand, you could say ferret out means the process of getting to that or you could mean it's the actual seeing of it. The actual seeing of it, it seems to require that you become that pure observing without any bifurcation and then to notice that that gets transformed into thought. But from the other side it's a process of inquiry or reflection upon thinking. So you could say that the practical means is the constantly looking at thought to try and inquire into their nature but actually you're saying that you can't really ferret out the source before you become the pure observing itself. As it were the other side of thinking, the obverse side, that's the only way you can really ferret it out. Isn't that right?

AD: Yes.

AS: Two complimentary views, ferreting it out could mean the process of getting here from the side of the thinking or it could mean actually seeing it. To actually see it you have to be on the other side of thought.

LR: (?)

AS: No, I'm just suggesting there are two practical ways to ferret it out. One is to just make the attempt to get to the obverse side of thought. Before you can get to that side, the best you can do is continually try and enquire into it.

LR: . . .

Peter C: Isn't part of that inquiry, even when you are on this side, to be aware that there is this undivided mind...

AD: No, that won't help you. It's better that you don't know that.

PC: It's better not to...

AD: Not to know.

PC: . . . so that you'll just kind of look directly at your thinking, you mean?

AD: Yes. Thinking enquires (Q: PC version=inquires) into its own nature: What's going to happen?

PC: Become pure observation.

AH: It's better not to have a thought of the undivided mind because that's a thought of the undivided mind. It's not it. And that is a way of going in a circle.

LR: And then would you offer the ego to that source. First ferret out the source, then offer the ego to that source.

AD: Once you find out its nature, then you can offer the ego to the Source. Now THAT'S capitalized.

LR: That's not the thinking process, but you'd still call that thought or mind.

AD: I would call that the Source, as capitalized. And he says, oh yeah, that's the Overself, that's the higher Soul. You offer that which you have found out to the higher Soul.

LR: What does that mean? I followed you about getting to that source and being that source, but what do you mean by offering the ego to that source?

AS: Wouldn't it be for instance, if you saw, just seeing that, ferreting it out, you get to this point of pure observation, you can see that it's then the transformation occurs, you're back in thought. In other words you get to this point of pure observation and you haven't destroyed that source of the thought yet because in the next moment or whatever or some while later it will continue and that could keep happening. Getting to the source and recognizing it, and seeing it isn't the same as doing away or destroying the fault in that.

LR: I don't think he's talking about destroying the source.

AS: No, destroying thinking. Stopping it from happening again. Making it permanent?

LR: I'm not understanding the point.

AS: Recognizing why that ego, why that identification, arises not conceptually recognizing, but actually recognizing it, is not the same as preventing it from happening again. Before you can prevent it happening again you first have to recognize it, experience it.

LR: And you are saying that establishment is what you meant by offering the ego to that?

AS: First you've got to recognize that source only then can you offer that up to the higher self.

JG: Is it not the offering, that you discontinue, that you stop what Anthony calls the habit of wrong thinking?

AS: Even if you see that that habit is what's bringing about the ego, that's a good step because you're not conceptualizing, you recognize it. You still come back and it begins operating again. And you go in there and you see it again and it begins operating again.

PD: I could see it just the other way around, though. That you may have to give up the, slay the ego before you can recognize the source. If the ego's present, there is no recognition of the source.

LR: . . .

THE BODHISATTVA IDEAL – SERVICE AND ENLIGHTENMENT OF MANKIND

AD: Isn't that the Bodhisattva ideal? (pause) You're offering to try to be of service. What would you do with it? You realize the illusory nature of the ego. Now what would you do? Are you going to go around saying the ego doesn't exist? Well, what would you do?

CdA: You offer it so that it can become a vehicle.

AD: Yes, you become dedicated to the Higher.

(Q: conversation Linda/Avery?)

LR: . . . It seems like to actually say that that lower habitual power that is going through me will not take me any longer. It's a real thing that happens in the heart.

AS: I think they're giving like a practical way to make that thing permanent. They're saying, you can't dissolve the ego, so what you do is offer it in service.

AD: So what would that mean? What is the Bodhisattva ideal?

Laurie D: Don't you have to resolve to live by the dictates of the Overself rather than by the dictates of the ego? You have to constantly make that resolution and every time a situation comes up you have to try and live that.

AD: Yes, but suppose the Overself isn't--

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1984 0404a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AD: What is the Bodhisattva ideal? To develop wisdom and compassion until all are enlightened. Now this mistaken way of thinking is going to be dedicated to what? (Q: This paragraph from PC transcript version, not on tape.)

CdA: --to the enlightenment of mankind.

AD: Yes. Yes, yes.

EM: It seems that here would have to be a dedication in a certain sense to ALL egos, rather than just to the one that you've identified yourself with.

AD: Well, wouldn't you say the dedication means that you are going to direct this ego, dedicate it to a higher ideal, a higher service. That's what the Bodhisattva ideal is, the way she put it, the service and enlightenment of mankind. So that means that now YOU have to take a direct hand in guiding this karmic continuity.

RC: Could you say a little more that this "enlightenment of mankind" that's being spoken of in quotes, includes oneself rather than meaning other people than oneself, that this working on one's own ego is as much part of the ideal as...?

AD: Yes, of course. But it doesn't require much perception to see that once one recognizes that the continuity of the ego is something that's assured, in the sense that it will always be going on, then you have to take a direct hand in guiding its growth and evolution, not only for its own purposes but for the purposes of mankind. So, I think we could put it that way.

First ferret out the source of the ego. Once you find out what it is, then you get dedicated to the service of the Higher. But until one does, so to speak, ferret out the source of the ego and recognize that it's this thinking that's producing it and that now you have to play a hand in thinking a certain way so that you produce a certain ego, that's the dedication. In other words, this thinking is going to go on; you're going to guide it, and the guidance is going to take away from it the egoism that it operates with.

RC: So here when you go on to speak about the affirmations and recollections, it's not so much that from inside the ego the person is making this statement, "I am this and that and the other thing" so much as that from a perspective outside the ego, it's directing that thought into the ego and trying to make the ego more and more capable of instantiating that thought.

AD: I think I follow you, Randy. "Inside" and "outside" of course is very difficult but I think you're saying that you're poised at that point where thought occurs, and you guide it properly according to the ideals which have been devised by the higher Powers.

RC: Because it's a very different thing for us at this point to be saying, "I am Infinite Peace," given that where we're standing to make the first statement, is the wrong place to bring about the result. But it seems that standing at that point of leverage then that thought "I am this peace" or "I am whatever" is directed INTO the more limited . . .

AD: I think it would be at that point, at what you call "leverage" is where we can properly speak of "As a man thinketh in his heart, so be it with him." [Bible, Proverbs, 23:7]

AS: It would be like the dream analogy. The guy in the dream thinks "I am Peace, I am..." He can't think anything because his thoughts are just reflective, but if he were at the point of the dreamer, the dreamer's mind, that's where he would actually have the power to think the dream. If he were at that point he could think into that dream any qualities he wanted...

AD: And establish them there as part of a continuity. Do you understand the nature of the work that's laid out?

AP: No.

AD: Neither do I. I'm quitting. (laughter)

AP: Could you explain more specifically how you guide the soul?

AD: Anna, I'd like to go back to more quotes. Otherwise with one quote we could expound his whole 28 categories of Philosophy.

Myra: I'd like to ask you one question on the notion of detachment. With respect to what we've been discussing would it make sense to consider detachment from your own selfish interests as part of this path, but you don't want to consider detachment from your perceptual field because that would be an erroneous kind of detachment.

AD: That can't happen unless you go into Nirvikalpa.

MB: That's beyond the state.

DB: Anthony, I just wanted to ask a question about the Bodhisattva Path. From what I have been able to read and understand it doesn't sound as if it's something taken except at the extremes of adversity and defeat. I mean it's not something that you kind of do by an avenue to congratulate yourself on how saintly you're becoming and have it really be legitimate. I'm a little bit confused as to how, what the transition point is within a person who is motivated to do that and that motivation comes from the circle that the ego is working within and the motivation that makes that a legitimate activity. It seems to me that it's not something that's going to happen after a glimpse or after a couple of glimpses but after enough period of time and frustration and so forth has taken place so that you don't seem to have an alternative but you really have a very clear perception of what's going on in your day to day consciousness. Is the question I'm asking...

AD: I'd like to know, what is the question?

DB: How do you know whether someone who professes himself to be on the Bodhisattva path is kidding himself or not?

AD: That's a question for each person's conscience. I can't answer a question like that. A person in his own conscience would have to know that.

PC: Are you asking what do we have to do until we get to the point where we know that that's the real thing?

AH: In the tradition, the Bodhisattva vow is always associated with generating thoughts (of not(?) leaving) (Q: last words hard to hear) cyclic existence. I think that's a way of speaking about putting the ego in perspective. Also the vow includes meditating on emptiness for the benefit of all beings. Those are some of the ways of speaking about that vow. I don't think they ever speak of that vow in a way that would ingratiate the personal ego. I don't know if that responds to your question.

AD: I think that the point David made while he was perambulating around, was very good. Do you know when it's legitimate, when you're not kidding yourself. I think it's an important point; I don't think I could answer it. It's something that each person has to ask in his own heart. You remember the three books that the Dalai Lama gave to me when he came here?

JCox: *Entering the Path to Enlightenment*. [Note: Shantideva, Marion L. Matics (tr.), *Entering the Path of Enlightenment: The Bodhicaryavatara of the Buddhist Poet Santideva*.]

St: *Guide to a Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

AD: And I was absolutely unwilling to consider that: I mean to enter into a lifetime of service or lifetimes of service, unending service. I couldn't even bring myself to pronounce the words. No, it's something everyone has to find out within his own heart. No one could determine that. And I would go further and say that you don't even need a ceremony. When the time comes and you feel that that's the way it is, that's the way you want it, you take that vow in your heart, and it may not even be with words. But it could be carried on very secretly, and in your own heart, in the depths of the stillness, and it's your business from there on.

AH(?): What were the other two books?

AS: One was his book, *Tantra in Tibet*, and the third one was the one *The Essence of Nyingma*. (Q: Mahamudra) [Note: No such title as *The Essence of Nyingma*. As of April 2024, nobody remembers the title of the third book.]

AD: It's just like he gave us a book representing the three baskets of Buddhism, one for each.

AS: The third one was on meditation.

MISTAKEN THINKING AS THE SOURCE OF EVIL; EGO VS. EGOTISM

AD: Alright, let's try another. We got through one.

TS: (to class) I want you to know I didn't pick this one, this was just handed to me.

PB: "An ego we have, we are; its existence is inescapable if the cosmic thought is to be activated and the human evolution in it is to develop. Why has it become, then, a source of evil, friction, suffering, and horror? The energy and instinct, the intelligence and desire which are contained in each individualized fragment of consciousness, each compounded "I," are not originally evil in themselves; but when the clinging to them becomes extreme, selfishness becomes strong. There is a failure in equilibrium and the gentler virtues are squeezed out, the understanding that others have rights, the feeling of goodwill and sympathy, accommodation for the common welfare--all depart. The natural and right attention to one's needs becomes enlarged to the point of tyranny. The ego then exists only to serve itself at all costs, aggressive to, and exploitive of, all others. It must be repeated: an ego there must be if there is to be a World-Idea. But it has to be put, and kept, in its place (which is not a hardened selfishness). It must adjust to two things: to the common welfare and to the source of its own being. Conscience tells him of the first duty, whether heeded or not; Intuition tells him of the second one, whether ignored or not. For, overlooked or misconstrued, the relation between evil and man must not hide the fact that the energies and intelligence used for evil derive in the beginning from the divine in man. They are Godgiven but turned to the service of ungodliness. This is the tragedy, that the powers, talents, and consciousness of man are spent so often in hatred and war when they could work harmoniously for the World-Idea, that his own disharmony brings his own suffering and involves others. But each wave of development must take its course, and each ego must submit in the end. He who hardens himself within gross selfishness and rejects his gentler spiritual side becomes his own Satan, tempting himself. Through ambition or greed, through dislike or hate which is instilled in others, he must fall in the end, by the Karma he makes, into destruction by his own negative side." (8.1.191/Persp. p. 104) (para reread)

(Q: conversation Andrew/ Tim/ Andrew/ Tim/ Andrew/ Carol/ Andrew/ Louis Damiani/ Andrew/ Herbie/ Andrew/ Herbie/ Tim/ Herbie/ Andrew/ Tim/ Andrew/ Peter/ Herbie/ Peter/ Herbie/ Peter/ Herbie/ Carol/ Herbie/ Carol/ Kathy Damiani/ Tim/ Kathy/ Louis DeSarno/ Kathy = plus/minus 10 minutes)

HS: But if everything that you got comes from Heaven, any energy, any intelligence...How did you make the mistake?

(Q: Bert/ Kathy)

AD: Herbie, how did you make the mistake? (laughter)

(Q: Andrew)

RC: Remember Satan's dictum from *Paradise Lost*? "Better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven."

AD: That's already too late. It's the mistake that Herbie made. (laughter)

HS: Where did I go wrong?

AD: I asked you. First of all, Andrew, if consciousness was withdrawn from the body, would a World-Idea appear?

AH: I understood the quote was saying no, that it would not appear.

AD: So in that sense, isn't it dependent upon it? Or, if you could take the version: When you're asleep, there is no world. When you're awake that means that your consciousness is in the body. And the body, and through the senses, the body as a functioning organism and the senses--concomitant with the functioning of the body--there arises an appearance. The arising of the appearance is dependent upon the functioning of the organism. If there is no functioning of the organism, there is no appearance. So to that extent we could say that the World-Idea depends upon the individual organism in order for it to get manifested. Otherwise, you're not going to have a World-Idea.

AH: Earlier tonight, you spoke of a nondual, not bifurcated kind of awareness where the cloud is still white. I'm having a little understanding that white cloud is not the World-Idea from the point of view of pure perception. Is that inappropriate?

AD: Yes. That's not going to help you because that white cloud and the organism that interacts with that, these two are both sides of one and the same thing. The only point I wanted to make here is to recognize the fact that a World-Idea, or the image of the world that we have and know, can only arise through a functioning body. Take consciousness out and there is no appearance, because there is no organism through which an appearance can occur. And now if we go back to Herbie's mistake...Herbie, having mandated all these powers to you, this intelligence, this particle of consciousness which has energy--what happened?

HS: I don't want to say it was a primordial, beginningless mistake.

AD: But why not? Isn't it wrong thinking that leads the person into those errors?

HS: It would be wrong thinking. The perpetuation of previously wrongly held thoughts and a continuation of that previously wrongly held thought in the present instant. I would say yes. But to postulate that it never began or it was beginningless that they talk about?

AD: Even the Buddha pointed out that as far as he looked he could see no beginning. Why worry about the beginning, anyway?

LR: You know the quote about the amoeba? (q: ref = 26.4.257//Persp. p. 368)

AD: Yes.

LR: Can you postulate wrong thinking within that?

AD: What would be wrong thinking there?

LR: In the amoeba?

AD: If you want to go that far down.

LR: I mean you say it's beginningless, there's this unit of life beginning as the tiniest cell. Even there there is an identification with the body. Even if you're an amoeba.

AD: Alright, we don't have to think of ourselves as amoeba, we just think of ourselves as human beings. You inherit the animal body...

LR: . . .

PD: You say the unit of life begins. Right there is a mistake. To separate out the unit of life and you must by necessity maintain the beginning.

LR: No, you maintain egoity.

PD: You maintain an existence that's separate.

LR: Yes, the problem is with the ego. "An ego we have, an ego we are . . ." The problem, I thought, was the egotism.

AD: If we took that situation, "an ego we are," then why start with an amoeba? It wouldn't be appropriate for us to discuss the amoeba.

LR: There does seem to be a point where bad judgment enters in, where there's a choice. I don't think amoeba's have much choice. I don't know.

MB: You can't completely, necessarily ascribe the error to our own bad judgment when we're put in a human situation or an amoeba situation or some kind of situation by some force of evolution that's not what...some cosmic processes are going on as well.

DB: Yes, but don't we do it because we like it.

MB: We do it?

DB: Don't we like our egoity?

AH: But we're talking about that which belongs to nature as if that's what's seeking enlightenment.

MB: I think the point is there is an element within our lives, whatever stage of evolution that we're at that does belong to nature.

AH: We have to give that back to nature. That's not going to go to Heaven. The part of us that rises above that is not what's being spoken of here. The ego and the body and the world belong to the world.

DB: I think the issue here is, it's not because the ego, the body and so forth are not apart of the world, that's what makes them evil, there's some other thing that he speaks of there as clinging and selfishness and so forth which is a distortion of the activity, which is what I understood as being the source of the evil, the distortion of these God-given faculties. That's the hard part.

AD: Would you read that part again where he says at the very beginning.

PB: "An ego we have . . ."

AD: Go on from there.

PB: ". . . Why has it become, then, a source of evil . . ."

AD: Just before that.

PB: ". . . its existence is inescapable if the cosmic thought is to be activated and the human evolution in it is to develop. Why has it become, then, a source of evil, friction, suffering, and horror? The energy and instinct, the intelligence and desire which are contained in each individualized fragment of consciousness, each compounded "I," are not originally evil in themselves . . ."

AD: Alright, that's the part. Continue just another sentence.

PB: ". . . but when the clinging to them becomes extreme, selfishness becomes strong. . . ."

AD: What happened, Herbie? These things in themselves are not evil--the energy, the instinct, the intelligence--all these things are included in the compounded "I." What happened? What went wrong? Doesn't he say in the next sentence what went wrong?

S: Clinging.

AD: Clinging. Now what does clinging do to it?

JG: That's your mistaken thinking, isn't it?

AD: Yes.

JG: Is that the reaction?

AD: Yes. In other words, I had a very pleasant experience two years ago. I cling to it. I'm attached to it. I don't let it go away. I want it AGAIN. I'm clinging to it. So I repeat it, and I repeat it again. Now the clinging becomes stronger, the selfishness becomes greater. What went wrong originally? It's mistaken thinking.

HS: You would say that in the far past, you went off by half an inch or a millimeter and once you're off, you're off. Once your thought is wrong...

AD: Then it has certain consequences.

HS: And every subsequent thought or pattern of thought...

AD: That repeats that, makes that stronger.

HS: You're off by . . .

AD: More and more.

LR: Would that be the special law of karma and not the general. In other words he says the evolution is to develop. That in itself is not evil. That's like the general law of karma. The evolution will continue. But now the responsibility for one's thought, one's mistaken thought, that seems to be the special law. That

mistake does, in a sense, have a beginning. It has a beginning with the point in evolution where you begin to think with the self-conscious ego. It seems only there is the possibility for mistaken identity allowed.

HS: But since you began thinking yourself, it would be fair to assume that a lot of mistakes might have slipped in and now there's like a knotted collection of cords where the mistakes are intertwined.

AD: What would bring about a mistake, Herbie? Isn't it that you no longer think of the whole, but you're thinking of the part? And you're working within the part and you're understanding as a part. Wouldn't that be, again, mistaken thinking. And isn't the consequences of that have their own momentum and a snowball effect?

Why is, for instance--in a passage that is unrelated completely to this--does PB speaks about the master stroke of this philosophy is that it has the thinking turning upon itself to solve the riddle.

REMAIN AS UNFRAGMENTED CONSCIOUSNESS

HS: Remember he speaks, "upon the Ariadne's thread of thought."

AD: That really is fundamental, isn't it, in all his--in his outlook? Thinking is really the fundamental problem. We have to understand the nature of thinking. And the only way we can understand the nature of thinking is by doing precisely what he said and have thinking think about itself. It'll come to a dead stop. But that's beside the point right now.

It's only when a person sees that thinking is creative of his world that he can see that right thinking and wrong thinking is going to create all the horrors he's going to live with.

HS: You have to do more than begin to think right; you have to go back and unravel previously wrong thought?

AD: Well, you see, that would be endless. The important thing is to do correct thinking, now. Never mind about the past. But to see the thinking that's going on and to see how it is mistaken and correct it. Correct thinking is when you're pure observation, pure seeing. As soon as that's deviated from, there's mistaken thinking.

HS: When you're speaking that way you're not wiping out the grades of knowledge that could be within so-called conceptual thought?

AD: No.

HS: You would permit correct thinking to include those.

AD: That would be quite secondary.

Kathleen: Would you say that correct thinking would be equivalent to . . .

[Audio File 1984 0404a Ends]

[Audio File 1984 0404b Begins]

AD: [Not on tape: To permit the World-Idea to be manifested through you without] you distorting it: That's correct thinking. In other words, if we go to a lower level, we spoke about you being pure looking, pure seeing, pure observation. The perceptual manifold goes on manifesting. Correct? You're not

interfering. Why? Because you're not going to identify with a portion of that; You're going to remain as mind, unfragmented consciousness. Then that would be correct thinking.

HS: Would you say that becomes a tendency that then gets built up to remain as mind?

AD: Yes. You remain, so to speak, more and more the whole, and you refuse to identify with the part. And this doesn't turn you into some kind of clown, that you go around permitting people to use you for a doormat.

CdA: This is the only solution to selfishness. As soon as you would identify with a part of it...

AD: Then the train of error must follow. As soon as you identify with a portion, with that mind which divided itself into a subject and an object, as soon as you permit that, then the train of consequences are inevitable. They must follow.

CdA: So even if you saw that you had all of these vices or weaknesses, to try to correct them within the frame of the ego subject is...

AD: Well, we have to try to do that anyway, but the trouble is that your ego will get reinforced.

CdA: It's not going to be successful.

AD: That is not the way to ultimate success. But that does not preclude the efforts that you should make to overcome that. It will NOT guarantee ultimate success. Ultimate success will only come when you reinstate yourself in the original and undivided whole that you are.

LD: If we speak like this and we say consciousness clings to these thoughts and consequently mistaken thinking takes place then that implies the mistake was inherent in the consciousness to begin with and so the mistaken thinking...the origin of the problem still is within the higher self, is still within consciousness. For consciousness to make the mistake and begin the clinging...

AD: You see, you're going to escape. You're looking for an escape route. You're going to get into the etiology or the genesis of the disease instead of getting rid of the disease. You say "now all this is due to the fact that my consciousness is fallen, etc, etc." And I'm saying never mind that. What counts now is: Look, and keep looking; understand the way your mind operates, see what it's doing, trace it back, and you'll see that eventually your mind or your consciousness is splitting up. Watch that process until the point where you get immersed in it and you become just pure seeing. You tell me, look--tell me, before you get that doctor to pull this arrow out of my chest, I want to know what his name is, his vocation, where his family comes from, and you go down the list. And by the time I finished telling you all that, you'll be dead and buried.

LD: I agree and all that but practicality has to be somewhat coherent with theory and the two are always trying--[to be] (Q: to be not on tape) held together.

AD: But, Louis, don't you see I try to restrict myself to the immediacy of the quote that's involved and I keep trying to cut off these questions that will take us to an exposition of the whole doctrine. Then you're going to ask me, "Why did consciousness cling to something? What's inherent in consciousness?" Then we have to go back and try to understand how the nature of or the Idea of Man in its full development is

included in Being and how it is all non-evolutionary. I don't want to go into that. All I want to do is present you with the immediacy of the quotation, the extreme value it has. If you just restrict the understanding to what we're talking about. The tendency to become theoretical is rampant. Those of you who read the Traditionalists know this. They call it Intellectual Intuition. But the immediacies of the case require that you understand this. And what is it that I wanted you to understand right now?

S: This--

AD: You see how the mind is always providing its own escape route? Now, very often we think that the questions we ask are relevant, and I have to, of course, go along with that because I don't want you to get too angry with me. But the fact is that those questions are really irrelevant--now we're getting down to a level of understanding that has to be applied to the immediacy of the situation.

And when he spoke about ferreting out the source of the ego, I wasn't speaking of theory; I was speaking about something you've got to do. You've got to watch every time a thought comes into your mind. You've got to understand the nature of that thought. You've got to see what it's doing. You've got to trace it to its origin. You've got to keep doing that with the perceptual field, from moment to moment, as it's going on. You can't allow yourself to be comfortable in the psyche. You know, that's like taking a girl for a cup of coffee and enjoying her company. It's what I call "the living dead."

And we're all guilty of it. It's very hard work to constantly keep looking at your mind, seeing the way the ego is always surreptitiously or nefariously, slyly, always throwing those things up, always, without letting go, never stopping.

JG: Suppose you see that, what's the next thing?

AD: Well, after the shock wears off, if you see, then you begin to get an idea of the task that's ahead. You get an idea of the magnitude of the task ahead of you. Because you're no longer children; you're no longer neophytes or beginners. You've penetrated this teaching to some extent now, and you're going to have to start applying some of it. That's the hurtful part. When you see it, I would really have a reason to resign, to retire, go away for . . . (inaudible)

JG: We'll make sure we won't see it.

AD: You'll have no need of anyone.

JG: Is it that clear?

AD: You know. I don't mean by that you know the Ultimate. I mean YOU KNOW what your task is.

And that's why a lot of talk, we did a lot--I mean we have and are doing a lot of metaphysical talk, but like in some of the classes I'm really trying to get down on the ground, now. That's why I'm going to, more and more often, restrict a lot of conversation. Not that I don't want you to talk but I just want to corner--every now and then corner your attention on a point that is of EXTREME value. Alright, Thank you. I'm sorry we only did two notes. It seems that we're getting slower.

LR: Long notes.

AD: Long notes? Well there's still only two . . . Thank you.

Students: Thank you Anthony. [Audio File 1984 0404b Ends]