

# Notes on Visits with PB - Wisdom's Goldenrod Community Members

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*Editor's Note: This file is comprised of personal recollections about Paul Brunton, and excerpts from interviews with members of Wisdom's Goldenrod Center for Philosophic Studies, Valois NY. At the time the interviews occurred these individuals were all students of Anthony Damiani and it was through his auspices that they had access to PB. Both the recollections written down by these individuals and the interviews with Christi Cox happened decades after the actual encounters with Paul Brunton. Therefore, Brunton's words, as reported, are approximations of the original, although the individual's own responses are as accurate as any recollection of a powerful event is.*

*The meetings with PB occurred either during visits to him in Switzerland or during his visit to New York and Ohio in 1977. The interviews with Christi were recorded by her; she then transcribed and edited them. Unlike most other files in the archive, this file is not based on an original scan but was generated digitally by Christi; therefore there is no physical version of this file.*

*This was originally a personal project of Christi's, but then she decided to contribute it to the archive, for which we are very grateful. All the individuals herein – including those only represented by initials – have given their permission for their words to be included in the archive and made public. Interested readers should also consult "PB Visits 1 (Goldenrod interviews)" and "PB Visits 2 (more interviews)" also in the archive. – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2022*

## **Alan Berkowitz. Switzerland**

During my time with PB I had the responsibility of doing PB's grocery shopping. For this, he gave me a hundred Swiss Francs at the beginning of my visit, and each day I went into town and bought the necessary items – fresh bread at the bakery, organic biodynamic vegetables at the farmers market, etc.

As the money diminished, I made a decision that I would secretly donate the necessary funds and not take any more money from PB. So after a few days, when he asked me if I needed any money, I said, no, that there was still plenty. He seemed slightly surprised, but did not say anything and seemed to accept my "white lie." A few days later he asked again, and after receiving the same response from me, he said with a mystical smile on his face: "It is interesting how long a hundred francs can last!" After that he did not inquire any more about money and I continued to provide the necessary funds on my own for the daily shopping.

On the last day of my visit, as we were saying goodbye, PB tried to give me a large sum of money. I felt that I could and would not take anything from PB, so I

resisted and said that I could not accept it. But as he persisted, firmly and insistently, I felt that I could not disobey or disregard the wishes of someone who I view as a Sage and who was my “maha-guru” (the teacher of my teacher). I therefore reluctantly accepted the money that he was offering. To my disbelief, later on when I counted the money, it was exactly the same amount that I had spent from my own pocket on PB’s groceries. So in the end, both PB and I gave each other a gift, and in addition he gave me a lesson to ponder for the rest of my life.

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Another instance of PB’s “imposing” something on me was the following. Occasionally we went out for tea, and at the same time took advantage of the wonderful Swiss pastries. One day we were at a tea-shop near PB’s apartment, and with my tea I ordered only a single pastry. PB strongly insisted that I have a second, so I could only comply despite my feeling that I really did not want it. This was not my idea of being with a Sage – going out for tea and his insisting that I have a double serving of Swiss pastry! Much later Anthony commented to me that I had “overdone asceticism in a previous life.” So, perhaps this was a teaching for me personally.

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When PB came to the United States in 1977, he came by ocean liner, arriving in New York City. Anthony<sup>1</sup> drove to pick him up and bring him to Wisdom’s Goldenrod, his first stop on a cross-continental trip. A special lunch was arranged for him at the Center, and I was lucky enough to be one of the invited guests. PB entered the Center and we all sat down at the table. A very awkward, long silence ensued. What could one say to PB? What should one say? What would one say? The silence continued. Everyone (except PB) was getting restless. Finally, one of those present decided to break the silence and quietly asked PB: “PB, how did you find New York?” PB answered: “I got off the boat, and it was there!” A great laughter broke out. The physical silence was broken and conversation flowed freely.

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Being in the presence of PB was to be in the presence of an immense stillness-silence-peace. It was an aura that he lived in, a “peace that passeth understanding.” It wasn’t that he was “in peace” or “at peace” – it was as if he was peace, or one with peace. Across Lake Geneva from the apartment that he lived in and visible from the balcony was Mount Blanc, a great silent white mountain that seemed to reflect physically the intense silence of PB himself. It felt like there was a parallel or a polarity or some kind of cosmic balance between the two – outside the great silent mountain, inside the physically small, silent PB, each on opposite sides of the great lake, across from each other, and somehow together with each other.

(The fact that the person in the apartment below PB’s occasionally liked to listen to Elvis Presley, and that we could sometimes hear Elvis’ crooning, created an

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<sup>1</sup> Referring to Anthony Damiani.

interesting juxtaposition, which in any case did not manage to disturb the silence, perhaps instead “flavoring” it in an unexpected and humorous way.)

Inside of this silence, there was nothing to reflect my ego, nothing to project its thoughts on. So, to some extent, I also experienced a kind of silence when I was with him. When my mind produced thoughts in PB’s presence, it felt to me as if a bomb was going off and I was truly worried that my thoughts were disturbing PB. So, I asked him if I was disturbing him and he said no. In fact he seemed to not know what I was talking about. Sometimes these thoughts accumulated themselves and exploded into what I called an “ego attack” and the silence which I felt with him was gone until I recovered. When another student (Tim Smith) came from Wisdom’s Goldenrod, there were now three of us, and the presence of another ego allowed my mind to become active and gave it a means of externalizing itself.

One day we were walking down the hill from PB’s apartment to the train station in order to catch a train to the nearest big city. PB and Tim were engrossed in a deep conversation about the Heart Sutra. Somehow my mind became convinced that we were going to miss the train, given the slowness of PB’s gait and the fact that he seemed oblivious of time. Not wanting to disturb him, I decided instead to race down the hill and buy the train tickets for the three of us in order to both save time and avoid missing the train. So there I was, anxiously standing on the platform, tickets in hand, as PB and Tim finally approached the station, still in slow motion, still engrossed in conversation. The train approached the station. PB entered the station. The train came closer as PB walked up the stairs and onto the platform. The train entered the station and came to a stop, the door opening exactly in front of us. PB, without pausing or stopping or adjusting his gait, continued walking in perfect synchrony and timing with the opening train door, entering the train without missing a step. It was a perfect, seamless cosmic ballet performed before my eyes. So much for my ego’s thoughts. But then to make the point clear, when I said to PB that I had bought tickets for all three of us, he said, “I don’t need a ticket, I have a senior pass.”

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PB could be extremely impersonal, almost as if he “was a stranger to himself” or “not from this planet.” In fact he has said in the “Notebooks” and in other places that he was a being from the star Sirius, that he had “exchanged a tranquil existence for a troubled one” and also that looking at the star Sirius in the sky brought about a feeling of “homesickness.” Other great teachers have said that the spiritual instruction for planet Earth comes through beings from Sirius. But it was not a cool or unfriendly impersonality, but more that he was not the mind-body complex that was inhabiting the vehicles that we referred to as “PB.” It seemed in some way that they were actually unfamiliar to him. So, for example, once I asked him a question about something from the “Wisdom of the Overself,” and he said: “Who wrote that?” Another time we were discussing all the work that he had and that it was not always possible to respond promptly to letters that were sent to him, and he said, “Besides, I have to take care of

PB.” Thus, even while the body-mind complex had habits or patterns of behavior, the being who was PB seemed not to be the body-mind complex and while inhabiting them, gave one the feeling of living or being from somewhere else.

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In PB’s presence it was easy to lose track of time. Even while there were a daily routine and schedule, being with him was about the moment and the presence. Another characteristic of PB was his smile, his mysterious Mona Lisa smile, a faint upturning of both sides of the mouth that hinted at secret knowledge, other dimensions, and perhaps other universes, an other-world-ness that was both a here and a not here. The mystery smile to end all smiles. (The sub-category in the “Notebooks” called “The Yoga of the Liberating Smile” may be of interest.) Finally, there was almost always total silence in PB’s apartment. The phone almost never rang, and no one ever came to the door unless it was for an anticipated, prearranged interview (or Elvis Presley making an appearance downstairs).

These three themes came together in the following experience.

In Europe it is customary in the morning for the women to bring the rugs to the porch of their apartments and to clean them by beating them. I was always open to the opportunity to do some house-cleaning, and one day when PB unexpectedly decided to take a nap, I saw my chance to imitate the local women and beat PB’s rugs (some of which are now in the Wisdom’s Goldenrod library). I had no sense of what time it was, only that I could do what the local women do and help with some house cleaning. So, I took the rugs to the porch and started banging them. Cascades of dust poured out, bringing immense joy to my many Virgo planets and ascendant. I put them back, with PB still in his room, seemingly unaware of my secret house-cleaning binge. Suddenly – could it be? – there was a knock on the door. I opened it and a woman said in French: “Was it you who was beating the rugs?” Yes, I answered in my fractured French. She replied: “Well, we were sitting in the porch below having dinner just at that moment,” and then she left. So guess what happened to the Virgo-pleasing cascades of dust?

I was mortified beyond belief, not only for having committed a terrible faux-pax, but also having disturbed PB’s carefully guarded anonymity, not to mention ruining a family’s dinner. Suddenly the door to PB’s room opened and he asked, “Who was that?” Too embarrassed to tell the truth, I muttered something about the neighbor having a question. To which PB replied, with his magical mystery smile that reached to other universes: “Well, I guess she must have had something in mind!” and then he went back in his room.

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One evening after dinner PB asked me to choose a book from his library for him to read at bed-time. What would you have given PB to read? It was a bit of a mystery to me. After spending a bit of time in his library – one room of his apartment had a desk on one side and extensive rows of books on the other – I chose the biography of a medical intuitive for him to read. I hope that he had a good night’s sleep!

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Sometimes when sitting with PB I felt a profound immense love and an incredible powerful intimacy. It was nothing like what I had been taught to consider as human love. It was love strained of emotion, passion, eros, and all the other familiar elements that seemed to define it, raised to a celestial state. It felt almost impossible to believe that it was possible.

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Although PB lived as a hermit in almost complete isolation from his immediate physical environment, he was a busy person. He had an extensive international correspondence, with letters coming in daily. He was an avid reader and had a system of marking books in the margins with dots, so that the sections identified could be typed up by someone for his library. His literary estate had to be managed, including new editions of his books, foreign translations, and corrections that needed to be made to existing books of his. And he kept up with the news of current events.

Regarding his correspondence, PB said that he answered all letters, in one form or another. There were different ways that he responded: some he wrote personally in his own handwriting and he signed the letter; other letters he dictated to me and then signed himself; still others, he summarized what he wanted to say and I wrote the letter for him, with him signing it; and sometimes after summarizing what he wanted to say he had me write and sign it myself, saying that "PB asked me to write you..." So there were varying degrees of physical involvement that PB had with his correspondence. Finally, PB stated that he answered some letters mentally, but that not all of the writers were receptive enough to receive his response.

On one occasion we were working on an important publishing project which had a deadline. There was never any haste, rush, anxiety, or feeling of pressure. For this project there was an important piece of paper that was needed for the task, but mysteriously it disappeared. The two of us spent most of the day turning PB's office inside out, but the paper was nowhere to be found. I remember thinking to myself: "How can a Sage lose something?" "Doesn't he 'know' how to find it?" Finally we gave up the search. The next day, when we entered his office in the morning, there was the missing piece of paper sitting in full view on top of a pile of papers that was on his desk. So much for my infantile thoughts about the omniscience of a Sage.

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The first time I met PB he gave me a "test." After Anthony confirmed our visits, PB had written me stating that I should call him when I arrived in Montreux, the city where he was living at the time. So I called him and he told me to go to a certain restaurant and have lunch, and that he would meet me there. After he arrived and we exchanged greetings, we went for a long walk along the beautiful lake shore, which gave us a chance to talk until we reached the youth hostel where he was suggesting that I could stay. It was very cheap, appealing very strongly to my acquired habit of financial stinginess. But it was far away from PB's apartment and required taking a

bus. Then he very quietly and neutrally mentioned that there was a much more expensive hotel just near where he lived, and that we could look at it if I wanted to. So, I said yes, and we did. Then I decided to swallow my desire to save money (which I did not have much of as I was a student at the time) in order to be physically closer to PB's apartment - in fact only a very short walk away. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life, because the work schedule that evolved could not have accommodated the bus schedule, which would in turn have compromised my visit and greatly reduced my time with PB.

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PB was very interested in hearing about the Dalai Lama's first visit to Wisdom's Goldenrod, which had occurred a few months before. At that time there were some students there from Sweden for a short visit, so we all sat in PB's living room and listened to a tape that PB had of Tibetan Buddhist chanting, while I gave a report of the visit. The atmosphere was amazing and it felt as if the Dalai Lama was actually in the room with us. When we were finished PB commented: "So, the Center has had a real Tibetan Buddhist initiation."

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Part of the daily routine was to have tea. Although PB seemed to exist in a place beyond form, his body still had habits. Once he commented: "I don't need to meditate anymore but I still do it because my body has the habit of meditating." With respect to this, the way that he made his bed was to put a second sheet on top of the upper sheet, half-way up the bed and folded down, so that when he sat up in bed at night to meditate, he could pull up the upper second sheet and cover himself. Being English, one of these habits of his body was to drink tea. So, each afternoon, I went into PB's study and waited quietly for him to acknowledge my presence, and then he told me what tea he would have that day.

The routine was the same for deciding the menu for the meals. One day after waiting a long time with no response from PB, I became impatient and thought I could say something, so I very quietly started to speak and PB's body seemed to jump as if in shock almost to the ceiling. Who knows where he was and how far away he was from his physical body at that moment?

So anyway, back to the choice of tea for the day. I noticed that there was a pattern with regards to which tea PB had each day, i.e. one day black tea, the next green, the next herbal, and so on. Having noticed this pattern it seemed to me that I could predict which tea PB would have on the following day. So the next day I decided that I did not need to disturb him and that I could make the anticipated "tea of the day." When we sat down in the kitchen for our daily tea, PB said, "Why are we having this tea today?" and I explained my rationale. He then said, "Today I am not having caffeinated tea because my body needs herbal tea," and he gave the reason. So much for the sequential knowledge of the lower mind.

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Jose Trigueirinho Netto, a well-known Brazilian spiritual teacher, had an interview with PB during one of my visits. Trigueirinho was at that time living in Europe and was in the initial phases of his work as a spiritual teacher, and he strongly encouraged all of his students to read PB. PB's custom was to keep his interviews short and timely, and often I was instructed to come into the living room around the time that the interview was supposed to end to help bring it to a close. In this case Jose and PB sat together all day, alternating talking and sitting in silence, until eventually they were sitting together in the dark. When the interview was over, PB asked me to accompany him to the train station. Afterwards PB commented very positively about Trigueirinho and his work.

Trigueirinho has mentioned PB in many of his thousands of recorded lectures and over forty books and he has been instrumental in keeping PB in print in both Spanish and Portuguese. He frequently gives PB's books to his students, including to monks and nuns of the monastic order that he is a founder of. His interview with PB gave me the opportunity to meet him, which in turn changed my life fundamentally. In fact, much of the last thirty years of my life has been spent translating PB into Portuguese, giving talks about PB in South America, translating Trigueirinho's works into English, and much more, all in collaboration with my wife Gran whom I would never have met if I had not first encountered Trigueirinho that day in PB's apartment. It was therefore interesting to later find out that Trigueirinho had in fact requested earlier interviews with PB, and that his requests had been denied, only to be finally given the opportunity of a meeting on that very same day that I was in PB's apartment. So, with PB serving as the agent of my destiny, I met Trigueirinho and the rest of my life (and future) is history.

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I have always had a fondness for the Hindu namaste greeting, in which you place your palms together and bow to the other person, which is a gesture that means: "I bow to the God within you." One day upon leaving PB's apartment, he accompanied me to the door, and before parting I turned around and offered him a namaste. He responded with the same. I have experienced this ritual hundreds, or even thousands of times and it is very habitual for me. It seems like a "nice thing to do." But this time something was different, something profound and amazing. PB was actually bowing to the God within me, actually perceiving the God within me, and actually doing what is intended by the gesture.

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My final physical contact with PB was as follows. I had to take the train to the airport from the small village that he lived in on Lake Geneva in Switzerland, and PB had to go somewhere else. So we went to the train station together. After saying goodbye, we each went to the platform for our respective trains. As I stood on mine waiting for the train, I saw PB across the tracks entering and walking across his platform. But he was not really walking as one does in physical space. It seemed as if



he was floating across the space, motionless (although his body was physically moving), almost as if he was on a conveyor belt, a being composed of a diaphanous, non-physical substance. And he seemed to be in a different psychic space, one in which I no longer existed. There was no attempt, as a more “normal person” would have done, to wave to me, smile, or exchange glances across the train tracks. It seemed as if I no longer existed. Only PB floating effortlessly through space.

### **Andrea McFarren. Valois, NY, 1977**

In my interview, PB said to me, “You’ve had a glimpse, and then you will and then you will... and then you will... and one day it will be the light of your very own Overself.” It felt he was taking me into a trance, the way he used that rhythmic phrasing. And then you will... And then you will... Everything was completely still; I’d never felt such stillness in my life. It was profound. It was riveting. I didn’t have the ability to think.

I was just brought into complete light; I’d never been there before. In the space I was in there was nothing but I didn’t understand exactly what it was. It was definitely a transmission – absolutely – and a gift. It was through that gift that I was definitely in a witness position, but deeper than that. I was in a different place, close to my heart. It was a marvelous transport. Then my life became totally different and it was transformed because I became mindful. It’s a different life now, a thoughtful life. Now it’s easy to go into meditation; it’s always immediate.

### **Andrew Holmes. Valois, NY, 1977**

PB told me: “You were given a certain amount of experience from the past, and now the rest of this incarnation you have to improve your character and slowly overcome your fear<sup>2</sup> so that you can enter the portal to the higher world.”

### **Anna Bornstein. Montreux, Switzerland, 1970s**

When I came to see PB I arrived late.<sup>3</sup> My hair was standing on end; my big socks were curling around my feet. I pressed the bell on his door and there he was. I looked into his eyes directly because I wanted to know if he really knew what he was writing about – I know that sounds arrogant! I got such a deep impression of this peace that was radiating from him. I knew it was inappropriate to kneel, there on the staircase and in that setting. But my soul was kneeling to him when he stood in the

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<sup>2</sup> Regarding an experience of the demon on the threshold. – Christi Cox

<sup>3</sup> Due to travel. – Christi Cox

door. My soul was on its knees. I had never met anyone before that had that effect on me. I felt awe – and I was not a humble person. This feeling remains today – that he is my master and I bow down to him.

He ushered me in and we sat down right away. He didn't ask why I was late, nothing. This peace and absolute silence descended in the room, on me, on us. And I felt myself whirling toward the center, some center, not my own but maybe of the earth or the universe, I can't tell. And then all impressions ended and I have no idea how long we were sitting like that – at least half an hour. Afterwards we went out in the kitchen and I was giggling, like a child, without inhibition. Like a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders.

Within a few weeks I had this experience. I was drawn through like a dark tunnel, like you hear described in near-death experiences. I exploded in light on the other side of the tunnel and I was in a heavenly world of light and knowledge. I was not myself, I was just there. I sat in my chair for hours. It was like a Niagara Falls of light coming through my body from just the touch of that heavenly sphere. It was an incredible ecstasy that just went on and on. I had the intuition afterwards that it would be a long time before I would have that experience again and that I would have to learn discipline. (*Laughs.*) That's the message I got. "Discipline" was an unknown word to me; I had never tried to discipline myself!

I'm still very inspired by him. It gave me hope – for me. Somewhere to lean. I have him to thank for everything.

## **Avery Solomon. Switzerland**

Every moment with PB was holy, extraordinary – or just ordinary! For the sage, every moment unfolds Reality – every detail, every sense perception, every thought. Every detail unfolding the reality, instead of hiding it, which it seems to do for most of us. And that's what it was like. It was all important, every experience, whether it was going to an art gallery or having coffee. There weren't bells-and-whistle things, but it was like, oh, life unfolds beautifully. Just in the now. Ordinarily extraordinary.

One time PB got strong with us – not angry but...<sup>4</sup> PB said that if you want truth then you must be truthful in every detail of your life, and there's no compromise. He was very strong about it; truth is what is important. I've seen the consequences of not following that tremendous teaching, and they're very strong. I'm not able to be {fully}<sup>5</sup> truthful; the ego lies. I'd be lying to say I can do the truthfulness! It's a hard one, not to see oneself as a truth-teller. It could be a lifetime's work to develop the soul-quality of telling the truth.

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<sup>4</sup> Avery suggested that they could get away with not paying for something that he perceived as an unfair charge. – Christi Cox

<sup>5</sup> We have inserted the missing word "fully" here for context. – Christi Cox

PB's notebooks, that writing, that's the body of PB. It's as much PB as the PB I saw in Switzerland. It may be the essential of PB. The notes on glimpses have a very strong effect; they could catapult you into a glimpse themselves. They're powerful.

PB wanted to know about my personal background. I told him about my involvement in social action, karma yoga. He did encourage me to do service work for others. It felt like he was drawing something out of me that I already knew, but that had gotten kind of covered over and maybe wrongly thought about now I was in philosophy. He said, forget about teaching the high, complicated philosophy - people need just basic stuff. I was surprised.

One time I was helping PB shave - that worked out okay, maybe he got a little nick or something. And he was talking about how the sage feels pain, and yes, be careful. He said, I have to shave PB - talking about PB in the third person - and yes, I feel PB's pain.

### **Barbara Platek. Valois, NY, 1977**

Upon completing the regular meditation session,<sup>6</sup> I felt inclined to go upstairs and continue my meditation alone. Not long after I began, I was overwhelmed by a tremendous yearning to "feel" God. I felt that my life from that point on would be absolutely useless and barren without some tangible sense of a Higher Power. My feelings of anguish intensified, until I found myself shaking and sobbing and pleading for some sign of Divinity. Finally, in utter despair, I threw my head down on the ground overcome by the thought that all I wanted to do was serve God.

Slowly, and almost imperceptibly, a sense of calm stole over me. A delightful gentleness wafted through my mind, comforting and reassuring me. In ITS presence I felt that there was never any time that I was not serving God, that God was always there and that my life was inseparable from the Divine Power. A sense of light permeated me. The session ended and I felt very much relieved and blessed.

That night as I lay in bed to sleep, I became aware once again of some force other than my own taking command of my thoughts. Under its influence I felt compelled to vividly and intensely imagine my own death (What would "I" be after this body was no more?). For a few moments I struggled with the urge that was gripping me, but then I suddenly realized that it was my very being that was attempting to communicate with me and I let go. As I did so I felt a soaring sense of expansion. It was as though I was lifted out of my body (although there was no actual imagery to that effect, just an overall feeling of being lifted) and I felt my consciousness grow wider. I knew then that I was not the body and that I could never die. The entire experience lasted only a short while, whereupon I fell into a deep sleep lasting several hours.

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<sup>6</sup> While staying at the Center a few months after seeing PB. - Christi Cox

When I awoke the state of mind from the night before had “settled” and deepened. Everything had slowed down and become very quiet. I walked outside into the early morning air and it was as if I hovered over myself. I could see that what I previously took to be myself, my ego, was a series of thoughts arising in my mind. Just thoughts. I was a thought and yet I was above the thoughts looking down on them. Even more strange was the recognition of MIND being everywhere. The “world out there” and the mind associated with the body were of the same stuff. There was one essence running through everything like a song. Most of the time we make so much noise we don’t hear it. The world feels separate and different and we don’t see that it is all of a piece. This is how it always is – we experience this all the time.

### **Beverly Bennett. Columbus, OH, 1977**

It was the summer of 1977, Paul Brunton came to Columbus, Ohio and gave interviews. Although I was new to the group of students studying his books I was fortunate to be selected to be his secretary. I had read all his books but as a typical westerner I believed in the truth of science which did not include the concept of extraordinary abilities.

We sat outside under a tree while he dictated ideas to me. At one point he asked me to go in the house and tell the others that we were ready for tea. When I entered the kitchen an amazing thing happened. Waves of energy moved simultaneously toward me from each of the people present and within that energy were their voices revealing what each was thinking. I was stunned. This experience was truly earthshaking. I realized I had been given a precious gift that shifted my perspective of reality and opened my mind to consider a whole new world of possibilities.

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It is now the summer of 2017, 40 years later. While reading a book entitled “The White Brother” by Michael Juste I found the following statement that described and validated my experience:

...M. also told me about the waves of thought and emotion sent to him, and how he can distinguish which student or friend has done so, for each person possesses a different atmosphere, being also differently coloured, and as he is responsible for his pupils one can understand how carefully the teacher has to watch the one who desires to be chosen.

## **Christi Cox. Montreux, Switzerland 1971-1972, Zurich, Switzerland, 1974**

Anthony<sup>7</sup> sent me to PB for a very specific problem: attacks of sudden, apparently unprovoked anxiety. Not panic attacks, per se, but a cold anxiety. So when I met PB, I was surprised when one of the first things he asked me was whether I had ever used a ouija board. In fact, I had. "You are very mediumistic," he said. "You must get rid of that." He said that if one weren't mediumistic the use of ouija probably wouldn't hurt. PB mentioned that he had had some difficulties of this kind as well when he was younger. PB also told me I was under psychic attack - not possession! - and part of the reason was my two uses of LSD. Drugs like this, he said, rip holes in the protective subtle sheath that we ordinarily carry around us.

After a quiet moment, he told me he was not "permitted" to take care of the attack for me, the implication being that he takes orders, as it were, from... well, some higher source. PB recommended that I stop meditating for a while. When I resisted, he smiled and said, "What's the hurry?"

Some time later he said to me that I would never entirely get rid of my mediumism, but there is such a thing as "higher mediumship": it's the higher self working through you. Ordinary mediumship should be avoided. Those born with mediumistic temperaments should not meditate at all. "Occult powers aren't safe to use until you give them up."

Two years later PB gave me an exercise to raise the kundalini; strict celibacy was required. Anthony was alarmed when I told him, and muttered that PB must think that he, Anthony, was up to guiding me through kundalini, but he wasn't confident that this was so. He warned that there are dangers to raising the kundalini: If the kundalini doesn't hit the thousand-petal lotus and goes down into the lower three chakras the results will be the opposite of what intended.

Long path: Despise the world, despise yourself, despise yourself for despising yourself. Short path: glorify world, glorify your Self, glorify lower self. Ignore your negativity. One can do both long and short paths together.

About the quest, "Keep your sense of humor and keep relaxed." In Zen, they know how to make jokes about the quest. Balance is important: "Feet on the earth though head is in the clouds."

PB had just received a copy of the Swedish "The Secret Path." It has a picture of the sun on the cover. "What's that?" he said. "A comet? PB is a comet over Sweden." He added, in a jokey way, that we should tell people that he travels around in a spaceship, lives on another planet, and is just coming down to earth to visit publishers and some students.

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to Anthony Damiani.

PB said, in regard to giving references to a company, that he could give “personal, financial, and celestial references.”

If you are in Eternal Now you have no memory; memory is tied up with ego. The ego is built of memory. If you remove it, you weaken the ego. “Let the past go – forget it. That is one way to weaken the tyranny of the ego.”

PB told me to stop pushing hard on the quest: “The message is, take it easy.”

On one occasion PB was sitting next to me on a train. He told me I had to help my father get on the quest. I thought to myself, but didn’t say, that my father was already so ethical. PB immediately turned to me, exactly as if I had spoken out loud, and said, “But ethics aren’t enough.”

On another, he told me and X to take a nap right after our lunch with him. We went back to our hotel and sat cross-legged on our beds chatting energetically. Very suddenly it was impossible to stay awake; we simultaneously sank onto the pillows. All I know is that I then “saw” a seed shape – a vesica! – entering my heart. Within it was a timelessness in which my entire future development existed simultaneously – I saw it all. Then, I popped back into space/time and could retrieve none of the details... so frustrating! Fifteen minutes had gone by. X awoke at the same time and reported being “rocked in a paradisiacal state.”

### **Cindy Stillman. Valois, NY, 1977**

I walked in and the first thing he said was, “When was the last time you ate meat?” And I said, “Last night.” He said, very serious, “What were the circumstances?”

So I told him people had given me a party and they had shish kabobs – and I really like shish kabobs! – and he said, “You did the right thing, because there would have been such negativity if you hadn’t eaten them.” But then he said, “But never ever again will you eat meat. Ever.” You know when a Sage looks at you like that and says “Never, ever,” you don’t.

He said one can contact people who’ve died, through meditation. Just be quiet, say their name, picture them, and you can contact them, he said.

He said “You have three things to learn: you can sense other people’s feelings. What you have to learn is to differentiate your stuff from other people’s. Because you can pick up their feelings at the drop of a hat.” He said check out yourself before you go into a room.

He said, “No matter what happens to you as you get older, never ever forget the Overself. Never. Never.”

When I first walked in, he was so light, the whole place was so light. He didn’t radiate light, he was light.”

## David Wakoff. 1977

The first time I met PB was not in the flesh. Everything fell apart: I got arrested, ran out of money. Didn't know what I was doing with my life. Spent a week in Boston carousing with my friends. In the morning this thing happened. I was sleeping on the floor. I woke up, lying on my back. All of a sudden I felt my chest melting. It was very pleasant. As it was happening I saw a giant fetal eye opening and closing with my breath, which had slowed down. And then all of a sudden I was looking down at my body and I didn't feel any physical sensations and I had this moment of clarity that rippled through me and it came with the words, "Now I know without a shadow of a doubt that I am a soul." The next thing I remember was the melting sensation again and there at my feet was PB. He was just looking at me. He didn't say anything; I didn't say anything. Gradually I came back into my body and I felt so light and good I decided to stay an extra day. I was driving from Boston to Buffalo I might as well stop off and see {a relative}<sup>8</sup> in Ithaca. I'd never been to Wisdom's Goldenrod<sup>9</sup> before. I showed up at about 11pm and {someone at WG}<sup>10</sup> was surprised to see me. He said "It's interesting you showed up today because PB showed up today." That was the summer PB came to Ithaca. I was intrigued. He had showed up; and I had showed up.

Around PB, it felt like he was giant pendulum that had stopped. And in that stopping, the whole world was born. It was like "the peace that passeth understanding." Utter peace, visceral, palpable.

The experience I had of being around someone who had no chatter, no internal dialog, I haven't felt the same thing, even with the Dalai Lama. It was utter peace, contentment with whatever is happening. It was a very visceral, palpable experience. And that has stayed with me more than anything, because it's hard to come by.

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The first time I saw PB, when he walked down a path, it was like an earthquake. It was so powerful, so powerful. Just seeing this little man, this so-called little man (*laughs*), just walk down the path. Power, staggering power. It was like the earth shook, the world changed. It was very unusual.

## Elaine Mansfield. Switzerland, 1970s

PB walked out of the restaurant and there was bright sunlight on his face and he just stood there - I had been feeling so agitated - for about one or two minutes, he didn't move. He didn't look at us and he just stood there and this incredible - I just start to cry when I think about this - incredible peace and joy descended on me like, like

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<sup>8</sup> We have inserted the missing words "a relative" here for context. - Christi Cox

<sup>9</sup> A spiritual center. - Christi Cox

<sup>10</sup> We have inserted the missing words "someone at WG" here for context. - Christi Cox

a glimpse, and I was just kind of blown away and I was so grateful because I had felt, before this trip,... I'd been so agitated but my ego was disarmed. I had this wonderful moment of opening and connection. It was an unforgettable moment. For the rest of the day I felt very lit up and very peaceful. Something powerful had really happened to me. It was very powerful gift.

I cut PB's hair a few times which was very intimate. He would wear his long underwear - it was January - and I would clip his hair.

In the attic PB found an old hat with ear flaps. It was like a kid's hat, a silly hat. He tried it on and we started laughing. And then PB started laughing too, so hard that the three of us were doubling up with laughter. It was a "laughter glimpse."

Vic<sup>11</sup> seemed somehow, in a respectful way, able to banter and tease PB throughout the trip. PB liked it; he liked laughing. He liked when Vic would say something amusing.

Regarding 49-day reincarnation in Buddhism, PB said: "If that's what you believe, that's what will happen."

## **Gillian Pederson-Krag. Switzerland, 1970s**

I do know that when people get together to talk about him there's a special atmosphere that arises, that is not like anything else I know. This sounds very fantasy-land, but I do feel he is present. Seeing him in the flesh was one thing - a great privilege - but I think that his presence is even more intensely there through his work. He's out of the body; but he is around. I feel his presence every day. Especially when people are talking together about him; it's as though he's right here with us.

I had a huge spiritual awakening when reading "A Search in Secret Egypt" - an experience of my true being; that was long before I met him. Later PB told me, well, yes, that the purpose of his books is to initiate people into what he would call a glimpse, which is now referred to in California as awakening. You have a glimpse and then you know what the goal is; you have a way to orient yourself for the rest of your life. It's available to everybody.

My visits to him weren't always easy. The second time I saw him I remember being visited by a tremendous amount of shame and self-rejection. This is just part of the long process of seeing the ego and its mistakes for what they are. Being with him was like walking into the fire.

Visiting him {mostly}<sup>12</sup> created peace and ease; I wasn't motivated by strategy of any kind. What went on with him is really transmission. We talked about weather, politics, Switzerland, but in fact there was a huge amount of transmission going on.

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<sup>11</sup> Referring to Vic Mansfield.

<sup>12</sup> We have inserted the missing word "mostly" here for context. -Christi Cox



A high point for me occurred when PB invited me for tea in a restaurant. We talked about trivia - politics, etc. - and in the course of it felt a kind of uncontrollable magnetic pull to look up into his eyes. I was brought up to think this is rude, but I couldn't help myself; I just had to look up at him. When I looked at his eyes, I felt like one does when you look at the sun and the retina is traumatized. It was like an electric shock went through me. And then I had to look away and pretend that nothing was wrong. I thought there was something wrong with me - I was going crazy. So we continued our conversation and I looked at the flowers, the tea, and then I would be drawn back to look at him and when I would look at his eyes, again I would have this experience of shock. It went on 6 or 7 times. After this I was definitely not the same. I think this is what is called transmission. This is transmission squared. It was another way of him sharing his information.

Anthony - and he spent a lot of time with PB - mentioned that PB used to withdraw his whole physical body. He'd be sitting with him and then he would become more and more translucent and finally disappear. And then he would re-manifest. Tony mentioned this kind of casually. He would be cutting PB's hair, cutting, cutting, and then look down and there would be no head. And then he would come back again.

To be in his presence was to be in unconditional love. I wouldn't really call it love, it's much more like a kind of enthusiastic acceptance of everything. You could encompass war and death. Whatever happened, it could be embraced with this feeling of acceptance. That is a totally fearless state. To be in his presence was to experience that directly. He had given me the experience of unconditional love; that is enough. Now the ball is in my court, to live out of the knowledge of that experience.

In his presence you feel your capacity for innate freedom. Freedom from fear of our separateness. You feel your own expansive reality. It's hard to talk about.

## **Harriet and Michael Eisman. Valois, NY, 1977**

PB asked me if I had seen Filipino healing, where they enter the body and take stuff out with their hands. He said he thought the power was once present in the human race to do that but he didn't think it was present any more.

That evening, what happened was this huge "Who am I" question. I kept asking the others "Who are you?" I meditated on "Who am I" the rest of the night. This was an overwhelming "Who am I" question.

He has that incredible stillness, the way he sat. There was nothing fidgety. I asked something about Chinese philosophy. What has stayed with me over the years is that he said, "Confucius wanted people to be well-behaved." Over the years it's come to mean so much more to me; it's come to be very foundational for me. Once when [I

unexpectedly heard a tape of PB's voice)<sup>13</sup> there was such a cloud of peace, it was unbelievable. Something came across.

I had multiple dreams with PB in them for a while, with clear indications that mentalism is true, I'm a mental being.

He was a really gracious host; he'd just met me, and didn't make me feel that I was intruding. There was this enormous graciousness and kindness toward me.

### **Harold Hermann. Valois, NY, 1977**

PB was playing with our baby's hands. He was creating a really gentle kind of atmosphere. The atmosphere was very ethereal.

And then he said: "Have you written to me? Have I responded to your letter?" I said no. PB said: "I want to apologize. I'm elderly now. I'm in semi-retirement. I have a large correspondence. I do not have a personal secretary. I want to apologize to you. I think every letter to me should get a response."

So X and he were having this conversation. I was having this out-of-the body experience: I was watching the three of us. It was very gentle. And then he turned to me and he said, "I really do offer my apologies for not writing back to you." I said, "It's really ok," and he said, "No, it's not." I said, "You know what, PB. I'm sorry I said you didn't write to me; I should have said you did!" He started to laugh. All three of us were laughing.

X asked, "How could I get to purification?" He said, "I'll give you an exercise: Breathe in positivity of the Overself. You must remember that your attitude will create the atmosphere for whatever activity you may be doing."

### **Jayne Demakos. Valois, NY, 1977**

The sense that he was transparent and that I could look through him. He wasn't solid somehow; he didn't have concreteness. He didn't seem to have the same kind of mass. A different kind of mass than your basic person. More like a kind of texture. It was such a singular moment of meeting him. Just having that encounter does sit in my memory someplace, the possibilities for humanness. I don't think I've met anyone like that before. Anyone who had that attenuated sense.

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<sup>13</sup> We have inserted the missing words "I unexpectedly heard a tap of PB's voice" for clarity. — Christi Cox

## Jeff Cox. Vevey, Switzerland, 1978

PB and I sat on a bench in the shade and he fell asleep. I had to put my arm around him to prevent him from tipping. He slept about 15 minutes, and then we went back to Vevey. He insisted on paying for everything (“this is my territory”). He also returned the check,<sup>14</sup> as he feels he cannot accept it.

PB picked me up at 8 by taxi to go to the warehouse where his things are stored. So many trunks, suitcases, and boxes – mostly of books. He gave me a couple of shirts to wear as it was a little chilly. He has many interesting clothes and little boxes and so forth from all over the world: Tibetan cymbals, robes, tea, and lots of incense.

He met me in Lausanne for lunch. He told me that sugars overdone in the diet were unbalancing.

He didn’t like negative auras, and mentioned it several times. He often doesn’t like to take the bus on the way home to Vevey, because there are ladies on it who resent him because they think that he, as an older Englishman, is getting special treatment. One day he didn’t have part of his ticket but the driver, who knew him, let him go anyway. The ladies started speaking about him and it bothered him. He was very careful. One consideration, whatever we did, was: would it arouse negative thoughts.

He mentioned that Anthony probably knew Plotinus.

PB told about a secretary he hired who knew nothing of queer subjects. She worked for a few months and then one morning she didn’t show up at the usual time. A few hours later she came to work. Shortly before lunch she asked if he wanted to know why she was late. He said, yes, he was curious. She said that after she awoke she had a trance and felt she couldn’t move and so remained in her chair. Now, she said, she could understand what he was writing about. It’s dangerous to work for PB!

We fed the ducks and swans – so nice. PB said, “Look how content they are.” “But,” I argued, “they don’t have a permanent soul.” They do have an astral body, he responded. Animals do conceptualize, but not like us. They don’t have causal bodies – bodies in the sense of higher manas.

He told me about a healer, William MacMillan, who wrote “The Reluctant Healer.” He meditated each morning for an hour to an hour and a half; he forgot his body and his ego and connected to the Higher. Then he was ready to work. He only took patients that doctors couldn’t cure, and when he met them, he intuitively knew whether or not he could cure them. If yes, he asked them to lie down and lightly massaged the sick area. Heat was aroused in that area; this was kundalini heat. He then had the patient sleep for about a quarter of an hour. He scheduled eight a day, and often felt exhausted afterwards. He regarded himself as a professional and charged money; charging for use of spiritual powers may have contributed to his early heart attack. PB spoke to him about it but he wouldn’t change. PB would have worked half-

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<sup>14</sup> Referring to the check given by Wisdom’s Goldenrod Philosophic Center. –Christi Cox

time healing and half-time at another job, or maybe would have put out a bowl for donations.

PB likes colored lights. He said orange is vitalizing; red is too passionate; gold and yellow are ethereal. He likes to meditate under the red or blue light. He asked if I see auras; I said that close to the body I see blue. He said the etheric varies from green to blue.

Noise bothers PB. You should cut and tear vegetables. They omit little screams. Would you prefer to be broken or cut? I said I'd never thought about it.

I asked if we could have his manuscripts and the other material he has written over the years on scraps of paper etc. He said they would have to be typed. I said we would organize them, type them, and index them so as to make them accessible to those who use our library. He agreed.

On walks a few times PB complained of the body being a burden and he didn't know if it was worth the trouble any more.

I don't remember exactly what led up to this, but he was sitting in a chair and I was on the floor and I was looking up at him, and I felt how much I was standing in my own way, how much I wanted to be a certain way for him, but coming up against my psyche. And I said something like, "PB, I'm sorry - it's just the way I am." I was crying. And he just looked at me in a compassionate way, but we didn't talk about it. But then, thirty years later I'm reading the "Notebooks," and I come across this passage: "'This is the way I am,' is a sign of somebody ready for the short path." An acceptance of the limitations of the ego, instead of trying to make it the means for achieving the Overself. Wow, PB actually wrote that incident down, and made it into a little teaching. I guess I was ready for the short path when I read that passage! As I was leaving, his parting words were, "You'll experience the Overself when you die." At the time I thought, well, ok, but I want the Overself now. I'd go on a protest: What do you want? When do you want it? Now! More recently I realized, no, he means when I die, surrender. It made me feel like (*teary*) at least he saw it as enough of a possibility that he would say that to me. He recognized I had fumbling sincerity. The proof will be in the pudding, as it were. I was touched very deeply by it.

I thanked PB for the opportunity to be with him, that it has helped in terms of the demand on me to be mindful. I apologized for my reactions that were negative and said that it was hard to do anything about them all at once. He said, yes, that the road wasn't straight but that one had to call oneself back to the higher. I said that being in the presence of a sage was hard work, a constant strain to do what the higher wants instead of my egotistic wishes. He said that there was no rush, the self can't be lost. Sometimes one is very close to it without being in it.

A 50-cent piece fell to the floor and he said to forget it. I pointed out that it would get him  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way home. He said he has a celestial address!

Animals have astral but not causal bodies.

I asked about the after-death experiences: if people in the astral were locked in their own imaginations or if they contacted others – or both? PB agreed with the latter. The body is a burden that prevents strong imaginative powers from working.

He told me about the current Sai Baba who produces rings. Some were fake, but not all. The rings were said to be dematerialized from various locations – shipwrecks etc. – and brought to him. These manifestations inspire the faith of his followers. We spoke of other types of magic such as healing. Jesus healed to give people a sign of spiritual reality. Faith is an important part of any healing. If a person doesn't want to live, the life energy will wane and they will die. The question of faith healing in general came up: whether or not it is a good idea. Theosophists say it is an interference with one's karma. The cures don't always work; sometimes there is a relapse. Healing is a form of white magic.

### **Laurie Conrad. Valois, NY, 1977**

I knew nothing, nothing, nothing. I walked in, and there was this little fellow. I said to him, "I'm not very good at talking," and then I didn't say anything for the next forty minutes and neither did he. In that time, at one point I mentally said, "I love you," and he just started. He jumped! – and inwardly I said, "I'm sorry; I won't do that again," and he kind of smiled at me. And then this thing happened to me that I didn't know what was happening. I was standing in my heart, and my heart was all around me. I was looking around at the spiritual heart. This went on for forty minutes or so.

I could see he was looking into my future, and he asked me a few questions about being a musician – I hadn't told him about being a musician.

He said, "Meditate every day – but not too much," and then he said – and I think this was his true message to me, "Music will take you very close to where you want to be, but there's another step." And as he said that, I could see it. He also told me to meditate on the heart, or as he said, my divine center. For about 6 months after he left the whole world looked pink. He'd just changed everything in me.

Before I met PB I'd had depressions – ah, I just wanted to jump off a bridge. They were so frequent. Awful, awful. Soon after I met him, I was driving home and I knew I was heading for that horrible place and you're bracing yourself and I fell in, and I fell into this radiant brilliant light and love – a love I'd never known – and that was the end of those depressions. To think that someone could do this. I hadn't had any training, read any books. I'd had no idea that a life could be altered this way. It put me on a path to perfect myself so that I could help others.

I think he changed my entire life and being in those few paltry minutes of earth time. I don't think I've ever been the same. And he showed me something that I wouldn't have believed possible.

The main impression I had of him when I walked in was that he was just a person. He didn't look extraordinary, like a king. He was so quiet and gentle, another

person who had broken through to the god-like quality that we all have, the radiant soul that we all are. The power of it, the finding that in that little package, little body, like that, just overwhelming. With all that power coming through him. Basking in that gentle love that he had.

It's so easy to say someone changed your life. But he changed everything, and me. You can't put it into words.

### **Laurie Damiani. Ithaca, NY, 1977**

I don't remember anything we talked about. I remember being nervous, and feeling that my house wasn't perfect, and that I didn't really understand who this person was - really. I think I was judging myself; I didn't feel judged by him! But it was all very numinous at the same time. He was so quiet, and so calm, and so gentlemanly, and just not like somebody I was used to seeing.

### **Linda Ruth. Valois, NY, 1977**

Basically, my interview with PB was about the short path and the long path. I say something like, "Although trying very hard to relinquish my personal will I still find myself still operating from a selfish state of consciousness, without compassion. What advice can you give me?" I still am selfish after all these years! He says, "Your question has two parts: the selfish attitude and the personal will. You are a self, a glorious self, an unfolding flower, like a seed of a tree that has everything within it. Through birth, infancy, adolescence, adulthood you're constantly developing. You are developing physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. What brought you to this point of asking these questions? Your development. Do you wish to relinquish your development? Do you wish to cut off the lower self? The animal self is part of the whole self. Is it an unconscious wish to cut off your development? You've been trained to think this way. This is the religious attitude: to do battle with yourself, to pit one part of yourself against another, the lower will against the higher. From this religious attitude you will grow into a mystical and then another."

Q: is it erroneous? PB: No. The self has many parts. It's all of them. To try to cut off any part of yourself is to deny yourself. Every individual is developing in this way. Your knowing has brought you to see the way you see now.

You can choose to try to see at what level you're developing and try to figure out what is the next problem for you to master, or - and this was the part, and there's a long pause, and that long pause is like eternity and he got very quiet and I'm doing everything I can to stay conscious because I thought I was supposed to stay conscious but really it was trancing me out - and then he says, "There is another way." And then he was all different. And he says: "You must recognize, through knowing, your

glorious self. It is timeless ever. You must say 'this am I.' This (he pointed to himself); am (the Self has really being); I (the fully unfolded flower, the glorious self). You must do this constantly. Never forget, always remember 'this am I.' That will be your secret. You need not advertise what you're doing. You must continue your work, keep your feet on the ground. You have heard of the short path. The short path I explained is an introduction to this. This is the most that can be said in words. When you do this you need not worry about your development. You desire is to reach only the true, timeless individuality. The rest takes care of itself. The character development takes care of itself without effort." And then he starts to chuckle. "This am I. Do not just let it flash through your mind; spend four or five minutes on it. The important thing is to remember it continually."

{Later, in a letter about the mantra:}<sup>15</sup> "It's a well-known Sanskrit Mahavakya or great truth. Tat tvam asi. That Am I doesn't exactly mean 'the whole world am I.' It's pertinent only to one thing: the Reality of Brahman. This Brahman, the great I, universal existence, specifically this Brahman is the reality. It's trying to show you you're not limited to the little ego alone. Even though you don't feel it you're part of the real. It's an exercise to remind you when you get discouraged that you're bigger than you think you are."

At the time I can remember feeling completely stupefied by that answer. But I don't feel that way anymore. It's so obvious what he's saying, now. He was just trying to get me out of my head and out of my striving and out of my religious way of operating. When he came to dinner he said: The Zen life is the ordinary life. He was trying to get me down to earth, bring it into every day.

## **Louis Desarno. Valois, NY, 1977**

PB said that the traditional religions are dying and that the impulse behind them was fading.

He said that the Serpents Path is the final exercise in the Wisdom and that's because it's the end of all yoga, the culmination. He said to me that it's a really simple exercise. I said (*laughs*) okaaaay. He said you don't even have to be sitting; you could be out in nature or anywhere. And you pause, and just be quiet for a few moments. It's a matter of - something like - popping out of the ordinary mind. Just awakening to the presence of this deeper mind. I'm paraphrasing now. It's like waking up, and you're no longer centered in the ordinary mind, the ego. It's this very sudden and subtle change. It's very quiet and, he said, it's not difficult (*laughs*). He made it sound so easy.

When we first got there he had us be quiet. I felt this incredible kindness. I didn't feel judged. I felt that in some way we passed some kind of a test, that we were accepted. Yeah, like that.

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<sup>15</sup> We have inserted "Later, in a letter about the mantra:" here for clarity. –Christi Cox

When we read back our notes of what he said to us, the hallmark that he said to us – more than any other word – was “surrender.” It was seven times. I didn’t even remember all our questions, but the response was, “surrender.” Surrender. Surrender. Surrender.

He also told us to go into the Stillness. He encouraged us to try to go into the Stillness when we could.

We were told we’d be having PB at our house. I remember being beside myself with getting it right, and the house has to be immaculate. Oh my God, it was pretty tense. We’d heard how meticulous he was. I’ll never forget when he first came in – and I was thinking, I think I’ve got this, I’ve gone crazy with the house – he walked in and bowed and looked around and then walked right over to the can opener that I had on the wall and kept looking at it. And then he ran his finger along it; he’d found a little bit of matter on it. (*laughs*) There’s no perfection in this world! I missed that little thing. It was hysterical – not at the time of course.

He was very jovial that night. He kept laughing, and telling us stories, and he kidded us at the table.

When he said grace he called upon the World-Mind. I had the distinct feeling that the WM was right there. By his doing the grace, something beyond the ordinary was invoked, something way beyond. Another whole dimension seemed to open up around him, around us.

There<sup>16</sup> was a lot of pressure on him to accept a meal from the men at the hotel. He took the lid off one of the dishes and he immediately intuited that it was poisoned. But he had given his word that he would eat, so he had just a little morsel. And he got deathly sick, deathly. It ate the stomach lining and did a lot of damage. He said he was close to death from that poison. It was touch and go. I think it affected his whole life from that point on. So we’re all sitting there, thinking, “What kind of an elevated person is this that does not break his word even if it possibly costs him his life?” What does it mean to give your word. Wow. It was a heavy story. As it turns out the owners of the hotel were communists, and were threatened by PB’s stories of Ramana. We were blown away.

I’m trying to grow into that kind of character that was demonstrated by PB. Not that I could be at that kind of level – my word is my bond – but I feel that it is an ideal for me, very important.

In thinking about it over the years, he set the bar for a certain kind of aspiration and character that you could spend your lifetime working towards. We were dumbfounded. We’re extrapolating; he just told the story. It seems almost impossible that we should be aspiring to that kind of integrity. You have to grow into it.

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<sup>16</sup> Referring to PB’s illness in India. –Christi Cox



There<sup>17</sup> was something about the way he told it – we were laughing hysterically. It was very wonderful and very jovial. He felt really blessed in his presence; it was very powerful.

He goofed on us a lot; he got us laughing. I got kind of embarrassed because I was laughing so hard. PB got a big grin on his face, like, I really got these guys.

It was a very dry summer, and I remember X complaining to PB about the lack of rain. PB said, so why don't we look into how to get the rain to come? It hadn't rained for 2 or 3 weeks. It was so dry. After lunch I helped him put his trench coat on, and all of a sudden it started to rain. Everyone looked at each other. That was pretty special.

He was incredibly powerful, yet the feeling that the body was frail.

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There was this incredible graciousness. It didn't take too long until he put us at ease, an incredible ease. When I first went in my heart was racing.

I told PB that my meditation was very dry. He said, you know for some people to get that devotion back it's very helpful to go into nature. I knew that, but I had forgotten. He says, The same life force that is running through the trees is running through you.

## **Michael Wakoff. August 2017**

I was living at Wisdom's Goldenrod at the time;<sup>18</sup> I was 25. I have some memory of when PB first walked down the path to Wisdom's Goldenrod. My sense was that he... he almost seemed like an apparition. The atmosphere's shimmering or something... a mirage kind of thing. And I remember him walking into the meditation room and he removed his picture from the altar – I don't remember exactly how it happened.

Because I was living at the center I was one of people who served as the "greeter" when people came to their interviews<sup>19</sup> at Bert's<sup>20</sup> house. People would come to the door; I would show them into the place that PB wanted them to wait.

I remember PB was asking me something about what I might do for a living. I mentioned that I enjoyed working on the construction<sup>21</sup> and he said something like, "Have you thought of something you might do at a desk?"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Referring to a story PB told about a man who was obsessed with the curative aspects of coconut. –Christi Cox

<sup>18</sup> Referring to when PB visited WG. –Christi Cox

<sup>19</sup> Referring to their interviews with PB. –Christi Cox

<sup>20</sup> Referring to Bert Salmir.

<sup>21</sup> Referring to construction at Wisdom's Goldenrod. –Christi Cox

<sup>22</sup> Referring to the fact that M had dropped a log on his toe and was on crutches. –Christi Cox

One thing that was unusual when I came for my own interview was that Anthony had come to me and said that PB was going to do an exorcism on X, and he wanted someone else there. X and PB went off into a different room. My presence wasn't required further, and my memory is that Anthony stayed with me and it was just PB and X in another room.

Then it was time for my interview. My memory is that in that situation PB was very still. But when he spoke his voice just seemed to be coming from someplace very deep - almost as if he was channeling something. I don't know; it was just, where is this coming from? He also seemed very present too, so it was this funny combination; he was there and he was also completely still and when he spoke... He didn't speak in continuous sentences: he would say a few words, and there would be a pause, and then he would say a little bit more and there would be another pause. It just seems to be coming from (*laughs*) another world.

The first thing he asked was, "Do you have any questions?" Of course I did; I'd spent days narrowing down my list of questions. I basically wanted to know what the relationship of individual and cosmic mentalism was. And then he said something like, "What do you think?" I tried to convey what my understanding was, and he said, "So that's what you think." (*laughs*)

PB started talking and I started writing down what PB was saying. There was a little bit of relief, taking notes! It was familiar, and I was a little off the hot seat. But it was really what I wanted: I really wanted to hear PB explain mentalism - and I was hoping I would get it. I think I got it down accurately.

At the time I was jaw-dropped open; I felt like that was a lot to take in. I thought I should just be quiet and let it come in. I was very grateful. That's what I wanted: I wanted him to speak the truth to me and I wanted to be able to hear it spoken by him. I think Anthony talked about the best way to prepare for the interview: he talked about bringing your questions and - I don't know if he talked about bringing the best part of you - the most fundamental and real questions.

One of my lasting impressions is that sense of stillness and peace and then out of that was coming these words. I felt like it was from deep, coming out, rather than coming down, as if the person talking to me was on top of the ocean and something very deep down was coming up. The peace and stillness were so palpable, yet they weren't broken by his speaking.

When I was nineteen, and was finishing freshman year at Cornell, I was reading "The Wisdom of the Overself" in the dorm. It was Memorial Day. I was in the Scorpion of Death chapter and it was talking about what are the sensations of the dying person. He says something like, "Something touches his consciousness which has imperturbably witnessed his bodily death and which he has hitherto not recognized as his self." And the moment I read those words I was having that experience. But it didn't stop there - I kept reading. Everything I read, I was experiencing: the life review. It was this odd thing: the very first moment of it I was released from my

normal identity. I was like, oh, that's not me! I don't have anything to worry about. I also had the sense that I could care about other people because I didn't have to care about this guy (*points to himself*). Then came the life review. You see how you've harmed other people and the pain you've caused them. He says you see your life like with the consciousness magnified a thousand fold, and I just felt all of that. So I was plunged back into the person and then feeling tremendously responsible for all of the things I had done and not done. I felt almost as though I was remembering a past time of dying, so it wasn't particular things, but more like the essence of it. So you would see your life from the perspective that was not the self-absorbed one. It left me with: It was possible to so miss the point of your life that when you saw your life it would just be horrible. That's the unforgettable experience for me.

### **M.S. Valois, NY, 1977**

At one point I wondered if PB has his original teeth or does he have false teeth, and PB looked at me and bared his teeth!

At another point in the conversation I wondered what would happen if I had a spiraling inner negativity that I couldn't control - an obsessive blah-blah-blah - and it started coming up when I thought of that. And then it was like an invisible finger pushed that thought beyond the range of my mind; it was coming from him, which I thought was pretty cool.

He suggested that I move on from WG and take up Buddhism. And of course I didn't; I didn't get it - and he saw that I didn't get it. And then I felt this tremendous compassion - it's so beautiful. It was only twenty years later that I realized that's what it feels like when an enlightened person feels sorry for you. The seed of the short path was planted but took twenty years to sprout.

I could sense that he was in this envelope of silence. That was my first intuition that this was what self-realization was about.

### **N.R.**

I was in the presence of a great one. It's so beyond words; I just don't have the words but my understanding of the quest, my path, my view of life is forever altered. The gentleness and the power, that combination of utter gentleness and whatever that power is, there's this quiet energy that is so powerful, of another world, another plane.

## **Nanci Rose. Zurich, Switzerland, 1974 and Valois, NY, 1977**

I was 23 years old, an early student of Anthony Damiani, when I first met Paul Brunton in Zurich, Switzerland. I'd been married for six months; my husband and I were to spend the summer of 1974 in Venice, Italy, as he'd been accepted into a Cornell University study abroad program. We hoped to arrange a private meeting with Paul Brunton while in Europe.

After speaking with Anthony, we decided to draft a letter of request to PB; it was written by me. That night I had a lucid dream in which the face of PB appeared in vibrant detail. He was bathed in light and seemed far more physical than any dream image I'd ever had. For occasional brief intervals, however, the face became foreboding, even sinister, yet PB's image always returned swiftly to its beneficent glow.

The next day I described this experience to Anthony. He assured me with certainty that, during my letter-writing, Paul Brunton had received the concentrated energy of my attention, and had responded directly and quickly. The fearful aspect of the "dream" was my own projection of threat regarding a potential dismantling of the ego, a genuine possibility to be welcomed by anyone meeting PB.

The first appointment took place at Paul Brunton's apartment in Zurich. I remember him standing in the doorway, strikingly small of stature yet immense in his auric clarity. Giving the impression of vital energy in layered and colorful dimensions, he seemed to project both utter quiet and powerful attention; in contrast, his surroundings briefly seemed pale, bland and two-dimensional. After welcoming us, PB gave a tour of the apartment, pointing out specific works of art and taking us onto the balcony. His home was tidy and aesthetically appealing.

I recall little of the general conversation as I was focused more on absorbing the magnanimity of this gentle, kindly and thoroughly present individual. At one point, PB took me, alone, to view a large painting of Shakyamuni Buddha on the living room wall. It seemed to be of Chinese origin, quite classic in composition. We stood in silence for a moment, then PB asked me to describe what I saw in the Buddha's eyes. This question took me by surprise, as I didn't feel I had a particular affinity with Buddhism, being more interested in Vedanta at that time.

My reply to the question was that one of Buddha's eyes seemed to be looking inward, while the other was outward-looking. PB seemed quite happy with my answer, affirming my interpretation before we moved away from the painting. Later, in retrospect, I recalled a significant experience from earlier in my life, before meeting Anthony: a large, unexpected image of Buddha came into my mindstream, bestowing a type of blessing, as if protecting me. Soon after the Europe trip, my interest in Buddhist thought flowered. This focus was a homecoming, so to speak. And I've often marveled at how PB knew seemed to know this about me.

During this first meeting, I told PB about specific guidance Anthony was giving me regarding a tendency toward what he called mediumism. I was having vivid dreams and intuitions which were verified later as being true. Many of these were quite uplifting in nature, often helpful to other people as well as providing guidance and inspiration for myself. But certain of the experiences involved fore-knowledge or after-awareness of harmful events in the world, none of which I could have any possibility of preventing or responding to. These moments were baffling and sometimes frightening; I could assist no one by knowing such facts. This “negative” awareness had no apparent purpose, particularly as opposed to my more “positive” dreams and images. Anthony had suggested specific methods to help prevent unwelcome mediumistic intrusion.

Paul Brunton remained utterly silent and somewhat removed while I spoke. Finally he said it will be important for me to be very careful in meditation and in my life. He affirmed Anthony’s warnings, impressing on me the importance of working closely with Anthony on meditation techniques which would create boundaries against being used by entities that create chaos and harm in the world. Conversely, I needed to gradually cultivate my openness to the positive forces which were definitely available to me; I could develop strong access to energies of goodness, allowing me to become inwardly stronger and to eventually provide service in the world. PB then sat quietly with me for a few more minutes.

When the visit ended, PB agreed to meet with us again while we were in Europe. I have only a vague sense of discussing travel details and possibilities for our next meeting. More importantly, this visit in Paul Brunton’s home resulted in a definite feeling of having been cleansed and protected. In fact, the troublesome mediumistic experiences never returned; it was as though a barrier to them had been constructed for me. And happily, “true” dreams and messages did not end, although they became less frequent or dramatic.

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I was happily anticipating our second meeting with PB during the summer of 1974. My husband and I were young, in Europe for the first time, and had been immersed in Italian art and architecture for two months; we lived in Venice and had taken several trips into France and other parts of Italy, as well as through Switzerland. I felt my perspective on life and spiritual growth was widening, particularly in relation to the earlier meeting and advice given by PB.

For this visit, he had asked us to meet at his favored vegetarian restaurant in Zurich. Upon entering, it was easy to spot PB, as he sat diagonally and visible to anyone at the door of the crowded, popular, quite modern tea house. With him, at a table for four, was a gentleman of perhaps sixty years of age. I felt a surge of disappointment over possibly having to share our time with an additional person. However, I quickly found Arthur Broekhuysen be entirely pleasant, interesting and

politely reserved. And he was utterly devoted to PB. Every movement and comment was for PB, expressed in gentleness and a thorough admiration.

Clearly they knew each other well and shared a mutually understood pattern of relating. For me, watching them was a profound learning experience: the teacher Paul Brunton was loving and patient; the student Arthur was humble and receptive. My own sense of self-importance melted. After some time, Arthur rose from the table and said he was happy to have met us. It was then evident that he'd agreed in advance to leave soon after our arrival.

We stayed in the restaurant a while longer. PB chose to speak about food. I remember two topics of importance: 1) Alcohol and illicit drugs are not to be used by a spiritual seeker as they cloud the mind and make it difficult to concentrate in meditation, even when the substance is not directly in the body. Sometimes, however, alcohol can be used medicinally. Similarly, so-called spiritual experiences are not authentic as they are artificially induced; 2) Edible mushrooms are to be avoided as they grow in dark places without the benefit of sunlight. PB also spoke on other lifestyle points but I had the impression that more weighty questions about the spiritual path were not to be broached in such a public and busy location.

We went outside together where I asked Paul Brunton if I could take his picture. He said yes, and I gravitated toward a place which felt nice. PB, however, moved us to a particular location in front of the dark reflecting windows imprinted with yellow-gold lettering. He posed somewhat formally. Later, after developing the image, I immediately noticed that a lower case 'i' was situated above PB's left shoulder, directly in line with his heart; and from his breast pocket a silver pen seemed to point upward, completing the line to his heart. In a subsequent communication, PB instructed us to not share copies of the photo.

Our final meeting with Paul Brunton, during of the summer of 1974, took place soon after. He took us to our destination using public transportation; he was uncertain about directions at one point, and I noted that he was unruffled and we arrived without delay. Basically we spent most the afternoon along quiet streets and in parks. Shops provided a mild curiosity for him. My husband and PB discussed some matters related to philosophic study but for the most part I was content observing PB's shining presence and the grace of his movements.

All of PB's actions and words were measured yet completely natural and warm. His skin was as translucent and tissue-thin as I'd noticed during our prior meetings. There was ever a sense of distance or detachment, as though PB lived in the stillness of a rarefied realm, sometimes tiptoeing into the human world for the sake of communication. I relished this and do not remember what was said during that time.

While walking down to a park winding around the lake, we asked PB if he would meditate with us. He replied promptly and with some force that he does not meditate with people. The conversation slowed; I felt mildly disappointed. But the scene was beautiful and the question was quickly forgotten. PB motioned us to sit with

him on a bench. The day was calm, warm and slightly dark. The three of us sat together without talking, gazing out at the water. We remained there for quite some time. In the evening, after returning to our hotel, my husband and I laughed over the fact that Paul Brunton had meditated with us after all – or at least we meditated – a word not applicable to PB as he simply IS.

As the day turned to early evening, PB guided us back to town. Numerous seemingly random individuals had chatted with him during the day; it appeared they were drawn to his openness and calm spontaneity. Each of those brief interactions was a pleasure to observe, and PB never pulled back from anyone. However, as we strolled down the Zurich street at twilight, PB noticed a group of young adults walking toward us. They were laughing, animated and self-interested. PB very intentionally stepped off the sidewalk and crossed the street to the opposite sidewalk before the youths could pass us. That moment stayed with me as a strong reminder to consciously avoid energies which are not welcome.

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PB<sup>23</sup> appeared glowing while he gazed unmoving as if in reverie. He turned slowly in acknowledgment of us. His movements were unusually smooth yet his attention was sharp. Paul Brunton's peaceful vibrancy, his multi-faceted presence, struck me in quite the same way as when we first met. I felt deeply comfortable yet was simultaneously unnerved at how transparent I felt.

PB smiled warmly, greeting us with kindly enthusiasm when he recognized us as the couple who'd first met him eight months after our wedding. Now, two years later, our six-month-old son, Rama, sat quietly on my lap. PB was quite interested in him, asking questions about my baby's development and the specific qualities of his nature. PB did not comment on my responses but nodded with what felt like an almost scientific approval. During this time I experienced a strong awareness of light flooding the room. I already had noticed how a considerable amount of the day's sunlight was coming through the windows but additionally I experienced a yellow-white light from PB's countenance, directed toward my little son.

Near the end of this portion of the meeting, PB asked what was in the bottle Rama was holding. I explained that I was still breastfeeding but now supplemented his intake with fruit juices; and this bottle held freshly made local red grape juice. PB responded quite positively and spoke of the benefits of grapes, particularly in relation to enhanced vitality and clarity. He then said beets can produce similar results since purple fruits and vegetables have properties related specifically to strength and clear-mindedness.

The conversation quickly changed to meditation and our philosophic studies. Much of this discussion was not specific to me yet PB did want to know in what ways Anthony Damiani was assisting me personally with meditation. The topic had been an

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<sup>23</sup> Now referring to her interview with PB in Valois, NY in 1977.

important one when I was with PB in Zurich, so this was approached as a follow-up and continuation. After describing the work Anthony was doing with me and at WG generally, I discussed with PB the difficulties of finding time and motivation for meditation, since a small child can be so unpredictable and distracting. PB encouraged me to persevere.

The meeting seemed to end naturally yet I have no recollection of leaving the room or anything else. I remember feeling pleased and surprised at how quiet the baby had been throughout.

NOTE: Many years later, when Rama had become a young adult, he informed me of a lasting and pleasant memory of light; somehow he knew this was his experience of the meeting with PB. Rama has no other associations from that day, and doesn't remember my ever speaking of the light in the room.

## **Om Gupta. Switzerland, several visits**

I suggested that PB must have had a rough time in India, suspected from both sides: Indians may have thought PB was a British agent – because they were in the throes of a sometimes violent freedom movement – and Britishers suspected him because they wanted to keep authority. He nodded his head and said, yes, he paid his price. I asked him about his being poisoned. I said I'd heard that he knew his food was poisoned, so why did he eat it? He said, I gave my word to the family that I would eat food from their house and that family were communists, in South Kerala. He knew that the food was poisoned and asked that they bring the food to his hotel. In his room he ate a few morsels but it was very strong poison and hurt him quite a lot. This story was a realization for me! Because I go around saying, "Let's get together for lunch," when I have no intention of seeing the person again. I'm learning to be more careful about what I tell people I'll do.

PB told me once that once that he has had many teachers in his past: Lao Tzu was one of them. But Ramana was special in his line of teachers.

One afternoon I decided to go see a psychic. I'm afraid of psychics, so I wore PB's jacket and shoes.<sup>24</sup> She said: I'm very famous; she sees my name in print in many different languages; she sees me in front of huge pyramids in priestly robes. I interrupted her, and told her, "I don't think you're talking about me; but it fits very well with the person whose clothes I'm wearing!" She said, no, no, I can see through the clothes! I think I told this story to PB and he told me it's better to avoid psychics.

I asked him about the use of birth control. He said the best is to use self-control, and secondarily birth control. We didn't talk about abortion.

One time we talked about nuclear war and how terrible it could be. He said that fear shouldn't stop war: it should be love.

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<sup>24</sup> Om Gupta had been given the jacket and shoes. –Christi Cox



He said that there are national characters, just like individuals have character. Americans have made mistakes – Vietnam was one of them – but they won't knowingly get involved into evil. Another time he said that American's – loving people; they will never go under a totalitarian regime.

When I was growing up I was very, very devotional. I would pass a Hindu temple, a mosque, a church. But then I lost it. He said it was given to me as a gift as a child but now I'll have to work for it.

One time I was very desperate. Anthony said that if I wrote my mantra one thousand times a day for a month, he could guarantee liberation. So I did it. After a month I took it to him; he was embarrassed! He didn't expect that I'd do it. Om bitsu mantra was Anthony's mantra; PB gave it to him a long time ago.

People used to tell stories that bulbs always burst in PB's presence, but it didn't happen for a long time when I was there. But then one evening a bulb burst in his apartment – we tried to clean it up.

He asked me one day if I know why the Dalai Lama played with Anthony's beard. I said no, and kept quiet. Then I said that there seems to be some old friendship from the past and PB said, "It seems so."

In my first dream about PB, he said to me that he was seeing me again after a long, long time. I looked at him strangely: I had never met him before!

She was walking with PB once in NYC. She was thinking, oh, people have all these ideas, such as I was Cleopatra in my last life or I was the Queen of Sheba. And then she wondered what she herself had been in her past life and thought that she must have been a commoner. Just then, she tripped, and in that fraction of a section she had a vision: she was a clam in the ocean. Water was coming in her mouth, in and out, in and out. When she straightened herself up, PB looked at her, smiling, and said, "Very salty, wasn't it!"

A couple of times I asked him what time I should arrive every morning; he said 10 o'clock. And I wandered in at 11, 11:15. It went on for 5 weeks, and then X and Y were supposed to takeover after me so PB asked me to stay one day extra to show them what needs to be done. In the night, when they were leaving, X asked PB what time they should come in next day. PB said, 11 o'clock, adding he's never ready before 11!

The first couple of days in the morning I would go to PB's in a jacket and tie. And PB was always in a tie and jacket. After two, three weeks or so I decided I won't wear ties. And the day I was not in a jacket and tie, he was in a sweater!

PB told me once that some kids from his apartment building asked him, "Are you the same Dr. Brunton who wrote a lot of books?" So PB said, "No, no, no. He's my cousin." (*Laughs.*) He keeps different identities; probably he was a different person when he was writing his books. His books are illumined; when he's in a worldly thing he's a different person. He didn't say he was totally unrelated!

One time after lunch PB ordered the chocolate cake. And he ordinarily didn't take dairy, and no sugar. He's eating it, and he says that it would be very hard to make

a chocolate cake without dairy and sugar. I said, I think so, PB; should I ask the waiter? He looks at me says, "Of course not! I'm eating it; we'll ask afterwards!"

## Paul Cash

PB is so difficult to speak about because, at least to me, he seems always tuned to the reality he describes in these writings. So describing what it was like to be in his presence is like trying to describe what it is like to stand – or cook, or work, or shop, or eat, or think for that matter – in its presence. On one hand, there was an ego, a highly individualized person, that I could relate to (in his case a remarkably refined, sophisticated, educated, and gentlemanly one); on the other, there was simply no ignoring a pure, clear stillness in the presence of which nothing – especially myself – could be seen in the same way as before. The relationship at the more ordinary level was interesting enough; but it was how he helped people discover themselves in that other presence that made him so extraordinary.

The constant presence of this other "dimension" was sometimes exquisitely nourishing, sometimes terrifying. On occasion it made for an intimacy infinitely greater than I have ever felt with any lover. There were moments when I knew his thoughts, felt at least some part of his peace, and he knew I knew and felt them. There were other times when it was painfully clear that thoughts or feelings I would have liked to hide were plain as day to him. How things went at any given time depended on how much I clung to out-of-sync habits and desires, and how much I could let them slip away and open up to the rhythm of that particular day.

He seemed sometimes amused by the process, at other times not so amused. But tears came like never before when I first realized that despite his seeing all my flaws he also saw something much deeper in me – something I had always hoped was true – and that his bottomless love for it was always there. When I could love it like he did, all the rest was forgiven. I don't mean he forgave me – there was no sense of his having the slightest thought or feeling that he needed to forgive me for anything. It was simply that in the light of that deeper something, so capable and worthy of love, the rest is nonessential; the best was all that was really worthy of attention, and it could be lived.

I write reluctantly about this, and only because others have since told me they had the same experience with him. At bottom, it says much more about him than it does about us.

### The Sage's Mind

One afternoon I asked him, "What exactly is it about a sage's mind that makes that mind so different from the rest of us?" It was one of many questions I asked that he didn't originally seem to intend to answer. But I persisted and finally he asked me, "Well what do you think it is?"

I said that I had never been able to believe that it could be omniscience in the sense of knowing everything at once; but I didn't think it unreasonable to conceive that

when a sage wants or needs to know, he could turn his mind toward it in a certain way and that knowledge would just arise.

PB laughed heartily and answered, "It's not even that good!"

"Well, how good is it?"

"It has really nothing to do with knowledge, or continuity of intuition, or frequency of intuitions. It's that the mind has been made over into the Peace in an irreversible way. No form that the mind takes can alter the Peace."

"You could say it's a kind of knowledge," he continued, "in this sense. If the mind takes the form of truth, the sage knows it's truth. If it doesn't, then he knows that it's not. He's never in doubt about whether the mind has knowledge or not. But whether it does or not, his Peace is not disturbed."

I asked if that meant that someone could go to a sage for help and the sage would be unable to help them. He replied that sometimes the intuition comes, sometimes it doesn't; he explained that when it doesn't come, the sage knows he has nothing to do for that person. The continuity or frequency of the intuitions has to do with the sage's mission, not with what makes a sage a sage.

"You must understand," he said, "that there is no condition in which the Overself is at your beck and call. But there is a condition in which you are continuously at the Overself's beck and call. That's the condition to strive for."

As he spoke these words, he was the humblest man I had ever seen before or since. For all the extraordinary things about him, all the glamorous inner and outer experiences, all the remarkable effects his writings and example have had on others, that humility is what seems to be the most important fact about him.

It was the first key he turned when he turned his mind to write. And fortunately for me and many others, it often sufficed for the door to open and let a sacramental presence illuminate doubts and questions common to us all.

## **Paula Jacobs. Valois, NY, 1977**

I was so nervous; I couldn't believe I was going to meet this sage. My heart was pounding, I was just a wreck. I walked across the threshold and it was like I walked into a void of silence. It was so intense. Everything stopped. My body stopped; I wasn't nervous. It wasn't like I was dissociated. It was a tomb of silence. We sat on the couch and honestly, I don't remember a thing he said to me. I was so completely in this place of silence. Then the interview was over and I remember somehow gliding towards the threshold in this place of complete silence and walked out over the threshold and was hit. You know those images of Lady Macbeth rubbing her hands? That's what it was like for me. I felt all of this stuff from my past - not all of it was dirty. I didn't know what to do. It brings tears to my eyes thinking about it. It took me weeks to come back into something normal. It was a psychic cleansing. It was a little frightening. Back then "silence" wasn't how I thought of the quest. It was studying,

meditating. So that experience of silence was so unexpected. I didn't know how to understand it at the time. It's almost like there wasn't room for any personal self.

### **Peggy Fry. Valois, NY, 1977**

I remember quaking on the porch as I knocked at the door to go in. I remember feeling neutral, no bhakti feelings.

I<sup>25</sup> asked him if the negativity had always been there or if it had just come in. He said no, it had always been there. It was because I had had the experience that I then had a place to stand so that I could see all of the darkness and awful stuff – those are my words! – that is there in the ego. Grace can come sometimes as a result of past karma and sometimes it's freely given as a new thing when somebody's in crisis. We went out into the backyard and were quiet, in meditation, for about 15 minutes. As I was leaving he said, "Don't worry too much."

In seeing Shankara my feelings were dramatically involved; and my feelings were not involved with seeing PB. It felt more impersonal – in a good sense. It's foundational.

### **Richard Platek. Switzerland**

Going up to his door I was frightened to death. {But}<sup>26</sup> PB had a way of putting people at ease in a very short time.

Before I visited PB I'd bought a new car in Europe. As I was driving there I thought, oh boy, wait 'til PB sees this car! Those type of thoughts. His very first words after we came to his house and were put at ease, were, Let's go for a ride. I'd never mentioned the car at all. After I got back, Anthony said, You let him ride in your car? Your car will break down; he has a big electrical field around him! And indeed I had nothing but electrical problems with that car.

PB's key word when talking to us was "balance." He said, "There's no reason you can't eat dairy, but I don't." He ascribed his not eating dairy products to his age.

He was very interested in my development. What he would do is he would see some place in me that needed development and then do something so that it would jump out at me and I could see what needed to be worked on. I needed to become more balanced; I was so naïve.

He knew I was a shy person and was reluctant to use French – I had a smattering of French. So he'd send me on errands where I'd have to use French. Knock on neighbors doors and ask a question – I just couldn't do it. I failed.

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<sup>25</sup> Referring now to negativity that followed an experience of grace before meeting PB. –Christi Cox

<sup>26</sup> We have inserted the missing word "But" here for clarity. –Christi Cox

He always stressed to me that there would be a time when I would have to leave {my teacher.}<sup>27</sup> I just couldn't understand it. The way you'll know it, he said – no matter who the teacher is – when they're speaking it will suddenly become completely unintelligible. It will make no sense.

PB and I had lots of discussions on the history of occultism in the West. He told me he had to give up, as a young man, his ability with occult phenomena. It was a thing that would lead to trouble. He said that's how he entered this path but he had to give it up in order to make progress and that it's a good thing not to pursue it or talk about it. There were occult events that happened in his presence, but I'm taking his advice: this is not where the emphasis should be put. PB was, as he put it, as a student of philosophy.

Many a time he would just stop, be quiet, take out a pen, and write. I guess most of that stuff became the basis of the paragraphs in "The Notebooks." He took this thing of writing very seriously. If a thought came in he had an obligation to write it down. When he went to India and visited these sages, he recorded these conversations verbatim, without editorializing. He felt that was his job; he was a journalist.

### **Robert Carlson. Columbus, OH, 1977**

When PB came to Columbus he stayed with X and Y. X had already come down with MS – she became bedridden, and she was quite bitter about it – why me? PB told her that she was learning one tremendous soul lesson from this. He told her she was learning surrender – and if she could get that, it was worth the whole thing. The next time I was there, she was in a room and it was so joyous and light-filled, and for the next three years, well, she did it. She obviously did it. She totally surrendered, and just joy came through. The whole thing was fabulous. She would never have chosen that illness but in fact having that one tremendous lesson was worth everything.

Transcript of PB's recorded comments to X: Could you bring yourself to believe that at this stage of your life you have nothing to learn? You haven't to strive to learn anything. You have nothing to do. Can you just let go? Not by using the will to make yourself better. Just as if you had become absent-minded and not attempting to do anything. If you were to do that, you would also find that you did really become absent-minded and forgot who you were, for a while. Now if you were willing to do this, it may sound terrible, but if you were willing to give up by letting go everything, it will come to this. Let go, and let by. Nothing more left. Then why should you not make the experiment and let go, even of your identity? Don't attempt to hold on intellect. Don't attempt to let go. To me, looking at it from the outside, this is a challenge too. It's an opportunity to learn, to do what you thought you want to do and that's why you're asking to learn the lesson. We learn not by words but by experience.

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<sup>27</sup> We have inserted the missing words "my teacher" here for clarity. –Christi Cox

You know the lesson in your attitude. It will be a game, if you want to talk in such language. It will not be a deterioration of your life but it will be the finding of what has real meaning. If you were to take that kind of view and give yourself some time every day – an hour here, an hour there, so that you get a few hours during the day in letting go...

## **Robert Esformes. Montreux, Switzerland, 1975 and Valois, NY, 1977**

I was part of a small delegation that met the QE2 when PB came to the US in 1977. Melody<sup>28</sup> had asked if I could join her and her mother<sup>29</sup> and Kenneth<sup>30</sup> as part of the small entourage, and PB gave his approval.

When I finally greeted him, I was totally tongue-tied and self-conscious, despite his kind and lovely little smile – as if, I thought, he was thinking “why is this guy torturing himself?” When we left the dock, we headed toward Kenneth’s home in two cars: Kenneth and Evangeline in one, and PB, Melody, and I in the other.

I was driving, and PB was in the front seat beside me, while Melody was in the back of Susan Meeder’s capacious old Mercury. Thinking that PB would like to hear all the news from the Center, I started chattering away about various people and activities, saying “we do this” and “we do that.” At one point, PB looked quizzically at me and said, “Who are we?” That’s been my koan pretty much ever since.

It was a wonderful moment in retrospect, but I was just too nervous to appreciate it aside from the context of my ego anxiety. One of the standard response patterns in encountering persons of deep attainment, I understand, is that the ego feels so terrified sensing its insubstantiality and fearing its dissolution that it clings to its own illusory selflessness as if to life itself. I was terrified most of the time at this feeling that I was falling apart before PB’s eyes and embarrassed that he could clearly see into my dreadfully confused mind states.

Later, when I had my interview with PB in Valois, I didn’t really have any questions, so I just showed up for my appointment. My naive belief in my general competence to meet the world was totally shattered. I had no idea what I was doing or what I should be asking or thinking. I suppose I’m one of those questers who, unaware of how to meet the unknowing, gets dragged along kicking and screaming down the path... Informed sweet surrender would surely have been an easier point of departure for higher domains.

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<sup>28</sup> Referring to Melody Glass.

<sup>29</sup> Referring to Evangeline Glass.

<sup>30</sup> Referring to Kenneth Hurst, PB’s son.

One particularly iconic moment occurred when PB first arrived in Ithaca and was visiting briefly each of the living spaces that had been offered for his stay. I had offered my small apartment for the occasion, and PB, in Anthony's company, would be arriving late that afternoon to have a look. That morning, while I was dutifully scrubbing the bathroom fixtures in honor of the august visitor, they arrived, many hours earlier than officially scheduled. Stinking and sweaty, I greeted them at the door. And there was that little smile again...

I remember an incident a bit later, when PB visited the Center and first came into the meditation room. Without fuss, he removed his picture from the altar and then offered a brief teaching to the group. But it seemed clear that he was there out of a sense of obligation. That's how I recall the matter.

My visit with PB in Montreux a couple of years earlier was considerably less dramatic, though equally challenging for a disintegrating sense of self. Nonetheless, through it all, I was graced unstintingly with his presence, his patience, and his generosity. My deep appreciation for that continues to echo in my life as I continue to grow. My thanks, too, to Anthony, for preparing me for such an encounter, and for making possible the interviews with PB that changed so many lives.

### **Sam Cohen. Valois, NY, 1977**

I cannot even imagine what my life would have been like without the influence of PB; I'm very grateful, very grateful.

We didn't have any questions and we sat there quietly. After a while he asked whether we had questions. X asked, "I've read all the books and I understand that people have different stages of development, and I look around the world and I see so much suffering. And I look at my life and I can't grasp how it could be that some should have such great fortune." He smiled and said: "There's no answer. The only answer to that question is gratitude." In the last couple of years that has come back. Every day I feel this great sense of gratitude. What he said to me not only stayed with me but deepened.

Many decades later, X and I were going through so much suffering on her part, and intense care-giving and worrying on mine, and we always felt grateful, grateful for our life. It was gratitude for the state that we were more deeply entering. We were privy to a lot of grace.

Out of nowhere he said, "You really need to eat eggs." {Later}<sup>31</sup> eggs became my number one staple. They're really keeping me going; giving me strength. His advice was so particular to the person.

When I'm reading these things, the PB material, there's such a deepening for me. I don't really feel I'm reading them; I'm assimilating them. They come into me; it's so

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<sup>31</sup> We have inserted the missing word "Later" here for clarity. –Christi Cox

overwhelming. I cry a lot. It's been very dramatic, the extent with which this work, which I've been guided to do, has played such a key role in guiding me. It's incredible.

PB was getting ready to leave, he turned towards us and said, "I want to be very clear that the life you are leading here, that is truly the Zen life." It was really helpful in realizing: living in monasteries, that's easy.

PB has a quote that says you can have meetings,<sup>32</sup> you don't know what form it could take: it could be subtle, it could be the breath of their atmosphere. What you want to do is just invite the person. And he also said, you can't do it very often. You really have to let people go.

After we left PB I was so nuts, I didn't know what to do. I felt I needed to get really drunk or go to sleep. I felt absolutely crazed.

## **S.D. 1960s**

The first time I met him was when he came for dinner when I was seven years old. He had a twinkle in his eye. He seemed so calm, so gentle. Nothing ruffled him. He never spoke negatively or derogatorily about anyone or anything. He was just a person who held the light - I mean, I felt that way.

One time he came over, I had holes in my shoes. The next time he came over - a couple of years later - he brought me a pair of shoes. His shoes. I was in my early teens then, so they fit me okay. But my life became hell for a while. I blamed it on the shoes! Through my life, that felt like hell for many years, the times I met him... he exuded a peacefulness that I really was attracted to. The times that he came over I always looked forward to seeing him; I didn't know why. I remember when PB spoke, you could hear the difference in the kind of person he was, the way he spoke, his manner. He knew what he was talking about. His wisdom came through; he didn't force anything.

I was never a student about PB. He even made a comment, a note on something I sent him: He's not my student. And he wrote me a letter: "The goal can be achieved through the Christian process but you have to dig deep. You don't have to follow your father's path."

## **Sera Smolen**

I was reading PB and I just stopped for a moment and closed my eyes and I was flooded - just absolutely infinite golden light. It was just endless and golden and totally full - and then the phone rang and it was gone. It was one of those things where I just decided to close my eyes to contemplate what I had just read. My intuition knew it before I did. That made a big impression on me.

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<sup>32</sup> Referring to meetings with those who have passed. - Christi Cox



In the interview, PB said,<sup>33</sup> “You’re surrounded by many, many egotistical people. And to whatever extent you have power over yourself, they won’t have power over you.” It feels to me like a lifelong assignment.

X came to my house and brought a card from PB. It said, “The divine strength is with you.” He said that I was deeply disturbed and that I needed this. That was a very mysterious communication and kind of haunting.

## **Severin Drix, Tom Marino, Phil Wilson, Richard Nowogrodski. Burdett, NY, 1977**

PB said, “Religions have failed to instill ethical precepts. This is really their one basic function, to educate the masses, but they have not done this. Except for Quakerism and Buddhism, which succeeded in opposing violence, religions have failed to teach the Law of Karma.

From what we know from mentalism, a thought held repeatedly and intensely enough over a period of time will necessarily lead to an outer explosion. This is how wars start.

Suffering<sup>34</sup> instead of going ahead and dropping this life and starting the next one. Terrible.

X: It’s a fine distinction between this and euthanasia.

PB: And what is wrong with euthanasia? There is a humane way.

PB: “Suffering of different kinds can bring about either a fast or a slow enlightenment. I’m not using “enlightenment” in the highest sense here... Most people don’t gain from suffering. It shakes their faith. They say, Why does this happen to me? They become bitter.

“However, there are many people who do get direct, positive benefits from suffering. You’ve doubtless heard of many cases of people who had experiences of higher consciousness. I have material I could gather together for books on persons having experiences out of extreme pain or danger.”

“He<sup>35</sup> had a serious disease and was to be operated on; there was a strong chance of dying during the operation. As he was going under the anesthesia he suddenly had an experience of pure consciousness. He had been studying this all his life – and now he recognized that he was experiencing the very {state}<sup>36</sup> that he’d been intellectualizing for so long. He lived five more years and maintained that state of bliss for the rest of his life.”

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<sup>33</sup> Referring to a response PB gave to a question about the meaning of snake imagery for the student. –Christi Cox

<sup>34</sup> Regarding end-of-life. –Christi Cox

<sup>35</sup> Referring to a math professor. –Christi Cox

<sup>36</sup> We have inserted the missing word “state” here for clarity. –TJS ‘22

“The Buddha was being unfair to the body; it has its dark and its light sides. The body is a source of suffering but if it were only that there would be universal suicide.”

“When you realize this consciousness you still see the ego. It’s a smaller circle within a larger circle. You see the ego and the body for what they’re worth and how long they will last. You are not the ego but you can use the ego. This consciousness is a part of you and it’s only natural for you to seek it. Part of you isn’t here. The greater part has been left out and it’s just part of the process of becoming fully human to realize this consciousness.”

## **Sidney Piburn. Switzerland, 1970s**

At<sup>37</sup> some point in our conversation, I asked PB why, after years of meditation and study, I felt more anxiety and nervousness than before. He said, “It’s a result of increased sensitivity. This sometimes comes with being on the quest. What are you nervous of?” I replied that I was constantly involved with self-judgment and how I wanted to get free of it but felt stuck. He said, “You should switch to the Short Path. It’s time.”

PB asked, “Have you felt quivering or jolts in the body during meditation? Have you been doing breathing exercises? What major mystical experiences have you had?”

I told him about one kundalini experience but explained that I hadn’t had any major mystical experiences. PB looked quizzical.

He started talking about the Short Path and said, “The short path attracts grace; the long path attracts the short path. On the long path, one goes forward and falls back, stagnates and fusses. In our time it is necessary to begin the short path earlier.”

PB discussed the stages of the short path. While discussing these stages he asked if I had a notebook and suggested that I should write these stages down.

The Short Path –

1. Remembrance
2. Identity
3. Witness Practices

“An aspect of the short path is the ‘Identity Practice’ (the ‘As If’). The person is to regard himself as an already Enlightened Man rather than a Quester after Enlightenment. He should think and act as if he has nothing to attain. He bases this on the fact of Reality being here and now rather than something gained in time – being timeless. He is as accomplished as he’ll ever be.”

“Remembrance comes before Identity. Remembrance takes place both in the heart and mind. Remembrance of the Divine must go on all the time as an under-current.”

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<sup>37</sup> Sidney Piburn wrote this section himself (as opposed to the other entries, which were transcribed by Christi Cox from audio recordings).

“The Meditation on the Timeless Self” watches the relationship of the ego to the witness. The Witness exercise observes the ego and the world. The two practices overlap a little but they are distinct. The Timeless Self practice is preliminary to the Witness practice.”

Other practices you could do are meditations involving:

1. Mantras – positive, not negative
2. Mandalas
3. Symbols
4. Suggestions

He said, “You can meditate on figures of the Buddha, they give off a vibration of attained peace.”

“Don’t think that it is necessary for you to be an extrovert. If others want to display themselves or parade their ideas and feelings publicly, then that’s their business. This is not your nature. Be yourself.”

That day he talked about Madame Blavatsky, Vivekananda, and Meher Baba. He was a little negative in regard to Meher Baba but he said that Blavatsky and Vivekananda laid the groundwork for the doctrine to spread to the West.

He said, “After the Buddha’s enlightenment, he taught because of his tremendous compassion. The Buddha knew just what a person needed. He spoke to both their lower self and higher self. Of course for the Buddha there was no higher self or lower self.”

“Sahaja is where consciousness is settled and at rest – not affected by the body, thoughts, or feelings. But a main character of it is its naturalness. It is a perfectly natural state. There is no fuss about enlightenment.”

PB started us doing formal sitting meditations twice daily for forty minutes each session. After the others left he continued the meditations with me but extended the duration to one hour per session. I remember PB saying, “I don’t usually do this” as he smiled.

One night over dinner, PB said: “Can you see any difference between the highest school of Buddhism and the highest school of Hinduism? I don’t see any real difference except in expression. They’re operating from exactly the same level. The Buddha never denied Reality although he denied the Self... even Brahman. Everything the Buddha asserted was correct! The Buddha was necessary to cleanse false conceptions which abounded and provide what was needed for future times.” “There are many Tibetan Buddhist sages. Tsongkhapa was a sage as well as Tilopa.”

“The experience or expression of enlightenment is colored by one’s tradition and by the personality. And the personality is conditioned by the body, and so forth. However, in enlightenment, the ego is an open channel.”

“The observer moves towards its source which is the inner stillness. However when it finds it, it ceases to be the observer. This inner stillness is the Void. Ramana Maharshi calls it the Self but the term is completely arbitrary. The experience is the

same for Buddhists and Hindus alike. If a person is trained in a particular doctrine he will describe his realizations in terms of that doctrine. This is the power of suggestion and of familiar terminology."

"You either see the Truth or you don't. Degrees are degrees of nearness to the Truth but not degrees in the Truth."

Regarding the Dalai Lama, PB said, "The Dalai Lama has truly mastered himself. He has a comprehensive view. I am an admirer of the Dalai Lama."

"Plato uses language as if he were not a dualist; although he has a flavor of dualism, he's sort of in between. The idea of the One holds implicit within it the two, three, and four. It is not non-dual. However when the Buddhists speak of the Void, you can't speak of substance, being, etc., coming out of it."

We were talking about how difficult K.C. Bhattacharya is. PB responded by saying, "It's good to have a few writers like that and it's also good to have a few popularizers like me. I write for the masses."

X asked PB if he had ever had the cosmic vision. PB responded, "I don't know. I don't remember. After all what are we after - experiences?"

When asked about the possibility of an autobiography, PB said, "I couldn't write a biography about a person that I wasn't even interested in. But I suppose someone will after I'm dead; they always do. They won't get my help anyway."

"I'm a mere journalist and popularizer for the man on the street; Tom, Dick, and Harry. I only present half-truths. That's my job as a popularizer. Tony<sup>38</sup> is a teacher and can present the whole truth."

"The essence of the Short Path is to remember who and what you are and then to attend to that memory as often as possible."

While meditating with PB, I had an experience which I told to PB after meditation. He told me to be sure to write it down. The gist was that both in meditation and periodically during the day a deep profound feeling of peace, quiet, and contentment settled over me. It just suddenly took me over. Everything seemed to slow down and take place within this peace. The most intense instance came just before sunset and lasted for about two hours. These experiences started during meditation with PB. When I told PB, he said, "You became one with nature... now you know the spirit. That was a glimpse of the Overself."

We went to the library and PB pulled some books of poetry off the shelves. We sat at a table and he quietly read aloud to me various poems.

"These<sup>39</sup> people don't realize how important my time is. In the five minutes that I'm seeing someone I could be helping hundreds. She doesn't realize that. I don't see most of the people who write to me because they would come here and all they would see is my body."

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<sup>38</sup> Referring to Anthony Damiani.

<sup>39</sup> Referring to a request to see him. —Christi Cox

PB showed his gold ring which is Egyptian and 2,500 years old. It has a carving on it of a personage known for his healing abilities. The ring was beautiful and intricate in its workmanship. A visitor asked where he got it. PB grinned and said he stole it. Later when we were alone I asked where he got it and he said, "Don't ask personal questions."

At one point PB said, "The idea of an impersonal observer is only a tentative one." I was confused. He said, "There can't be such a dualism in actuality as observer and observed. There's only Mind. There's no impersonal observer in sahaja. The notion of an impersonal observer is for practical help about half-way through the quest."

"These divisions of psychology, epistemology, ontology and metaphysics are not so in actuality but they are made to help give us a picture." I said, "Is that why you said in the Wisdom of the Overself, 'Psychologically all this can be summed up...'" PB smiled and said, "You like that paragraph?"

### **Steve Smolen. Valois, NY, 1977**

It was a precious time; it went very fast. At parting I remember bowing to him, bowing to each other. There was a point where we got very quiet - in the beginning - very quiet together, just sat, without speaking. I've read over and over again in his writing on World-Mind and Individual-Mind about what happens when you meet a sage. What a sage's blessing is. That's what was transpiring in those moments. I remember feeling a lot of embarrassment over thoughts that I was having. But I knew that having that one meeting was worth a whole lifetime. I feel an enormous connection to PB and Anthony (*crying*). They're so precious to me. I'm so very grateful that I was able to find them in this life. My association with them is such a foundation of living a life with good purpose and moving upwards, inwards.

I was quite elated. I also remember going into a bit of a depression a week or two later. It didn't last long. Anthony told me that it was quite normal to have a response like that, meeting a sage.

When I think about my next life, I hope they're there. It was with great joy to find these teachers. Made me very happy, still does.

I don't hang on that meeting, that happened 38 years ago. He's so much a living presence in my day-to-day focus. I just like where they are in my heart right now. It was only an hour, a precious hour. They're very present to me right now.

It was a great quiet, sitting on the chaise lounge in the garden. Anthony used to refer to this process that PB could size you up like a photograph, your whole evolutionary development up to this point, and then dismiss it for the illusory self it is and then go into a very deep connection of soul to soul. PB writes, that's the sage's blessing. But I wasn't conscious of it. I did feel the peace around him. Yeah, he glowed.

## **Susan Alida. Valois, NY, 1977**

Years before I met PB this happened. I wrote a letter to PB asking if I could visit. While Tony was with PB I had this dream. I was in a white gossamer gown and I flew over the world to Switzerland. And I hovered over this apartment. In the apartment Anthony and PB were talking. I remember that in the apartment there was an orange rug, and orange chairs. And the very next day I ran into X, who had visited PB's apartment. I told him about the dream and described the apartment and asked if in fact that's what PB's apartment looks like. And X said, yes, that's exactly what his apartment looks like. So, in my dream I astral-traveled to PB, right. After Anthony returned he grabbed me after meditation and said "I have a message for you from PB." PB told me to be more patient, hopeful, and to continue my inner life.

I<sup>40</sup> told him I appreciated the message he had sent to me through Anthony several years ago. And then he smiled. And when he smiled it was like there were rays coming out of his mouth; it was so beautiful. And I relaxed.

I told him that I would get very depressed when the sun went down, and he said, "Just listen to your Overself, and you'll never feel lonely again." At some point the conversation just stopped and we meditated. I have no idea how long. When it was over, I was just enveloped in silence. And peace. And light. It was incredible. It was very profound. It was total peace. I wasn't sure how I could drive; I was so gone. It was beautiful. I was very fortunate. That's it. I felt that this experience with PB was something to fulfill: to find that silence in myself. This has been my quest, the path that I've been on all my life. PB kick-started it, in a sense. He got me going, starting with that message he sent me. PB gave me silence and light. It was incredible.

## **Tom Marino. Valois, NY, 1977**

X asked what PB's relationship was to the group in Ithaca. He said that he was a longtime friend of Tony's and therefore naturally had an interest in what Tony is doing. He described himself as sympathetic observer. He added that many groups study his books.

I wondered what happened at death for non-yogis. He said, death was quite different for questers, the faithful, and disbelievers. He stressed the differences. Questers went through death more consciously, whether or not their quest was successful in life. Faithful persons get what they believe in, a continuation, and will sometimes get a glimpse of the higher self. Questers, in nearly all cases, achieve what they fail to achieve in life. By that he meant that there was a glimpse of the higher self. After the glimpse there is a prolonged period of sleep, after which the quester wakes up

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<sup>40</sup> Referring to when she finally met PB. – Christi Cox

in the after-life to resume the efforts. This is a direct quote: "We spend more time out of the body than in." It's easier to make progress after death; both the physical handicaps are removed and sufferings were removed and one didn't have such obstacles. Things were not so pleasant for the wicked.

He said that each has a spiritual mission in life, so immediately I thought he was talking external but he said no, it was contemplation for most everyone.

The result of the long path is equanimity, calmness.

Ecstasy when experiencing a mystical state is due to its novelty - happens when the state is new.

We were in the beginnings of the Aquarian age, the upward swing of the Kali Yuga.