

Dr. STEFAN DE SCHILL

1.

Being seasoned with a gracious voice,  
obscures the show of evil.

Shakespeare

Biography as a form has become the revenge  
of little people on big people.

Edmund White

Character assassination for fun and profit

It takes a special kind of disposition to devote oneself to writing scandalous biographies, a modern version of body snatching, as well as kiss-and-tell books. Both are a sordid and growing industry. Jeffrey M. Masson succeeds in combining both genres in the four books of his series.

We are appalled when innocent bystanders are killed by gun fire between drug dealers. However, when two publicity-hungry " mental health professionals " join forces to seek personal benefit, even if it means besmirching the reputation of an outstanding ethical human being, hardly anyone raises a finger.

A title in huge letters on the front page of the New York Times Book Review Section of February 7, 1993 calls attention to Jeffrey M. Masson's " My Father's Guru." The " Guru " referred to turns out to be Paul Brunton, a dedicated philosopher and an expert on spiritual writings as well as the comparative study of religions. The reviewer of the book is Robert Coles, an author of many books and a child psychiatrist at Harvard.





It has never been my inclination to comment on sensationalist assertions made on the level of supermarket tabloids. However, while re-establishing the truth about a kind and dedicated human being, namely Brunton, one finds the key to a clear understanding of Masson's repetitious pattern of "serial defamation." One can thus invalidate his diatribes against psychotherapists and their craft. Furthermore, by pointing out the fallacies of his writings, one is enabled, once more, to gain insight into the level of competency of so many psychotherapists : surely, psychotherapists commanding sufficient expertise would have shown far more hesitation in giving serious attention to Masson's propositions. His efforts to gain fame would have died in the bud.

In his book about Paul Brunton, Masson revels in completely unfounded fabrications which precisely follow the pattern of his accusations in his past. Even though Masson's repetitious behavior becomes quite obvious, Coles utterly fails to detect the stereotyped ploy. Once more, Masson has rewritten history with a vengeance - to his benefit and the detriment of others. Brunton is one of many people who, over the years and starting with Freud, have been wantonly maligned by Masson.

Let us provide details. The reviewer, Robert Coles glowingly refers to Masson as an idealist who exposed the whole pernicious fabric of psychoanalysis. Early in his review Coles makes the following statement :

Masson ... foresook a promising career as a psychoanalyst of exceptional intellectual gifts. He did so because he concluded that Freud's emphasis on the idea that childhood seduction is primarily a phantasy, rather than remembrance of actual fact, represented a failure of moral nerve...

Coles continues by giving a synthesis of Masson's acerbic criticisms of psychoanalytic therapy, to which he wholly subscribes. Then he states :

The last chapter ( of Masson's book " Final Analysis&"\*) was especially dramatic, for it was an account how Mr. Masson was cast out of the profession at the Freud Archives and discharged from the International Psychoanalytical Association after he took on psychoanalytic principalities and powers.

\* Addison-Wesley, Reading, MA, 1990





Continuing, Coles thus quotes Masson from the above mentioned book :

I was stripped of all rank, like a disgraced soldier.

Coles, the reviewer of Masson's book, is quite familiar with Masson's previous writings and the pattern of his relationship with authority figures. The initial part of Coles' review is devoted to Masson's "debunking" of Freud, analysts, and the institutional world to which they belong. Coles accepts Masson's assertions without the slightest reservation. Even better : he paints a picture of Masson as a shining liberator and a fearless fighter for truth and honesty. Here is a quote from Coles' review referring to Masson's previous books attacking analysis and analysts : "he called his one-time profession a 'cult'; he provided the reader with instances of analysts' smugness, vulgarity and callousness ; and he offered a tough, unrelenting critique of the institutional world to which they belonged. His disapproval was conveyed in an accessible, engaging, erudite voice."

I dare say that Coles is hardly qualified to judge who might be a competent and responsible psychotherapist or not, such as when he states that Masson "foresook a promising career as a psychoanalyst of exceptional intellectual gifts." We shall return to this shortly. In Coles' case the reader will not need to read his many books to evaluate his level of competence. I believe that this examination of his review will be entirely sufficient.

Coles, without the slightest knowledge of the matter at hand, irresponsibly asserts that Masson is "alert and knowing" when he calls Brunton a "phony, a charlatan, a mountebank, an impostor, a quack." In short, Masson calls Brunton a sociopath. Nothing





could be further from the truth as I and a number of respected mental health professionals can testify. Thus the question is : " Who is the sociopath here ?" Here the reader will be able to decide.

Unfortunately, many people are reluctant to set the record straight because Masson is most eager to sue anyone who does so. The mechanics of the legal system work well for Masson. Lawsuits, because of the publicity they engender, seem to be welcome grist to his mill. On the other hand, a dead Paul Brunton cannot sue. Nor can Masson's analyst, Kurt Eissler, defend himself and reveal that the statements of his " patient " are untrue and self-serving. Let us point out that Masson, for very good reasons, did not dare to utter a whisper concerning Brunton while he was alive. This too will be explained later.

Because of my interest in psychological influences, both positive and negative, which religious and spiritual beliefs and practices may have on the human psyche, a friend, Professor Otto Klineberg, put me in contact with Paul Brunton in 1945. Professor Klineberg was Chairman of the Department of Social Psychology at Columbia University, Visiting Professor at the Sorbonne, Honorary President of the World Federation of Mental Health, Member of the Board of Governors of the American Mental Health Foundation.

At that time, Professor Klineberg advised me that he had utmost esteem for Paul Brunton whom he knew well as a person and as an outstanding expert on eastern and western ancient and modern religions.

Thus, I was in contact with Paul Brunton since 1945, initially by correspondence. In early 1948, we finally were able to meet in person, and since then were in frequent contact, both in the United States and in Europe, until his death in 1981. I was most favorably impressed by Paul Brunton's sober and scholarly expertise in religious and spiritual matters as well by his personal integrity and charitable character. Brunton and I would routinely discuss the impact of various materialistic, religious and spiritual life styles as well as superstitions and aberrations that might endanger the individual's emotional welfare. He told me about many specific examples, positive and negative, without ever mentioning names. He often asked me for any psychodynamic comments I might be able to make regarding the people he described. My comments necessarily had to be very tentative, and, much of the time, were limited to asking for additional information. Brunton refers to our conversations in one of his books, and they are also mentioned in his biography. Brunton never mentioned names. However, from Masson's references







to his childhood, I, because of the most unusual characteristics and circumstances, easily recognized the family as matching Brunton's descriptions of them as well as his concerns about them. However, many of the important particulars as told by Brunton were significantly dissimilar from those narrated by Masson. It is easy to understand why Masson fabricated a very different story. I will return to this shortly.

Masson refers to Brunton as a " guru " and also claims that he faked psychic phenomena, such as table levitation. Such assertions are contrary to fact. Not only to me personally, during over 35 years of our acquaintance, but also to his numerous friends, as well as in his many writings, did Brunton consistently warn against gurus and the participation in psychic practices, both being a formidable obstacle to those wishing to engage in a spiritual path. The Massons had all of Brunton's books, and it would have been utterly impossible for Brunton to propose the practices of which Masson and Coles accuse him.

Besides Professor Otto Klineberg, I know of at least four competent mental health professionals of great integrity who, because of their cultural and philosophical interests, became friendly with Brunton and thought of him most favorably : Gustav Byschovski, Nandor Fodor, Denise LaHullier and Jacques Palaci. In addition, I have in front of me a packet of testimonials from other professionals and writers sent to me by the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation in Burdett, New York, who all express their utter dismay at the falsehoods and distortions promulgated by Masson and frequently magnified by Coles. Other persons, writers, and reviewers of Brunton's books have attached considerable philosophical importance to his writings, mentioning them at the same time as those of Merten, Huxley, Reinhold Niebuhr and Teilhard de Chardin. One should not be misled by Brunton's simple prose. He merely wished to make his writings accessible to all, as well as to facilitate translations. His books were translated into 26 languages. Does Masson wish us to believe that he is the one single person in this world to have discovered in Brunton a new Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde ? And why did Masson not come forth with these accusations while Brunton was alive and could have responded to them ?

Among the many testimonials on behalf of Brunton's sterling character and profound knowledge of Eastern philosophy, a 16-page letter by Melody Beaumont Podes is of great interest. It is also deeply moving. Melody is the daughter of Brunton's divorced wife, Evangeline, from a subsequent marriage. Evangeline remained a close friend of Brunton's and Melody's first 21 years were spent in close proximity to him. Just as Masson claims that Brunton's negative influence cast a sinister shadow over his early years and the life of his family, Melody tells us how her's and her mother's life were greatly enriched by Brunton. Point for point she cogently demolishes Masson's numerous accusations and falsehoods. I wish I could reprint her brilliant exposé. Since this is not







possible here, I strongly suggest that the reader writes to the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation for a copy.

Masson loves to vaunt his "scholarship" and claims that because of his knowledge of Sanskrit, his comprehension of Indian philosophy is far superior to that of Brunton. Nor could he, Masson, find anything in the Sanskrit writings that would justify Brunton's evaluations of these texts. This is blatant nonsense. Masson had years of psychotherapy study and training. Yet he did not succeed in acquiring any understanding of psychotherapy and the human psyche. He had to abandon his psychotherapy practice for this reason rather than, as he and Coles falsely claim, due to any expulsion from the profession. The same shortcomings apply to his failure to comprehend philosophy. Just because someone knows a specific language, it does not imply that he understands the philosophers who write in that language. Skinheads do not comprehend Goethe nor will soccer punks be attuned to Shakespeare. As evidenced by his writings, Masson cannot grasp philosophy, logic and ethics in any language. Both Melody, an erudite woman indeed, and Dr. Georg Feuerstein, an eminent Sanskrit scholar quite familiar with Brunton and his works, share these views. Feuerstein greatly admires Brunton and feels that Masson completely and deliberately misrepresents him.

Masson and Coles repeatedly insinuate that Brunton was financially motivated in his relationships with others and thus sought to exercise a powerful influence on them. Melody writes "Masson has strongly implied that P.B. cultivated his father primarily for financial reasons hinting that his father's moderate wealth was somehow a magnet to P.B. and a rarity among his acquaintances." This, too, is utterly untrue. Melody recalls that Brunton knew very wealthy and powerful people, and she mentions quite a number of them. I am aware of the same fact, and I know that some of them wanted him to establish a philosophical school. Such an idea was abhorrent to him. Brunton consistently tried to protect his privacy, his freedom and his independence. Nor did he ever seek financial gains, even though such pursuit would have been easy for him. For instance, his writings, published in many languages, were in great demand. Yet many years before his death, he decided that the great number of manuscripts he was working on should only be published posthumously. More than two million copies of his books were published all together. To attribute a "shabby" motivation to Brunton is a projection of Masson's psyche. After all, Brunton did not engage in scandalous tabloid-style writing, spiced by personal revelations and sexual innuendo, to make money.

Thus, in their eagerness to obtain front page attention, Masson and Coles do not hesitate to introduce scandalous sexual accusations against Brunton. Sadly, they succeeded in this manoeuvre. Here is one example out of several. We are quoting Coles: "One of the strange stories Mr. Masson tells concerns the "stunning...21-year old blond and blue-eyed" woman who was hired to do the housework when his parents became too weak because of their fasting. His father, who







was striving for sexual abstinence, asked Brunton if he could 'make a deal with the higher powers.' He said he was 'prepared to renounce intercourse if they would accept fondling' the maid. Before long, not only Mr. Masson's father but young Jeffrey himself took to fondling the housekeeper in bed." This paragraph is followed by a verbatim reprint of a love letter little Jeffrey, eight years old then, wrote to the housekeeper, asking her to fondle his genitals. We wonder if Masson had this letter framed on his wall, or is this a recent production?

At any rate, Masson does not state in his book that his father consulted Brunton nor is there any mention of the "deal with the higher powers." These are Coles' lurid additions. Paul Cash, a friend of Brunton's and the editor of his books, found these insinuations regarding the maid so incredible that he contacted Masson's father Jacques. Quoting Cash, "Jacques responded immediately. He said that he never discussed this with P.B., that P.B. most certainly would never give his 'blessing' to such an idea, and that he thinks it is 'terrible' that such accusations are being made against P.B." Cash then continues regarding the long fasts, excessive purification practices, etc. "The reviewer gives the impression that P.B. recommended these extreme practices and that the family simply followed his advice. Here again Jacques Masson says no. For instance, Jacques had started fasting long before he met P.B. He told P.B. what he was going to do, and P.B. neither encouraged nor opposed him in this regard."

I know that Jacques Masson is telling the truth because such a non-directive response was precisely Brunton's response to all questions regarding personal matters. He would restrict himself to expound the philosophical positions that are to be found in his writings.

I related the above episode in order to prove that Jeffrey Masson is not telling the truth in his writings. When we understand his approach in his writings about Brunton, we comprehend his three books about psychotherapy even better.

There is an unsavory repetitious pattern in Masson's actions, which can be easily detected. First, he seeks to enter into a close relationship with persons or groups whose favor he covets. He will use whatever means and manipulations he possibly can. For example, in his recent book, "Final Analysis," he speaks about his ardent desire to be accepted by the well-known psychoanalyst, Kurt Eissler. The subsequent development of their relationship is a suitable example out of many. Also, one has to allow for some variations of the same basic theme in each instance. The next phase invariably is this: being obnoxious and pushy (he calls it his "feeling of entitlement"), he will exploit the situation in one fashion or another, and/or relentlessly demand more and more of his "victim," whether it is time, effort or even a privileged position. Sooner or later, he will try to show that he is a better person, morally and intellectually, than the targeted individual.







The third phase tends to run the following course : as the victims resent being increasingly used and become revulsed by Masson, they try to put distance between themselves and him, rejecting his further approaches. Masson's response is one of extreme hatred and vituperation, engaging in a vicious, no-holds-barred vendetta, attempting to destroy the rejector by any means he can. To him, persevering in such destruction is an unending source of joy. By equating analysts to gurus, the book about Brunton is actually the fourth book in which he is able to attack and vilify psychotherapy and psychotherapists. Thus he shrewdly mixes profit and pleasure. While he calls it "debunking," it is actually a business wherein he routinely builds up a strawman, that is, an utterly distorted image of an authority figure, besmirches him and then burns him down. Obviously, this kind of enterprise requires suitable victims. The late Paul Brunton came in handy.

Paul Brunton became the next target for a hatred, which has been smoldering for many years. Brunton was a kind and patient gentleman but he did not suffer knaves gladly and withdrew completely from persons who revulsed him.

Since Coles obviously is also ignorant of this fact, it should be pointed out that the pattern just described, even though not entirely sufficient by itself, is a frequent tell-tale sign indicating sociopathy.

To indicate Masson's pattern of behavior, let us take a very brief look at Masson's "revelations" concerning Freud's seduction theory when Secretary at the Freud Archives. To understand the events, it must be stated that Masson is singularly insensitive to human emotions, completely failing to comprehend them. As Sophie Freud remarks in her review\* of his three books, Masson, after settling down in the San Francisco area as a psychoanalyst, "finds that he neither enjoys nor has any talent for psychoanalytic work. He has no confidence in his ability to help other people in psychic pain." While Masson is a shrewd and clever man, he does lack the sensitivity that is a hallmark of a deeper intelligence.

Thus, when Masson had an opportunity to study the Freud papers, his inner magnet was not attracted to the historical verities, as fascinating as they were. For him they were an inconvenience, which must not be allowed to be an obstacle in his path. His inner compass was automatically set on the course that we described : he sniffs out the material at hand to see if it can be exploited for his purpose. His true interest is to twist the material so that it can be used for his own glory and self-aggrandizement. By employing his usual methods, he succeeds. He presents to the world his "discovery of Freud's dishonesty" in regard to the seduction theory. Freud is exposed as a self-seeking fraud, and Masson is the luminary who brought light into darkness. Thus Masson is greater than Freud. People like Coles fall for it, but to

\* Psychoanalytic Books, Vol2, 1, New York, 1991







knowledgeable therapists Masson's actions appear like a fool's delight.

What, then, are the historical facts as we can reconstruct them from the same material Masson had available? In those days little was known about child abuse. As in most other instances, Freud had to work from scratch - and practically nothing to go by. The documents clearly show that, to his unending credit, Freud struggled with this extremely difficult matter in order to find the truth. Freud placed all his pride in the edifice he was building. There was simply no advantage, no fortune, no glory existing in this world that could have induced him to flaw this enterprise, the purpose of his life. No loss of reputation, no calamity could have prevented Freud from stating matters as he believed them to be. It is simply that Masson, and the likes of him, cannot comprehend that cheating is an impossibility for men of honor and ideals.

Coles' review, as well as Masson's books, are full of untrue statements and contradictions. It would take volumes to answer them. However, just giving these examples from the present review should suffice to demonstrate the pattern.

At the beginning we reprinted three quotes from Coles' review. The first one indicated that "Masson forsook a promising career as a psychoanalyst of exceptional intellectual gifts." Actually we already have the answer to this assertion. There was no question of a promising career. Masson abandoned his psychotherapy practice because he was not adequate in treating patients and thus did not enjoy it.

The second and third quotes assert that Masson was "cast out of the profession." Joseph E. Lifschutz, President of the San Francisco Psychoanalytic Institute and Society, in a letter to the Editor of Psychoanalytic Books\*, states categorically: "It is an event that did not occur, and the canard should be laid to rest...he had never paid a penny of dues (to the Canadian and San Francisco Psychoanalytic Societies). On that basis he was dropped from our roster. Hardly an expulsion or excommunication." But certainly useful to proclaim oneself as a martyr and make a scandal.

\* Vol.2, 3, 1991





Also of interest is the claim used in advertising Masson's books, that he was the first analyst to abandon his profession in order to expose its shortcomings. We already know that he quit for quite different reasons. Nor is he the first one to quit. There were others. Masson spent many years in Europe. During that time a very extensive and detailed book by the Belgian analyst Jacques Van Rillaer " Les illusions de la psychanalyse " \* caused a sensation and became a bestseller in professional circles. Van Rillaer abandoned practicing psychoanalysis because he was disappointed with its non-scientific assumptions and procedures. Contrary to Masson, his book is purely academic and he never introjects his personality. Masson must have known this work. As a matter of fact, some of the few, more sober criticisms by Masson seem to have been inspired by Van Rillaer.

Now let us consider Masson's book " Against Therapy. Emotional Tyranny and the Myth of Psychological Healing." \*\* By now, Masson, having pretty much exhausted his available ammunition against the analysts and in order to be able to write another sensationalist book, had to broaden his accusations against all therapy and therapists. The book is another monument to his lack of understanding of what psychotherapy is about and how it works. It is unscrupulous to the extreme to write such a book, since it will discourage emotionally disturbed people from seeking much-needed help. Of course, this is the last thing that would worry Masson. Instead of psychotherapy as we know it, Masson proposes self-help groups without a professional being present. He completely disregards the fact that psychotherapy can only be dispensed by professionals possessing considerable expertise and talent. And he must know as well as everyone else that, for close to a century, innumerable people have been helped considerably by such therapists. However, Coles gives his full approval and support to Masson.

Masson seems to have a special knack of usurping the knowledge he obtained from his much maligned benefactors, and, in one way or the other, using it to his benefit. Would Masson please tell us if, without being inspired by the " fraudulent quack " Paul Brunton, he would ever have become a Sanskrit language teacher, or have written a book such as " The Oceanic Feeling : The Origins of Religious Sentiment in Ancient India " ? \*\*\*

No one should misconstrue what I am saying in my discussion of Coles' review as a defense of the grave shortcomings in the practice and teachings of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy.

\* Pierre Mardaga, Bruxelles, 1980

\*\* Atheneum, New York, 1988

\*\*\* Kluwer A.C., Norwell, Mass.





We examine these extensively and thoroughly in the publications of the American Mental Health Foundation. Our purpose is eminently constructive as we attempt to show which problems need to be overcome and what solutions should be applied. Masson, however, is not capable of detecting and addressing the real issues nor does he show any interest in them. They do not lend themselves to screaming sensationalism. Moreover, in his hatred, he wishes to destroy all psychoanalysis and psychotherapy - if he cannot practice them, nobody else should be allowed to do so.

We are now coming to the part in Coles' review which, from a psychological viewpoint, is the most interesting in his article, as it reveals a great deal of the father's feelings in regard to his son. Coles intersperses his review with numerous psychological comments which, almost invariably, miss the point. However, regarding the following, meaningful incident, where its psychological implications loom as large as Mount Everest in front of him, Coles has nothing to say nor does he realize its meaningfulness. He seems to have brought it in as part of his diatribe against Brunton.

Coles refers to an episode that occurred while father and son were traveling in India. It must be stressed that Brunton was not with them. We also need to remember that when traveling in rural India, boiling water before drinking it is an absolute must. I am quoting Coles : " His father commanded him ( Jeffrey ) to drink the obviously dirty water that was used to wash the feet of a man named Swami Ramadas. The father cannily avoided drinking the same water, and the son became seriously ill for his obedience and nearly died."

I do not wish to give any explanations that would be founded on Brunton's description of the interrelationships between the family members. Brunton did not ever give the names of the people he discussed with me. They remained anonymous, and I will respect Brunton's wish to protect them. Thus I will merely ask two simple questions which might come to anybody's mind when reading Coles' report. What kind of negative feelings toward his son impelled the father to command him to drink the polluted water ? What kind of behavior of the son might have generated such feelings in the father ? The answer to these two questions, which have no bearing on Brunton, gurus, analysts, therapists or whoever else is on Masson's execution list, will reveal far more about Masson's inner world than any of Coles' psychological ruminations.

To Masson's parents Brunton was an admired authority and a dear friend. It is obvious that the younger Masson was jealous of their affection for Brunton. Furthermore, authority figures are something that Masson does not tolerate for a prolonged time. Sooner or later he starts seeing red. Having exhausted





the material used against the analysts, in his previous books, Masson is able to continue his vendetta by matching the analysts with the "gurus." He conveniently picks out his father's idol and creates a composite figure of Paul Brunton and the gurus, as well as the charlatans that his father had sought out. If Masson had been truthful, he would have called his book "My father's gurus," and not even mentioned Brunton who does not fall into this category. However, this would not have allowed Masson to vent his hatred of Brunton. To a man like Masson it is utterly inconceivable and intolerable that honest and straightforward men such as Freud and Brunton really exist. This would be too much of a blow to his self-esteem. Both Freud and Brunton felt their lives to be a mission, each one working on the cause he believed in. For Freud and Brunton to have adulterated the truth as they saw it, would be an impossibility.

Thus his new book allowed him, Masson, to write a scandalous, attention-getting report, to settle an old grudge against one more man in all ways superior to him, and to continue his attack against analysts as fraudulent "gurus."

Coles, before participating without hesitation in the character assassination of a man he knows nothing about, could have easily glanced through one of Brunton's books. In spite of his lack of discernment, even he would have realized that something is very much amiss in Masson's description of Brunton. However, to investigate and to relate the true facts were contrary to Coles' interests.

In his "case history" of Masson, Coles points out the grave psychological damage caused to the child by the "guru's" influence. Consequently, one would expect Masson to be tortured by severe anxiety and depression, withdrawn and unable to approach women. Unfortunately for Coles' theory of child development, the opposite is true. The photographs in Masson's book show him as a happy and smiling child. In what is one of the few true parts of his book, Masson in his own words describes himself as brash, pretentious, narcissistic, pushy and a former "charlatan." He speaks of his "sense of entitlement." If Coles owns a text book of psychiatry, he would find these characteristics listed among those describing a sociopath. He would also learn that these people can be charmers and charming. Why does Masson admit to the aforementioned traits? Why this confession? Has he become a reborn Christian? Not at all. He hopes that, by admitting to all these negative features of his character, he is taking the wind out of the sails of the many who are wise to him and would point a finger at him. Furthermore, also contradicting Coles' lamentation about the damage done to young





Masson by the despicable guru Brunton, Masson is not depressed at all but rather exuberant, and proudly brags about his successes with innumerable women. Many psychotherapy patients would love to be as "damaged" as Masson.

There is one more fact that Coles might find in the chapter on sociopaths : while they have no genuine concern for others, they do feel sorry for themselves in adversity. They often pretend to have deep emotions in order to elicit sympathy. They are never bothered by injustice suffered by others but will perceive any action and situation which is of prejudice to them, as a major outrage.

In the final paragraph, Coles gives us another example of his outstanding professional acumen. He gives Masson the benefit of his precious psychotherapeutic wisdom : he admonishes him to overcome his "gullibility" ! It is hard to see how this applies to Masson who invariably tries to "unmask" even the most honest men as liars and frauds. Surely, it is Coles himself who should examine his own incredible naivety for accepting, without questioning, Masson's self-serving procedure of mixing one portion of fact with nine portions of convenient fabrication. Coles' credulity and lack of discernment are incompatible with the proper exercise of psychotherapy.

If Masson's books had been on any other subject in the field of mental health, Coles would not have written such a glowing review. Here, however, by being able to constantly equate the gurus with the analysts and vice versa, Coles actually uses Masson's book as a convenient vehicle for his own resentment against the psychoanalytic establishment. He definitely betrays himself when, at the end of his review, he inveighs against the "snotty, self-serving arrogance, and, most important, on the malice involved." None of these particular accusations were leveled by Masson against gurus or Brunton in particular but, yes, against the analysts. Coles does not care that, for the satisfaction of throwing stones at the analysts, he helps to destroy the reputation of a fine human being, namely Brunton.

By giving title page prominence to Masson's and Coles' defamation of Brunton, the Book Review Section of the New York Times has caused considerable consternation and pain to many readers of Brunton. The vast majority of these readers have never met Brunton and therefore are unable to evaluate correctly Masson's accusations - thus to reject them. While gurus are in personal contact with their followers, writers are not.

The immense contrast in the approaches engaged in by these writers, Masson and Coles on one hand, and Brunton on the other





hand, raise the issue of ethics in writing, far beyond the specific matter at hand.

Under the pretense of scholarly academic knowledge, real knowledge in psychotherapy is being displaced, watered down and ultimately destroyed. In Masson's book we find this carried to a ludicrous extreme : in his books he speaks in the name of science and academic knowledge. But why should his academic career as a language teacher entitle him to claim scholarly expertise in philosophy, ethics, psychology, psychotherapy plus everything else ? Surely, everybody is allowed to speak about these matters. But for Masson to describe himself as the scholarly expert and to denounce Brunton as an unscholarly fraud, is to maliciously switch the roles.

Masson is illogical beyond belief. At the end of the book he states : : " I believe that P.B. himself is a sincere seeker and an exceptionally fine human being " ( sic ). Why on earth would Masson engage in such a contradiction to everything he and Coles wrote about Brunton. How dense must Coles be not to take note of this statement and be warned that something very serious is amiss here ! At any rate, Masson, in a most clumsy way, once more attempts to protect his flanks as he knows that there are innumerable people out there who know the truth about Brunton and greatly admire him. In this way Masson, if accused, can always point to these lines.

Paul Brunton was a man and writer of substance, something that Masson and Coles never will be.





REBUTTAL

by Melody Beaumont Podea

to *MY FATHER'S GURU*  
by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson

I am writing in response to a recently published book by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *My Father's Guru*. The "guru" of the title is Paul Brunton, my mother's first husband. Mr. Masson, in a letter to my mother, Evangeline Noël Glass, suggested that the book he was then about to write was not so much about Paul Brunton, as about himself. It is in fact a thoroughly personal view of a man others have experienced quite differently. No doubt it is sincere, in that it reflects Mr. Masson's current convictions. He may well have stated facts he observed or recollected. There are perhaps no blatant or obvious lies. Nevertheless, the character of a man I have known and loved is here cruelly defamed.

Although my mother was twice legally divorced from Paul Brunton, and had married my father, Beaumont Glass (misnamed in the book), her bond of friendship and love for "P.B.," as he was known to friends, was by no means severed. He was part of our family, part of our life. I am in the curious and perhaps unique position of also being able to comment on what it was like to be brought up under P.B.'s influence. I spent the first twenty-one years of my life in close proximity to Paul Brunton and had frequent contact with him. For almost all of that time we were living in Switzerland. He was our house guest in Zurich during summers and many holidays; and my mother and I traveled to Lugano, Montreux, Vevey, or Cannes, or wherever he happened to reside, with great regularity--usually every six weeks or so--to spend a long weekend with him. I continued this habit until my early twenties, whenever I could, until a move to America (and England) shortly before his death.

In other words, I had ample time to observe P.B. Although Mr. Masson accurately catalogues some of P.B.'s habits, foibles, and excentricities--often quite endearing, sometimes inscrutable,--I fail to draw the same conclusions from them. There was no atmosphere of paranoia, repression of sex, constant reference to it, or indeed any form of "abuse" in my encounters with P.B., or in my family life, and indeed he was an intimate part of that.

Mr. Masson claims that P.B. thought women inferior, spiritually and otherwise. But my femininity was never insulted. He discussed a very wide range of issues with me, and I was always treated with respect for my ideas.





The mysterious atmosphere of sex and repression, sinister secrecy, and paranoia, which permeates Mr. Masson's account of his childhood, is something I missed out on completely. Self-control in sexual matters is not a subject entirely alien to the world's religions and philosophical cultures, nor is it foreign to ethical systems in most civilizations, advanced or primitive. The fact that sexual permissiveness and the cult of promiscuity featured so prominently in the life of my generation in particular and of the century in general does not invalidate the ideal of self-discipline put forward in most of the others. It is ridiculous to blame P.B. for other people's sexual obsessions. If he referred to the need of mastering sexual behavior, he will have done so in direct response to the question "how can I reach a certain spiritual goal?" Isn't self-mastery linked with the attainment of wisdom in every classical culture, whether Greco-Roman or Japanese? And does not society, even on the level of, say, the "gentleman" in the true sense of that ideal, or indeed the ideal of "high character," require a degree of equilibrium and self-control? Is that such an outrageous notion to today's minds?

The whole notion of "gurus," as Mr. Masson projects his sense of the word, is entirely without parallel in my experience of P.B. Certainly to me he was always a saintly, holy man when I was a small child; later I understood him to be a true philosopher, a sage, my guide and example in life, and along with my parents the most important person in it.

Mr. Masson's family's acquaintance with P.B. coincides with my mother's association with him to a large extent; it exceeds my mother's by roughly five years. My mother, as Mr. Masson points out, traveled with P.B., and shared his life, over a period of seven years; and therefore had a much larger view of the manner in which P.B. conducted his life, the nature and scope of his acquaintance, the content and purpose of his work.

The Massons, though well within the affections and personal regard of P.B., who frequently visited them, at times for several months at their request, were not introduced to P.B.'s larger circle. He was a reserved man, reticent in disclosing his personal affairs; he was disinclined to mix friends and acquaintances of differing interests and from different walks of life, of whom, until his decision to retire, there was a vast array.

P.B. traveled constantly. My mother is in a position to confirm that he did so at his own expense. It was in P.B.'s character not to brag about his association with the great and the good. Mr. Masson has strongly implied that P.B. cultivated his father primarily for financial reasons, hinting that his father's moderate wealth was somehow a







magnet to P.B., and a rarity among his acquaintance. The facts were quite different. My mother met, and at times personally befriended, during her seven years of travel with P.B., men and women of great culture and influence in their respective countries.

P.B. did not consider his financial matters to be anyone's particular concern. He received a modest but sufficient income from the publication of his once highly successful books. They have been published in thirteen languages. In addition to that, he had some money of his own. My mother was witness to P.B.'s refusal of offers of large sums of money from extremely wealthy friends, who wished to make their contributions to P.B.'s work and comfort. He often refused the hospitality of friends living in settings considerably grander than the circumstances of the Massons, because he liked to be on his own. My mother remembers how relieved P.B. always was to find precious time for writing and solitude. In Connecticut, for instance, they rented for themselves a charming small house by a stream in a secluded country setting for many months. P.B. was as happy as a child when the carrots he had planted finally came up.

P.B. was invited constantly. There were standing invitations everywhere, a few hints of jealousy and rivalry, and much urgent insistence. Everyone interested in the matters P.B. discussed seemed to wish to have a distinguished author in the house, to enjoy his company and conversation, and have him further elucidate the content of his books. This is the fate of most authors of some reputation. P.B. aimed his writings toward, and received, an educated readership. My mother still owns boxes of correspondence, and has given me many vivid accounts of such associations.

At the height of P.B.'s popularity in the thirties and forties, he developed personal friendships with some of the luminaries of the British raj, among them General Jan Smuts of Africa and Sir Francis Younghusband, the commander of the British military expedition to Tibet, both of whom were profoundly interested in Eastern philosophy. Mr. Masson seems to wish to cast doubt on the nature of P.B.'s great friendship with the celebrated and revered Maharajah of Mysore. He has no basis for doing so. Other people have witnessed and heard much about which the Massons are unaware.

When I was living in Switzerland, and P.B. happened to be staying with us, there were telephone calls and visits somewhat less mysterious to us than they may have been to others. There were calls and visits from German princes and various members of several European royal families. Although P.B. had become increasingly obscure, odd episodes





still took place, such as an occasion when some intrusive reader of P.B.'s books stood trespassing in our garden on the shore of Lake Zurich photographing our house, or when a producer of major feature films came walking up to us in one of Zurich's grander hotel lobbies to ask if P.B. weren't the author of *A Search in Secret Egypt*. Princess Irene of Greece and the then infanta and present queen, Sophia of Spain, during one summer visit were preparing vegetarian food for P.B. in our house. Queen Frederika of Greece was also at our house as a guest of P.B.

I do not wish to vie here with Mr. Masson for academic honors, which he has displayed so unassumingly in his book; but he does seem to claim that no one with a higher education of any merit could possibly find any intellectual coherence or substance or merit in P.B.'s writings. Mr. Masson mentions the celebrated I.A. Richards, who, together with F.R. Leavis and others, represented the "Cambridge School" of English literature. I took my degree at Cambridge University. I read English there under the personal guidance of Eric P. Griffiths of Trinity, distinguished scholar in the tradition of the Cambridge School.

Mr. Masson's attacks on P.B. are cruel and unjust. P.B. never, in anyone's hearing or in any of his writings, laid claim to a knowledge of Sanskrit. I also was schooled in Switzerland, have been fully bilingual (in German and English) ever since I could speak, was instructed in French in Swiss public schools since elementary school, and attended Swiss boarding school where I acquired a reading knowledge of Italian. I grew up aware of P.B.'s very English approach to foreign languages, his almost comically anglicized accent and endearing mistakes. It pained me to read Mr. Masson's snide remarks about P.B.'s efforts at Italian. I too experienced P.B.'s gentleness as a child, but was not bred to ridicule those who offered me kindness.

What appalls me more than any other result of Mr. Masson's earnest searchings, doubttings, and convulsions, is the brazenly haughty ridicule, the deliberately sadistic and cruel contumely with which he lashed P.B. on several occasions, to Mr. Masson's eternal discredit. Moreover, though one might hope he would regret his conduct deeply, he seems to exult in it even today as if it were some sort of ultimate triumph. I consider it a paltry and pathetic victory. This is indeed my very personal view of the matter.

Much of the "debunking," for which Mr. Masson is so famed, here centers around the fact that Mr. Masson presumably considers it essential to be a scholar, like himself, in Sanskrit, fluent therein and conversant in every aspect of classical Indian scholarship and contemporary





academe, if one is to claim any legitimacy in bringing ideas of Indian philosophy to the West. Mr. Masson claims to have combed almost all the ancient Sanskrit and Pali primary texts, surveyed the length and breadth of academic knowledge in the field, and found nothing therein to support any of P.B.'s interpretations of the philosophy of India.

There are other less pontifical pundits, however, who seem to have deemed P.B.'s project of interpreting Indian philosophy for the West a worthy one, at a time when the general educated public here was largely ignorant or patronizingly dismissive of these matters. Some hint of Indian philosophy, particularly through translations of the Upanishads, had already reached certain circles in Europe, especially in Germany, by the nineteenth century (there had even been a seventeenth century translation), where it profoundly influenced several great philosophers, including Kant and Schopenhauer, who also lacked Mr. Masson's knowledge of Sanskrit.

The English-speaking world, on the other hand, remained almost defiantly in the dark about the matter, with some notable exceptions, such as Coleridge and Emerson, who were influenced indirectly by the Germans. To expound on India's "wisdom" at the time of the raj, which was indeed P.B.'s world when he wrote almost all of his books, was not always taken kindly, and it took some intellectual and moral courage for certain leaders of society and government at the time to do so publicly: Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, in charge of British forces in Egypt, was known for his odd behavior on a certain island in the Nile, where he meditated regularly. Like Smuts and Younghusband he was interested in--and had practical experience of--Eastern mysticism.

Mr. Masson paints Paul Brunton as an isolated unscholarly lunatic. Some of his contemporaries had a different view. The late Maharajah of Mysore (Krishnaraja Wadiyar Bahadur IV), the great statesman celebrated by the English and his own people alike, not only furnished P.B. with one of his own delightful summer retreats, but, more importantly, besides sharing many long, frequent, and intimate conversations with P.B., the maharajah made available to him little known Indian texts from his own personal library and provided him with a hand-picked expert translator. The maharajah was of course respected for his own scholarship and devotion to the classical Vedic teachings, as he was known for his modern, enlightened views and personal wisdom.

If the translations of the Upanishads P.B. uses are not to Mr. Masson's liking, perhaps he will consider the historical circumstances, P.B.'s aims, and the qualifications of the scholar and translator who enlightened him at the maharajah's behest. As P.B. states in his







dedication to the Maharajah of Mysore in his book, *The Quest of the Overself*, 1937:

"He who puts a roof over my head shelters my body from the elements, yet does nothing for my soul. Your Highness, however, has done both. For it was through your indirect instrumentality that I was initiated into the study of the higher intellectual wisdom of India. [...] You have rescued philosophy from those who would make it a mere refuge from disappointment, and converted it into a dynamic inspiration to higher action for service. [...] Your Highness provides an exemplification for all men by showing that it is possible to attain a lofty spirituality and yet attend to one's immediate duties as effectively as the most materialistic person, and indeed infinitely better. The clear Hellenic mind of Plato foresaw that, 'the world can only be saved if the kings become philosophers or if the philosophers become kings.'"

Three years after accepting this dedication the maharajah died. Perhaps many modern readers are unaware that historically a dedication to any person had to be formally approved and accepted by the person it addressed before any publication thereof was possible. Obviously, dedications could also be declined, as was the case when Oscar Wilde refused a proposed dedication to him in a book Lord Alfred Douglas wrote after Wilde's downfall. Therefore, a formal published dedication always represented a full official endorsement of whatever it contained by the person to whom it was addressed.

P.B. often speaks of a "hidden" teaching. Much is made in Mr. Masson's book of the notion of "secrecy." It has a thoroughly sinister connotation there. He claims that the word "secret" was a favorite with P.B., that it might well sum up the atmosphere around him, that P.B. was obsessed with the idea, engaging in elaborate schemes and hocus-pocus, all of it entirely bogus. If Mr. Masson has studied the East, or indeed any religion or philosophical school from Plato to ancient Egypt, from the Eleusinian mysteries to Esoteric Buddhism, he must not be entirely ignorant of the concept, "elitist" as it may seem to him, of a certain selectivity or secrecy in imparting what was considered "higher teaching." Perhaps not everything in India has been flung open to Mr. Masson's scholarly eye. That would certainly not be entirely inconceivable, given the Brahmin cultural tradition of secrecy Mr. Masson seems to deplore. I wish to quote here at some length Sir Francis Younghusband's interpretation of P.B.'s use of the word "secret" from the foreword he wrote to P.B.'s book, *A Search in Secret India*, in 1934.





"`SACRED INDIA' would be as apt a title for this book. For it is a quest for that India which is only secret because it is so sacred. The holiest things in life are not bruited abroad in public. The sure instinct of the human soul is to keep them withdrawn in the inmost recesses accessible to few--perhaps to none. Certainly only to those who care for spiritual things.

"And with a country as with an individual. The most sacred things a country keeps secret. It would not be easy for a stranger to discover what England holds most sacred. And it is the same with India. The most sacred part of India is the most secret.

"Now secret things require much searching for; but those who seek will find. Those who seek with their whole heart and with real determination to find will at last discover the secret.

"Mr. Brunton had that determination, and he did in the end find. [...] Spirituality at its finest and purest is what he wanted and this he found at last."

(In addition to being Commander of the British Military Expedition to Tibet, Sir Francis Younghusband was also British Political Minister to the State of Kashmir, Brigadier General of the British Army in India, and President of the Royal Geographical Society of England.)

Mr. Masson confesses that he sensed a certain insulation from the culture of the countries that he lived in and visited in his youth. He points out what he considers his ignorance of the international situation at the time. He says he was soaking in mysticism throughout his adolescence, wallowing in it to the exclusion of all other thoughts, humanitarian or intellectual. He blames all this on P.B.

It is very curious, in the light of his claims, that despite the fact that I had the same "guru" in the house--and must have presumably been exposed to the same sinister influence, repression, ignorance and power play--my life was entirely different. I was not intellectually numbed by the experience, as Mr. Masson claims to have been. I was introduced to the culture of Europe in a most intense fashion at a very young age. In this respect, as in knowing P.B., I was indeed fortunate and privileged. At six, in Rome, I was regaled by my father with vividly recounted stories from classical mythology and the history of Rome, so rich and detailed that they have nourished me all my life. P.B. was fascinated by history and further deepened my





understanding of it after my father's comprehensive introductions. I was led through architecture and art, through little Tuscan churches known to *conoscenti*, through the wonders of classical sites and renaissance cities, and all through Europe, with my father as an excellent guide. These experiences became part of the fabric of my life. I was able to discuss all these things with P.B., he understood them profoundly, and encouraged me to pursue them. He initiated me into his ideas of aesthetics and pointed to Plato's concept of Beauty as an aspect of the Divine. I was also exposed to opera and classical theatre in the great houses of Italy, Germany, Austria, France, and England. P.B. often accompanied us. At thirteen I entertained him by reciting long stretches of Goethe's *Faust* and, later, by giving him impromptu performances of Greek tragedy, a literature with which he was very familiar.

Though P.B. was steeped in his overwhelming load of work and plagued with stacks of correspondence--with which I helped him on occasion--and although his main purpose, preoccupation, and goals were always in the realms of philosophy and practical mysticism, the study and exploration of which in his writings comprised his chief interest, he was by no means ignorant of culture, politics, history, or Western philosophy. Unlike Mr. Masson, I grew up in a household where these things were discussed. Mr. Masson should not blame P.B. for the poverty of his own intellectual world as he was growing up. It was obviously not P.B.'s place or calling to fill a cultural vacuum in other people's lives. It would have been both presumptuous and impossible. One takes people as one finds them.

I discovered the atrocities of World War II for myself at thirteen, and read everything I could find concerning the subject for some time. My godmother, a Jewish Catholic convert, had been in Auschwitz. I discussed these matters with P.B. at the time, and many times later. I strenuously object to Mr. Masson's account of P.B.'s feelings or thoughts about the Holocaust. It represents either a deliberate distortion or a profound misunderstanding of the man I knew. The same can be said for P.B.'s views on human suffering in general, or the miseries of the disadvantaged masses of India in particular. Mr. Masson's claims about the matter are not only outrageously unfair, but, quite frankly, intellectually trite. He colors P.B.'s views with what common prejudice has ascribed to Indian culture in general: complete disregard for the needs of "this world" and a self-centered obsession with the "other." Mr. Masson shows clearly that he cannot have discussed these subjects seriously with P.B. as an educated adult. His account of P.B.'s views is distorted by immature memories.







Distortion due to ignorance and puerility are equally present, but with the addition of calculated malice, in the comical and frequent references to the planet Venus and the star Sirius plastered liberally all over the book. It is quite obvious to anyone who really knew P.B., that these accounts, in the manner in which they are presented here, are not only deliberately distorted and subtly venomous, but quite ridiculous. I said in the beginning of this open and public rebuttal that I did not consider there were any obvious lies in Mr. Masson's book; but there are certainly subtle ones. For instance, his imagined roof-top contemplation of P.B.'s "home-star" with my mother. It is not possible that they could have discussed that particular subject, since my mother had never heard any comment associating P.B. with stars or planets.

Indeed there is a quote in P.B.'s posthumously published writings about Sirius. These writings were not all intended for publication when they were written, as is probably most particularly true of many of the notes in Volume VIII, "Reflections on my Life and Writings," of *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*. This is not to say that they should not have been published, only that they were written by P.B., for P.B., and not necessarily with the prying, critical public eye in view. In the offending quote P.B. expressed private romantic yearnings reminiscent of prayers made in ancient Egyptian texts to the star Sirius.

Mr. Masson hardly disguises the pride he takes in his little literary coup, "Cars on Venus." The idea is so prominently displayed. It is obvious that he racked his memory in order to find even one truly damning thing to say about P.B. He finds one thing only; but such a thing that, if properly distorted and stretched and highlighted, will at last have the desired effect. P.B. *did* drive a car--he was once cited for speeding in the open Arizona desert--and P.B. obviously knew where and to whom he was born. No one has ever heard him seriously imply anything to the contrary, even Mr. Masson. My mother is in possession of the facts of P.B.'s early life and background.

Yes, P.B. did express his opinion that extra-terrestrial intelligence in fact exists. Carl Sagan and others are actively engaging in a rather costly search for such intelligence, and Carl Sagan is hardly known for his adherence to mystical New Age cults! Besides, who are we, living in the nineteen-nineties, to set limits to knowledge and to the possible? Continental drift was a theory once publicly ridiculed.

If P.B. entertained one over-curious little child with a few fabulous-sounding Alice-in-Wonderland-style remarks, he will certainly not have imagined that they would





one day be used by that child to publicly question his sanity.

References to communism also stick in my mind. P.B., like most thoughtful individuals with a social conscience, abhorred extremism and totalitarianism, whether on the right or on the left. I often engaged in lengthy conversations with him about the matter. Readers of P.B.'s books were indeed persecuted in Czechoslovakia and other communist countries. I personally met and conversed with some of them--in English. P.B.'s books were banned, and he would most certainly have been arrested if he had attempted to travel in certain countries at certain times. Mr. Masson may be surprised to learn that P.B. was very much actively engaged with the intellectual left in the Edwardian England of his youth, as was George Bernard Shaw, for example. P.B. was no apostate either. The egalitarian views he formed at the time for humanitarian reasons remained with him all his life. Nevertheless, he and Mr. Masson would have been fools to deny the intellectual, moral, and physical destruction forced on so many by fascism and communism alike. Given P.B.'s personal political record, Mr. Masson will henceforth have to search for another arrow in his quiver if he wishes to hit his target.

Moreover I consider Mr. Masson's distortions of P.B.'s words into a "cold," "hierarchical," "remote," and "privileged" world view to be utter nonsense. No such thing ever emerged from my discussions with him, nor have any of his writings given me such an impression. Certainly any experience of his sterling character, personal integrity, his kind and generous nature, would speak against such preposterous assumptions, even if one were not familiar with his writings in general or his views on politics or human nature in particular.

P.B. was an avid reader of major newspapers in several languages, even German, which he read haltingly but with full comprehension, in my presence. He would often discuss classical antiquity with me, as that was one of my chief interests. Being a woman, I once asked P.B.: did he know of any great women philosophers who had attained the ultimate degree of spiritual enlightenment as he understood it? His answer was yes, Hypatia of Alexandria. This woman had presided over a coterie of scientists and was herself a mathematician. She was also the mistress of the governor, and was one day, while still a young woman, pulled from her open chariot by a mob of early Christians and flayed alive.

In regard to P.B.'s use of the word philosopher, much ridiculed in the book, I respectfully remind Mr. Masson of Socrates' discourse on the qualifications of the philosopher in Plato's Republic. P.B. often pointed to Plato as the source of his own use of the term. I am familiar with the





Platonic dialogues, and I never cease to marvel how closely P.B.'s words, his bearing, his very life, were akin to the views and great examples displayed therein. Mr. Masson is currently behaving in a fashion reminiscent of a Meletus or an Anytus, whose absurd accusations brought Socrates to trial. Alcibiades is very eloquent in *The Symposium* about Socrates' effect on his conscience. It seems to me that Mr. Masson, in a very different way, is still wrestling with his memories of P.B.

Like P.B., Socrates never set himself up as a teacher, though he engaged in what some considered a number of very strange discourses. Like Socrates, P.B. spent his life doing nothing but good, and was accused of doing evil. Yes, I speak of Socrates and P.B. in the same breath. They were both good men. Both serving their god. Both dedicated to elevating and enlightening their fellows.

I feel proud and fortunate to have met such a man, to have spent so many years of my life in his elevating presence. He was truly sage-like. In fact, the behavior and gentle character of Socrates remind me of P.B.! That is what struck me when I first encountered Plato's writings in *The Apology*. The feeling even engendered tears. Here was another "friend."

If Mr. Masson's feelings are different that is his affair. Yes, as he hinted it would be in his letter to my mother, the book does seem to be all about himself. He describes the external form of P.B., catalogues this and that; but all appears skewed to my view, as if seen through a distorted, thick, discolored lens. I have no patience with his crass attacks, his blatant accusations. My life was blessed by P.B., and always will be. He was, to me, a true philosopher.

P.B. was reticent and tolerant in the extreme. He never preached to anyone. He certainly never boasted. He would refer to the spiritual attainments and wisdom of others, rather than to his own, and preferred to discuss the subject in a general, impersonal manner. As a child I had to ask questions to get an answer on matters spiritual or philosophical. There was certainly no loose prattle about it. My mother, who, as I have already mentioned, spent seven years with him before I was born, a time coinciding with much of the period Mr. Masson describes, says he was no different then. She remembers, however, that he laughed more often and more heartily with the Massons than he did with most people in later years, though his gently smiling, quietly cheerful manner never left him. The Massons were jolly, kindly, good friends, companionable and friendly to him. Here was a warm, sunny household, with two charming children, lots of pets, and some carefree chatter about topics that interested the company. Thus the Massons were





perhaps "chosen disciples," as Mr. Masson claims, in that P.B. may have felt a special, almost familial affection for them.

That brings us to the question of World War III. Who, who lived at the time, during the increasing tensions and very well-founded nuclear paranoia of the late fifties, would not have expected such a war? Even I remember anticipating one in my early childhood, and I was born in 1959. There were air raid shelters built by law under all new Swiss apartment houses, and until quite recently the Swiss government actively maintained elaborate and costly arrangements not only to guarantee the survival of Switzerland's entire population and army, but even to rebuild, stone for stone, exact replicas of the historic portions of major Swiss cities!

Was not the Cuban missile crisis a close call? Did not everyone know that it was? My mother, who has memories of her own, states emphatically that misrepresentation of P.B.'s real feelings, words, and intentions is here particularly blatant, and that both she and P.B. remained aware that misunderstandings over this issue led to general disillusionment and bitterness in the Masson family.

My mother, moreover, finds it hard to explain why such a simple wish of P.B.'s--that a few people he cared about, indeed loved, should be safe in a crisis--should lead to so much bitter recrimination. She also insists, as Mr. Masson himself implies, that P.B. always linked any statement of his conviction that a nuclear holocaust was imminent to his fervent hope and belief in the possibility that the angel of death would pass over mankind at the eleventh hour and that the catastrophe would be averted. The latter was obviously the thing which any sane person would have preferred.

Surely P.B. was not the only religious man who prayed for the salvation of mankind at that frightening and momentous time, or hoped that such prayer would have the power to make a difference. Does Mr. Masson wish to fling his mockery at this sort of idealism, harmless at worst?

In recommending South America as a possible safe haven during a nuclear conflagration, P.B. was only acting out of a warm concern for his friends. It was not in P.B.'s character to dictate to others how to conduct their lives, or to coerce them into making certain personal choices. If the Massons moved to South America, they will have done so of their own volition. The Massons moved constantly, residing here and there all over the globe. Why not in a "safe" place?





The bitterness that resulted out of this affair is in keeping with that clearly documented constant demand and insatiable craving for power, spiritual experience, magic and hocus-pocus, and participation in cosmic events, which floods Mr. Masson's account of his youth. P.B. is not responsible for the obsessions, delusions, and wish-fulfilling fantasies of others, even if they center on him. Contact with a generous, wise, and philosophic man, a rare breed of course at the best of times, may well go to the head.

Did Paul Brunton have any of the powers Mr. Masson says he claimed, or that were claimed for him by Mr. Masson's family? Before answering, I wish to point out that whatever anyone's personal beliefs may be about what is commonly referred to as the "supernormal," the F.B.I. have found it useful to use trance mediums to locate bodies of murder victims telepathically. This is an established fact. No one knows exactly how the feat is performed, but no one seems to care as long as the process works.

Then, if telepathy exists in some forms, it must exist in others. The prevalence of charlatans in any field in no way invalidates truth. Telepathy either exists, or it does not.

The same is true of the belief in survival after death, or near-death experiences. We believe or disbelieve such matters until we have had some personal experience with them. One often hears of scoffers, agnostics, or skeptics changing their minds suddenly. Thomas Mann seems to have undergone such a conversion in Munich; and his account of flying objects, rattling furniture, and other astonishing events during a seance is very vivid.

As far as P.B.'s "psychic" experiences are concerned, he has described some of them in his books, others to my mother on a few occasions. The topic was rarely brought up in our house. It did not seem to interest anyone particularly. P.B. turned away from so-called occult practices in mid-life. He had found himself with highly developed sensitivities in his youth. These sensitivities remained, and were very troubling to him at times, in crowds, for instance, or during handshakes, which he avoided. I wonder if Mr. Masson would not also be less inclined to press the flesh of our fellow men if he possessed acute telepathic sensitivities. His mind could become a constant whirl of other people's unflattering thoughts!

As to other "powers," there are indeed "more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Mr. Masson prides himself for having caught a little man attempting to push a huge table upward with his





hands. There are plenty of charlatans to be unmasked; but before he makes a profession of that, perhaps he will cultivate an open mind about the paranormal and comb the world for some intelligent person he can respect, who can explain to him how objects might be moved or lifted by mental or "psychic" powers. Perhaps he will hear that some reputable persons have observed such feats, and that the energies required for it are channeled physically in a certain manner. Such information might make P.B.'s posture at the table in Portugal look a good deal less ridiculous to Mr. Masson, and he would be asking himself some serious questions. Among other things he would ask himself why he would have required such proof, or engaged in such a challenge in the first place.

I never asked, but I myself did receive proof, during an emergency, in the form of an act that saved my life. I also received proof of qualities in P.B. more profound and elevating than I can here describe. "The holiest things in life are not bruited abroad in public," to quote again Sir Francis Younghusband.

Mr. Masson thinly disguises his glee beneath a show of reticence as he describes the episode of cross-examining P.B. in Cannes as to the authenticity of his Ph.D. Mr. Masson was convinced *a priori* that he was about to have the pleasure of unmasking an academic fraud. It was a particularly crude and embarrassing performance. Incidentally, the document verifying the Ph.D. in question was given by P.B.'s son, Kenneth Thurston Hurst, together with a large number of other documents, manuscripts, and effects, to the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation, where all of them are available to public view upon request.

P.B.'s published thesis was his thin volume, *Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture*. In it, there is much Sanskrit in translation. As to the authenticity of P.B.'s sources, we hear of a certain pundit whom the maharajah put at P.B.'s disposal, as mentioned above. I will introduce the man in P.B.'s own words:

"It is my object to open up the curiosity of the thoughtful Occidental mind by exploring ancient Indian texts and comparing excerpts or thoughts from them with parallel passages or ideas from the writings of representative modern Western thinkers; philosophic, scientific, and literary. [...]"

"I have had an exceptional opportunity to equip myself for the subject, for, in addition to several years' travel and research throughout India, I have been a personal friend and private pupil of Pundit Subramanya Iyer, who combines in his own person the fullness of the best European and Indian





knowledge. Pundit Iyer is a former Professor of Modern Science and Mathematics on the one hand, whilst on the other he spent his early manhood studying in Sringeri Monastery, the most ancient and most respected institution of philosophical and religious learning in South-West India. Such are his intellectual attainments that Sir S. Radhakrishnan was also at one time his personal pupil, while today the Pundit occupies the post of Reader in Ancient Hindu Philosophy to His Highness the Maharajah of Mysore."

As to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Pundit Iyer's student, he was appointed shortly before the writing of P.B.'s thesis to the newly founded Spalding Chair of Eastern Philosophy and Religions at Oxford University. Pundit Iyer also held the title of Registrar, Mysore University, India. My mother tells me that P.B. always kept a picture of him on his desk, as he felt a deep affection and gratitude toward him all his life.

In a recent reprint, 1981, of an old Indian edition (Bharatiya Book Corporation, Delhi) of *Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture* (which, as mentioned above, was in fact P.B.'s published thesis), P.B. has a dedication to V. Subramanya Iyer from which I wish to quote in closing. I will let the reader draw his or her own conclusion--through P.B.'s own words--about "P.B.", Paul Brunton, one of the best men this century has known.

"...you unfolded to me the higher wisdom of your land, expounded its most ancient books and explained its most imperishable philosophy. I was indeed fortunate to have the privilege of your instruction, for you yourself were an initiate in the esoteric tradition of the great Sankara.

"The contact with your razor-keen mind sharpened my own until I perceived the folly and futility of those spiritual and intellectual illusions which men everywhere hug fondly to themselves.

"In these pages I yield gladly to your request that the West be reminded of the close parallels between the findings of its best modern thinkers and the still more profound findings of India's early sages. I have also touched on your favorite theme and shown how our latest discoveries merely begin to confirm the oldest discoveries of India's antiquity: that the soul of the world is ONE, a sublime Unity wherein the differences and antagonisms of Orient and Occident disappear, and





wherein all science, religion and philosophy find  
their final reconciliation."

-----  
January 25, 1993,  
Melody Beaumont Podea  
817 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021

wherein all science, religion and philosophy find  
their final reconciliation.

January 22, 1933  
Melody Basement Pader  
817 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10021



DRAFT 2/8/93

The Editor  
The New York Times Book Review  
229 West 43rd Street  
New York, N.Y. 10036

To The Editor:

The lives of great individuals generate controversy, as the pages of this review attest to on a weekly basis. Apparently Paul Brunton is no exception. My Father's Guru, by Jeffrey Masson, (reviewed 2/7/93) presents an extremely critical view of this highly acclaimed writer. From this review one would never guess that Dr. Brunton's first ten books (written between 193X and 195X) have remained continuously in print, with translations in over fifteen languages, or that his posthumously published Notebooks have led reviewers to compare place him in the company of Thomas Merton, D.T. Suzuki, Alan Watts and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. His early books have received extremely favorable reviews in the pages of this newspaper as well. (provide examples)

My Fathers Guru presents a young child's view of his parent's spiritual teacher and mentor, Dr. Paul Brunton. A careful reading of the book indicates that most of the statements about 'P.B.', as he is called, are attributions rather than facts (note the frequent use of phrases such as "it is possible that PB thought", "I am not sure what he meant... but presumably," or "I was told"). In actuality, the book is filled with erroneous misinformation about the facts of Paul Brunton's life, his writings, and ~~more importantly~~, his character. This sloppy scholarship is evidenced, for example, in frequent mistakes regarding the names of individuals mentioned, or in dates ascribed to pictures. Paul Brunton did, in fact, get a Ph.D., (from Roosevelt-McKinley Graduate College in 1938), had thousands of admirers (as indicated by his voluminous correspondence and news clips attesting to the hundreds of well-wishers who greeted his ship at each port on his Oriental passages), and lived for the majority of his life in hotels and apartments paid for with income from his books, rather than in the homes of his students. The contradictory statements made within the book itself regarding many of these issues are not mentioned by the reviewer.

Masson frequently admits that his parents took various practices to an extreme <sup>explicitly</sup> not recommended by Dr. Brunton and then blames Dr. Brunton for their impact on himself and his family. Many of the beliefs which P.B. is accused of "making up" are ones he was familiar with through his extensive research into Eastern and Western spiritual teachings and religions.

The book's reviewer, Dr. Robert Coles, while critical of Masson and his parents, has apparently accepted these attributions without

Tim - if you'd like to  
comment, please call me

ADOP

"spiritual teacher"  
same appears to be "spiritual teacher"  
In fact one of the most notable  
P.B. writings is a balanced

we are all

appears to be general awareness of Eastern & Western mystical thought







with him questioning their validity. My own personal experience of P.B. along with the personal accounts of dozens of others who knew him, and worked offer an entirely different portrait of his character, personality, and motivations.

Paul Brunton's writings are still in print well after his death and the ideas in them remain vital and contemporary. His posthumously published Notebooks, for example, have been described as "sensible and compelling", "sensitive, deep and profound" and "vigorous, clear-minded and independent." The San Francisco Chronicle observes that "the meticulousness of (Brunton's) reading and interviewing, as well as his personal, inward application of that knowledge, reveals a genius for balance", while Choice commented that "his work can stand beside that of such East-West bridges as Merton, Suzuki, Watts and Radhakrishnan." The readers of Mr. Masson's book and its review are encouraged to consult these books and come to their own conclusions about the legacy Dr. Brunton has given us.

Sincerely,

Alan Berkowitz, Ph.D.  
Chairperson, Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation  
Burdett, N.Y.





# LARSON PUBLICATIONS

PUBLISHING FOR THE PAUL BRUNTON PHILOSOPHIC FOUNDATION  
4936 ROUTE 414, BURDETT, NEW YORK 14818 607-546-9342

Ms. Rebecca Sinkler  
New York Times Book Review  
229 West 43rd Street  
New York, NY 10036

February 8, 1993

Dear Ms. Sinkler:

As one who enjoys Robert Coles' work and has had high regard for you since we met for nearly an hour in 1986 (at Sue Flaster's recommendation), I'm confident you will both appreciate the information prompting this letter. So I'll begin only with enough to interest you in following up.

Many well-respected people, whom one simply can't pass off as easily duped, hold a view so markedly at variance with the one of Paul Brunton created by Jeffrey Masson in *My Father's Guru* as to cast significant doubt on the factuality of the account endorsed de facto in Mr. Coles' 2/7/93 Times review.

Choice, for example, reviewed Paul Brunton's posthumously published Notebooks as "sensible and compelling," saying that "his work can stand beside that of such East-West bridges as Merton, Suzuki, Watts, and Radhakrishnan." The San Francisco Chronicle observes that "the meticulousness of [Brunton's] reading and interviewing, as well as his personal, inward application of that knowledge, reveals a genius for balance." Eminent Sanskrit scholar Georg Feuerstein, author of several specialized books on Indian philosophy, writes of Brunton as "a philosophic sage . . . surely one of the finest mystical flowers to grow on the wasteland of our secular civilization." Library Journal has called Brunton's work "vigorous, clear-minded, and independent . . . a synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western rationality." Elisabeth Kubler-Ross describes his Notebooks as "a veritable treasure-trove of philosophic spirituality."

Charles T. Tart, former president of the Association of Transpersonal Psychologists, has reviewed Brunton's Notebooks as "a great gift to us Westerners who are seeking the spiritual," and has written of how many mornings begin for him with inspiring readings from that series over breakfast. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer/ conductor Karel Husa writes that "Mr. Brunton's writings are most sensitive, deep, and profound. One has to admire his most positive attitude toward life, nature, beauty, and his respect for both cultures, east and west, their ways of life, religions, arts, and the search for truth and goodness." Stephen Levine wrote, "It is to the likes of Brunton, Vivekananda, and A.E. Burt that I bow in gratitude for early initiations." Jacob Needleman called his own readers' attention to Brunton's work by writing, "Any





serious man or woman in search of spiritual ideas will find a surprising challenge and an authentic source of inspiration and intellectual nourishment in the writings of Paul Brunton."

The list can go on much longer, and I will gladly provide more on request if it is not already clear that Mr. Brunton's work may be significantly more valuable than Mr. Masson would have his own readers believe.

There remains, of course, the issue of Paul Brunton's character. Having been co-editor of his posthumously published Notebooks, I've been privileged in the past several years to meet or have correspondence with dozens of people who knew Paul Brunton through many of the same years Mr. Masson "describes" in his latest book. None of them gives an account anything like Mr. Masson's. I consistently hear about a remarkably kind, patient, and dynamic yet unassuming man, a witty and dignified gentleman who made no claims beyond being a writer and researcher. I hear of a man who consistently declined to mount the pedestal some people created for him in their own minds, who countered rather frequent attempts at the formation of a personality cult around him, and who instead put all his emphasis to would-be followers on coming to terms in themselves with the ideas he made available. Testimony to that effect is readily available well beyond what is needed to raise doubts about the objectivity of Mr. Masson's account.

These images correspond with the man I knew from 1977 until his death in 1981; Jeffrey Masson's do not.

I question the value of a public tit-for-tat with Mr. Masson about the objectivity of his memory processes. But many Times Book Review readers now have only Mr. Masson's highly questionable version of Paul Brunton, de facto endorsed by Mr. Coles' review despite its blatant factual errors and high percentage of conjecture. I will greatly appreciate any time you can make in your demanding schedule to see if you agree with me that this is unfortunate.

Cordially,

Paul Cash  
Director, Larson Publications  
Burdett, NY

cc: Candace Gipple

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These images correspond with the man I knew from 1953 until his death in 1957. Jeffrey Hanson's do not.

I question the value of a public tirade with Mr. Hanson about the objectivity of his memory processes. For many times Book Review readers have read only Mr. Hanson's highly questionable version of Paul Brunton, the facts reduced by Mr. Coles' review despite its blatant factual errors and high percentage of conjecture. I will greatly appreciate any time you can make in your demanding schedule to see if you agree with me that this is unfortunate.

Cordially,

Paul Coles  
Director, Latent Publications  
Burlington, VT

cc: Candace Gipple



February 10, 1993

Dr. Robert Coles  
Harvard University  
University Health Services  
75 Mount Auburn Street  
Cambridge, MA 02138

Dear Dr. Coles:

As one who respects and enjoys your work, I'm confident you will appreciate the information prompting this letter. So I'll begin with just enough to interest you in following up.

What are your first thoughts, for example, on hearing that the Dalai Lama has a full set of Paul Brunton's Notebooks in his library in Dharamsala, and that the spiritual leader of south India's Hindus (Shankaracharyya of Kanci) has made those same Notebooks required reading for his own successor? And hearing that the Dalai Lama has publicly credited one of Paul Brunton's more faithful students (Anthony Damiani) as "a truly great man . . . one of my closest spiritual brothers"?

Many well-respected people, whom one simply can't pass off as easily duped, hold a view of Paul Brunton so markedly at variance with the one created by Jeffrey Masson in My Father's Guru as to cast significant doubt on the factuality of his account.

Choice, for example, reviewed Paul Brunton's posthumously published Notebooks as "sensible and compelling," saying that "his work can stand beside that of such East-West bridges as Merton, Suzuki, Watts, and Radhakrishnan." The San Francisco Chronicle observes that "the meticulousness of [Brunton's] reading and interviewing, as well as his personal, inward application of that knowledge, reveals a genius for balance." Eminent Sanskrit scholar Georg Feuerstein, author of several specialized books on Indian philosophy, writes of Brunton as "a philosophic sage . . . surely one of the finest mystical flowers to grow on the wasteland of our secular civilization." Library Journal has called Brunton's work "vigorous, clear-minded, and independent . . . a synthesis of Eastern mysticism and Western rationality." Elisabeth Kubler-Ross describes his Notebooks as "a veritable treasure-trove of philosophic spirituality."

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The list can go on much longer, and I will gladly provide more on request if it is not already clear that Mr. Brunton's work may be significantly more valuable than Mr. Masson would have his own readers believe.

There remains, of course, the issue of Paul Brunton's character. Having been co-editor of his posthumously published Notebooks, I've been privileged in the past several years to meet or have correspondence with dozens of people who knew Paul Brunton through many of the same years Mr. Masson "describes" in his latest book. None of them gives an account anything like Mr. Masson's. I consistently hear about a remarkably kind, patient, and dynamic yet unassuming man, a witty and dignified gentleman who made no claims beyond being a writer and researcher. I hear of a man who consistently declined to mount the pedestal some people created for him in their own minds, who countered rather frequent attempts at the formation of a personality cult around him, and who instead put all his emphasis to would-be followers on coming to terms in themselves with the ideas he made available. Testimony to that effect is readily available well beyond what is needed to raise doubts about the objectivity of Mr. Masson's account.

These images correspond with the man I knew from 1977 until his death in 1981; Jeffrey Masson's do not.

One account that may particularly interest you comes from the daughter of Brunton's second wife and her second husband. This woman also grew up with Paul Brunton as a frequent house guest and companion on family get-togethers. In sixteen pages she contrasts her own childhood memories with Masson's. The differences in her version are astonishing. I could send





you a copy of that by return mail if you would find it useful.

I will greatly appreciate any time you can make in your demanding schedule to see if you agree with me that the image of Paul Brunton Jeffrey Masson has succeeded in foisting onto Times Book Review readers is unfortunate. Please do call or write me if you would like to look into this.

Cordially,

Paul Cash  
Director, Larson Publications

You a copy of that by return mail if you would find it useful.

I will greatly appreciate any time you can make in your demanding schedule to stop if you agree with me that the issue of Paul Brandon Jeffrey Mason has succeeded in forcing onto these book review readers is unfortunate. Please do call or write me if you would like to look into this.

Cordially,

Paul Cash  
Director, Larson Publications



Hello Paul — Please let me have your input.

Please let me explain why

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to Robert Coles' review of Jeffrey Masson's book My Father's Guru. For a book review to be featured on the front page of New York Times Book Review, one would expect it and/or the book to be significant. However, I do not find ~~this~~ <sup>neither</sup> to be the case. Both the book and the review scarcely merit front-page attention. Let me explain why?

I too received Masson's book for review from the publisher and was genuinely delighted to see a biographical treatment of a writer, Paul Brunton, whose work awakened my own interest in Indian philosophy and religion more than a quarter century ago. After reading Masson's book, though, my delight changed to dismay. For he has produced a work that in its iconoclastic fervor exceeds good taste and, more importantly, distorts truth.

As the author of Holy Madness, I am no stranger to criticism of contemporary spiritual movements and gurus. However, Masson's childhood recollections and adult ruminations about Paul Brunton belong to the category of <sup>indefinite</sup> guru-bashing, which is so popular nowadays but which has little to commend itself.

As I have affirmed in several of my books, it is absolutely necessary to practice vigilance in regard to spiritual authority (of any type), and also to call a spade a spade. Even the media exposes of popular gurus, insidious as they are in their gawdy sensationalism, tend to have a useful function, because they encourage us to take a critical look at otherwise sacrosanct issues. There is indeed a place for applying Occam's razor to spiritual authority, charisma, and discipleship in modern times. I do not question the fact that the old ideals of discipleship and gurudom need to be thoroughly reexamined and, where necessary, revised in light of our modern sensibilities. A

There is need for much deconstruction, but there is an equal need for reconstruction. It is saddening to see someone of Masson's intellectual caliber dedicate himself so exclusively to the task of deconstruction without assuming responsibility for the correlative task of reconstruction. If I (as a scholar in the history of religion) may be permitted a psychoanalytic observation, his book appears to be an exercise in demolishing the father figure in the form of his erstwhile guru.

Moreover, it is clear from some comments that his criticism extends to his own father, whom he sees as having blindly followed Brunton. Significantly, the title of the book is not My Guru but My Father's Guru. This implies a total rejection of the role Brunton played in Masson's own life, as well as a telling fusion of the two father figures.

To be sure, transcending the guru image is a necessary step in a disciple's personal path to freedom and enlightenment. "Kill the Buddha when you see him on the road," states a well-known Zen maxim. In other words, this psychological demolition job is an integral part of spiritual practice—one that calls for deep insight and courage.

Masson's book is a public exorcism of old private ghosts. It is full of anger and resentment, which, as he more or less admits, are the product of unresolved childhood conflicts. As a







2

consequence, his work is primarily autobiographical rather than biographical. Admissions such as "I grew up in the shadow of a man who laid claim to enormous power" hint at the unconscious forces provoking Masson to the kind of attack his book represents on a man who is otherwise widely remembered as a benign and even sagely individual.

Yet, perplexingly enough, Masson also remembers Brunton as a person who was "steady," "never angry," "never testy," "frugal," who "always knew what was real" and "never looked bored." Masson even generously credited Brunton with "a certain degree of healthy skepticism" and especially mentions that his guru "abhorred what he called 'unbalanced' people, the fanatics, cranks, extremists, and monomaniacs who infested his domain of mysticism." At the end of his book he writes, "I believe that P.B. [Brunton] himself is a sincere seeker and an exceptionally fine human being." To most people, these characterizations would appear to be desirable virtues rather than failings. It does not occur to Masson that they stand in stark contradiction to his other claims about Brunton, as a charlatan and a liar.

*by modern standards*

Particularly insidious is Masson's suggestion that Brunton should be held responsible for the sexual abuse he believes to have experienced in his childhood. In Masson's view, he suffered a trauma because of the pervasive mood of secrecy around Brunton, where sexuality was considered inimical to spiritual life. Brunton was clearly an ascetic, as have been many if not most mystics. However, he addressed sexuality fairly and squarely, as is clear from his posthumously published notebooks. Masson's suggestion that Brunton could have "found sexual excitement by controlling everyone else's sexuality" is lurid and contemptible. As Masson writes, "meditation sustained P.B. as sex and food sustain other people." It is hard to imagine such a person wanting to vicariously participate in other people's sex life.

*understanding of the value*

*when one is ready for it*

It is easy to see that Brunton's high ideal of chastity ran counter to Masson's early preoccupation with sexuality and his later self-confessed obsession with it. May we see in this the real reason for his break with Brunton at the age of seventeen, when, as is well known, the gonads tend to exercise a singular influence over a young man's cerebral activities?

If sexuality and spirituality are seen as incompatible, and sexuality is uppermost on one's mind, feelings of failure, guilt, and shame lie close at hand. In Masson's case they clearly led to a radical dismissal not only of his teacher but of the spiritual ideals, values, and beliefs that comprised his childhood universe. His academic education neatly facilitated this process, leading to an increasing secularization of his whole outlook.

Today he regards those years with Brunton as traumatic. Yet when we look at the photos included in the book, what we see is not a traumatized child but a reasonably happy one. From his present thoroughly secularized (and presumably psychoanalyzed) viewpoint, Brunton's worldview and attitude toward life must appear as less than realistic. Masson speaks of Brunton's "romanticism," as if it were a crime. He feels that he idealized Brunton just as he idealized Freud later on, only to find himself ripped off.

Let us recall that disillusionment, which is what this book is







essentially about, is dis-illusion, that is, the shattering of illusions. In the present case, what is involved are the author's illusions about a prominent father figure in his early life. He was not traumatized by Brunton's spirituality, or "romanticism," but by his own doubts and by his subsequent acceptance of a materialist explanation of existence, which disallows the kind of world in which Brunton obviously lived, and quite happily and peacefully so.

Since Masson's book, as I have noted, is chiefly autobiographical, I may be permitted a few remarks about the adequacy of his methodology. Masson confesses freely that he relies on his own memory, but ever since Freud we know how faulty our reconstructions of childhood events can be. Yet Masson, the ex-psychoanalyst, insists that his reconstructions are not fictional. ~~What else could they be? Surely not facts. Facts do not rely on memory.~~ Furthermore, even facts, as we know from epistemology, are riddled with interpretations. Masson's memories are similarly riddled with presumptions about life--namely his current materialist outlook acquired in reaction to the "romanticism" of his childhood days. And they are riddled with unresolved emotions.

Moreover, when we read some of the conversations recollected by Masson without projecting his materialist bias into them, and simply view them as conversations conducted in a spiritual mode, they seem far less outlandish and not in the least sinister.

How reactive Masson is to what he now dismisses as sheer romanticism becomes clear when he speaks of Brunton as a charlatan in regard to his knowledge of the Indian philosophical and religious literature. He harshly criticizes Brunton thus: "P.B. knew no Sanskrit, knew no texts, invented things, lied, cheated, and stole, intellectually speaking." And, "He was just a hodgepodge of misread and misunderstood ideas from an ancient culture he did not know or understand." Masson chooses to ignore that Brunton did not pretend to be a scholar.

Additionally, <sup>present</sup> as someone who has worked in the area of Indian studies for over a quarter of a century, I am perhaps entitled to an opinion here. While Masson undoubtedly acquired a knowledge of Sanskrit and Sanskrit literature that exceeded that of Brunton, his former guru certainly did not <sup>present</sup> regard himself as a Sanskrit scholar, and so Masson's ad hominem remarks are so much shadow boxing. What Brunton and his work stood for was the spirit of the ancient Indian tradition. He was above all a practitioner of the sort of ideas that Masson, during his career as a Sanskritist, merely speculated about.

As I see it, Brunton was perfectly faithful to the highest expression of Indian spirituality, while at the same time creatively developing a teaching that was based on the ancient wisdom ~~but also was couched~~ <sup>and expressed</sup> in a language that would appeal to Westerner seekers. His many books are a distillate of his studies of the Indian traditions as well as of his own rich spiritual and mystical experiences.

Incredibly enough, Robert Coles, in his review, glossed over all these important issues. Instead he claimed to have seen humor and compassion in Masson's book. I thought both were conspicuously absent, and that Masson aired his grievances with not a little sarcasm and contempt. We find a possible clue for this behavior in







4

his admission that "teasing had always played an important role in our family. . . A tease was most successful when the person was actually frightened. Teasing often had sadistic and sexual undertones." One cannot help but wonder whether Masson is not trying to tease, scare, and sexually titillate his readers?

Brunton is dead, but it would appear <sup>is</sup> what Masson is still carrying ~~him~~ around in his head--~~though~~ not the essential Brunton,-- which would probably be a peaceful experience--but ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> image Masson himself has created ~~of his former guru~~. Masson's final confession is, "he [Brunton] and I did not remain friends. I think the fault was primarily mine." I rest my case.

--Georg Feuerstein, Ph.D.  
Author





Telephone Interview with Jacques and Diana Masson

February 22, 1993

Conducted by: Barbara Platek

BP: I would like to get a sense of the chronology of your relationship with PB. Why don't we start with how and when you met him.

JM: In 1945, I went to India (Mysore) to meet PB for the first time. It was my first trip to India and my first encounter with Paul Brunton.

BP: What prompted you to meet him?

JM: My brother had read his book, *A Search in Secret India*. My brother was in the U.S. Navy at that time and he wrote PB a letter making an appointment to see him in Hollywood. So, my brother went to Hollywood and he was very much impressed with Paul Brunton and he told me all about it. So then I decided that one day I would go and see him, too. Then the war happened and for several years we couldn't travel. As soon as the war ended, I was able to go to India, through the Air Transport Command of the American army.

BP: Tell me about meeting PB for the first time. What was your impression of him?

I was very impressed. I came by train to Mysore and he met me at the station. He recognized me immediately. I was quite impressed and when I started talking to him I was very much interested in his teachings. He taught me to meditate. One day we had a meditation together in my hotel in Mysore. At the end of the meditation he told me, "Jacques, I had a vision of you." You must have read that in the book, *My Father's Guru*.

BP: Yes.

JM: So he told me about his vision. He said that one day I would enter into spiritual consciousness and I would develop some occult powers. So I asked him if I could write that down. I wrote everything down in order not to forget it and he corrected a few sentences. I still have his own handwriting about his vision. I was terribly impressed by it and I believed every word he said. I had no doubt that his vision would come to pass.

BP: Had you been interested in spiritual ideas before you met him?

JM: No, only slightly. My brother always talked to me about it, but I was not really interested.

BP: So what happened after your first meeting with PB, did you stay with him...?

JM: Yes, I stayed in Mysore for a couple of months. Then he...

DM: ...went up to the hills:



JM: He went up to Ootacamund, the Hill Station in India. He said he would be there for about a month, so I took that opportunity to go to Sri Lanka to buy some precious stones. I had never bought precious stones before so I thought it would be an opportunity to see what it's all about. So I went to Ceylon and I came back to Hill Station, Ootacamund, where PB had a little bungalow. We used to see each other every day.

BP: And after that?

JM: He told me that he wanted to go back to the United States. I helped him a bit financially to get a ticket and then I invited him to come to our house. He was a strict vegetarian and so were we. It was very convenient for him. So after a few months, he came and visited us in Los Angeles, California and he stayed with us.

BP: So he stayed for awhile and then returned? How did things proceed from there?

JM: Yes, we kept up a lengthy correspondence for years. He told me he was looking for a house, he wanted a certain type of home-- very quiet, with a nice view. So I went to Arizona with him. We looked at several homes. Finally, he found a home that he thought was suitable for him. I am a very practical business man and I realized the home was not good for him. So I told him [garbled on tape: something about knowing your guru when you meet him and knowing whether a house is right for you.] On the strength of what he said, much against my better judgment, I gave a deposit on the house. I knew that I would lose the deposit. When I told my brother about it he told me to stop payment on the check because the place wasn't suitable for PB. I told him that I couldn't do that because it would be a bad reputation for PB. So didn't stop payment and sure enough, PB went with my brother Bernard to look at the house and they decided it wasn't the place he wanted. Later on we found another place in the desert in Tucson and we rented it for the season.

BP: What year was that?

JM: 1946. My brother and his wife took care of the house. She did the cooking and he did secretarial work for PB. My wife, Diana, and myself and our two kids rented a house in Tucson. I used to go everyday to the ranch to visit him.

BP: What was that like, what did the two of you do/talk about?

JM: We used to meditate and we would talk philosophy and mysticism.

DM: And he came to the house.

JM: He used to come to my house for dinner. And we used to go to his place. We had a lot of long talks.

BP: Tell me about your impressions of PB.

JM: I believed everything he said. I believed in the vision he had of me and I was sure that vision would come to pass. It actually never happened.

BP: Well, you still have time.

JM: I'm eighty-one year's old, there's not much left. I kept hoping from year to year. I'd say, "Well, maybe next year." He emphasized purification. He said that without purification there can be no illumination, and without illumination, no union. He emphasized all the time: purification, illumination, union.

DM: And no sex.

JM: No, actually no. He never told me no sex. He said I should modify my sex life.

BP: What about in him? Did you see any changes in him over the years?

JM: No, he remained the same. His ideas remained the same. He strongly believed in meditation and purification. He very strongly believed in that.

BP: So after the time in Arizona, where did you go from there?

JM: We came back to Los Angeles.

BP: Did PB come with you?

DM: He met us there.

JM: Yes, he didn't come right away. He came later on and he stayed with us in Los Angeles. Then we sold the house in Los Angeles and went to Hawaii. PB stayed with us in Hawaii for about six to eight months.

DM: Also, when we went to the Valley he had the back house.

JM: We went to San Fernando Valley and we rented a ranch-style house. He had living quarters all by himself and we had living quarters, too. He stayed there a couple of months:

BP: I'm getting the feeling that you spent a great deal of time with PB during those years. When was the last time you saw him?



JM: The last time was in Switzerland shortly before he died. I remained friends with him all through the years. Although at one time I wanted to see Gurunathan Krishna Menon [Atmananda]. PB writes about him in his book. He is a sage. Anyway, I had met him and I decided to go back there with my wife and two children. Before going, since PB was my guru I sent him a telegram asking for permission to go there and permission to take another guru. He cabled me back saying that I was free to do anything I wanted. But you see what the mystery was ...for instance when I first became his disciple he said, "Yes, I will become your guru. I don't take any disciples, you're the only one and another one, an Indian, besides you." He accepted me and he told me, "When a guru accepts his disciple, the disciple will grow malgre lui. You know what that is? Maigre lui? In spite of himself he will grow. Like water and flowers. He told me I would grow. He told me he was my guru, but later on he said he was not a guru. So I was all mixed up, I didn't know what to believe.

BP: Were there other people that he was also close to like yourself, other students/friends?

JM: He was very secretive. He had his lawyer called Myron Frantz. And an Englishman named Mr. Spicer, a very high class person. He had disciples. He had the Wagners, very poor farmers living near Los Angeles. But he was very secretive about everything.

BP: Were you the only people that he stayed with?

JM: No, when he traveled abroad he stayed with other people. But he felt comfortable with us because my wife was an excellent vegetarian cook and she knew what type of food he liked. He was extremely strict in his diet. After awhile he gave up eggs, milk, and cheese and dairy products. He was very, very strict. And she knew exactly what kind of food he liked.

DM: He gave up oil. He had to have his salad without oil in the dressing.

JM: He was very austere in his ways. She catered to his every wish.

BP: He felt comfortable saying with you...

JM: Yes, it was very convenient for him to live with us because of the cooking and the service.

DM: We catered to him. We ignored everyone around us.

JM: We drove him wherever he wanted. We were with him constantly. I gave up my business and I devoted all my time to Paul Brunton.

DM: [garbled] That time you rented a house with him...

JM: I rented a house in Fallbrook [?], near Los Angeles. He wanted a quiet place, so I rented a house. I became his servant. I did the cooking, the cleaning, housekeeping, chauffeuring around, everything.

BP: Tell me about his habits, his lifestyle. Did he meditate frequently, spend a lot of time writing...?

JM: He was very mysterious. He slept very little at night. He used to meditate. In his room he had different colored bulbs--a green one, yellow one--he thought they were good for his psychic way. But he was very mysterious about it.

BP: What was it like to be in his presence? Was there anything special about it?

JM: I went for the spiritual atmosphere. I had heard a guru is God and you had to devote your life to the guru.

BP: Did you feel a spiritual atmosphere around PB?

JM: Frankly, no. Once in awhile I used to meditate with him in the evening. I used to feel a certain amount to peace. I asked him once, I said, "Tell me PB, the peace that you have with you, do you have it all the time?" He was surprised. He looked at me and asked, "How do you know that I have that peace?" I said that I could feel it. "Yes," he said to me, "I have that peace with me all the time." I could feel a certain amount of peace around him.

BP: You felt the peace especially when you meditated with him?

JM: No, not when I meditated with him, after our meditation. Actually, when I meditated with him, he would always ask me at the end of the meditation, "Did you feel anything?" And I had to admit no, I didn't feel anything. This went on for years and years. He was greatly disappointed. One day I was meditating with him in Palm Springs, I took a house in Palm Springs and I stayed with him. After the meditation he asked, "Do you feel anything?" I said no. He said, "The Maharshi came to me in my meditation." He asked me, "Did you feel anything?" I said no, I didn't feel anything.

BP: Are there any particular times with PB that stand out for you?

JM: Well in Mysore it was very nice, very quiet. There were no distractions. There was nice scenery and good food there in Mysore. It was very pleasant.

BP: Nothing else that comes to mind?



JM: Nothing else. Frankly, I never felt a spiritual atmosphere around him. Never. I never felt anything psychic. I'm not psychic by nature. I never felt anything out of the ordinary.

BP: How do you feel about him now ...when you read his books...?

JM: To me, he remains a mystery. I really don't know what he was, what he is ...it's a mystery to me.

BP: Would you mind if I asked you some questions about the book?

JM: No, not at all.

BP: Do you feel that the events that your son describes are accurate?

DM: Which ones?

BP: Well I was thinking first in just general terms, but we can be more specific.

DM: Well yes, the way my son accepted him and all that, that was correct. He gave my son to believe that he was going to be the next, you know, leader...in a very spiritual sort of...and my son tried to please him, to become that way. I was the only one who wasn't impressed in that sense. I was a very good friend of his. We had laughs together. We enjoyed each other's company. He wasn't spiritual with me. We lived together for ten days in a little apartment I had in the South of France, in Cannes. Jacques was away on a trip and the children were already grown. And the two of us were living in this little apartment. PB was always worried that he couldn't spare time. I would say, "Let's go down to the beach and have our sandwich on the beach and have a little sun while we eat." "Oh," he says, "That would be wicked." I said, "Not at all, let's do it. Let's get the newspaper, look at the news..." And so he would do that. And then when we would come home, he would get through his notes and after that, he would help me set up the apartment. He would help me tack pictures on the wall. He was very helpful. It was very nice. There was no pretense at all, of any sort.

Once when I came to visit him--this is very funny--I wanted to get away from the whole family because they were driving me mad. You know, buying their croissants at seven o'clock in the morning and shopping and cooking and everything else. "I've got to get away," I said. "The only place I know where I can go quickly is to Switzerland, where PB is." So I came there, but I came prepared. I had a drop of salt in a bag and a little bit of oil. (I didn't tell him that). So, anyway, I wasn't going to cook, because I was fed up with cooking. I said, "Tonight we're going to dinner, there's a nice little vegetarian restaurant. You and I will go. You can have spaghetti and things of that sort." And he said, "Oh no, no." I said, "Come on, we're going to go." He said, "No, let's eat at home." I said, "Well, what have you got at home?" We opened the

icebox, he had a wilted piece of lettuce and tahini, and that's it. And I thought, well this isn't going to taste like anything...and it wouldn't have. But I didn't let him see. I prepared the salad and I added the little bit of oil, and lemon, you know, the things I knew how to do. I fixed the rice with something more, I don't remember. It was all vegetarian, of course. And he said, "Oh, you sure know how to prepare tasty meals. How did you do that?" I said, "Well, a women's touch..." I didn't let him know that there were a few little extra ingredients. The day we went down to the beach, I made our cucumber sandwiches, dry, or whatever he wanted. We sat and read the paper and he quite enjoyed it, you know.

The only time that I went along ...once I was in meditation with Jacques and PB...he used to do his chanting, *Om Mani Padme Om*, and then we would just sit quietly, for twenty minutes or a half hour. When we came out of it he said, "How did you feel?" Well I was holding my neck in such a position that I think I got a bit of a cramp or something in the head. He said, "Well what did you feel?" And I said, "I don't know, I felt something rise in me." It was a painful thing. He said, "That was the Kundalini that was arising and you had a great opportunity to enter into the Void (or whatever he called it then)." I said, "Really?" He said, "And it may not come again." So I was very upset, I thought I lost my chance. I realized later that I had gotten a very stiff neck and the blood didn't come to my head or something. That's why I felt something rise in my head--I was getting dizzy. But he thought I was having some Kundalini experiences. I am strictly not interested in any of those experiences. If there is to be anything that happens inside of me, yes. But that wasn't it.

But we had wonderful times together. Once we were in the car and we had a bottle of wine there. I remember we stopped to tank up. Jacques was driving and PB and I were in the back. I said, "Let's have a little drink." He said, "Oh no, that would be naughty." I said, "No it wouldn't." So we had our little wine and he quite enjoyed it. I mean he wouldn't allow himself to enjoy anything he was very, very severe with himself.

BP: Did you feel that he was severe with your family as well? That is, in terms of...

DM: No, with the family everyone thought that we were going to be touched on the head with a fairy wand and we'd all go into Nirvana.

BP: Your son, Jeffrey, made it sound like there was a strict atmosphere around fasting or sexuality.

DM: That was well indicated.

BP: Was PB really that strict with his followers in terms of what he prescribed for....

DM: With us he was. He was very strict.



JM: You know of course that he got married?

BP: Several times, isn't that right?

DM: He married Eve twice. Actually, Jacques was in Japan at the time. PB was staying with us and so was Eve. They were living with me. She came for an interview that night, because she was having all sorts of visions of spirits and they were upsetting her. She had read one of his books, I don't know which one, and she came to visit him. She was young and beautiful and had a powerful voice. Whenever he had visitors, we retired to our private bedroom and we couldn't come down. The house was his. So this woman walked in and I could hear from upstairs a booming voice. She was telling him about what happened. Then he told her he would exorcise these spirits, or he did it without telling her--I don't know which way--I didn't hear. Anyway, they were discussing it. The next thing you know, he said that he had to leave--for Europe or something--and she said she'd like to help him. I think you know that.

BP: Yes.

DM: So, they got married within a few days. You heard ...when they went to marry them and the mother came along? The Justice of the Peace started to marry PB with the mother. Then afterwards, when she met Beau--that also happened at our house--she was very much taken with him. He was crazy about her. He was the accompanist when she went to study with [?], in Santa Barbara. So, we were all sitting around the dining table. There was Beau--we had invited him for dinner--there was Eve and PB, who were living with us, and Jeffrey, Jacques and I. Then Beau I guess tried to reach Eve's leg. So PB said, "You're playing footsie with the wrong person." Eve was shocked and ran from the room. PB had a good sense of humor about it, he wasn't at all concerned. That's when she did finally chose Beau and got married.

BP: Would you say that the way that Jeffrey described the experiences in the book is similar to the way that both of you remember?

DM: Yes, as it was happening, that was the way.

BP: Is that true for you, too, Mr. Masson?

JM: Yes.

DM: As Jeffrey described in the book up until the time he went away to college. Until we moved to South America, that is.

BP: Tell me about that time, about the predictions for World War Three and all that happened then.

DM: Yes, that was the prediction. All of that is true. PB had the vision and so did Eve. He thought that there was going to be a nuclear war, a third world war, and the whole northern hemisphere would be blown up. The only way we could save our skins was to go to the southern hemisphere. We all made preparations for that. I felt very badly about leaving my family to their fate. But how could I tell them? They wouldn't have believed it. What would I say? Some fellow had some queer notions...I mean you don't go giving up your life and home and family...but we did. We went off. I remember when we went to have our tests. We had to have chest x-rays and blood tests to get our Visas for South America. We were all supposed to move to...Chile?...or was it Uruguay?

JM: Chile.

DM: Chile. PB was very much afraid of going there. We didn't realize it at the time. He thought that South America had nothing but savages or communists. He was very much afraid 'of the communists. He was afraid of moving down there. I think that's why he let us go down there and he didn't go. So we all prepared. Eve passed out when they went to take her blood because she couldn't stand having the needle put in. Anyway, we all took our tests. Then Eve and Beau didn't go.

JM: They went to Switzerland.

DM: They went to Zurich, where Beau was accompanying at the Opera House. We wound up in Uruguay. Thank God. And PB went to Australia and New Zealand without telling anybody. Everybody really felt deserted. We gave up a lot to go away.

BP: Did you feel deserted Mr. Masson?

JM: Yes.

DM: Until we met these people in South America who set us straight. We met Natasha and Freddie who had been to meet this guru in the South of India. We realized that was the real stuff. He was a sage. We were going to meet him. But by the time the four of us were ready to go, [ ? ] passed away. It took us another eleven of twelve years before we met him ...there are very few in the world...

BP: Did PB correspond with you when he was in Australia and you were in Uruguay?

DM: Did we?

JM: Yes, Yes.

DM: You had some letters?

JM: Yes, but very sparse.



BP: Did he explain why he had gone to Australia?

JM: Yes, because it was a safe place.

DM: He was looking for a safe place and being secretive. I don't know if he had anybody there that he knew. He went there because it was safe, it was southern hemisphere. He wanted to be in an English-speaking, civilized country. He thought South America had uncivilized people. He didn't understand. He thought they were all Indians or communists or they were rebels. He was deadly afraid of that.

BP: I see. I have another question for you, Mr. Masson.

JM: Yes?

BP: Do you feel that the decisions you made regarding, let's say fasting, were your decisions or ones that PB suggested?

JM: Fasting? No, I started fasting way before I knew PB. My brother used to tell me about fasting. Actually PB had nothing to do with the fast. I think Jeff made a mistake saying that. I told PB I was going on a fast. He didn't encourage me, nor did he oppose it. He had nothing to do with the fasting.

BP: So that was something you wished to do?

JM: My own decision.

DM: I think that was Jacques' own way. Jacques was health-minded from way back when.

BP: Did you feel that he was encouraging your family to put restrictions on sexuality, or was that also your own idea?

JM: At one time I told PB that I decided not to have any sex because I was not advancing. I felt something was holding me back. So I told him that I was going to give up sex. He did not disapprove.

BP: What about money? It sounded from the book that you felt you had given him a lot of money.

JM: I did not give him a lot of money.

DM: But through the years...

JM: Through the years I gave a certain amount. I helped him financially.

BP: What was his response to that?

JM: He was grateful, that's all.

BP: Did he try to discourage you?

JM: At one time when I was with him in Mysore, India, I told him that I would like to go to Ceylon to buy some precious stones. But I said since I had come to him for spiritual reasons I shouldn't do that. He said, "No, no, you're perfectly justified." He said, "You go to Ceylon, I'm going away, I'll meet you in a month from now." Which I did. When I came back to Los Angeles, my trip had been very successful and I sent him a check for quite a large amount of money. He returned it to me.

BP: He returned it to you.

JM: Yes.

BP: You know, one of things that I found most curious about the book was the story of the table.

DM: Oh that's true. I was there.

JM: Well, I don't know. I was there, too. But I never did see PB lifting the table. So I don't know.

BP: Do you have any ideas about that incident?

JM: I was hoping that something would happen to convince Jeffrey. I remember that very well. Jeffrey said that he opened his eyes and saw PB lifting the table. So I don't know which is true.

BP: It sounds like Jeffrey was very close to PB when he was young.

DM: Yes, oh yes, until he was nineteen.

JM: He was extremely close. Actually he was his secretary when he was about fourteen or fifteen year's old.

BP: So he went through some kind of disappointment?

DM: [inaudible]

BP: At this point in time, he's not interested in reading PB's books or anything of that nature?



DM: No, but you know how he says at the end that he's still charmed by him? PB would tell little stories...like to me once he told a story about the birds, that he goes into the bird's mind and he can see what the bird is thinking. Well I never was interested in that sort of thing. I didn't like it in fact, magic and all that.

[Jacques at this point asks me about my connection to PB--I tell him again that PB was my father's guru and that he had an enormous impact on my life, his writings, etc.]

BP: I was very surprised by Jeffrey's book and it made me very curious to know whether the stories were true or not.

[Discussion between me and Diane about which of PB's books I liked the best, including a reference to my liking the "Search" books when I was a teenager. She asks about the psychic phenomena in those books--whether it bothered me]

BP: I don't really associate psychic phenomena with PB in his later years or in the Notebooks. But one of the questions that did come up for me reading your son's book was what you would say to a new PB reader about the book, how should they view what Jeffrey wrote? We've had phone calls from people who, let's say, have been reading PB for two or three years, they've never met him, of course...

DM: That's strange that they would be reading him now, does he have a big audience?

BP: Yes, there are many people who have discovered his later writings--the Notebooks--and have been quite impressed with them. So there are people who didn't know PB personally and know they come across Jeffrey's book and they don't know what to make of it.

DM: What he wrote is correct. We were there, so we know. In so far as Jeffrey turned against it later on, well that's something he has to pass through. If he will ever come back full cycle, we don't know. But he did believe in him up until he went off to college.

BP: Mr. Masson, what would you say to someone who has read your son's book?

JM: You know people don't believe everything they read. Take everything with a grain of salt. People that are devoted to PB will remain devoted to him. People that don't know PB...

DM: They may question...

JM: ...they are not that interested, you see. I don't think it will do any harm. On the contrary, I think it will bring him into more focus. People may start reading his other books. I don't think it's going to harm PB. It will create an interest in Paul Brunton again.

DM: PB gathered a lot of information throughout the years, he was a journalist after all. He gathered a lot of material, he kept millions of little notes. One of the things I once told him I saw down in notes later on. Whenever he heard something he would put it together, he would have all these little notes. Therefore he was able to write at great length, he gathered all this information...how centered he was at the end...only he would know. I saw him up until almost the very end.

BP: Was the man that you saw in Switzerland at the end the same man you had met in Mysore?

DM: Well, I never met him in Mysore. I only met him when he came to Los Angeles in 1945. In fact, I was the one who stayed up with him till two in the morning while Jacques fell asleep. Jacques would always go to bed earlier. PB and I used to talk long into the night.

BP: So, did you feel it was the same person?

DM: Afterwards? At the end? No. At the end I think he...well he read something I sent to him, two books I sent him, and he was very much impressed. I think he had something going there at the end.

BP: You think he was different at the end?

DM: Yes.

BP: Do you agree with that, Mr. Masson?

JM: It's hard to tell. To be honest, I can't answer that.

BP: The reason I ask is that I've often heard from people, people who knew him during different times, that he was different towards the end of his life...

JM: I don't think he was any different.

DM: In what way did they think he was different?

BP: Well, more quiet and...

DM: His health was failing, he was very much concerned with his health.



JM: He became extremely health-minded toward the end.

DM: More body-conscious, you see. Too much body-consciousness there. He was getting ill and that affected him to some extent, I think.

BP: Well, I've asked you a lot of questions at this point. Is there anything you would like to talk about?

JM: I can't think of anything else.

DM: That pretty much covers it. Everybody has the book.

JM: I suggest you call the Wagners.

DM: There's only Claire, she's very devoted.

JM: Yes, Claire, she's extremely devoted. She had a Kundalini experience when she first met PB. She's extremely devoted to him, I suggest you call her. Also his former wife, Eve. It would be a good idea to speak to her.

BP: All right. Getting back to you, for a moment, do you think your spiritual development was helped by your contact with PB?

JM: Yes, because I knew nothing about spiritual matters when I first met him, absolutely nothing. So, he was a help.

BP: Do you think he contributed to your spiritual growth?

JM: Yes, I would say so.

BP: But you never felt that the vision of you came to pass?

JM: No. I was very disappointed in his vision. I believed it one hundred percent. He said that in the vision I looked a little bit older, that my appearance had changed. I figured that it was maybe ten or fifteen years later. Now it is over forty-five years.

DM: And you don't have too many years left.

BP: But you did feel that you received benefit from knowing him/being with him?

JM: Yes. Absolutely.

BP: Are you glad that he spent all those years with you and your family?

JM: Yes, I'm glad.

DM: Yes. My daughter has a very nice feeling about him.

BP: Do you think your life would've been different if he...

DM: I think he was a stepping stone for us, for me. A stepping stone to the Absolute.

JM: He did enrich my life.

DM: And thanks to him, we went to South America and we met these disciples who pointed us in the right direction...

BP: Well, perhaps that was...

DM: That was a stepping stone, too.

BP: Yes.

[Brief discussion about Kenneth and his health]

DM: Kenneth and PB didn't get on at all.

BP: Is that right?

DM: Oh, my God. Kenneth was living with us, while PB was living at the ranch with Ida and Bernard. Kenneth stayed with us for two weeks and he was very unhappy. He didn't have any work, he was just doing PB's work, and that drove him crazy. You know, with all the little piddley papers and everything. So finally, Kenneth said he was going to kill himself. He started walking toward the sea. PB said, "How are you going to do it?" he said, "I'm going to drown myself." So PB laughed, he said, "Go ahead." Of course he didn't. But their relationship was not great. Whenever we went to restaurants together there would always be a fight. They didn't get on at all. But now, to listen to Kenneth...you'd think he was the darling, you know...

BP: Memory is a strange thing.

DM: Yes, it can distort things.

BP: During those years, was PB recognized for his writing? Was he popular?

DM: Yes.

JM: His first books, *A Search in Secret India*, *Secret Egypt*, *Discover Yourself*, were very popular. He was the first one to bring attention to India, to Ramana Maharshi.



DM: That's really where spirituality comes from--India. All the great sages through the ages have come from India. We have to admit that.

BP: Did he receive a great deal of attention as an author, letters and so on?

JM: He received a certain amount of mail, I wouldn't say a lot.

DM: He wasn't overwhelmed, no.

BP: I just wondered about the level of recognition that he received from the world, whether he was a popular figure.

DM: I don't think so.

JM: He was on the go all the time. Sometimes a letter would take six months to get to him.

DM: He kept a post office box for years. Then when he moved to Switzerland, he kept moving. He had funny ideas about places, about people. He was a little paranoid about people and neighbors. He was sure everyone was looking at him. once we went to a movie in Italy and he wore sun glasses at night. I said, "What are you wearing the sun glasses for?" He said, "You never know, there are people that might see me." Sure enough, we were taking pictures before the movie--PB, Jeffrey, and I--and someone comes over and says, "Paul Brunton!" He told me about some of his incarnations. He was a Pope.

JM: Not a Pope, a secretary to the Pope.

DM: Well, anyway, they put him in jail, he was imprisoned during that incarnation. He could remember these past lives, which is something new to me.

BP: Did you feel he was speaking the truth when he said that?

DM: He might be having these visions, I didn't know. It sounded strange to me...but what made us laugh...he said that when he was this secretary to the Pope, he said "That's why I speak such good Italian." Of course he spoke the worst Italian you ever heard in your life. He had no accent for languages. He was British and that was that. It was very funny.

BP: Well I greatly appreciate both of you taking the time to talk tonight.

[Discussion about my coming to visit someday and other brief chit chat.]

JM: Thank you Barbara. Good night.





Meeting @ the cottage @ Wisdom's Goldenrod:

Arthur's First Meeting with PB. How he met him. Why he wanted to meet him and what it was like.

1.1. How did I meet PB?

I met PB by writing a letter. He was in Czechoslovakia, and he answered from there. He said that he was coming to Holland and I would be able to meet him there. The year was 1948. I had just finished my studies then and was looking for a job.

1.2 Why did I want to meet PB?

Two years earlier I read The Hidden Teachings beyond Yoga. I saw it in the window of a book shop and the words, *Hidden Teachings*, captivated my attention. So I read *Hidden Teachings*. That means I read Mentalism and at once I realized that it was a kind of liberating experience. I was not living in a material world. I was living in a mental world. This I experienced as a liberating knowledge.

After reading *Hidden Teachings*, I discovered that he had written a second book entitled Wisdom of the Overself which I read. I was very much delighted with all his notes. I read it like a novel. I was so delighted that it stimulated me to write a letter. Something that I had never done before. I just wanted to thank the author for writing something that was of so much help to me at the time.

Q. Have you been reading a lot of spiritually oriented books before this, or were you familiar with other teachings before you met PB's book?

A. I was a natural religious person, not having been educated in any particular religion. On my own, I went to church and read religious literature. At 16 I began reading philosophy. Reading PB was a natural result of my interest in philosophy.

I was grateful to discover that PB did not consider philosophy a replacement for religion, but an adjunct to it. PB was a religious man. By traveling this path, what you have learned before is not thrown away, but kept in the higher element stages. So religion, mysticism and philosophy always remain together. Philosophy also stresses the need for humility, devotion and the need for further study.

Q. Is it safe to say that what you read in PB was not found in all the things you read before that?

A. Certainly.

Q. Could you say what that was?

A. It was what the title said, it was Hidden Teaching. I had never read it before, but I recognized it. It gave me not the slightest trouble. As I read it, it was recognizing things that I

Arthur, 20 Nov  
Arthur, 20 Nov 1948

clarify circumstances  
of where - put in  
context  
↓  
who  
KTN



<sup>has been</sup> may ~~be~~ recognizing from previous incarnations. <sup>was he</sup> The ~~same~~ thing is that these two books meant much more to me than his previous books about meditation. In fact, I read them in the wrong order. Meditation was a thing that I learned only much later. It was much more difficult.

Q. What was your first meeting with him like? Let's go to that. You wrote to him and said "Thank you for your books." He wrote you back and what did he say?

A. He said in his letter that he was coming through Holland, and if I wanted I could see him.

Q. So he offered to see you? You did not ask to see him?

A. I did not ask him. I never thought of this possibility. I did not know where he was or that he was travelling through Europe. I wrote him spontaneously only to thank him because I found his books so worthwhile.

Q. Do you know what he was doing at that time? Was he going to different places and giving talks?

<sup>creel</sup> A. He came himself. This was before the Communist occupation. He had to be rushed from one place to another because they were already focusing on him. So, it was just in time. He had to get out as soon as possible.

Q. Do you know why he was coming to Holland?

A. He was going to visit someone there. He brought with him translations of his books <sup>was Creel</sup> that were bound in beautiful leather.

Q. Do you know <sup>at</sup> that we have found them in Kenneth Hurst's house?

A. Yes?

Q. Did PB tell you to meet him at a certain place and time?

A. Yes, it was in the lobby of a certain hotel.

Q. So could you tell us what it was like when you actually met him?

A. Well, I was not alone. I was with a lady who also wanted to see him.

Q. So you told a friend of yours that she could come with you.

A. Yes.

Q. Do you want to say anything about her?



A. I can only say that she was an advanced mystic. She introduced me to mysticism. In the last year of the war, during the bombardment, she had enlightenment. She was especially interested in writing. She found it incredible that so much could be written about such a little thing.

Q. So then you and she went to the hotel together. . . Continue. Tell us what the first meeting was like. What happened?

A. Not much happened because we did not have much time. We made an appointment for the next morning because she was more advanced than I was. Her reaction was more powerful. She started weeping and was much impressed.

Q. And what was your less advanced reaction?

✓ A. I did not have any experience that I remember. He invited us to have breakfast with him the next morning. I do not remember much of what else was said. I do remember that I was looking for a job and asked him if I could be his secretary. PB responded that he could not afford a paid secretary. But, there was a lot to do. Those days, he was travelling which was a time consuming job. I soon learned how to book his travels, arrange hotels, make appointments. We went to travel bureaus. I learned how to do all sorts of things. I had to write letters to <sup>people</sup> we were supposed to meet.

Q. So you accepted the opportunity to work with him without pay? Is that what happened?

A. At that moment he needed help and I was available.

Q. I see. And by the way, how old were you at this time?

A. 34.

Q. And PB was 50?

A. Yes. In those days he had tremendous energy.

Q. Could you tell us a bit about his energy or his atmosphere?

A. After this he came several times to <sup>10/1/51</sup>. I always helped him typing letters. I don't remember the years, it must have been around 1950. We were both staying in a hotel in Amsterdam and I had written letters to about twenty people that were entitled to see him in that hotel. We had appointments every hour at one hour intervals.

Q. Were you present at those interviews?

A. I had to interpret for those people who did not speak English.

Q. It seems that very soon after you met PB you assumed this involvement in his work where you were answering letters for him, making arrangements for his travels being his personal assistant when he came to Holland and translating interviews he gave to other people.

A. Right. I brought food in from my landlady. It was a hotel without a restaurant. In 1952, for instance, he was in Copenhagen. He stayed there a few months with Martinis. I was there three weeks working on the galleys of ~~photographs of men~~.  
the spiritual crisis of man

Q. Do you want to say who Martinis was?

A. He was a Danish mystic.

Q. And what was his relationship with PB?

A. We travelled around and visited men in whom he was interested. Martinis was a man in whom he was interested. So PB interviewed him. PB not only gave interviews, but interviewed people who interested him. Of course Martinis was one of them. Martinis was away for a few months. When he came home, we had to quit work and go to a hotel. I had to run a household there. I had to do the shopping, cooking. I mean there was this tremendous energy. I had to start at seven in the morning and would not end until eleven in the evening. It was a long day.

Q. So this leads very naturally into the next question. What was it like to be with PB? Here you were spending the whole day with him, sixteen hours a day.

A. Well yes, that was hard work as I said. The galleys I was typing and making corrections for Spiritual Crisis.

Q. And at this point in your life did you have a job?

A. Of course.

Q. You had a regular job at that time?

A. I have to go back to our first meeting. When PB said that I could not be his paid secretary, he mentioned someone he had met before us who was working a library. He gave me her name and address and said that perhaps she knows of a job. So that is how I came to the idea of library work.

Q. So PB actually guided you to your future career from his meeting with this other person.

A. Yes. He directed many aspects of my life.

Q. With or without your knowledge.



A. I could not get a job at that library. I had an interview there. However, I kept it in my memory and ten years later, I got a job at that library. I do not know what else to say about Copenhagen, other than that it was hard work.

Q. When you say that PB had a lot of energy, do you mean physical energy or. . .

A. Yes

Q. Or do you also mean like magnetic personalitiy?

A. No. He was not that. He did not radiate his enlightenment. He held it back until it was needed..

Q. So what was it like to be with someone that had this enlightenment and how did you know that he was holding it back?

A. I don't know. Let us go to my own development. I was then still very young.. I had just heard about mysticism. I did not know anything. I did not know much about it. Only having read his earlier books, I gradually began to understand what mysticism was. As I said earlier, I was a religious person. All of his ideas about enlightenment and mysticism were new to me at the time. I only started then on this path and had to go through a whole development. So being so much with PB is speeding up your development. It may sound nice but you have to pay a high price because speeding up also means speeding up your Karma. So I went through terrible times for the next twenty years.

As he said in his notebooks, what became clear was not quite clear in the earlier books. As PB says himself, he did not write much about character development in his earlier books which he later regretted. I had to learn by experience that character development is vital. On this path, my own character needed a lot of development, therefore, meditation was not quite successful in the beginning years. I tried many times. But I now know by experience that if your character and your personality have not reached a certain maturity, meditation simply does not work.

There are certain laws governing development and meditation that you have to obey. So I had to develop many sides. You have to be a harmonious person where the intellect, feelings and actions are in harmony and all developed on the same level. I am not sure if psychological development describes all of this. I had to purify character, develop different sides. I found especially that having a job was a great help. Not only for development purposes, but to teach you balance. If you are so pushed and search at high speed, you are apt to lose your balance. So I was always grateful that I had to go to work the next day, because life was very difficult in those years.

Q. Just to clarify, you say that PB speeded up your development and that was very difficult, do you mean when you were with him or after you would see him certain things would happen?

A. Yes, it was mostly subconsciously so I cannot describe it. I only experienced that I was in trouble in various aspects. Even if you ask me, "What kind of trouble?" It is difficult to



describe. You see your whole personality was intensified. All kinds of things were happening in your inner life which I cannot describe exactly. In any case, you were unhappy and did not know what to do with your life. That is why I think a steady job and being among normal, rational people during the day was a great help.

Q. You were a single person living alone? Is that correct?

A. That is correct. If I was a monk or without work, I do not know what would have happened. You were just taken as far as you were able to endure.

Q. Do you think PB knew this was happening to you or that it was conscious on his part?

A. I have no idea.

Q. What kept you from saying, "Ever since I met this man my life has been a mess. I do not want to see him anymore." What did you feel you were getting from him?

A. He was my only help I think. I only knew when I was with him, things would straighten out a bit. I can say that I often felt that I wished I had never started this thing. Life became much more difficult than it was before. He said that I was . He would never recommend that I start this path.

Q. Can you say a bit more about how it felt that it was ok when you were with him? Did things feel solved? How did it feel when you were with him?

A. It was simply that he was the only person to whom I could return in my predicament. I simply felt attracted to him. I did not hope for anything. I felt when he went to Australia for a few years like I did not know what to do. Fortunately Kenneth came to visit me, so I could complain to him. Kenneth encouraged me to write to him. In those years, Kenneth was of great help to me. He came every year.

Q. How did you actually come to meet Kenneth? Did PB actually tell him to come to see you?

A. Yes, he introduced us to each other. PB told me, "I know a very advanced student. Do you want to see him?" I responded, "Yes, of course." Then plans were made for me to meet him.

Q. Did PB say, "This is my son"?

A. No

Q. So how did you find out?

A. I discovered it myself. PB never said that.

Q. So you would see PB once a year for a few weeks?



A. Yes. At first we never made notes. It was for two or three weeks, something like that. I would always ask him first whether I could come and he would tell me when, where and for how long I could come.

Q. Where were some of the different places you would stay with him?

A. I would often stay with him in Sweden in different hotels. There we went to visit different students. He always had a great sense of humor, so there were always nice things. I will always remember that there was one time, there was someone he wanted to see. PB asked me to call him and tell him that I wanted to see him; and ask him if I could bring a friend.

Q. If this were in regard to me, would PB be checking me out?

A. No. Once we came, they were shocked.

Q. What did people know about PB at that time? Did they know who he was?

A. I don't remember these people. I only know that they could not get over it. It was completely unexpected.

Q. So he was very well known?

A. I think he introduced himself.

Q. But they already knew who he was?

A. Yes, because they were students.

Q. I see, they were other students.

A. It was a shock for them. They were not prepared for him.

Q. So do you think that this was a mean thing for PB to do?

A. No, this was PB's sense of humor. He would like to have a joke now and then.

Q. And then what would end up happening after they got over the shock?

A. Then I was just a normal visit.

Q. Let me make a little side track about money. When you were with PB in Zurich, how was the money handled?

A. That is important. Always, at all times, PB paid his own bills. There was never any question about anyone else paying for him. He always paid all of his own expenses.

Q. And what about you? Who paid your bills?

A. I paid them myself.

Q. I will just take a point of view. Did you ever feel that he was taking advantage of you? Here you spent all of this money and all of this time with him. You worked for him for free.

A. No, it was a privilege for me.

Q. In what way was it a privilege?

A. He was a man I owed so much to. Life with him was very interesting. There was always things happening. Piles of letters coming every day. People coming to see him, and arrangements to be made.

Q. Just to give us an example, on a typical day, how many letters would he get from his readers or his students?

A. Perhaps five or six.

Q. Five or six a day?

A. Yes.

Q. How many interviews would he give in one week's time?

A. That was different. It was very soon after I started that he started to retire. But, in those days when I met him, anyone who wrote him could see him. A few years later, he gradually started to retire. One time we tried to create a form letter saying that he was not seeing anyone anymore because he was getting older and retired. He was an author, not a teacher. Those people that saw him, he tried to send to someone else. Once, in Copenhagen there was a teacher who asked PB to take care of his students, so PB tried to avoid seeing so many people. He always saw his writing as his primary task.

Q. What would happen if someone want him to be their teacher. What if it was someone said that they did not want to go to see someone in Copenhagen, you were my guru. What would he have said?

A. From the letters he received, PB always made a selection of who he wanted to see and who he did not.

Q. What do you think was the basis of his selection?



A. His intuition.

Q. Over all of the years, at how many of the interviews of people he agreed to see were you present?

A. Dozens, perhaps twenty or thirty.

Q. So at another time that might be an interesting discussion about what you observed during the interviews PB gave to these readers.

A. What was most striking was that they all asked him the same questions.

Q. Do you want to say what some of those were?

[? about post-lives]

A. I had better shut up. I am beginning to feel like a tape recorder. I am answering the same questions all of the time.

Q. What were some of the questions that everyone would ask?

A. Problems with meditation and diet. I don't remember much.

Q. So it is a correct conclusion to say that PB felt it would be the best use of his time to write books that would answer these questions than to give personal interviews?

A. Yes, and he was right because the interviews were not very important. Most of the answers<sup>s</sup> could be found in his books.

Q. What about, as in your case, meeting PB accelerated your development and had some profound effects on you. Maybe that was true about the people with whom PB had an interview.

A. No, most times he said to himself that there was no need to see. *He*

Q. So somehow PB knew what he was doing and was consciously involved in whatever things were happening to the people to whom he spoke.

A. I am not sure about that. Kenneth and I both asked him questions that he did not want to answer. I was glad for the interviews, for then I could hear something at last. When I would listen, he was working.

Q. Why do you think that over a meal or some casual opportunity, he would not allow you to ask him questions?

A. That was not the arrangement. I was not there to ask questions, I was there to do my work.

Q. So it would have been rude for you to ask questions.

A. Well, he was irritated when I tried to ask questions. So I refrained from doing that. I had discussions with Kenneth and he said that it was the same with him.

Q. So, this leads to another question on our list of questions. You said that PB would become irritated. Now some people would say ..

A. No, irritated is not quite the right word. He simply did not answer or went on to another subject. Irritated was not the right word.

Q. But, did he ever get irritated?

A. I don't remember.

Q. Because, that is another question which is that all of us humans have these mental states and emotions. Did PB have these too?

A. No. I am sorry that I used the wrong word. It was so long ago that I have trouble in remembering what exactly would have been the right word. Between us there was a lot of telepathy. Things were not always said in words. He knew what I was thinking before I said it.

Q. Did you know that he knew that?

A. Yes.

Q. What was it like to be with someone who was so tuned in to your mental states?

A. It was nice.

Q. Did you ever feel embarrassed?

A. No.

Q. When you went to be with him, would you have that telepathy right away after not seeing him for a year of time.

A. Yes. He always knew my state of mind. It is described in literature that the master always has a picture of the student before him and knows exactly what he is up to. I remember that we had that.

Q. What was it like for you when you would come from your job and all of your other world/y involvements? What would it be like at first?



*adjust + time w/ to He atmosphere*  
A. I had to first ~~About the same.~~ He had a powerful atmosphere in his house. I remember that once I fell on my knees and he had to pick me up. I was a bit shocked at first.

Q. When you say, "in his house", this was in one of his apartments in Switzerland?

A. Yes.

Q. Could you say more about the atmosphere? Would you describe it? What did it feel like, using words?

*Aw*  
A. That ~~is~~ spiritual actually, you understand. You could use the word peaceful. He himself says that peace is only a human reaction. . . a certain state.

*W*  
Q. So not you are talking about after PB had retired and was living in one place and not traveling all over?

A. No, we haven't finished traveling yet.

Q. Ok.

A. In any case, it was always the same, packing and unpacking. When he arrived at some hotel we helped to unpack and arrange his personal things. He always made his own atmosphere in the hotel room to balance it with his own things, his little Buddha~~h~~ and incense. I hung his clothes away. When he went away again, we were back packing. He was always in a hurry. He always started packing. Putting his own things in.

Q. Did he ever get, like a lot of us, upset, angry or frustrated if we were rushing and did not feel as if we had enough time.

A. No, I was the one who would get upset.

Q. What was it like for you to get upset or frustrated when you were with him?

A. I remember that in Spain we had to take a plane. He was just walking as if nothing was the matter. I said to him, "Come on PB, we have to get that plane." He does not feel excitement or rushed.

Q. Did he ever miss a plane or anything?

A. No. We once went to Spain where Kenneth had a house.

Q. What year was this?

A. I cannot remember.

Q. So, do you want to say anything more about the travels? Was there any more about the atmosphere? About being with him?

A. No.

Q. So, when he travelled, he created an atmosphere by setting up his things. But when he lived in one place, his apartment would have an atmosphere.

A. Yes.

Q. What did he say to you when you fell to your knees? Did he say anything?

A. No. That was a sign of what the atmosphere was like. I never before fell on my knees. It happened naturally. It was a powerful atmosphere.

Q. You said that at first it took you a few days to tune in. What was that process like?

A. I only understood that later. <sup>At</sup> the time, I was always surprised that the first few days it was difficult to get in touch with him. He would be shut up.

Q. Do you think he was doing that on purpose?

A. Yes.

Q. He was acting withdrawn until you shifted?

A. Until I dropped my wordly interests, attitudes, and all of the things I was carrying with me from my job.

Q. As you shed your work/home related things, then you would be in harmony again in a few days.

A.

Q. So when you came back from seeing PB, how were you different?

A. I carried PB's aura with me. There was the higher consciousness that I tried to keep during the following days, but it gradually wore off.

Q. What was it like having this exhalted state and have it gradually wear out?

A. It was a terrible experience. That was the reason you wanted to go again.

Q. To get what we call another hit?



A. To get another dose. These doses were what kept you on the path and kept you alive. The question was, how could you develop yourself in such a way that you could maintain this state? The reason that you lose it is that your character is not sufficiently developed, not pure enough. You have certain aspects in your personality that are not in harmony with his higher consciousness. That is why you cannot maintain that state.

Q. So would you say that as you evolved you were able to maintain that presence longer after you went home?

A. I don't remember that. It lasted two or three weeks.

Q. And then how would you feel on the fourth week?

A. Miserable of course.

Q. So that would mean you would feel miserable for the rest of the year until you saw him again?

A. Well then your job would keep you in balance. Otherwise you would be really sad, and perhaps depressed. With a nice job you could live until the following dose.

Q. This is relevant to what PB calls getting a glimpse and maintaining a glimpse?

A. Right.

Q. But in your case, you had the good fortune to have that experience through personal contact with someone like PB.

A. Right.

Q. What advice would you give students who don't have the opportunity to meet a teacher or advanced student like PB in person, but are still on some kind of spiritual path? How would the rest of us do it, when we don't get to see PB every year?

A. He says somewhere that a teacher is not indispensable. You can also evoke a glimpse by yourself if you know how to invite grace. Outside of these meetings, I have also had glimpses by myself.

Q. Do you want to say any more about having a glimpse that came on its own?

A. Well it is the same situation. You cannot keep it. But they were views on different aspects on the path.

Q. What was an example of an aspect of the path of which one could have a glimpse?

A. To have the impersonal view and to manage to be in these two states at the same time.

Q. So, the glimpse was to experience a simultaneity of the unmanifested intelligence and the presentation? *of experience*

A. Right

Q. And the continuousness of the two levels. What was it like being with PB? Did he have that or could you sense his state?

A. Yes, he had that. I could see it. When we were in the library, for instance, and he was sitting there reading a book, I could see that he was reading and at the same time smiling because he had the manifest. *present to him*

Q. I just had this interesting thought. When we talk about the Mona Lisa smile, do you think that that is when someone is smiling from something on the inside? Is that what you are saying?

A. I only know PB, I don't remember that smile. It does not appeal to me. With PB it was very clear that he was . . . Maybe he did it on purpose to show

Q. How do you respond when people want to know about PB's personality, because here we have this man who is living in two states at once. He was living in a state of continual awareness. . .

A. In the first place, I was never asked this question. I am in a different situation than you are. I am not in a circle of students, I am alone.

Q. If I started asking you a lot of personal questions about PB's life, what would you say to me? Would you answer them?

A. What do you mean? About the person?

Q. Yes.

A. I could say that he was living in the state of sahaja.

Q. Was he always in the state of sahaja from the time you met him?

A. I cannot answer that because I was too undeveloped in those earlier years. I had not heard about sahaja. I hardly knew what mysticism was. So it was a number of years of developing and studying before I was able to understand it and to see it. This was after all of the glimpses. [I cannot say I was surprised that no one ever asked me.]



Q. I asked you if you noticed that PB's inner state had changed over time and you said that that was hard for you to answer because your inner state changed. As you had more inner experience, you could perceive PB's inner state better and appreciate who he was. So there is still the question of: 16

Is it possible to say that PB was evolving or changing during the time you knew him?

A. Yes, even if you look at his first <sup>body</sup> you can see that he was changing all of the time. He was never the same. But if you asked me what had changed during that year, I cannot answer that. He was never the same man the next year. He was always different.

Q. In what way? His personality? His atmosphere?

A. In the first place, I would have to think about that. Secondly, it is too much to ask me what was the change. It is too difficult for me to answer.

Q. Did you feel like it was the same person?

A. Of course, but he was different. If you ask me how he was different, I cannot answer that.

Q. So, the personality was the same, but there was some other transformation that was happening parallel with the personality that you could sense but you could not explain?

A. You want to make the distinction there. Of course, as you know, the impersonal being cannot change, so it must have been the personality that changed. There are two things in a human being, the impersonal and the personal. The impersonal is eternal and cannot change, so it is always the personal that changes.

Q. But the personal's relationship to the impersonal?

A.

Q. So there were some things about PB's personality that were the same, that would continue when you met him from year to year. Like it would be common that each year you would pack <sup>W</sup> orderly and then you would get rushed. Like certain things would be common, but other things would change that are hard to describe.

A. For me, at the moment, it is not possible.

Q. Ok. Do you have any sense of what was making PB change or what. . .

A. The natural process of development. The personality is, as you know, not a stable thing. It is a mixture of memories, thoughts, feelings. It is not a stable thing, so it cannot be stable over a whole year. No one is ever the same after a year. We all change, so why should he not change?

Q. But in your case, PB was the catalyst in your evolution.

A. Yes.

Q. Could you say what catalysts or forces were propelling PB's evolution?

A. Perhaps it was his contact with, what would you call it?

Q. The Impersonal

*The highness*

A. is constantly working on the personality. Everything in nature is developing. So in Reflections, he mentions that he does not recognize the earlier PB. "The man who wrote his early books is dead", he said. He is no longer there. It is better to take his own words.

Q. So, you are saying that if I see you once a year, I feel that certain things about Arthur are the same, but certain things have changed and I know who you are in a mundane sense. But you are saying that over a period of decades, PB changed so much that the person that he was no longer existed?

A. That's what he says himself.

Q. What was your experience? The person you met in 1948 and the person you knew in 1968, what was the difference, besides the aging of the body, etc.?

A. I can only give an impression.

Q. Sure, so what was your impression?

A. My impression was that he had more insight in his *when*. That was my impression.

Q. He had more insight into them?

A. Yes.

Q. And do you think he was more, that his responses to them were more helpful to them?

A. I don't know about that. But when he *advised*, he developed a more mystical philosophy.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. A mystic is more concentrated on himself. A philosopher is more concentrated on the world.

Q. Did you see PB going through that change?



A. That is my impression.

Q. What characteristics would describe the change?

A. When you are a <sup>philosopher</sup> you understand more and see more outside yourself and in other people. That is my impression, but you cannot take this as a statement because I am not sure of this. It is only an impression, an idea about a person.

Q. Why do you think PB wrote all these books? He wrote 10 books and had many many readers that were waiting for his next book. They would go hear him talk when he came to their country and were writing him. Why do you think he stopped writing when he was serving such an important need?

A. He said that himself. He did not want to write under pressure. "If I make a contract with a publisher, I am under pressure to deliver at a certain date, and I don't want that any more." That was his argument. (Both Anthony and I knew early in our lives <sup>him</sup>)

Q. If someone had never read PB and wanted to know how to approach his writings, now that we have his first 10 books and the Notebooks, what would you advise someone to do?

A. The same thing that he advises Discover Yourself. <sup>no 1st</sup>

Q. Which program of readings would best help me discover myself? Should I read Discover Yourself? To which books would you direct people first?

A. Yes, as I said, Discover Yourself, <sup>te</sup> Quest of the Overself. Then of course, The Hidden Teachings, and Wisdom. <sup>te</sup>

Q. So you would read the original books before you read the Notebooks?

A. Yes, because you cannot understand the Notebooks if you have not read the early books.

Q. You are saying that, aside from the Search books, there is a sequential development that he was mapping out in the books that you should still read, in reality, Quest, Hidden Teachings, and Wisdom before you approach the Notebooks? <sup>Orch</sup>

A. Yes. Although he himself said that they were full of mistakes. So he himself criticized them.

Q. Do you want to say anything about Mrs. Beach, because she was someone who followed the sequence in all of these books? <sup>[why?]</sup>

A. There were no Notebooks then.

Q. What do you want to say about her?



A. She had to wait until he was giving lectures, and she went to his lectures. She knew exactly what he said. She saw what was happening as he left mysticism behind. As he says himself, he overstressed the intellectual side in The Hidden Teachings and compensated for that in Wisdom of the Overself.

Q. So, what happened with all these people who were upset with The Hidden Teachings?

[explor]

A. Well, a person like Mrs. Beach bravely accepted it and developed that side in herself. She started out later in life, at 40 I believe. Then I remember, this was in the fifties, she went to see PB in Mexico and returned saying that PB had made her very happy. So he helped her to make another <sup>step</sup> in her department, I suppose. The last time I saw her, she was a very powerful person. Enormous aura

Q. When was the last time you saw her?

A. It must have been in 1955 or 1956.

Q. So, you are saying that when the Hidden Teachings came out, it was quite controversial because it was a departure from his earlier books?

A. Yes.

Q. Did other people . . .

A. I don't know about other people. I only know about her because she told me that. She had a circle of students around her. She used to meditate with her students. She had written papers about meditation. Her strong point was meditation.

Q. And were those papers available? Were they published?

A. I think not. In any case, she was able to reach the ultimate state which she calls Yoga.

Q. You have described her as someone who followed the course of instruction in all of PB's books and then achieved the final

A. enlightenment

Q. as a result of following his map.

A. Yes.

Q. Now how do you explain the fact that PB himself said that there were many mistakes in these books? How come she did not go down a dead end or something?



A. I means that he may have exaggerated the mistakes. It may be that the main course of events that he described in the books were ok.

Q. Also, she had the opportunity of personal contact with him. Now, you had said that when you had come back from PB, one of your friends would come see you because he felt you had

A. He would pick up what I brought with me.

Q. Do you have any comments about what happened when she came back from PB? Did you ever see her after her visits with PB?

A. No. I only went in the summer holidays.

**Q. Did you notice any change in her development over the years?**

A. Yes. She was clearly more advanced. Her aura was much more powerful.

**Q. If someone is ever able to read this discussion, what would you like them to take away from it?**

A. The main message is what PB himself said. Develop your character. Character development is more important than anything else. More important than any mystical ecstasy. It is the basis.

**Q. You have hinted that in your own life, character development was important in order for you to have these glimpses.**

A. Glimpses you can have, but you cannot keep them if your character is not up to it.





## Transcript of “CW Interview 12/5/01” with Alan Berkowitz

A: So maybe if you want, just for starters, we could just briefly review how you met PB again and what your initial experiences were like with him.

C: Okay. You want me to read you this? I wrote something here.

A: Sure.

C: Let me begin at the beginning. As a child in [inaudible] Texas where I lived and grew up with my parents and one brother, I eagerly read children's books on mythology and later the adult versions of the same books. Then I graduated to Shakespeare, philosophy, the great [inaudible] music and health, always interested, always thinking answers to life and why man kills and abuses much of the animal kingdom. My interest in food and health began in high school when in biology we examined meat under a microscope and I discovered the microscopic worms that meat was infested with. At that time I had never heard of vegetarianism, but then and there I never ate meat again. I always loved animals and brought dozens of pitiful creatures that were lost, abandoned, or abused home from school, much to my gentle mother's dismay. Not long out of high school, I met and married a young lawyer from Houston, Texas, C. F. Wagner. This was in the 30's and the Great Depression still lingered. Doctors and lawyers were driving buses and streetcars. My husband continued law practice but was not happy with it. Before law, he was already an analytical chemist and a violinist. He had been studying PB's first books and with an offer to go to California, we packed and left for that state with our six year old son, Richard. I could write a book about our experiences in the birth of our second son, Alan, in a one-time mining town in the mountains this side of San Francisco. Eventually, we moved to Southern California. In this year we met Alex Badanok who had originally come from the Ukraine in Russia. Tolstoy was a friend of Badanok's grandfather and often visited with him in the cherry orchard. Anyway Badanok was a vegetarian and a student of philosophy. Badanok and my husband eventually went to LA together to meet PB. They returned from that trip with glowing reports and a great relationship with PB began. Since PB stayed with the Massons they also became our dear friends. I cherish the memory of those happy years. I was a student of Vedanta and Ramakrishna and into deep meditation. From the beginning of our marriage, we practiced celibacy and now I was into kundalini. We were vegans totally, no animal grown food. PB discovered that I made an unfired fruitcake for my son's birthdays and suggested that we go into the business, even helping us to choose a name, Sunshine Valley. We manufactured [inaudible] nuts, burger mixes, fruitcakes, packaged peppermint, sunflower seeds and meal. The business thrived. We started the sunflower trend and sold so much hulled sunflower seeds and meal that a large seed company invested in special equipment to hull the seeds. In the late 50's we sold everything for a mere pittance and with our youngest son and a dog and twenty- four trunks and foot lockers moved to Quito, Ecuador. After five years or less we repacked our trunks and came back to the United States. My husband continued his correspondence with PB but we never saw him again. We kept in touch with the Massons. Jack called regularly after my husband died and finally he too left this veil of tears. I hear from his wife Diana two or three times a year. Nothing derogatory was ever said about PB. I'm sure that Jack loved PB to the

end of his life. I'm the only one left and I miss them all. I moved to this small south Texas town of Hallettsville after my husband died to be with my mother and my aunt who too were alone. I've been here now for thirty years. Predominantly Catholic and a Czech and German heritage. All big meat eaters, beer drinkers, and domino players but still nice people, and I manage. I write a column, Sand and Pearls, for the local paper. Not another vegetarian of philosophy within a hundred miles. Oh, well, once PB told me, Clara, one day you will have to teach. I thought, how can I teach when I don't know anything, but I suppose I do pretty well with my column, although I'm sure that I ruffle a few feathers now and then. PB never claimed to be a saint or a teacher. He was an advanced soul who sought spiritual modesty on the veil of material life, and attempted to share with those interested. Like Christ, PB could help the blind to see and the dead to rise, that is, the spiritually blind and the spiritually dead. Religionists expect ... no ... Religionists expect miracles without knowing that which is needed to know. You have to be ready. You have work to realize a seat in the kingdom of heaven. Not Christ and not PB could give anyone a ticket to heaven. They would be the first to tell you so. But with their instructions and help the way becomes more clear and self-realization becomes possible. It all depends on you. All kinds of people who are wealthy expect compensation for using their money for gifts to church or leader for a [inaudible] relationship. ... That's as far as I got.

A: That's beautiful. Do you have more to write?

C: Oh, I write and write and write and write. I've got reams. You guys could write a book.

A: Well, maybe we will.

C: And I've got every column that I've written for 30 years.

A: Well, you know, I would say there's two things we could do. We can have interviews on the telephone, but if you enjoy writing, then we could just discuss some topics and you could keep writing, because I think there are people, younger students of PB like myself, who would love to read what you have to say.

C: Well, I quite often get people upset around here because I'm absolutely a dog nut and I don't like a dog mistreated. I don't like any animals mistreated and I say it like I think...

A: Right.

C: and sometimes it's pretty rough.

A: But you know the people that I'm talking about would be sympathetic souls who would appreciate what you have to say and would be very interested in your experiences of PB. You know all of us. I'm fifty years old, so I started reading PB when I was in my ... around twenty and I met him when I was in my twenties, but that was in the 1980's and the 1970's ... actually the 1970's. So you have a picture and a perspective of PB at a much earlier point in his life and also as a mature older person, and if you're willing to write about more about your experiences ... you know you told me about some inner experiences you had as a result of being with PB ...



C: Yeah.

A: and you also talked about how ... what PB was like, how he worked with and treated his students. That would ...

C: He never claimed to be a teacher. He never said he had students. He never liked that. He never said that. And one time we were up in Fallbrook. I think I told you about Fallbrook, didn't I?

A: Go ahead again.

C: Well Fallbrook ... he rented a place ... Jack Masson probably rented it for him cause Jack did a lot of that. That's why his son wrote what he wrote, I guess. But anyhow, he rented this place and we would go up there every night, my husband and I, and it was way up on top of a hill or mountain almost and one time it was raining and when we're ... we had to park quite a ways from the top of the hill or mountain to get to that beautiful house, beautiful ... way up on top of this hill. And we tromped up there in the rain and when we parked and stopped the car we could smell incense ...

A: Uh huh.

C: It was just ... why, I don't know ... unless it was something to do with PB which I always believed it was.

A: Uh huh.

C: But anyhow, we got up there to the house and it was a marvelous night. And then another night it was very, very beautiful. It was a moonlit night, and this house had a huge, huge picture window that overlooked the mountainside and the mountains in the background and this big moon came over those mountains and all of us sitting quietly... everybody was, Jack and Diana and my husband and myself and maybe Romaine, I don't know who else ... no, I don't think it was Romaine, she never was there very much. I don't know who the other ones were, but anyhow, all of a sudden, PB says ... Did I tell you this? Did I ...

A: No, no, I want you to keep going. Go ahead.

C: Okay, said, right out of the blue, said, "Look at the cat." And so everybody turned and looked at the cat, and the cat was sitting right in front of me and just staring straight at me. Never moved a hair or a muscle, that cat was looking at me. And PB said, then he said, "You know, cats can see both sides, the physical and the spiritual." And that's all he said. And then we went on into our meditations and that night I had one of the most absolutely... I've never told it to anyone. Jack begged and begged for me to tell him. And now I wish I had before he died, because he wanted to know. He adored PB. Jack Masson did. He loved him till the very end. I know he did, because he called me all the time.

A: But his son says that he was always disappointed that he didn't have the type of experiences that you had.

C: But the thing is ... I tried to explain that to different people, and it's not him ... it's not your teacher that's giving you that experience. You have to ... course, I didn't know any of this either. I mean I was just as dumb as all the rest of them. I mean, you know ... in fact I didn't study as much as my husband did. He read all those books and was always telling me about them and everything, and I never read a one. But it just happens. If you're ready, it happens.

A: Uh, huh.

C: And I can't tell you much more than that.

A: Do you want to describe what happened to you?

C: Well, not yet ...

A: Okay.

C: maybe later

A: Sure. Sure.

C: It's not all that fantastic, ...

A: (soft laugh)

C: really, but it was very, very beautiful. That's all I can say, it was absolutely fan... Well, I don't understand it even to this day what it was ....

A: Uh huh.

C: Really I don't.

A: And how would you describe PB at that time?

C: He was very great and we all loved him and we all enjoyed being there. And he was helpful to us, there's some ... I think there was ... I never have said this to anybody and I wouldn't ... and I don't even like to say it now, but I think there was something that flowed between PB and me ...

A: Uh huh.

C: more than with my husband and PB.

A: Uh huh.



C: We had great times. One time he needed a haircut, so I plopped him down in the living room. We just had a shanty, we didn't have much of a house. We never had any money, and (soft laugh) I cut his hair, and Diana and Jack were sitting there and they'd like to die cause I was cutting PB's hair and it ... that even was a great experience because I had ... I picked up sensations from him. Or what shall I say, not sensations. I don't know. A nearness, if I can say that I guess.

A: Uh huh. Well, what was it like to be in his presence?

C: Well, actually, it was ... it all depended on ... when I first met him, this friend I was writing about, this Badanok from Russia, great student. He was a strict vegetarian. He was celibate, and he was a fantastic person. But I don't think he ever got that close to PB as I did. But he liked him and he loved him and everything. But what was I going to say?

A: What it felt like to be in PB's presence.

C: Actually I can't really answer that cause it didn't seem any different. It all depended on you.

A: Okay. And when you said that something flowed between you and PB, do you want to say more about that, because people could have different interpretations of what you said.

C: Well, actually, like with you guys. If I met you face-to-face or what's his name, what's the other one that called?

A: Paul Cash

C: Yeah, Paul. Or any of the students that are truly, truly interested, there is something that flows between all those people.

A: Uh huh.

C: And like I said, PB never claimed to be a teacher. He never claimed to be a sage. Never.

A: Uh huh.

C: Never. Not one time.

A: He use to call himself a researcher when I was with him.

C: Well, he ... I did never hear him say that, but that's what he did. He researched all sorts of things and I use to take down notes, I mean he would read them. Different thoughts and kind of different people and different books and different things and I would write them down and then he'd later put them into, I guess, some of his books or something, I don't know. I never saw them any where after that.

A: Do think PB ever made claims about himself that weren't true?

C: No, cause he never made any claims. He never made any claims about anything that I know of. He didn't to me. He always said that he was not a teacher. He didn't want you to say you were a student.

A: So what happened with the Massons because here's this book called My Father's Guru.

C: Uh huh. Well, we all thought of him as a teacher, whether he wanted us to or not.

A: I see.

C: And like I said before, Jack Masson was a wonderful person. He was just a great person. But he was very wealthy and actually he financed ... this ... I think this probably is what caused maybe confusion or something with ...

A: with Jeffrey

C: Jeffrey. I don't know. I don't want to be quoted on that, absolutely don't want to be. Because Jack spent lots of money. He'd ... I'm sure he paid for most of PB's travels, and like that house in Fallbrook.

A: Uh huh.

C: I'm sure he rented it. He did all sorts of things like that. He had the money to do it with, and he was happy to do it.

A: Uh huh.

C: And we all were together. The four of us particularly, my husband and myself and PB and Jack and Diana. We were together. We went ... did all sorts of things together.

A: Uh huh.

C: And then Jack and my husband and PB did things together. They'd go out looking for places. One time he wanted to buy a place in that area, and we went to ... this house belonged to, oh what's his name, he played on that picture show with Katherine Hepburn and his daughter was a movie star. What was his name?

A: That I wouldn't know.

C: Yeah, you would. Didn't you see that last picture of Katherine Hepburn was in with, what the heck ... His wife, I mean his daughter was a fabulous

A: Ah, I know who you are talking about. I can't remember.



C: I can't think of his name. But anyhow, we went up and looked at a place that he had for sale. And it had a separate little house, and we looked in the window and it was full of ... drinking apparatus, I mean glasses and

A: Uh huh.

C: (soft laugh) PB called it ...(soft laugh) what did he call it? A booze house or something (soft laugh)

A: Uh huh.

C: We all died laughing, but he didn't rent that place.

A: Would you ... Do you think that PB took advantage of the Massons?

C: No. I don't think so.

A: Uh huh.

C: I don't think so. If he did, they were willing.

A: Uh huh.

C: I mean, I mean, the things that he did which I don't think Jack would ever have thought anything like that.

A: Do you think that some of ... I would call them PB's students even if he wouldn't. Do you think that any of the students were unbalanced in the way they went about being on the quest?

C: Oh, lots of people are.

A: Uh huh.

C: That's the bad thing.

A: Uh huh. What about the Massons?

C: No. I don't think so.

A: Uh huh.

C: They were very level-headed people, both of them.

A: Uh huh.

C: And I liked both of them. And Jack was a great friend. Since I've been here and before he died, he would call me periodically and he'd say "Clara, you all right? Do you need anything? Do you need any money?"

A: So he was a very sweet and a very generous man.

C: He was a great person. And I miss him a whole lot.

A: Uh huh.

C: Diana calls me too. She calls me once or twice a year.

A: Did you ever know a man named Keifer Franz or Michael Franz? He was a student of PB's in California.

C: Nope.

A: Okay.

C: We had our little group and we were together so much.

A: Uh huh. And ...

C: Then he rented that place up in the mountains that ... and I know he rented it just to be by us.

A: And what years was this?

C: Oh gosh, man (soft laugh) ...

A: (soft laugh)

C: (soft laugh) I have no time in my life. Hmm ...

A: Was it before World ...

C: I guess it was about the forties, somewhere in the forties

A: Before the ...

C: Late... late forties.

A: After the war?

C: It could have been after the War.

A: Okay. And do you want ...



C: Yes, yes, because that's why all this Ecuador stuff started.

A: Yes, and do you want to say something about that? You know, what PB said and why people did what they did? Cause you moved to Ecuador and the Massons moved to Uruguay

C: Yes, but I don't know what to exactly say about it. He ... like he said you can't always tell what's going to ... just like this Bin Laden stuff.

A: Uh huh.

C: They were almost had him and now he's gone. You know you can't pinpoint destiny.

A: But what was the reason or the motivation or the logic behind moving to South America?

C: Well, the idea was there's going to be this horrific war.

A: Uh huh.

C: And I'd never tell anybody that cause they think you're crazy.

A: But PB thought that there was going to be a nuclear

C: Yes, he did.

A: war.

C: Yes, he did

A: So he told you what?

C: Well, he told us to you know... everybody started looking for a place where they wanted to go.

A: Uh huh.

C: And so why we picked Ecuador I don't remember. I think...

A: Wasn't Ecuador supposed to be opposite Arunachula in India? Wasn't there some spiritual significance to ...

C: I never heard that. Never heard that

A: Okay.

C: But it was a nice place and I enjoyed it. I truly enjoyed it if my husband hadn't been so ill. But that's the part that puzzles me too of why would he go in the condition he was in. What difference did it make if the whole place was going to blow up.

A: But what did people think after the ... when there was no nuclear war, so what did people think. Was ...

C: Well, I don't know because I don't know anybody that ... we always said we just went because we wanted to go. It's all we told people.

A: But what... what did you think, were you upset at PB or did you regret it or did you feel that he misled you? How did you ...

C: No, no, not really. We went. We wanted to go. We went. We packed up lock, stock, and barrel like I said in this thing that I wrote. You know here.

A: Uh huh.

C: What did I say in here?

A: In other words did you ever ... how did you feel about the fact that PB gave you a suggestion that didn't come true?

C: Well, who can quote what's going to happen tomorrow? I don't care who you are, whether you're ... even Christ couldn't do that. He could tell you to be careful or he could tell you to look out for certain things or to do certain things but not ... it would ... it's not their responsibility. It's your responsibility. Do you want to or don't you want to? How do you feel about going?

A: So for instance ...

C: That's a personal thing as far as I'm concerned.

A: But in other words you and your husband took responsibility for your own decision.

C: That's right.

A: But why do you think Jeffrey Masson came out with this very negative picture of PB as a result of all these things.

C: Well, because things didn't pan out ... you know it took a lot of money. It took all our money. We were poor. We didn't have anything. We sold our business and lock, stock, and barrel packed up everything, left parents and we just went.

A: Uh huh.



C: And we didn't blame it on anybody.

A: And then

C: There's certain things you do in your life and certain experiences you have, but you have to do them. Nobody's telling you what to do or I don't know how to explain it to you exactly, but it is a personal thing. If you want to go, go, and if you don't, don't.

A: And then what's ...

C: And I gained a lot of experiences in Ecuador. I truly enjoyed it. They're a beautiful country. The Indian ... we lived with Indians 9,000 feet ... no 10,500 feet up in the Andes mountains.

A: The more you tell me, the more I think you should write a book.

C: Well, I've written a lot of stuff like that. If you'd go... someday maybe you can write one out of my columns and I illustrate them. I have pictures and I drew my own illustrations and I've got footlockers full of them. I kept them all except my granddaughter took some. She wanted to write a book, but I don't know what she did with it. Now she's got all those columns and now I wanted them back but ...

A: Did the columns talk about PB?

C: Nope.

A: They talk more ...

C: They ...

A: about your adventures?

C: Yeah. Only way they ... only way PB is mentioned is without his name that ... I mean through what things that I did and accomplished.

A: Uh huh. So after you came back from South America or even while you were in South America, did you have any contact with PB?

C: Yes.

A: What was ... how did that happen?

C: I don't remember that.

A: Was that through...

C: Actually I never wrote. My husband and PB were writing all the time.

A: Uh huh.

C: And then of course my husband had that cancer and he was struggling like everything with that. That's why I said a while ago how he could have given up everything. He truly believed in PB and he truly believed that we were going to have a war. All of us did [inaudible] nuclear thing was in the foreground.

A: Uh huh. But yet somehow when none of this came true, he wasn't mad or bitter ...

C: No, he was not bitter. He was not disgusted with PB or anything.

A: And then ... so this is in the fifties and PB lived until '81 so what contact did you have with PB for the next 30 years?

C: After we came back, we never saw him again. We never saw PB again. But my husband corresponded with him all the time. I ... Somewhere I've got that correspondence.

A: You do. That would be very useful to have.

C: But it's too personal. I don't know if I will ever let that out or...

A: I see. Do you think ... will you...

C: It was mostly about his cancer and how he was and then ...

A: I see. I see. Did PB give him advice that was helpful to him?

C: Hmmm. Not exactly. He gave names of different people and ... that were working with a cure for cancer and stuff ...

A: Ah hah.

C: But to me cancer ... my husband's cancer was karmic. It had to be. Because he never ate ... when he was 16 he was already going to Rice Institute in Houston and at that time to go to Rice Institute, you had to be a brain.

A: Uh huh. You mean Rice University?

C: Yes. Well, yeah.

A: Uh huh

C: Uh huh. He was only 16 and already going to that and he was already sick. He was an unhealthy person because his mother was a very poor cook and mostly greasy stuff and fried stuff and ice cream and you know just food ... well he started the first thing he did ... he ... there



were no teachers ... you know Texas is dry when it comes to philosophy and health. At that time particularly. And we were strict vegetarians. Never ... everybody ... my goodness nothing but fruits and vegetables, wooh! ... Then he ... he'd asked before we're married ... he was going to Rice and his folks owned an IGA family store, a grocery store, and after school he would go and drive that delivery truck and deliver groceries all over Houston. Well if he had hemorrhoids and he was bleeding from a pint to a quart of blood a day.

A: Goodness.

C: I don't know how he lived. But then he read the Norm MacBettens' books which was one of the first health cultures that there was. If you remember Norm MacBettens he had his entire set of beautifully red-leather bound books and his big thing was milk and milk diets. So my husband bought a cow. Young fellow, only 16 years old, 17 years old. Bought a cow. He fed that cow the finest food he could buy for a cow. Took care of him himself. Did the milking and everything. Well he drank so much milk, milk, milk, milk he got an impaction and then he was in a trouble because then he got hemorrhoids and from that time on he was sick

A: That was before he met PB?

C: Oh, yeah. Before. He was studying everything he could get his hands on ...

A: Yes.

C: like he studied that Norm MacBettens' and that milk diet, so he went on a milk diet.

A: Just to switch back to you. What would you say was the effect on your life of meeting and being with PB? .... Could ... Is that a ...

C: Well ... It's started ... of course, I was already a vegetarian and I was already studying Vedanta and Vivekananda and all those swamis and yogis and Ramakrishna and I was into deep meditation.

A: Uh huh. So ...

C: And it just continued. It just enhanced it and is all I can say about it.

A: Uh huh.

C: When we ... When I first met him, Badanok and my husband went to Los Angeles and they met Jack and Diana and PB. And they came back just all excited and they were babbling and talking about ... At that time I had never read a book of PB's.

A: Uh

C: My husband talked about it all the time, but I didn't pay any attention.

A: Uh. Did ... Have you seen the ... the books we publish called The Notebooks? The books that ...

C: I've got them all here. I've bought them.

A: What did you ... Have you looked at them?

C: Yes.

A: And any opinions ... any thoughts about... about them?

C: Well, they're ... see well I've got all his first books and they're just practically the same thing.

A: Uh huh

C: I've got his old books.

A: Uh huh.

C: First ones. Cause my husband bought them all. But anyhow he ... they came ... then they decided they'd come to see us, PB and Jack and Diana. And we just had a little old shack. We didn't have much of a house. We were happy. We ... I did never care whether I had a house or not ...

A: Uh huh.

C: Didn't make any difference to me. Long as I had my husband, my kids, that was enough for me.

A: Uh huh.

C: But anyhow, they came. PB came in. He sat down on the couch. And I was sitting opposite in a ... I think it was a rocking chair and I had a book in my hand and I was babbling and all of a sudden I looked up. Everything was quiet and PB was looking straight at me. And I had a ... that book in my hand and I was... just... had my thumb and was just flipping the pages and I can't tell you what I felt. Fantastic is all I'll tell you.

A: Uh huh.

C: But from then on we were all together all the time, the four of us.

A: Uh huh. For a few years.

C: Oh, yeah. Let's see. That was about forty... mmm ... I'd guess like '46 or 7 or in there somewhere because Alan was just a little bitty fellow.



A: Uh huh. And you've mentioned that you and your husband had practiced celibacy. Did that have anything to do with PB?

C: No.

A: That was your own choice ...

C: We did that on our own. Yeah.

A: Uh huh.

C: Because I awakened to kundalini.

A: Uh huh

C: And you don't have sex when you have kundalini.

A: Did you talk to PB about these things?

C: Uh huh.

A: And was helpful to you?

C: Well, he would say a few things now and then. But when he was helpful to anyone it was a silent help. I found that out.

A: In other words you didn't ask his advice?

C: Nope. No, I didn't. Well, once or twice I asked him about sex and stuff like that but it was very personal and private.

A: Uh huh. And was he helpful to you?

C: Oh, yeah.

A: Uh huh.

C: He would answer any question you asked.

A: Uh huh.

C: Unless it was something outside his line that he didn't ...

A: Did he ever answer your questions in a way that you felt was misinformed or misleading or unhelpful?

C: Hmmm. I don't think so. I don't remember anything like that. Just like I said in this article that I wrote here, let's see: "not Christ or PB could give anyone a ticket to heaven."

A: Uh huh.

C: "They'd be the first to tell you so. They would be the first to tell you so. But with their instructions and help the way becomes more clear" and this is the whole thing in a nutshell.

A: So was he a guide? What word would you use to describe him?

C: Well, he was knowledgeable, let's put it that way, and if you spoke about some of these things, he didn't flair up and tell you a mess of things and what to do and what not to do. He just gave an answer that left you there to figure it out for yourself.

A: Did he ever have pretensions to know more than he knew or be more than he was?

C: Uh'uh

A: Uh huh

C: Uh'uh. Nope.

A: See, the reason I'm asking some of these questions is because these are some of the things that Jeffery Masson claimed about him.

C: I never read that book.

A: Well, I'm going to send it you. And then you'll tell me what you think, because you were there.

C: What did you say? He thought he would ...

A: That PB had pretensions of grandeur or that he made himself out to be more than he was, or that he exaggerated things.

C: Not to me.

A: Uh huh.

C: Uh'uh.

A: What about his ...

C: Only one time he said ... we were all together and I don't know what came up or what happened but someone somewhere ... don't quote me on this because I can't remember it ... but it



was something to do with someone said something negative about PB and he looked at everybody and he said well, you have the right to defend me if you want to. That's all he ever said.

A: He didn't try to defend himself?

C: No.

A: And you said that when he got married that was very upsetting to many of his students.

C: Oh, it was ... it was even to me.

A: Uh huh.

C: I couldn't figure that out.

A: So how did ... how did you reconcile that with your other experiences of him?

C: Well, I never gave it too much thought. Cause after that we all went in different directions. I mean we went to South American and I don't know where Noel and PB, they... where did they go? I don't know. I kind of lost track of them at that time.

A: Ah hah. Um.

C: But it bothered me. Oh.

A: Do you want to say why it bothered you?

C: I don't know. Because (laugh) ... well you know when you get married, most people have sex and I'm ... I'm ... I'm vehemently against it

A: I see. Do did you feel that PB was hypocritical?

C: No. Uh'uh. No. He never ... He brought her to our house. They stayed there. That was before they were married.

A: Uh huh.

C: And like I said all we had was a little old shack. Jack had a gorgeous place in Beverly Hills with swimming pool, maids, and I remember one time we were there and Jack always had ... Jack was generous. He was generous. But what did he do? He took something off the mantle. It was a beautiful little shell. I think it was ivory and then it had this pearl in it or something. He offered it to me, was going to give to me and I held back and said no, no, no thank you. Then PB said Clara, one thing you have to learn. He said you're generous, you do things for people, you're constantly helping people, making things for them, doing things for them. He said then

you have to when somebody wants to help you or do something you have to learn to accept whatever it is they want to do for you. So I'll always remember that.

A: So that was an example of where he gave you some very specific advice.

C: Hmmm. Yeah. Yeah. It's not wrong to take things from ... of course, you have to know too the person. There can't be any hinges or any ... or any thing hinged onto the gift that someone gives you. It has to be free.

A: Now if someone had seen PB and Noel together, what impression would they have formed of them or their relationship?

C: I don't know. They just looked like good friends to me.

A: Uh huh.

C: I didn't see them much after that.

A: Uh huh.

C: On this film that I have there's one place where PB ... I don't think we saw him after that cause that's when he went off with Noel. I don't know where they went. Where did they go? Switzerland or somewhere. But anyhow he was selling a lot of his things. He had these wall hangings and I think he had a Buddha or two, I can't remember now. But they were all... he brought them all to our house. Well he had a lot of things stored in a little barn at our house.

A: Uh huh.

C: Books and all kinds of things. But he brought these things and he laid them all out on the ground and that's on this film and you've got to see that one day.

A: Well one day we've got to find a way to make copies of this film so that your family can have copies.

C: I would love to ... I don't ... you can't buy those projectors anymore.

A: No, you have to ... what we were going to do if you are willing is find a company that can transfer old films onto videos.

C: It's fantastic because Brad and I and PB were walking up and down. We have got all these wall hangings and things on the ground. And I'm hopping around. I'm always jumping and hopping. But anyhow, looking from ... at one and another and then we're discussing them.

A: You know some of these ... some of the ones that he kept were in his apartment in Switzerland and then he gave before the end of his life or maybe it was after his ... Kenneth ...



some of them were given to Noel and some of them were given to Wisdom's Goldenrod which is the center we have in New York and then some of them went to his son, Kenneth.

C: Okay.

A: But ...

C: Well I never saw him again.

A: Uh huh.

C: I did ... Did I talk to him on the phone or write to him or wrote ... Anyhow I had a couple of letters from him at one time.

A: Did you feel you ...

C: Because I grieved, I grieved terribly about my husband ...

A: Yes.

C: And he said Clara you did all you could do with no regrets or anything, but I had them anyhow.

A: Did you ever feel that you had contact with him on an inner plane or in an inner sense?

C: I think so, but it wasn't a real ... well, like I told you a while ago we have ... there seemed to be a flow of energy between us.

A: Uh huh. What kind of a flow of ...

C: I never told Jack that. I never told Diana that. ...

A: Was it a ...

C: I never told anybody that and I don't want ... don't quote me please. I don't want people writing me.

A: Well, that's why I want to ask you what you mean by that? Was it a sexual flow?

C: Oh no.

A: Was it something else?

C: It's just a spiritual flow.

A: I see.

C: A knowledgeable flow of ... mmm ... Well like it's almost like in meditation or prayer. I mean it was a ...

A: I see.

C: simpatico.

A: I see. It was a spiritual chemistry.

C: Okay. That's a good word.

A: (soft laugh)

C: See I need you.

A: Well, we'll help each other out.

C: I'm getting so ... I think I'm getting Alzheimer's. Half the time I can't think of a word or something.

A: Well, you sound pretty clear to me and what you wrote was pretty good. Would you be willing to put more of these things in writing?

C: What things?

A: You know, your ... what we're talking about, your experiences and memories of PB or keep writing what you started?

C: Hmm. You mean this thing I read you?

A: Yes, you can keep going.

C: Oh, okay.

A: Because one ...someday I would like to publish a book where there are different people's experiences of PB written down so that people get a sense from a variety of different perspectives and people of what their experience and relationship was with PB.

C: Umm. Really and truly that's something that I don't think you'll ever understand. ...

A: (soft laugh)

C: Either you do or you don't.

A: Uh huh.



C: And there's nothing that I could say that would make you go one way or the other.

A: No, but what you could do is because some people have said very critical and negative things about PB, it would provide a different perspective on the outer person. You can't describe the inner person and you can't describe the inner relationship but you can describe the outer person and whether or not he lived in a way that was compatible with his philosophy. Or whether he was a hypocrite.

C: I don't think so. I mean you know ... I write around here. I write all these columns. I call my column Sand and Pearls.

A: Uh huh.

C: And some people ... I know they object. They don't like what I do. They don't like that I'm a vegetarian and different things but yet I prowl around amongst them ... even the priests here but like this what I wrote: I just returned from spending Thanksgiving and several days in Houston with my son and his family. On Friday and Saturday after the celebration of Thanksgiving, crowds of shoppers pushed open the door

END OF SIDE A

C: red and green are the colors as jingle bells and silent night resound unnoticed to the harried shoppers seeking gifts that they cannot afford and that their recipients don't really want. A milling mass of humanity in which Christ and love are lost in the shuffle of materiality, the atmosphere of a carnival, not that of peace, humility, and love. With children looking for something for nothing from a fat man in a red suit, they begin a trend that lasts their lifetime looking for giveaways. Humanity is so far out on the limb of materiality that soon the limb will break with a heavy load and man will be stunned into silence and disbelief. Will he wake up and see the error of his ways before it is too late? Will the pomp and circumstance of material life win, or will peace and love become the way of life? The light of love outshines the light of thousands of manmade lights which are but mirages in the world and totally useless in lighting a spiritual love within the heart of man. Peace and God bless.

A: So I can appreciate that very much but I could see how some people wouldn't like it. You know when PB wrote The Spiritual Crisis of Man and when he wrote Message from Arunachala, he took a position that was very critical of the materialistic way of life and so some people could be upset by that. How long have you been writing this column?

C: Since '71.

A: And it comes out weekly?

C: Yes.

A: And what paper is it in?

C: The Hallettsville Tribune. Tribune Herald.

A: I see. The local paper.

C: Yes.

A: And ...

C: Sometimes I write articles for the [inaudible] paper but not very often.

A: Could you give me your mailing address?

C: Okay, Post Office Box 556

A: 556

C: Uh huh. Hallettsville

A: H, A, L, L, E,

C: E, T, T, S, V, I, L, L, E, Texas.

A: Say it again. H, A,

C: H, A, L, L, E, T, T, S, V, I, L, L, E

A: Texas. What's the zip?

C: 77964

A: Okay.

C: And here's one that I wrote that people ... that kind of bother people when I write like this here because it is a predominantly meat-eating place.

A: Uh huh

C: And they raise cattle and all that sort of stuff, and there's a slaughter pen or whatever you want to call it a ... right ... right in the middle of town. When I came here I wrote about it right away and those people have never talked to me anymore.

A: Uh huh.

C: Restless movement of cows behind metal bars, low cries, and terrified eyes as bodies are prodded to a door that clanged shut behind them. The stench of fresh blood and death permeates



the enclosure. They smell the odor of death. Soft furry bodies that in all of their lives have only given of themselves and receive little in return. Now the final reward is death. A slaughter of the innocent. They know. God too is watching and retribution follows. That beautiful (question mark), red steak on a white platter decorated with sprigs of parsley is lethal. The eating of it promotes illness and death, not only of the physical but also the spirit. But man has the right to choose for himself, although at the same time he wins or loses according to the laws of God which never change. We pay for our mistakes no matter who we are. The school of life grinds us up and spits us out according to how we play the game. Ignorance is no excuse. We pay. Drink poison, we die. Cause and effect is real. Mad cow's disease rather is man's mad man's disease. The cow is a natural vegetarian, created so by God. Man drives the blood and sludge of leftover killed animals from the slaughter pen and grinds it up with grain to feed cattle. Insult added to injury. And God said I give you every seed, berry, and plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.

A: That's from Genesis, right?

C: Yes, Genesis 1:29. Think. Peace and God bless.

A: Hmmm. Well, I

C: See an article like that in this meat-eating place is quite ...

A: It's iconoclastic and revolutionary, but you know... do you ever travel?

C: My husband traveled... we traveled great deal.

A: But I mean at this point in your life do you ever take an airplane or anything?

C: Yeah, well, we've been to... I have this friend. When we came here, I met this lady and she and I became very, very good friends, although she was a big meat-eater and whatever. But then she developed cancer. First one breast and then the other one and then she died. Well I didn't ever ... I knew her husband and everything and he used to take us to oh, garage sales or estate sales or to Austin or something. When he'd go on business, we'd go along. So I never knew him very well, but... but after her death then we became great friends and he's still a great friend. He's very helpful. He does a lot for me. He does a lot of my shopping, grocery shopping and things like that.

A: I see. He's a neighbor.

C: Yes, yes. They live in ... our places adjoin in the back.

A: Uh huh

C: So he's real good ... so what was I talking about anyhow.

A: If you ever travel?

C: Oh, well he loves to travel, loves to travel. Well his wife never did like to travel so when we first started running around together, that was about in '87 I guess, something like that. He died in '86. I guess that was about '87. We'd go ... we went to Canada. We went to Czechoslovakia. and a lot of nearby places.

A: Uh huh

C: But I've gotten to the point where I told him the other day, I said I'm tired of running around ... that a tree in Ecuador is just like a tree in California. And a river in Tennessee is like river in Czechoslovakia. I said what those are the same and I said people are the same everywhere. They're all looking for one thing, that's happiness and they look for it in all different ways.

A: Uh huh.

C: What's one person's way is not your way or anybody else's way. It's their way. I really don't get too much out of traveling. I love to go to art galleries ...I love to go to art shows and art exhibits. Just is what I'm going into right now.

A: Uh huh.

C: And I've got a beautiful ... was it you I was talking to or Paul, I don't know.

A: Uh huh. Well, I hope if I ever come to Texas I'll come visit you.

C: Well, I hope so.

A: Okay. So what do you think. Is that a good amount for today? For our conversation?

C: Huh?

A: I said do you think this is a good place to stop for today?

C: Stopping is a good place to ... I've been on here long enough.

A: That's okay. This is what I'm going to do ...

C: You know what. I've got two wall hangings that PB really liked, especially one of them. I don't which one he liked and I can't remember. Both of them are Buddhas.

A: Uh huh.

C: And I may sell those later on. Would you guys be interested in buying them? I can't give them to you.

A: Well you could tell us and then ...

C: They're expensive.

A: Yes, well we could discuss it. We could ... I would certainly say you should let us know and then we would decide, because even if we, the organization couldn't buy it, there might be individuals who would want to buy it.

C: See I had a marvelous collection of bronzes, bronze buddhas and things, but I got into a tight here and I sold some right here in town

A: I see but ...

C: Of course you're getting nothing here.

A: Well I'll send you a letter with my information and I'll also send it to your son.

C: Okay.

A: And then you, you know ... So this is what I'm going to do. I'm going to contact you by mail. I'm going to eventually find two copies of that Jeffery Masson book and send one to you and one to your son. And then we can have another interview ...

C: But we can use the same one.

A: Okay, I'll send you one then. And then we can have another interview and you can tell me your reactions to the book. And then I will have someone transcribe this interview and let you look at it so that you can edit it or delete anything or change anything that you may have said that you want to correct or leave out.

C: Okay. That's okay.

A: Okay. So Alan ...

C: I don't want ... I'm no brain or ... My husband was the smart one. He ...

A: Well, but you have other things to offer. So your son said that you're going to spend the holidays together?

C: I think so, yes.

A: So I wish you all a very, a very wonderful season.

C: Well, thank you and you too and will you have a little girl?

A: Yes, she's fourteen.



C: Oh my goodness. I always wanted one. And I've got three little great granddaughters now. Never had a granddaughter.

A: And actually I'll tell you something interesting. Kenneth Hurst, PB's son. He lived here for a while and when he decided to move to Florida, he gave some of his things to some of the students here and he decided to give my daughter a very little buddha that was PB's.

C: Hmmm

A: And I'll tell you when I gave her this buddha and told her that it was PB's, she was just overwhelmed. She said I can't believe I have PB's buddha. And she has it right by her bedside.

C: Great. Great.

A: So maybe one day you'll get to meet her ... who knows.

C: Could be.

A: Okay, so I ...

C: [inaudible] the same age

A: Okay. I'm not promising. We ...

C: I love little girls. I just love them with a passion.

A: Well, I'm sure that I'd be happy for her to meet you. So please ...

C: Are you vegetarian?

A: Yeah, she's been a vegetarian her whole life.

C: Yeah well Alan too

A: She's not vegan. She's not vegan but she's vegetarian.

C: My other son eats anything doesn't bite him first.

A: Well, now she's old enough that she can eat whatever she wants but she's a very strong believer in being a vegetarian.

C: Good.

A: So I will be in touch you and thank you so much.

C: Well thank you. I've enjoyed it.

A: Okay and please I encourage you very much to keep writing about you know your PB experiences.

C: Okay.

A: Okay?

C: I'll see what I can dig up out of the past.

A: Good. Okay. Thank you.

C: Okay. Bye bye now.

A: Bye bye.





## Transcript of “CW Interview 4/29/02” with Alan Berkowitz

Note: This interview begins with Clara reading a paper she wrote. The first part of this was also read at the beginning of interview #1. The interview was conducted after the interviewer sent Clara a copy of the book: My Father's Guru.

C: Let me begin at the beginning, as a child in Port Arthur, Texas, where I lived and grew up with my parents and one brother. I eagerly read children's books on mythology, and later the adult versions of the same books. Then I graduated to Shakespeare, philosophy, the great poets music and health. Always interested, always seeking answers to life; why man kills and abuses much of the animal kingdom. My interest in food and health began in high school when in biology we examined meat under a microscope, and I discovered the microscopic worms that meat was infested with. At that time I had never heard of vegetarianism; but then and there I never ate meat again. I always loved animals and brought dozens of pitiful creatures that were lost abandoned or abused home from school, much to my gentle mother's dismay. Not long out of high school I met a young lawyer from Houston, Texas, D.F. Wagener. This was in the 30's and the great depression still lingered. Doctors and lawyers were driving buses and streetcars. My husband continued law practice, but was not happy with it. Before law he was already an analytical chemist and a violinist. He had been studying P.B. 's first books and with an offer to go to California we packed and left for that state with our six year old son, Richard. I could write a book about our experiences and the birth of our second son, Alan, in a one time mining town in the mountains this side of San Francisco. Eventually, we moved to southern California.

In Vista (?) we met Alex Bodnak, who had originally come from the Ukraine in Russia. Tolstoy was a friend of Bodnak's grandfather, and often visited with him in the cherry orchards. Anyway, Bodnak was a vegetarian and a student of philosophy. Bodnak and my husband eventually went to LA together to meet P.B. They returned from that trip with glowing reports and a great relationship with P.B. began. Since P.B. stayed with the Massons, they also became our dear friends. I cherish the memories of those happy years. I was a student of Vedanta and Ramakrishna and into deep meditation. From the beginning of our marriage, we practiced celibacy, and now I was into Kundalini. We were vegans, totally; no animal derived foods. P.B. discovered that I made an unfired fruitcake for my son's birthdays, and suggested that we go into the business, even helping us to choose a name, Sunshine Valley. We manufactured soups, malted nuts, burger mixes, fruitcakes, packaged peppermint, sunflower seeds and meal. The business thrived. We started a sunflower trend, and sold so much whole sunflower seeds and meal that a large seed company invested in special equipment to hull the seeds.

In the late 50's we sold everything for a mere pittance and with our youngest son, our dog, and 24 trunks and footlockers, moved to Quito, Ecuador. After five years or less we repacked our trunks and came back to the United States. My husband continued his correspondence with P.B., but we never saw him again. We kept in touch with the Massons. Jack called regularly after my husband died, and finally he too left this vale of tears. I hear from his wife, Diana, two or three times a year. Nothing derogatory was ever said about P.B. I am sure that Jack loved P.B. to the end of his life. I am the only one left, and I miss them all. I moved to this small south Texas

town of Hallettsville after my husband died, to be with my mother and my aunt, who too were alone. I have been here now for thirty plus years. Predominately Catholic, and of Czech and German heritage, all big meat eaters, beer drinkers and domino players, but still nice people, and I manage. I write a column, Sand and Pearls, for the local paper. Not another vegetarian or philosopher for a hundred miles. Oh, well, once P.B. told me "Clara, one day you will have to teach." I thought, how can I teach when I don't know anything? But I suppose I do pretty well with my column. Although I'm sure that I ruffle a few feathers now and then.

P.B. never claimed to be a saint or a teacher. He was an advanced soul who sought spiritual knowledge beyond the veil of material life, and attempted to share with those interested. Like Christ, P.B. could help the blind to see and the dead to rise, that is the spiritually blind and the spiritually dead. Religionists expect miracles without knowing that which is needed to know. You have to be ready; you have to work to realize a seat in the Kingdom of Heaven. Not Christ and not P.B. can give anyone a ticket to heaven. They would be the first to tell you so. But with their instructions and help, the way becomes more clear, and self-realization becomes possible. It all depends on you. One can't buy his way into Heaven, or eat his way into Heaven, or bribe his way into Heaven. Spirituality or spiritual knowledge has to be learned. It is a many lifetimes study. P.B. was a learned man who investigated all facets of existence and read many books and manuscripts. He did not perform miracles, but if you were ready, he could help you see to move forward; to find Peace in daily meditation. The objective in life in a physical body is to discover your Self. To seek a teacher is good, but one has to be ready beforehand. The spark has to be there before it can become a roaring fire. The Teacher can't think or act for you.

(reading beings with new material approximately here)

I cherish the memory of the years that my husband and I, the Masson's, and other friends of P.B. spent together in L. A., Vista, and Fallbrook (?) in the 40's and 50's; years fraught with the anxiety of impending nuclear war. P.B. seemed to enjoy giving me impossible tasks to perform. Once in a spectacular house on top of a hill overlooking valleys and mountains, someone broke a small metal figurine, and P.B. asked me to fix it. Pot metal is difficult to fix, as heat dissolves it; but I fixed it. Another time P.B. handed me a few crusts of left over bread and asked me to make a meal. I did, much to his amazement, and the other friends in Fallbrook. Those were happy times. Discussions and meditations made the hours pass rapidly. With his help and approval, I reached a high degree of meditation with an insight to spiritual progress in the physical body. All else is material and an illusion. Those teachers who profess to have visions, hear voices and so forth, may actually do such things, but this is still on the material plane, and unnecessary to discover God and Self within.

Live on an animal free diet, which makes for a more receptive mind and a healthier physical body. To begin with, who is God? Where is God? I believe that in all the great religions, and religious books of the world, answers to these questions may be found when those who seek are ready to know. God IS - a life that flows throughout all creation. It works and lives for the good of the whole, and finds peace withdrawing from the material world of good and evil. As each great epoch begins and ends in catastrophe, scant few enter the Kingdom of Heaven to stay. Earth is a temporary home. No one stays here for long. There is a constant coming in and going out, leaving unfinished business behind to return again and again to find themselves and who

they are. The answer is not in the religion as taught by man, which is fraught with misunderstandings. Thus we have wars, lies and impostors all claiming a God that will save them from what? Actually, from their own lies, killing, sensuality and the negative aspects of life in a material body. Each must save himself. No one can do it for you. Beat and battered, one eventually learns by fate's heavy blows. We are caught in a web of our own thoughts and actions, and pay we must if we would recognize God within ourselves. You can pray until you are blue in the face, pound the pulpit and fall to your knees, but words without works are void. Man is good at passing the buck, that is attempting to let someone else pull his chestnuts from the fire. That is why churches are filled with people asking to be saved, when so often it is as the blind leading the blind. And cults who trust their leaders to take them to heaven. Pray, study, seek, and trust yourself. You are the captain of your ship. God is within you; trust Him.

Thank you for the book (My Father's Guru, by Jeffrey Masson). Reading it brought back many memories. It also made me think. P.B. was a learned man, who, I think, legitimately sought spiritual knowledge and found answers. Before I met P.B. I was into deep meditation and read many books. Even in high school I enjoyed English and studying the great poets and philosophers of literature. It was also in high school that I discontinued eating meat, although I had never heard of vegetarianism. I am sure that P.B. helped me in improving my meditation and understanding of why we are here and where we are going. The greatest puzzle to me is why P.B. had us all running to South America; especially my little family, with a husband dying with cancer, and no money. My husband, like Jack Masson, trusted P.B. implicitly. He was reading and studying P.B.'s books long before we migrated to California. And when he and Alex Bodnok went to LA to meet with P.B., they came back full of praises and enthused about P.B. Thus began our relationship with the Masson's and P.B., which was an interesting and happy time in which our meditations and studies improved. My husband's health was deteriorating rapidly, but P.B. didn't have as much background studies in diet and nutrition as we did, and gave us no solutions. The only being that one can depend on in this world is yourself. And an understanding of life and death, why we are here and where we are going. God Bless.

(end of reading)

That's it.

A: You knew P.B. in person, and you were present during the time that Jeffery writes about, so I'm just wondering what you thought of his book?

C: Well, his book is good to a point. I don't understand some of his objections. The Massons took care of P.B. Jack was very wealthy. And, I think he paid for all of P.B.'s trips; at least I have that feeling.

A: From P.B. or from Jack?

C: Not from either one. Certainly not from P.B.. Jacque was a kind, considerate, and generous person and, I am sure, that he gifted PB with funds. Such things were not discussed.



A: But, see, in the book, Jeffrey claims P.B. made all these inaccurate or exaggerated claims about himself, and that he was an impostor.

C: I know. He never made any such claims to me, or to us when we had our meetings and meditations. And all of them, Jack and Diana and the boys were there.

A: So why do you think that Jeffrey claims that P.B. made himself out to be something that he wasn't?

C: That I don't understand exactly, except, Jack looked for some phenomenal thing to happen, like seeing something, or seeing God, or at least this is my opinion, don't quote me, but ... he wanted to be elevated to a higher degree or something. This is what I think. And we all sort of looked for that; we looked for miracles in P.B. But P.B. did not perform any miracles.

A: Did P.B. claim to be able to perform miracles?

C: No.

A: So here's what I wonder: If Jack had unrealistic expectations of P.B., maybe what Jeffrey says that P.B. said really came from Jack?

C: I don't think so. I talked to Jack not long before he died, and he still...he was always asking me ... "Did P.B. do anything unusual? \_\_\_\_\_ ?"

(a period of static on the tape)

A: So what do you think of what Jeffrey says about P.B.? Is it fair? Is it unfair? Is it inaccurate? Is it partly true?

C: I really didn't look at P.B. like that. \_\_\_\_\_? I don't know just what words to use just real quickly, but ... He studied; he studied always; because I did a lot of copying for him. He studied manuscripts and books. And he would take excerpts out of those, and I think he used those excerpts in some way. But that's not so unusual, because somebody might say something better that you want to say. That's the way I saw it.

A: P.B. called himself a researcher.

C: Well, that's what he did. At least that's what I'm trying to say.

A: Well, let me ask you this; In the book it says: "P.B. singled out the young Jeff as the potential heir to his spiritual kingdom."

C: Well now that \_\_\_\_\_ (?)

(a long period of static, can't hear what's said)

...they went everywhere. They went to \_\_\_\_\_(?)

A: Did you have any understanding that P.B. wanted Jeffrey to be his successor?

C: No. No. That I don't understand. I think that this...I don't think that's right. I think this was an illusion, maybe, on Jeffrey's part. Jeffrey was a little...well...he'd carry his books around, you know. And when he went on a train trip, or whatever, he'd carry P.B.'s books; and when he was on the train, well he'd pull it out and act like he... well, I guess he was reading it maybe... He was (don't you dare quote me, or I'll beat you) but, he was a kind of... a kind of an exhibitionist.

A: O.K.

C: Jeffrey was very smart, very intelligent. You know that, don't you?

A: Yes

C: And I liked him. I loved those kids. They were like mine in our house. (static) \_\_\_\_\_? They were closer in age to Alan. I mean \_\_\_\_\_(static) ...and he did a magnificent job. And he had one real beautiful one that was all finished and he gave it to Jeffrey. Jeffrey took it outside and the first thing he did was break it all up, crashed it. That hurt Richard's feelings because he was proud of his work that he did. \_\_\_\_\_(static)

A: \_\_\_\_\_(static) (again, reading from the book)...”P.B. insisted on secrecy and mystery. If I could think of a single word to describe Paul Brunton, it would be ‘secrets’. He liked the word and everything it stood for.”

C: \_\_\_\_\_ (static) ?

A: So that doesn't describe him?

C: ? Yes (or “yet”, or “then”), there was one time in Fallbrook, we always had meditations, and this is what Jack always wanted to know, and I wish I'd have told him because I think... anyhow, we had these meditations; we sat in front of this huge window in this beautiful, beautiful home; and we could look out over the mountains and the moon and everything, and I was sitting there quietly in meditation. Everybody was meditating. And all of a sudden, I can't even describe to you what happened, because I've never been able to describe it; but it was fantastic, and it was roaring, just roaring, ...a roaring sound ... \_\_\_\_\_(static)

A: Let me read you this: ...Jeffrey says, “I was three years old and I was being raised as (?) Buddha (?) (static)\_\_\_\_\_

C: What P.B. called my son, what he always called Alan, was “the little Buddha”. \_\_\_\_\_(static)

A: So, do you think that Jeffrey was being raised as if he were the incarnation of a great Indian Yogi?

\_\_\_\_\_ (static)

A: Let me read you something else. This is what Jeffrey says that P.B. thinks of women: "Clearly women did not play a major role in P.B.'s spiritual universe, except as temptresses to avoid or triumph over."

C: \_\_\_\_\_ static ...this reminds me of a lady that, she tried to get in to P.B., she was very wealthy, ... \_\_\_\_\_ (long period of static).

A: Here's another one. Did P.B. want to be considered \_\_\_\_\_ (static) \_\_\_\_\_ because here's what Jeffrey says: "P.B.'s letters clearly indicate that he wanted to be considered a sage, Mahatma, Rishi or spiritual leader." \_\_\_\_\_ static

C: \_\_\_\_\_ (static)

A: And he never claimed too ? What about when you were with Jack and Diana?

C: I don't know. Before ... we just had a nice relationship. We stayed with P.B. a lot, and we were together a lot, but it was very beautiful relationship. There was nothing untoward about it.

A: Then, Jeffrey says that P.B. also spoke about sexual purity constantly. He was against sexuality.

\_\_\_\_\_ (long period of static.)

C: I really don't understand that kind of stuff.

A: The whole book is full of it.

C: I know. I was reading it. I've almost finished it. I was awful slow at it because I've had a lot of difficulty. When I read a book, I read a book; I don't stop. But I don't get any of that. I just don't. I know that he had quite a few women. Well, he had Romaine, and he had Diana. But Diana didn't conform as much as Jack did.

A: You mean he had women students, or women as...

C: Women students; not women as women. Not that I know of.

A: O.K. Now what about when Jeffrey says: "P.B. never made it clear from where he got his knowledge. He rarely stated anything, but preferred to hint."



C: Well, he did do that occasionally, about hinting about something. But not to a degree of trying to put something over on anybody. He read, he, like I said, he'd get these manuscripts and these books, and he'd underline certain passages; and he had me copying them.

A: By the way, in the library at Wisdom's Goldenrod we have all of P.B.'s books, including all the notes that he had typed up from his research. So, maybe we have some of the things that you typed up.

C: Probably, because I was always doing that. You know, anything that would help him with his work. But I never looked upon him as a God, or looked for miracles or that kind of thing. And Jack did. I'm sure Jack did, because he was constantly questioning, especially in these later years before he died. "Did I ever have any miracles? Did I ever do any of this or that or the other. I told him, "No, No, I had some nice times and some great meditations, but it's things that I can't discuss; I hardly know, myself, how to discuss them."

A: Now, Jeffrey says that P.B. claims that P.B. went to Tibet and that he wrote a book called The Search In Secret Tibet.

C: Search in Secret Egypt, Search In Secret India, I don't remember any Search In Secret Tibet. He talked much about Tibet. And he gave me a stone. I painted a very large Buddha. And it's beautiful. Now it looks like it's a thousand years old because I rolled it up and took it to Ecuador with me, and it got creased and crinkled, and it's got a little hole in it where it got kind of a dry rot place where I had it under the bed there...

A: Here's something else. Jeffrey says that "There was no spiritual superstition in which P.B. did not believe."

C: I don't understand that. What does he mean? He believes all the supernatural things?

A: And superstitious things.

C: I don't think he believed in any of that stuff.

A: Well, here's what he says. This is Jeffrey speaking: "It did not occur to me until many years later that P.B. was creating an imaginary world that he believed in. His words were like the adventure stories of a spiritual Tin Tin, a comic book."

C: I don't know, but he could discuss Ramakrishna, he could discuss the Maharishi, and Aurobindo, and wasn't that the one on the California coast? He wrote a lot of books. He was supposed to have been a spiritual leader and a teacher? But, P.B. didn't impress me as someone like that. Maybe Jeffrey got a different idea, I don't know.

A: Well, it seems that Jeffrey did get a different idea; and that's why he wrote his book.

C: Well, I read a lot of his book. In fact I've read most all of the book. I asked Alan if he wanted it when he was here over the weekend. But, it sounds like Jeffrey thought he was a charlatan or something.

A: Yes, exactly; that when Jeffrey became older he decided that P.B. was a charlatan.

C: Well, you can't... This is what I was trying to say in the thing I just read you. You can't look for those... you're looking for miracles, you're looking for somebody to rise above... You have to do it yourself! P.B. can't walk up and say, "I'm going to make a saint out of you". Or, "I'm going to make you understand everything". He can't do that. God can't do that. You have to do it yourself. He can help you study. He can help you learn. He can put your feet on the right path. But, other than that, he cannot do anything with you. None of those people could. Ramakrishna couldn't. You have to reach a certain point... How can I say this...

A: I understand. You have to be responsible for your own self and your own development.

C: That's right, but you have to go in the right direction or you'll never get there.

A: So, what direction did you think Jeffrey went in?

C: Well, Jeffrey, and I think Jack too...I think that was one thing Jack was looking for, a miracle. Jack wanted P.B. to make him a saint or a teacher or a godly person. He can't do that. You have to do it yourself. He can only put your feet in the right direction, and you had to take it from there.

A: Yes, so here's another thing. Jeffrey says: "Any request for concrete information threatened the fantasy world in which P.B. lived, and that he demanded others inhabit as well."

C: No, I don't think that. You had to live in your own world that you make. I didn't get anything like that from P.B. Well, Jeff was around him from the time he was an infant, almost, until he was grown.

A: Yes

C: He read his books, and he studied his books; but he was good at fabricating too, I think - Jeffrey.

A: Right, well there's a ...

C: Everybody's looking for enlightenment, but how do you find enlightenment? You don't get it from P.B. or Maharishi or ...

A: Here, it says, "As a writer about Indian texts, P.B. was simply a charlatan."

C: Well, I don't agree with that. Yes, I read stuff like that in his book, but I didn't pay any attention to it. I thought it was just Jeff talking.

A: Uh huh, so you don't take Jeff seriously.

C: Not really. What you get out of any thing, you get yourself; and you can't listen to anybody else. Even P.B. said that.

A: Yes. Well, it's just important to have another point of view. You're providing a different point of view.

C: But, your point of view has to be yours. You can't foist it upon somebody else.

A: Yes.

C: And you can't change people's minds. You're not a teacher.

A: Yes, but you know what happens? People who don't know P.B. read Jeffrey's book. And then they think...

C: And then they think he's a charlatan.

A: Exactly. So, you're an eye-witness. That's why I wanted you ...

C: What you have to get out of P.B.'s works, and I don't care who you are, I don't care if you're the Maharishi, what you get out of his lectures and his books, his conversations and the meditations, is as much as you can take. You can't make them up. What I'm trying to say is: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."

A: O.K.

C: You have to form your own...and I don't think...he never claimed to be a teacher. He never claimed to be a saint or a.....not with me.

A: O.K.

C: He could help you with your meditations. Well, I got so in my meditations, I could sit on the floor under a light fixture and make those bulbs fly around.

A: Uh Huh.

C: Well, if I'd tell that to somebody, he'd say "tell that to nobody" If I did they'd say "she's crazy".

A: Now, Jeffrey mentions some of P.B.'s students, one is a Miss Kirpatrick?

C: Oh, gosh. Heavens, she was a terrible woman.



A: Is she the one you mentioned earlier, the wealthy one?

C: Yes, I couldn't think of her name. She nearly killed us twice. She insisted we go to her home in San Francisco. Wealthy, wealthy woman. Huge, huge mansion. Word is she put Fred my husband, next to her at night and put me way off in another corner with the kids. I told my husband later, I said, "Well, you dumb dumb, you had a door between you; now, you know what you were supposed to do." (chuckles by both) That's what I told my husband.

A: You were teasing him. There was someone who's first name was W?

C: Her name was Vera Kirkpatrick, I think.

A: Yes, but there was someone else who's name was W?

C: I don't know who that was.

A: And someone who's name was D; he was a lawyer in Chicago?

C: I didn't know any of those.

A: O.K. I was just curious because...

C: Well we were...he was trying for this woman to buy a big place and let Fred run it, cause he knew we needed money. He was always trying to start the business. He's the one who said "Go into business." he gave us the name. We all worked on a name, and we all settled on that name: Sunshine Valley Food Company. And the business went crazy! We just sold that stuff hand over fist. And did it all by ourselves. I hated for November to come, or Thanksgiving to come. Golly! I had to mix up... I had these great, huge bowls bakers use, and mix up three, four hundred pounds of that cake mix. Then we pressed it into molds, then we wrapped it, and shipped it everywhere. We had two sizes, 2 1/2 and 1 1/2.

A: This is your business?

C: That was our business. And we made malted almonds and malted nuts. We were the first people to make those dried soup mixes. We made all kinds of dried soup mixes.

A: Do you want to say anything else about Jeffrey's book?

C: Well, I haven't quite finished it.

A: O.K., well maybe I'll call you in a week or two.

.....

A: Well, I think P.B. was a very compassionate person who had achieved a lot of inner peace inside of himself, and wanted to help other people, and wanted other people to be responsible for their own development.

C: That's right. You quoted it perfectly.

A: When I read Jeffrey's book, it's not the same person that I knew. The P.B. that I knew...

C: Well, like I told you. Jeffrey was in, with his Mother and Father and his Sister... \_\_\_\_\_  
(static)

A: The P.B. that Jeffrey describes is not the P.B. that I knew. But, I did not know P.B. when you knew him. So, I can say that the P.B. I knew was different. But, it's important to hear the perspective of someone who was there at the same time.

C: Well, one time when we were all at Jack's house, they rented beautiful places with swimming pools and everything, and, in fact they bought them. What they did with them later, I guess they just sold them again or something. But anyway, Jack went up to the ? \_\_\_\_\_ (static), and picked up a shell, a precious piece of work, and within it there was a real pearl. It opened, you know how shells open, and this exquisite pearl. Well, he offered it to me. Jack was very generous. Jack was the most generous person I've ever known. Her turned around, and he handed it to me, and he said, "This is for you". And I backed off...I said, "No, I can't take that". It was a beautiful thing, and very expensive. Well, P.B. was there, and he butted in, and he said, "Clara, you love to do things for people; you're forever and eternally giving people things; making things for people; and when somebody offers you something, you have to return that...honor."

A: So, he was telling you that you have to learn how to receive a gift.

C: That's right.

A: And that you're very good at giving gifts, but that it's important to receive other's gifts?

C: That's right. He said that's something you have to learn. You have to receive as well as give.

A: Uh huh.

C: I'll never forget it. And that was that beautiful home. We had dinner there, and P.B., well, he stayed with them. That's where Fred and Bodnak first met P.B. was at Masson's house.

A: O.K. Now what about the video, the movie?

C: Oh, I've got to look for those again. I had them all out at one time because I was trying to get in touch with Kenneth. And I told Alan, I said these should go to Kenneth because they're his father's.

A: You should send them to the P.B. Foundation, and we will make a copy and give it to Kenneth.

C: Well, I'll let Alan send them.

A: Well, I'll send Alan an email and tell him that we talked; and I'll ask him about the film, and about that article that you are referring to that I wrote.

End of tape