

**CLASS at Wisdom's Goldenrod, Hector, NY
with Anthony Damiani (AD)
July 25, 1984
PB PARAS; EGO**

TOPIC: PB Paras
SUBJECT: Ego

SUBSUBJECTS: Soul, Mentalism, Relativity, Meditation, World-Idea, Astrology, Two Kinds of Consciousness

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I AND NOT-I ARE INTERTWINED

DESIRE, INSTINCT, ETC., ARE BUILT INTO THE BODY BY THE WORLD-MIND; THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATING ON QUOTES

TWO KINDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

BOOKS READ FROM OR REFERENCED:

- Paul Brunton, *Notebooks*. 16 vols; Vol. 1 entitled *Perspectives*.
- Plotinus, *The Enneads* (MacKenna translation, 4th ed.)

PLOTINUS QUOTES READ OR REFERENCED: III.4.6

NOTE: Earlier transcript versions exist, including Scan File 1984 0725C2-05R27.PDF.

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AUDIO FILES: 1984 0725a, 1984 0725b. [Note 1: “Tape” and “Side” refer to original audio cassette tapes that were later digitized into .MP3 Audio Files. Note 2: In 2024, REP Studio separates off Jeff Cox class fragment from file b.]

1984 07/25 at Wisdom's Goldenrod

PB Paras; Ego

Readable Edited Transcript

I AND NOT-I ARE INTERTWINED

[Audio File 1984 0725a Begins]

PB: "Such is this relativity of all things to their knower that because the world we experience is *our* mental world, we never see the world as it really is in itself or as a being who was observing it from outside would observe it. The consequence is that we never see the world without unconsciously seeing the world mixed up with the self. The "I" plus something other than the "I" constitute our field of consciousness. We never know the world-in-itself but only the world-in-a-state-of-interaction-with-the-self. We never know the self-in-itself but only the self-in-a-condition-of-interaction-with-the-world. Such are the actual and compulsory conditions of the so-called experience of the world and our so-called experience of the self." (19.1.72 and Perspectives, p. 234)

PB: "What does experience mean in the light of this analysis? It means not only that the world in itself is never known in isolation but also that the "I" is likewise never isolated." (19.1.73)

(Q: above two paras read by jf; student discussion follows on above through remainder of Tape 1, Side 1 and continuing 1/3 through Tape 1, Side 2)

(Side 1 of original cassette tape digitized as 1984 0725a Ends; Side 2 Begins)

AD: Did someone else study a quote, and wants to read it and explain it? Is there another one?

LdS: I have one.

AD: Good. Quote it, assuming that you've meditated upon it, and you're quoting it, and you are going to explain it to us.

(quote read by LdS)

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 and Perspectives, p. 104)

(Q: student discussion follows upon above para through end of Tape 1 and beginning of Tape 2, Side 1)

[Audio File 1984 0725a Ends]

[Audio File 1984 0725b Begins]

AD: Try another quote. How many machines we got?

St: Three, four...

AD: Let's try another quote. You got one...good...let's hear it. We're shifting to the back. So we'll have our own conversation and you'll struggle to hear us. Good.

PB: “The desire to continue life in the ego contains all possible desires. . . .” (first line only read; complete para below)

AD: Well, let's have the whole quote, have some discussion.

PB: “The desire to continue life in the ego contains all possible desires. This explains why the hardest of all renunciations for which a man can be asked is that of his ego. He is willing even to suffer mortifications of the flesh or humiliations of his pride rather than that last and worst crucifixion.” (8.4.228 and Perspectives p. 105)

AD: Ok, now explain it. . . . How could the ego contain all possible desires?

PB: “The desire to continue life in the ego . . .”

AD: Alright, so if you take the life in the ego...if you put life into the ego...how is that the source of all desires?

CD: Well there's two ways. If you look at the life itself, that life of the soul that desires what we like, that seems very primary. In that sense, I could see that that one desire could hold all the other desires, could encompass all the other desires.

Because he's saying “the desire to CONTINUE life in the ego”--it sounds like desire is outside of the ego . . .

(Q: 10 minute student discussion)

LR: Anthony, what do you think the quote means?

AD: This one here? The one you just read?

LR: Yes, you Anthony (Q: inaudible)

AD: Would you read the quote again? Read it to them.

PB: "The desire to continue life in the ego . . ." (para reread)

AD: Plotinus points out the need to bring the embodying soul to rein--you remember that quote?

(Q: finding quote, hard to hear)

Plotinus, III.4.6: "Emancipated souls, for the whole period of their sojourn there above, have transcended the Spirit-nature and the entire fatality of birth and all that belongs to this visible world, for they have taken up with them that phase of the Soul's existence in which the desire of earthly life is vested. This phase may be described as 'that which becomes divisible among bodies', for it is what enters bodily forms and multiplies itself by this division among them."

AD: I think you asked my opinion about this quote?

I think it's referring to that--that that's the ultimate relinquishment the Soul has to make is the desire to get embodied. So if we think of our spirit or Soul as this vast universal spirit, which is the same with the Undivided Mind of our solar system and as one with that; and if there is a part within that spirit that seeks any kind of embodiment then we can imagine that that which seeks embodiment will come down, let's say, to this planet earth. When it does so, it must combine with a certain number of ideas. This combination, at a certain instant, produces what we are going to call that individual fragment of life which belongs to the cosmos, and which the soul identifies with. From there on, it's like the reason-principles have been implanted into that organism--that body-mind complex--just like seeds. In the seed there is already the plan and the structure of the future plant. Similarly, the instant that the combination of these ideas, with that embodying soul or that desire which belongs to the Soul which seeks to get embodied, these two get combined and then you have the ego and its world. So if you start with the first quote . . . Remember the first quote, would you read it?

(Q: PC reading)

PB: "Such is this relativity of all things to their knower that because the world we experience is *our* mental world . . ."

AD: "Is our mental world" . . . the world experience is our mental world. Would he mean that mind that projects consciousness onto this world and combines it with the ideas that in their totality constitute this world--you have this combination of the ideas and this consciousness. Would that be the combination that he's speaking about? Read it again.

PB: "Such is this relativity of all things to their knower that because the world we experience is *our* mental world . . ."

AD: In order for us to say it's our mental world we have to conceive of the world as being mental. Let's just temporarily admit that we're mentalists. What would that mean? If we wanted to talk to each other, what would it mean to say that this is a mental world? Don't we mean that everything that we experience are the ideas or are ideas? Isn't that what the degree symbolism indicates? That anything and everything that we can experience, which includes our own subjectivity, would have to be the ideas, or some combination thereof? Now, if that is so, you have this inextricable winding of these two factors: on the

one hand, consciousness which is an activity of Mind, and on the other hand, the ideas that in their totality are the world. These two together are going to be inextricably mixed together. And you're not going to be able to separate one from the other--not in your ordinary experience--impossible. So if you read a little bit more?

PB: "... we never see the world as it really is in itself or as a being who was observing it from outside would observe it. . . ."

AD: So why can't we see the world as it is in itself? Because we always have to see it through these ideas that organize or constitute our being. So how can you see the world in itself? You're like in a submarine that is made out of curved mirrors and everything you see outside is going to be distorted.

PC: Would you say that if you were seeing from the Witness position that would still be true, because you'd be seeing it...

AD: You wouldn't be seeing anything from the wisdom (Q: that's what transcribers heard) position. There isn't an objective world that you're going to see from the wisdom position. If by wisdom position you mean the functioning, the spontaneous functioning of the solar system.

Students: ...Witness...

AD: There's not going to be anything outside it.

PC: So you wouldn't still be limited to the specific ideas that constituted your . . .

AD: You wouldn't be limited. Alright. Read it.

PB: "... The consequence is that we never see the world without unconsciously seeing the world mixed up with the self. . . ."

AD: The world and the self are inextricably mixed up together. There is no way around that. And the fact was that the Monday classes were essentially devoted to DRIVE THAT POINT HOME, and that's why everybody left and went home. (laughter) It's the most disgusting thing that you can become aware of. When you read those degree symbols and you say, "but, this is what I think I am?" And you read the meaning of this degree and then that degree and that degree. . . Sure, you're going to go home very disgusted.

Metaphysics isn't always very enticing and romantic. Sometimes it can be pretty nauseating.

PC: Anthony, do you think that the self there is the consciousness as opposed to the . . .

AD: As soon as he puts it in relationship with the ideas it's nothing but consciousness and the ideas mixed together--ego.

PC: So when you say self and world, you don't think he means...

AD: He means EGO!!!

PC: Ok, but. . .

AD: You have no ego without a world; there is no world without an ego.

PC: Are you putting both those things on the side of the world, and then saying the self is consciousness?

AD: Am I putting them on the side . . . ?

PC: When he's talking about the self and the world does he mean the subjective pole of the ideas and the objective pole. . .

AD: Isn't what he means, "the self and the world" is that consciousness which is mixed with the ideas.

For instance, if I have a film, I project a film out there, and the light shines through the film and illuminates the cinema. Now the man or the picture--imagine a man in the film--he thinks that HE IS that consciousness, but the consciousness is the light illuminating the film. Now how do you separate them? Would it be meaningful to separate them? Or can you separate them?

PC: The light and the film?

AD: Yes. Just like the consciousness and these ideas, the two of them combined would be the self and the world.

PC: And we can't separate them.

AD: You can't. That's all talk.

RC: Why would shining the light on them make it so we couldn't know them as they were?

AD: The light on them--as soon as you project the light onto them you are speaking about an organization of ideas. Because that is what you mean when you say "the light is shining on those ideas." That is what you mean when you say "the Soul gets embodied." Again, this is moving to the quote I had which I wanted to wait . But when he speaks about the cosmos producing. . . let's wait, let's get to it. . . the quote that Louis read (Q: "An ego we have . . .") . . . let's continue with this.

PC: You're putting the subjective and objective pole of the ideas on one side.

AD: The subjective and objective pole?

PC: The ideas usually divide themselves up into contents which we take as subjective, and other contents which we take as the objective world.

AD: All I'm doing, all I mean is...the consciousness that is mixed with the ideas. In other words, you have Saturn on one degree Aries and its opposite, one degree Libra. That is the thought part. The consciousness is neither of them nor the combination of them. If you bring in consciousness, and it pervades that Saturn one degree Aries-Libra; now you have this combination of ego.

Separate them? You can, theoretically, just for the purposes of understanding what we're talking about. Alright, now if you do that...

Just think of it that way, think of this consciousness as combined or pervasive, or overshadowing or presiding over this combination of ideas. OK? Read some more.

PB: "... The "I" plus something other than the "I" constitute . . ."

AD: The "I" plus something other than the "I" . . . -- What is the "I" in this case? Isn't it the consciousness which is going to combine with something other than the consciousness? It would have to

be these thoughts. Why do you think I was so concerned about you people working on the Monday class? Because it is a practical application of abstract philosophic principles which you don't understand until you bring them down into the empirical. What (the hell) is the sense of telling me you understand ontology when you can't see it in the person? That is why I thought the classes were important.

PC: That light that's pervading the film, if you were in a Witness state . . .

AD: Never mind that now. You people have a habit of, I don't know what to call it but--you're not fanatical enough, when you follow a point, stick to the point. Get the point over with.

LD: Say it again. . . The "I" and something outside the "I"? . . .

AD: And something else, yes.

LD: The "I" is the consciousness?

AD: The "I" is the consciousness. In PB's terminology, Mind projects from itself this consciousness or this activity which combines with the ideas which we say is the network of the planetary intelligence. And the combination of these two, at a certain instant, is a cosmic production. Which contains, the way he says, instinct, intelligence, etc... Go ahead.

PB: "... We never know the world-in-itself . . ."

AD: How could you know the world in itself? All you know are ideas. You don't know the unity or the Lord of the World. You don't know the entity that is the Lord of the World. All you know are His ideas. For all you know the Lord of the World may be nothing but pure light.

Go on.

PB: "... only the world-in-a-state-of-interaction-with-the-self. . ."

AD: That's all you know. All you know is the way your consciousness is interacting with that network of intelligence which we call the planet? And the planet has to be very intelligent, right? It has to know, and be able to function in this solar system. Like the North Pole is a magnetic pole, and the south and how it can wheel around and provide for everything within it.

The Planetary intelligence is overwhelming; you can call it the World-Mind as far as you and I are concerned. And as far as you and I are concerned, it is infinite. And when you pray and you thank the Lord for the food, you're thanking that planetary intelligence for providing food for your body.

PB: "... We never know the self-in-itself . . ."

AD: You don't know the self-in-itself, right. . . You don't know that self or that consciousness distinct from its involvement with the body. You don't. When you do, you are an illuminated man or at least you are getting a nice big glimpse.

PB: "... but only the self-in-a-condition-of-interaction-with-the-world. . ."

AD: Alright, let's go to the next quotation. That's why this whole symbolism is so beautiful. You could pinpoint what we're talking about: the I and the not-I, the combination of these two, you know right away the not-I, well that's got to be the Ideas because that's what I am constituted of, all these tendencies. And

that consciousness interacting with all these tendencies that's who I think I am. And if you think you're going to separate yourself from that by talk, oh boy, you've got surprises coming. Let's go to the next quote (Q: and inaudible) . . . busy a long time.

DESIRE, INSTINCT, ETC., ARE BUILT INTO THE BODY BY THE WORLD-MIND; THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATING ON QUOTES

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. . . ."

AD: OK, you, stop there because that is the gist. You have to understand that, right there what he's talking about. He is saying the cosmic thought, or the thought of the World-Mind, in order for it to be developed or evolve, each one of these egos that it is producing, must develop. So consequently, built into that organism is what? He tells you! What's built into it? Oh come on, go drink some coffee, you need it. Instinct, intelligence, what else?

LdS: Instinct, intelligence, desire, energy.

AD: OK. They're built into it. In other words, the cosmic thought, the thought of the World-Mind builds into the body all these things that you need. You don't think it is going to depend on YOUR intuition.

Like, you get an exercise--sleep with your head north. Why? Because that is where the kundalini energy is coming into the body. That's the advantage of sleeping with your head to the north. That means that the magnetic pole of the Earth is where this force is coming from, and they would call it Mahakundalini, and if it gets activated in you, it's "little kundalini." (Q: laughter) In your body, I mean.

Now if all those things are built into the body you are going to be able to see why the body is going to be the seat in which ALL desires can arise. Once you hook into the ego or the psychosomatic, that's all you need to do. Every desire that you want--the craving for existence gets fulfilled right there. You don't have to go anywhere, and you don't need a big universe; it will satisfy you completely. The body represents all these tattvas working together.

Alright, what was the next quote?

LdS: Ok, he says all these elements you just listed--the energy, the desire, the intelligence, and so on, that are built right in, he says are not evil in themselves. . .

AD: Try to realize too, when the World-Mind spawns the psychosomatic organism it's a child. It's its child. It loves its child. But, boy, that love is going to be turned around and it's going to become self-love. . . We don't have to go to the rest, the rest of the quote is obvious. As soon as that self-love is there, the rest inevitably follows.

LdS: Would that follow in line with Carol's quote, where we spoke of the desire in the soul, that aspect in soul which has desire for earthly embodiment? Now, that would be the fundamental desire that pulls it toward this embodiment. Now taking embodiment includes all these elements that we've listed, all these desires, intelligence, energy and so on, but it's the fundamental desire in the soul itself, in that ray goes forth to take body, that is the clinging. Isn't that that makes for the error?

AD: Yes, that's where the clinging basically comes from--the Soul's desire or craving for existence.

LdS: So there's nothing wrong so to speak or evil about the desires that are built into the psychosomatic organism a priori from the World-Idea.

AD: No, they are placed there by a superior intelligence. It is appropriate that the body has certain desires for food. If your tastes aren't perverted it tells you what to eat; if they are, you won't get the signals. So those signals are a necessary part. They're built into the body. But there is something else that also comes along with it when this desire for individuality starts growing. Then you have a whole different ballgame.

What was the next quote? What you have to do really, is if you want to make something worthwhile, it isn't enough to read the quotation to the class, because most of us know how to read. (Q: laughter) You really have to do this: Now, tonight, you go home, and you say you're going to next week read a quote, pick out a quote that you want, or two weeks from now, START MEDITATING ON IT. Because there's worthwhile material to meditate on. I kind of suggested that. Plotinus is the same way. Although with Plotinus you're practically forced into a meditative state because of the difficulty of the way he expresses himself, and PB sounds more simple, more straightforward. But don't be fooled--there's treacherous depths hidden in that simplicity, and you really have to sit quietly and try to see what he's saying, and then expound it or say it in class. Even if you're wrong, there will be something right, in what you're saying. . . I'm sorry to interfere in your class. (Q: laughter)

AB: Well, you're forgiven. (Q: big laugh from class)

AD: (inaudible). Try one more quote. Remember the one we left off with last week? You got to answer it.

(Q: quote not read here, quote is:)

TWO KINDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

PB: "There are two kinds of consciousness, one is in ever-passing moments, the other ever-present. The one is in time, the other out of it. The ordinary person knows only the one; the enlightened sage knows both." (19.3.182)

AD: Two kinds of consciousness, one is psychological, the other is metaphysical? There is the consciousness, for instance, which, if you meditate a great deal and intensely, you reach fundamentally and ultimately a Stillness beyond which there isn't anything. That's Nirvikalpa. That's what the Vedantists talk about. Then there is another kind, the kind that the Buddhists talk about. . . that says, alright, now you reach that fundamental consciousness, you have to take that consciousness and you have to apply it to the World-Idea and understand the World-Idea. So in the World-Idea you understand that this body provides you with wakeful consciousness, dream consciousness, Prajna or sleep consciousness, and you got to penetrate with that mind that you have now developed, into the World-Idea and understand the World-Idea.

So that you understand that the World-Idea which is moving by instant-by-instant, you can see, "Oh yes, the Buddhists are right about this here." And then you have to see that the Vedantists are right about the other part, that there's this abiding transcendental consciousness which never alters, is never any different (last two words hard to hear). That's what I mean when I say that, when you reach that, that is the ultimate in you. When you reach that you know that that's the ultimate, and you know that is more like psychological, that's an introversion into your own being. Whereas the other is like--extroversion would be the wrong word--but a penetration into the consciousness of the World-Mind and its various

states. So I said that you have to try to understand these two consciousnesses and put them together so that you could answer almost any question that comes up in metaphysics. I'm getting my breath back-- you just be patient, and I'll be cursing at you in a couple of weeks. (laughter)

But try it. Try the quote thing, it's really worthwhile. I think you'll find that if you experiment-- take a theme, think about it. Look at how much you waste during the day: you drive, you go to work, you got a blank mind; you get to work, you still got a blank mind. (laughter) You're (typing), you got a blank mind, you come home, you got a blank mind, you're (eating/reading), you got a blank mind. Take one of these thoughts and dwell on it. Make it a mantram, keep saying, "Well what does this mean?" and keep occupied with it. You don't have to go around with a blank mind.

Good night.

Students: Good night.

[Audio File 1984 0725b Ends]

(Q: various topics are discussed in this class: "the ego," plus mentalism/relativity, meditation, World-Idea/astrology. We may want to save appropriate material for the later categories.)