

Memories of Dr Paul Brunton

by Milada Capkova

Translated by Marie Folprecht, Edited by Timothy Smith

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Translator’s Note: The following is a summary of the Memories of Dr. Paul Brunton. It has been an honor to create the summary and translate it. – Marie Folprecht, 2022

Editor’s Note: This book was published in 2006, though I believe it was written much earlier. It details some of the history of the Czech study groups that formed around PB’s books. The groups had been going for some time when PB himself agreed to visit in 1937. He was just back from India and was making his living by giving lectures and then meeting with smaller groups or individuals for a fee. This was by no means an unusual activity in those days – few people could afford much travel or even a subscription to an explorer’s journal like “The National Geographic” (which was a more erudite – boring – magazine back then). So many people who went to the far and mystic Orient rented lecture halls, gave talks with slide shows, and spoke with the folk who arranged for their appearance. The same was true for spiritual speakers of all cloths – though the Christian and the occult folk usually drew the larger crowds. We might think of it as having a YouTube channel, only longer. At any rate, PB made the rounds and some places “stuck” more than others; some that did include Denmark, France, Iceland, and Czechoslovakia. I suspect that PB visited Poland, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, and some bits of Scandinavia – but in spite of the fact that he was fluent in German, I don’t think he spent much time there. He had been somewhere on the “Western Front” as a communications officer during World War I, and that left its mark.

While we have little more than postcards and hotel stationary from some of these places, or a few letters either arranging for a lecture or thanking PB for a meeting with him, we are very fortunate to have this work by Milada Capkova which details the history of the PB study groups in what was then Czechoslovakia as well as some of his communications with that group pre- and post-World War II. The letters from PB are particularly informative, though we would have preferred to be able to quote them directly. Instead, due to the reluctance of the Czech group, we can only quote the triple-translation (from English to German to Czech and back to English) – a process fraught with problems, but it is what we have to work with at present. I have added a few comments to the letters in an effort to clarify what I believe PB meant in his statements; in doing so I have referenced both my own experience working for PB and his other correspondence from this same time period.

We have focused our work on the sections of this book which have a direct bearing upon PB and his interactions with the two groups of students discussed in the book. Much of the book is given over to the history of those two groups, which follows the sad pattern of most such schisms, whether in orthodox or unorthodox communities. Some of the book discusses PB’s published books, but since that material is abundantly available in English from a variety of sources, we have not translated it.

On the other hand, PB writes a great deal about his separation from the Ramana Maharshi ashram – a split that was quite upsetting for many people and created trauma amongst the followers of both teachers – traumas which continue to have some relevance even today. While PB has spoken about this separation and its causes here and there, his letters to the Czech

group provide a point-by-point rebuttal of the accusations against him. PB seldom responded to criticism in this way; usually he simply thanked the person for their observations and went about his business. What we have here is a unique set of statements which put most of the matters into their proper perspective. I say “most” because PB does not mention the original issue that got Ramana’s brother so angry. That issue had to do with money.

As the ashram grew, it brought many wealthy (at least relative to the folk at the ashram) Europeans to its halls, and Ramana’s brother – Nagasundaram aka Swami Niranjanananda – felt that these individuals should give more to the ashram than they were. In PB’s case he believed that PB should sign over the royalties of all of his books to him because even the books PB had written before he met Ramana were clearly “guided” by Ramana. PB pointed out that the same claim could be made by at least a dozen other teachers he had spent time with, and therefore the request was impossible to fulfill for all parties – to say nothing of PB’s own costs and labor. (PB – as was the case for all the other visitors of some substance – did indeed give generously to the ashram, and to the other individuals he visited or studied with, to the extent that they accepted money.) This wasn’t good enough for Nagasundaram, who eventually arranged to have PB poisoned with heavy metals, which nearly killed him and left him in poor health for the rest of his life.

Obviously at that time, the anti-British Raj sentiment was running high – as could only be expected given the exploitation suffered by so many Hindus. Ironically, PB was literally marked down as persona non grata by the British Colonial Government who accused him of siding with the Independence movement. In the end he withdrew to the hills of Mysore for the duration.

The reader will note that there was no correspondence from 1940 to 1945; although PB himself was entirely capable of getting that far behind on his correspondence, this was not the real problem in this case. The real problem was censorship: The British did not want any unauthorized letters even going towards, much less into, Nazi-occupied regions – nor did they want letters to leave India, which was a staging area for British troops (among others). This ban on communication stayed in place until 1945 and in some cases even later due to the Soviet presence in Central Europe. Unfortunately, this ban basically happened overnight, so PB had no opportunity to let any of his followers know why he disappeared. For a little more information about the fate of Czechoslovakia during WWII please refer to the appendix at the end of this document; where applicable, the specific events referred to in PB’s letters and telegrams are included in their footnotes.

For more information about the people and texts PB quotes or references here, please see the file titled “Wiki Standard Info for Comments.” For more information about the editorial standards, spelling changes, and formatting that we have implemented, please see the file titled “Introductory Readers’ Guide.” – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2022

The First Visit (from pages 22–35)

PB¹ spoke German most of the time with his Czech students, and he also was able to communicate with some students in French. Only two students knew the English language.

At every meditation PB always started singing the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM in his beautiful voice. The students described the 45-minute meditations with PB as being in bliss.

The group split in two.²

Mr. Karl Weinfurter had his own meditation group of friends and stopped coming to PB's presentations and meditations which were held at the Hotel Axa in Prague. PB visited Mr. Karl W. in his flat. The other group was led by Mr. Capek, Mr. Blaha, and Mr. Hoznourek – the “three amigos,” who were always in service to PB; they were invited to PB's hotel, where he gave his teachings and meditations. Students described how happy and joyful they felt in his presence, and they all laughed a lot. PB was always very kind, gentle, patient and indulgent in this group – compared to his demeanor in the group of Mr. Karl W., where he was very formal, reserved and inaccessible. After meditation with this latter group, he immediately left. He was aware right from the first meeting with Mr. Karl W. that he lacked a connection to his teachings.

PB's students had questions about how to become the best quester on this spiritual path, what to do to get better and so on.

“Do anything that will help” was PB's response.

If he didn't want to answer a question, he would just remain silent.

There were 33 fortunate students with whom PB had interviews and “made spiritual contact.” There was even an individual who asked PB what he had achieved, and then he offered to become PB's guru, promising him occult powers and great results. And there were also those who respected PB so much that they took the things that he threw into the trash and carried them as talismans for good luck and protection.³

Strange stories, or rather spiritual miracles, appeared to happen around PB.⁴ By looking into the eyes, when the student had been able to endure it, PB removed many of

¹PB is referred to as “Master” or “The Master” throughout this document. I know he hated such titles and rejected any association with them, so I have replaced them with his own preference – which was to be referred to by his initials. – TJS '22

²Note: the author of this article was in the second group, and was clearly strongly biased in his perceptions – which may or may not have been valid. – TJS '22

³PB was very aware of such souvenir hunting and didn't bother to correct it. These “talismans” had no more power than a button found on the subway. – TJS '22

⁴PB was aware that this happened – not only around him, but around any spiritually developed individual. PB insisted that such events were the result of the individual's own Overself's agency and nothing to do directly with him. – TJS '22

the veils of the student's ignorance.⁵ This was a great grace given by PB, which influenced his student's destiny.

Towards the end of PB's stay in Czechoslovakia, President Masaryk died.⁶ He was a very distinguished and special person, and the whole country loved him very much. PB said of him that he was a very advanced yogi who for this life forgot his practice in order to do a great external task for the country. PB guided him when he was dying to help him return to the Spirit World and regain the knowledge he possessed before birth.⁷

The three men, Mr. Capek, Mr. Hoznourek, and Mr. Blaha, had the special privilege of being taught the highest doctrine of Jnana Yoga by PB, who gave them a deep understanding of the ultimate Truth and practical help in meditation to attain it. He even imparted to them certain spiritual powers for connecting with spiritual friends.⁸

He always encouraged the students to have patience and have much hope on this path.

One day Mr. Jiri Poborak, then 22 years old, came by chance to ask PB for permission to translate his books into Czech. PB gave him an interview the next day. After a meditation during which Mr. J.P. made spiritual contact with PB and PB with him, they discussed the translation of the books together with Mr. Hoznourek.

PB said that spiritual contact with a student was given so that the student could receive the help on the spiritual path to the inner divine Self until the Master/Teacher agrees with the student's assessment of their progress. Then the Teacher will step aside so as not to stand in the way of the law of enlightenment.

The last moments with PB on St. Wenceslas Day at Mr. Blaha's flat were unforgettable; we met there at about 4 p.m. on September 28, 1937.

It was on the day of PB's departure. Sixteen of us came. Even Mr. Karl Weinfurter came with his wife Bozena. The meditation with PB was interrupted twice, and so PB ended the meditation. He had a plan to lead us all into the ocean of living divine Light.⁹ Fate did not allow this to happen.

After the meditation period, PB asked Mr. Blaha to be his interpreter and began to talk. A wonderful spiritual atmosphere was created which is hard to describe – peace, happiness of soul, hope, devotion and power. PB's words seemed to be like a gentle breath, and Mr. Blaha's translation was a beautifully harmonious echo. PB pointed out that the Overself is close to us, and the way to it is the path from the head to the heart. He inspired hope in us and spoke reverently of the Overself. He also said that Truth can be attained in seven years, but if it is not attained in the first seven years,

⁵This is a traditional practice called "darshan" (literally "looking") in Hinduism. – TJS '22

⁶Masaryk died on 14 September, 1937. – TJS '22

⁷It is unlikely PB himself would have made such a claim. – TJS '22

⁸PB would say that any such "feeling" of spiritual power was solely from the person's own higher self; no one can give such things to another. – TJS '22

⁹I wonder how the writer knew this, as PB seldom discussed such things. – TJS '22

the opportunity will be given to him in the next seven years, etc. PB also said that as long as the student is working without the Guru, he is like a man who is lost in the dark room. As soon as the Guru enters the room, he turns the switch and makes the light come on.¹⁰ The holy divine atmosphere was so powerful that we could hardly breathe just feeling PB's holiness. Later someone very appropriately compared this evening to the Sermon on the Mount.

Someone suddenly turned on the electric lights. We paused at this interruption and the spiritual spell that had enveloped us all slowly dissipated. PB spoke no more and rose to leave.

At his farewell, Ms. Krizova burst into such a heartbreaking cry that some of us had chills running down our backs. PB let her cry and stroked her hand. She felt she was granted some Grace, and she dissolved some of her egoism with her tears – and thus the way to divinity was cleared.

PB left by train for Budapest, Hungary. One of us had the feeling that he wouldn't see him for a long time and had to force himself to keep from jumping on the train after him. Each of us said goodbye to him in silence, just shaking his hand and looking into his eyes full of light. His words of farewell were: "I'm always with you. We are not completely abandoned; God still sends companions for our stumbling steps and Apostles of the Infinite for our wandering minds."

After the departure of PB from Prague, Mr. Karl Weinfurter received this letter from him written in Budapest, which he published in the magazine Psyche.

Budapest, 30 September 1937¹¹

Dear Mr. Weinfurter,

I write this letter only to thank you and to all friends from the group Psyche for the warm hospitality and generous kindness you have shown me. I shall always remember my visit to Prague with great pleasure. Kindly share this with everyone I have met and others through your magazine. The inner work was well done in Czechoslovakia. A good future therefore beckons to you. I have never worked with such a harmonious group. And so, whether I am invited or not, it is my intention to return to Prague sometime next year, as soon as I can, to take the teaching one step further. Everyone should persevere in their daily exercise, regardless of whether it has the feeling of success or not. These next six months are a very important and critical time. So, if everyone remains faithful, we have nothing to fear but everything to gain!

With blessings to you all,
brotherly Paul Brunton

¹⁰PB did adhere to this doctrine for a few more years, but as his letters from 1939 indicate, he permanently abandoned this view after his own experiences with the Ramana Ashram. – TJS '22

¹¹All of these letters are a double translation: first from English to Czech and now back again to English; some of the phrasing is clearly typical of PB's style, and some less so, as is inevitable. – TJS '22

After the First Visit (from pages 36–48)

The¹² author's popularity is evident by the fact that his books have achieved considerable circulation. "The Secret Path" had 14 editions in England in 1940 and was published for the twenty-eighth time in 1958!

The first book by Dr. Paul Brunton, "A Search in Secret India," was translated into Czech by Karl Weinfurter in 1937. When it came out, an English critic wrote: "'A Search in Secret India' is the greatest book about the magic, yogis and ascended spiritual masters of India that has yet been written."

{PB's followers emerged like ghosts from the hidden edges of society - people who were not able to invest in mainstream values and goals.}¹³ These people became readers of his books. It was a cosmopolitan and classless group. These people were scattered all over the planet in all the nations of the world. {PB spoke to many people after his lectures and interviewed his readers as well as contemporary spiritual figures of his day.}¹⁴ That's how his other books came about.

The first edition of "The Secret Path" was translated by Karl Weinfurter into Czech in the year 1938; a second version was produced in 1947, translated by Jiri Poborak and Ing.¹⁵ Arnost Capek. The author himself writes of this little book: "Many people have declared that reading it has caused a turnaround in their lives and enabled them to face life with greater courage and clearer understanding. These readers asked me to further develop the teachings contained in the book." PB writes: "'The Secret Path' was a literary bow stretched from nowhere to nowhere, but the arrow hit the mark." The first edition of the Czech translation has a dedication by PB which he sent to K.W. to include in the publication: "I dedicate this book with great feeling, to those in Czechoslovakia who seek the Truth and who formed the first group in Europe after my second return from traveling and spiritual study in the Orient."

Regarding PB's book "The Inner Reality," PB originally intended to periodically send portions as instructional articles to the groups with whom he had met. However, when he knew that the world would soon be at war, he wrote the complete book. Shortly after the English edition came out, Jiri Poborak translated it into Czech in 1939. This book compares the latest scientific research (of its time) to the deepest

¹²Page 36 is a short extract from the book "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" by PB; Page 37 is a short extract from the book "The Secret Path" by PB. – Marie Folprecht

¹³This sentence translates as: "The invisible unknown representative who rose wandered with PB." We have replaced it with our best guess as to what we think is meant. – TJS '22

¹⁴We have inserted this sentence for clarity's sake, as the final sentence of this paragraph otherwise makes no sense at all. – TJS '22

¹⁵This title corresponds to the title M.A. or M.Sc. in Czechoslovakia. – TJS '22

philosophical and religious thought; it returns the intelligent and reasonable person to faith in God. You will find in it an instruction for a precise discipline of thought, which will give you inner balance and lead you to deeper faith.

In the preface to the Czech edition, Mr. Josef Hoznourek wrote: "Two years ago I met the author of this book during his stay in Prague. At that time, I had a very good opportunity to get to know PB. I would like to say to the reader that I found that every word he wrote came from his own deep experience of writing about things he himself had realised. A few weeks with PB brought me more than the many years of effort I had devoted to this Inner Path. I could write many words about his great personality and his wonderful knowledge of both Christian mysticism and Indian yoga and philosophy. He aroused in me a greater respect for him than for all these traditions because he himself is a living example of the teachings he follows. The path that is given in this book is free and gives deep inner peace and satisfaction. The teaching is not the privilege of any person or any society, for Truth is the common goal of all seekers and Truth is one." (Prague, June 1939)

In 1939, the important work "The Quest of the Overself" was published in Czech language. It was translated by Jiri Poborak with the help of several students.

PB's private lectures were shared with Mr. Schlubek, who arrived from Berlin to attend them. In return, he shared with us the private lectures of PB given in London 1936 to his private group there. *{Editor's Note: The following appears to be a paraphrase of those lectures. – TJS '22}*

The crises will come no later than in two years. This period will be short, and a long crisis will follow. What the human race will have to learn over the next few years we could learn quickly and without difficulties. Nature is determined to ensure that her laws are respected. The human race has developed its intellectual abilities so powerfully that the dormant abilities which used to form an important component of its activities are completely forgotten.¹⁶

Therefore, access to the Light and to its Creator is closed to the human race. Humanity has its own creative power; nothing happens in the world without a human being's participation. *{On the other hand}*¹⁷ we don't understand who the Creator is. Our brains are too small to comprehend this. But we can learn the path to it if we return to the inner life. The human race has created too many false ideas about its Creator. In order to be led back, we can assume that our planet will undergo many changes with great losses of human life. I am convinced that it will happen soon, the same as it happened 12,000 years ago in Atlantis. Atlantis had a greatly developed civilisation which we can compare to ours in many ways. When the gods destroyed

¹⁶That is, human intellect and technology have outstripped its morality and respect for nature. – TJS '22

¹⁷We have inserted "On the other hand" for clarity. – TJS '22

Atlantis, it wasn't a punishment, but a spiritual education – this was meant to be a great salvation for the human race because it restrained its decline and brought humanity to a mental standstill. Today is not as bad as it was then. This time our suffering will be lighter and shorter.

We will have to continue to think positively in the midst of suffering and try to understand that we have an immense force within us – the greatest power in the world – which carries its own goals and which often works invisibly.¹⁸ Once we have uncovered this power, understood how it works and come into close connection with it, we are on a path where we can expect Light, Perfection and Liberation.

Letters from PB (from pages 49–89)

24 December 1937

We now have 400 people under our guidance in Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland. In addition, there are 300 people in America, 1500 in England, 100 in Hungary, and smaller number in several other countries. This is only the beginning of the most important movement of our time that will grow around the world. I see that this work carries great responsibilities, but it is also a great privilege. I only wish that we were all always aware that we were just tools, vehicles, that the single power of the Overself could flow through. We must rule out personal selfishness and then this power will flow freely. Our foundation is Truth. I count on you and your friends to stay loyal to the Truth.

I am not sending any Christmas cards because Christmas day is with me every day. The Christ is born in my heart every day, and I send his love to all mankind.

21 January 1938, London

Dear Mrs. and Mr. Capek!

I received your letter, and I am very pleased that you can write with such good English learned in such a short time. I am glad to hear that your meditations have gradually become deeper. You are both very lucky that you follow the spiritual path together. Those who maintain their faith and loyalty to me will receive everything they need to succeed. Everyone has to go through a period of trials that need a little patience. This year 1938 gives a special opportunity for souls to make a real spiritual progress.

I am sending you both the kindest thoughts and all my blessings.

With devotion your PB

Excerpt, 8 February 1938

¹⁸See PB's paras on Grace, which can be found in The Idea Series Notebooks under Old Category xxii: The Reverential Life or New Category XVIII: The Reverential Life (depending on whether the notebook was written before 1979 or after that date). – TJS '22

As for various sheaths¹⁹ of the inner bodies of human beings that are confusing to you, I will clarify such difficulties when I visit you again. In short, there are only three divisions of human nature: spirit, mind and body. Those who practice Yoga, teach that there are different bodies. But those who are initiated into the Jnana yoga²⁰ I am teaching learn that there are two principles: spirit and mind. The body is recognised as a thought in the mind.

This is advanced Jnana yoga and I will teach it when I arrive in Prague again. I also want to say that the study of the lotuses (chakras)²¹ and inner bodies is only given to people who cannot detach themselves from their semi-materialist adherence to shape and matter. For those few in Prague who are more developed, I have presented the Jnana path, which teaches them to forget all these things and focus only on the Supreme Truth, which is pure Spirit without any shape and form at all.

Your question is about “recognising.” Yes, it means that when you are in the wakeful state of mind, always keep recognising the Overself in your heart while at the same time paying close attention to working, speaking or walking.

Excerpt, 3 March 1938

{Mystical}²² yoga²³ and meditation must be parallel in your thoughts. They cannot be separated; therefore, the answer to your question is, it is better to stop trying at a certain point, turn to the Great Silence, and not to use the affirmation “I am the Overself.” In this situation you only have the thought about the Overself and not the REAL presence. The Real will appear only when all thinking about achieving yoga is stopped. If the Real is found once, {that experience will end because it began and}²⁴ attention will be transferred back to the thinking mind – but the underlying presence of the Real remains even in midst of thinking. You are always the Real. I can also say that even though the world is illusion, because it is only mental, all objects which seemingly lie outside us really exist, otherwise we couldn’t create thoughts about them. But we didn’t create these objects. It the Cosmic Mind which creates thoughts seemingly outside of us, these thoughts are floating into our individual mind.

¹⁹This is the Theosophical translation of the kosa, a term used to describe three to seven different grades of body, ranging from pure consciousness to the ordinary human body. These are also discussed in traditional Yoga texts, as PB says. – TJS ‘22

²⁰Jnana (wisdom) is one of the three traditional paths of Hinduism, the other two being Bhakti (faith) or Raja (mystical experience). – TJS ‘22

²¹The chakras are “energy centers” spread from the base to the top of the spinal cord, and are commonly depicted as lotus-flowers, each with its own number of petals. – TJS ‘22

²²We have inserted “Mystical” into the text for clarity. – TJS ‘22

²³PB had little interest in Hatha (physical) Yoga at this time, though he was aware of it as “Search in Secret India” shows. He is using “yoga” here in its literal meaning, which is to join with one’s higher self. – TJS ‘22

²⁴We have inserted “that experience will end because it began and” into the text for clarity. – TJS ‘22

16 March 1938, London

Dear Hoznourek, (continuation)

My advice to you and to other friends I had the pleasure of meeting is to remain silent and quiet. As for The Psyche Association and Mr. Karl Weinfurter, leave them to say and to do what they like. Do not take any steps, even if you know that they are not telling the truth. Do not worry about their making false claims about me; that is my business. Please ignore everything you hear that is coming from the other side, no matter how much it hurts. Neither should you try to rejoin the Psyche club. Be satisfied that you stay out of it. You don't need the club and the people in it.

Also do not recruit new followers you would like to teach. Let things happen without intervening.

I firmly believe that you will read this letter and explain it to all your friends. I want you to completely ignore the persistent attacks. This requires self-control and indifference. Also remember that this period is a test in which you have to practice this higher quality of your character.

From the moment I arrived back in England, my physical health has been deteriorating. As you know, I had bronchitis in Prague, and now it has gone down to the lungs and I am coughing and spitting up blood. The doctor says that the humid climate of England is very dangerous for me.

I am writing to K.W. that all criticism from his group {towards yours}²⁵ should stop; every group should respect each other or leave it alone.

I send my loyal greetings to all of you in the group.

PB

22 March 1938, London

My dear friends and students!

I received your letter dated 18 March 1938 and the medical pills in the letter from Ing. Marik.

I am deeply satisfied with your answer and your loyalty {demonstrated by}²⁶ your decision to ignore the rift with Karl Weinfurter and provocation of his group. The truth has nothing to worry about; later on, you will understand that I was right.

Concerning my health, I am deeply grateful for your invitation to be your guest during my rehabilitation in the Tatra {mountains}²⁷ or Switzerland, but the climate which I need is very different than there. I asked two doctors for advice and underwent a thorough lung examination. I was told I would be dead in four years if I stayed in Europe. I have no reserves of physical vitality; those were worn out due to my long travels in the tropics and the long fevers I had years ago. Doctors recommend living in

²⁵We have inserted "towards yours" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

²⁶We have inserted "demonstrated by" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

²⁷We have inserted "mountains" for clarity. Tatra is a mountain range between Slovakia and Poland. – TJS '22

a warm climate without sudden cold nights. They suggest my immediate departure to Florida – which has the climate I need – because my health is getting worse day by day. All this made me focus on my healing which I have always neglected. Therefore, I am leaving England on 20th of April, which means that I will be traveling to the USA for four weeks. In the USA I am not planning to do any teaching; I will live alone until I recover.

That is why I must postpone my visit to Czechoslovakia. I am very sorry about this change. I was looking forward to meeting you again; unfortunately, Fate decided otherwise. If you wish you can send me a letter once a month with your news. I will continue to send you help. Remember that distance in the spirit world doesn't exist. In the present time I don't want to interfere with material matters,²⁸ but there will come time when you will know that spirit and matter are one.

I am sending you all my love and blessings.

Everything will be Ok.

Yours, PB

26 March 1938, London

Dear students!

Today I received the cheque for 14 pounds.²⁹ I guess it is money for my treatment in Switzerland or Tatra {mountain retreat.}³⁰

As I wrote you, I can't go for treatment there. My doctors decided that I should go to California. One American doctor who was visiting London chose a place for me in the Sierra Madre Mountains, USA where there is a sanatorium for the treatment of lung diseases.

When I settle in California, I will find a small house and hire a secretary and continue to work on my book about Jnana. In addition, I plan to send instructive articles once a week or fortnight. These will be 10-15 pages typewritten pages, dealing with various topics of truth, meditations, religions and the like. In this manner I will have better contact with each of you on the mental level, as these lessons will be sent to you as well. I was hoping to see you again in a few months, but it's not allowed. I'll see you later. At this time, I wish that you all will keep mindful of the Overself, which will protect you and give you absolute safety and security. Keep this idea constantly with you.

With devotional greetings

PB

19 April 1938, London

My³¹ dear students!

²⁸I think this means PB intends to engage with his own health situation rather than go against that, as he had done in the past. – TJS '22

²⁹The buying power of £14 in 1938 is roughly equivalent to £1,075 today. – TJS '22

³⁰We have inserted "mountain retreat" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

Before I leave for America tomorrow, I am sending you the promised farewell message in response to the kind letter of 7 April from you. Even though I am going so far away, nothing will change in our spiritual relationship. As you gain some inner advancement, you will start to understand that the real connection with a teacher is in Consciousness.

I am deeply moved by your decision to abandon all previous interests and focus only on studying the Supreme Truth. It shows your courage and determination to refuse to accept illusion no matter how widespread it is. The reward of this attitude is the blessing of the Reality of True Consciousness.

Continue as a group in your Wednesday meetings as you are doing now. I am happy to hear that you have 70 members who have joined you. Keep in mind to be careful not to accept anyone into your group who is not prepared to follow this difficult teaching. We want to create in each country of the world an oasis of the few who are not satisfied with living in illusion and are thirsty for Reality.

I am happy that in the desert of this world these oases are rapidly emerging. It is a special mission of the nation of central Europe that includes Czechs, Austrians, and Germans to act as a mediator between the culture of the West and the ancient culture of the East. This way the spiritual wisdom will flow from Asia through Central Europe and from there spread across the entire Western world.

The photograph which I gave you should only be used for the purpose of concentration, and with the condition that it be used only for 2-3 minutes at a time. Please also take utmost care that the photo stays in your care and does not fall into the wrong hands.

The stream of spiritual power will reach you just as easily from America {as from England}³² and you will feel it.

Sending all my blessings, your devotee
PB

Telegram, 10:20 am, 22 May 1938, America³³

A message to all Czech students:

My support and protection goes out to you. Each of you do your duty resolutely but impersonally.

PB

September 1938, America

³¹Page 62 in the original.

³²We have inserted "as from England" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

³³Wikipedia for May 22, 1938: British Foreign Secretary Lord Halifax told the French ambassador not to count on British support in the event of a war over Czechoslovakia. Poland's ambassador also told French Foreign Secretary Georges Bonnet that Poland would not move if France moved against Germany to defend Czechoslovakia. While none of this happened in May, the situation continued to deteriorate into WWII. – TJS '22

I received a cablegram from students of Czech group and read it with the greatest pleasure and enthusiasm.³⁴ Please give my thanks to everyone and tell them that I am already 75% healthy and working hard. I am with all of them in the Spirit. Now more than ever the Czech students must remember amid the danger that surrounds them that they have to hold on to the path of seeking Overself as their only link with God. It is important to stay calm, without worries while evil forces around them are arouse disturbing emotions and feelings.

Sending you all my blessings.

PB

20 September 1938, America

Dear³⁵ Hoznourek,

I am writing to you and to all Czech students to tell you that my sympathies are with your people during this dark period of history. I don't have much confidence in England in these days.

The best advice I can give is: The Overself's inner peace must not be lost in these difficult times, but on the contrary even more sought because peace is a force and has power just like divine protection. Judgment Day is coming for all of Europe and the world. Everything is temporary today! We who believe in God must endure and trust.

Peace and blessing to all of you

Yours, PB

14 February 1939, Thailand³⁶

My dear Hoznourek,

With this letter I am sending you and all the students of your country the warmest greetings and fond memories of you all.

I was delayed by unexpected work in Japan and {Thailand}³⁷ and now I have to go to French Indochina,³⁸ so it will take a several weeks before I reach Ramana Maharshi in India.

The personal adviser of the Tibetan Dalai Lama came to see me, and much work was agreed for the future with the Adepts of China and {Thailand.}³⁹

³⁴This was when younger men first mobilized against Hitler. September 29, 1938 Germany, Italy, Great Britain, and France sign the Munich agreement which forces the Czechoslovak Republic to cede the Sudetenland, including key Czechoslovak military defense positions, to Nazi Germany. – TJS '22

³⁵Page 64 in the original.

³⁶"Siam" in the original. – TJS '22

³⁷"Siam" in the original. – TJS '22

³⁸French Indochina was comprised of Cambodia, Laos, the Chinese territory of Guangzhouwan, and much of Vietnam. It was occupied by Japan in September 1940. – TJS '22

³⁹"Siam" in the original. – TJS '22

In the middle of today's great changes in the destiny of the world, the changes which are inevitable, I will {bless}⁴⁰ you all so that you always have in mind our spiritual goal. The rewards will come, but later.

Sending you all my blessings and peace.

PB

12 March 1939, Madras, India⁴¹

My dear students, Hoznourek, Blaha, Capek, Marik!

I've arrived in India just now. I was delayed by research in China, Cambodia and Siam. Now I am at the ashram of Maharshi until the end of this month and then I will continue my trip to Nigari Hills.

Because my arrival has been delayed for so long, I have just now received your letters. The letters' dates are 3, 25, and 31 of January {1939.}⁴² Everything you are writing is very interesting. I am not surprised about the problems with Mr. Karl Weinfurter: I predicted everything from the first moment I met him.

As for the charges against me by K.W. based on the brother of Maharshi (Nagasundaram aka Swami Niranjanananda), who is the administrator of external business affairs of the ashram, I will only say that just this week all this was discussed at the ashram. The crisis between Maharshi's brother and the long-time students of Maharshi, including me, has come to a head. The letter which Mr. K.W. received from the ashram is not written by Maharshi. Maharshi never writes or reads.

At this time, we are trying to solve all the problems which have existed at the ashram for many years. My conscience is clear, and Mr. K.W. has made the biggest mistake of his life.

For now, I can only respond briefly to you because I am here for only few days and I have lots of work to do concerning preparation of my physical needs. Since you have asked for a quick answer regarding the translation of my books, I am sending you my answer directly.

1. Three months ago I wrote to Mr. K.W. to discuss the translation and publication of my books. He never answered. Together with this letter to you, I am also writing to Mr. K.W. and telling him that I am giving the rights of translation and publication of my books to you.

2. I am hereby giving you the copyright to translate and publish my most recent book, "The Inner Reality," published by Rider and Co., London. After that, you can translate and publish "The Quest of the Overself" and "A Hermit in the Himalayas." I

⁴⁰This translates as "entrust;" we have changed it to "bless" for clarity. – TJS '22

⁴¹Now Chennai, India. – TJS '22

⁴²We have inserted "1939" into the text for clarity. This is two months before the Czechoslovak president Emil Hacha was bullied into signing away his country's independence on 15 March 1939, during a visit to Berlin. Note the date of PB's letter to them; they would have received this after the fact. – TJS '22

own the translation rights for foreign languages for all three books. I will send you an authorisation in a special letter.

Please put the money from the sale of the books into my account in Prague. When I am there, I will use it to pay my hotel and expenses. Even if no money is made from my books, I don't care. My main goal is to make my books available quickly to help people who are on the spiritual path in Czechoslovakia.

In the next letter I will write detail about the accusations made against me at the ashram.

Sending to all of you my blessings

Yours, PB

P.S. One of the American Universities awarded me an academic title Doctor of Philosophy. The essays I wrote were published under the title "Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture." I do not wish and do not want that book to be translated into Czech, as it is only intended for university students.

8 April 1939, Madras, India

My dear students,

I received your letter dated the 21st of March. I am very pleased that my new book is very helpful.

And now I'll answer the accusation that I promised to write for you in my last letter - even though you have written that there is no need for an explanation on my part. I appreciate your attitude, and I am grateful for your trust. Now I'll answer the points you made in your letter dated January 3rd of this year.

The first point: Mr. Karl Weinfurter says he wrote to Maharshi and received an answer in a four-page letter written by Maharshi himself. This is completely untrue. Maharshi has said that he has given up the world and doesn't want to be bothered by correspondence. Everyone in South India can tell you that Maharshi never writes any letters. Therefore, Ramana's brother's claim, {and that of Mr. K.W.}⁴³ is false.

The second point: His brother claims that {Ramana has said that}⁴⁴ the teaching in my book "The Secret Path" is wrong. My reply is that Maharshi has read this book many times to visitors and ashram residents. He also translated this book into the local language of Tamil. He has recommended it to young Indians, who are closer to Western traditions than to the obsolete Indian one.

The third point: Mr. K.W. doubts the statement about the influence which exists between a photograph and the living person it represents. Maharshi's brother is not a competent authority on this topic. He is not a yogi. He controls the material affairs of the ashram. During the past ten years at the ashram, no one has ever seen him meditate

⁴³We have inserted "and that of Mr. K.W." into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

⁴⁴We have inserted "Ramana has said that" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

or be interested in spiritual teachings. He has even declared himself to be the director of the ashram {instead of Ramana.}⁴⁵

The fourth point: Mr. K.W. claims that the exercises that I teach are wrong. Well, the tree must be judged by the fruit. The fruit of Mr. K.W. was very clear to me when I saw him in Prague for the first time. He kept promising his pupils spiritual visions and experiences, but as of today none of them are happy or satisfied {in this regard.}⁴⁶ As far as my teachings are concerned, it is possible to point to the hundreds of letters I have from readers of my books in which they write about the joy of finding a degree of peace and spiritual understanding that has made them happy and at peace.⁴⁷

The fifth point: Mr. K.W. writes that I am against the teachings of Ramakrishna. Here again he shows his blindness. I am constantly called by Ramakrishna mission (which is a monastic organisation built based on Ramakrishna's teachings) to give lectures in their centers. It was not so long ago that I gave lectures to them in the Straits Settlements of Singapore, and Penang.⁴⁸ Several monks are very good friends of mine. Swami Shivananda himself gave me a blessing before he passed away in Calcutta. He also asked me to keep working on spreading Eastern wisdom to the West. This proves that I don't oppose the teaching of Ramakrishna but that I work in accordance with it and his followers.

The sixth point: Maharshi's brother sent several photos of Maharshi to your friends in Plzen; each photo was supposedly signed by Maharshi himself. My response is that no one ever saw Maharshi signing a photo or signing letters.⁴⁹ Signing his name means identification with his personal "I," and he doesn't identify with his personal self anymore. Therefore, the signature on his photos was forged by his brother.

The seventh point: Mr. K.W. has said that Maharshi forbade him to publish the letters Mr. K.W. received from him, saying that {this}⁵⁰ was an order. This order {not to publish the letters}⁵¹ only came from Ramana's brother, because he was worried that his forgery would be revealed.

These are my answers to the points in your letter. Now I would like to add a few more remarks about the situation created by Mr. K.W. As soon as I saw him, I immediately realised that Mr. K.W. would be a problem in your group. I saw that his livelihood was dependent on the federal magazines and books. He feared that the teachings I had brought from India were different from those he had given to members of the association for so many years. He was therefore faced with a problem that was very serious for an old man. He had to choose between accepting wages or accepting the spiritual Truth and following it. He chose the easy path and therefore he has

⁴⁵We have inserted "instead of Ramana" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

⁴⁶We have inserted "in this regard" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

⁴⁷See the Paul Brunton Papers Letters Series for evidence of this fact. – TJS '22

⁴⁸There were four such Settlements; they are basically part of Malaysia now. – TJS '22

⁴⁹This statement has been corroborated by other early visitors to the Ramana Ashram. – TJS '22

⁵⁰We have inserted "this" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

⁵¹We have inserted "not to publish the letters" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

separated from me step by step. He also continues his secret collaboration with Maharshi's brother.

I also have to inform you that the long-time students of Maharshi were expelled from the ashram by that brother - or they had to leave because they were mistreated by his brother. I had a terrible fight with Maharshi's brother right in front of Maharshi himself.⁵² I had to leave and have cut off all contacts with the ashram for good. I cannot stay connected with such ashram which is constructed on such a dishonesty and impropriety. But my inner link with Maharshi is indestructible. However, Fate forces me to interrupt all external connection with Maharshi. My actions caused a great sensation in India. I do not wish for - and I do not want to have - any students or followers, but because you've asked me to help you, I will allow it and will continue to do so with you. Time will be the best judge of everything that has happened.

I send my heartfelt thoughts and blessings to all of you.

Best regards,
your PB

13 April 1939, Madras, India

My dear students, Milada and Arnost Capek!

I received your letter from September 1938 {while}⁵³ in America, and I take it with me on my travels.

Thank you for your faith in my teaching. You say that your individual effort for studying and meditation is not important because a real understanding comes only by grace from Guru. That's not right. Your individual effort is very important, and you need to persevere in it regardless {of whether}⁵⁴ you have a Guru or not. However, the grace of the guru is valuable; it comes at an appropriate moment. Remember that on this path the steps of every beginner are the slowest and the most difficult. Later on, the results become more visibly clear.

Whatever happens, remember that I will be fulfilling my duty toward you as long as you stay loyal to me. The future will reveal all that has been done in these dark days of human life.

Sending both of you peace and blessings.

PB

During the Full Moon in July 1939, Madras, India⁵⁵

⁵²Both statements are true. The brother wanted all the Westerners to hand over all their money, land, and any other assets to the "ashram," meaning to himself. When this was refused, he barred the individuals from access to Ramana. PB told me that Ramana said he allowed this because it was time for those individuals to leave "the spiritual nursery" (i.e. the ashram). - TJS '22

⁵³We have inserted "while" into the text for clarity. - TJS '22

⁵⁴We have inserted "of whether" into the text for clarity. - TJS '22

⁵⁵There were two full moons that July: on the 1st and on the 31st; my guess is that PB is referring to the former. Also, this is after the 2nd Czech Republic was dissolved and Hungary more or

My Dear Czech students,

Up until now I have consistently said that I have no desire or wish to become a spiritual teacher and neither do I want to have any followers. Fate has arranged circumstances differently. Over the past few years, urgent requests for individual guidance from keen seekers have aroused my sympathy to the point that I have allowed a small number of seekers to become my students. With this, I accepted an undesirable situation that created unpleasant feelings in me. After several months of deep reflection, and with real regret, I have arrived at the final and irrevocable decision to release all my students without any exception, whether they are old or new, Asians or Americans. I have had to make this step in order to continue my work on a much wider scale. This work was given to me, and nothing can stop me from finishing it.

I give my grateful thanks for your trust in me, and I will continue receiving and reading your letters even though I won't be answering them in writing. When I visit your nation again, I will be happy to give interviews, give my best advice, answer your questions, but all without any commitments on either side.

Finally, I strongly encourage you to dedicate your life to the effort to know the Truth, for this is the most precious gift for an unstable human life.

Please accept my most sincere wishes for your spiritual well-being.

PB

1 August 1939, Madras, India, Private Letter to Josef Hoznourek

My dear Hoznourek!

I would like if you could continue to act as my personal representative and friend. If you would like the names of students from Germany who have questions about the topics contained in my books, I will send their addresses to you. But only if you would like to have contact with these people.

1 August 1939, Madras, India

My dear Czech students!

I have received your letter dated 7th of July and I am grateful to you all for the effort you expended by writing to Maharshi and Mr. Bose. Mr. Bose and the Yogi Ramiah had a meeting with Maharshi and the people at the ashram. The whole thing is still going on, even though Mr. Bose explained that the charges brought against me by Karl Weinfurter are completely unsuitable. However, I am so perfectly disgusted with the Ramana Ashram management that I have decided to end everything once and for all.

1. I have broken off all contact for good with the ashram.
2. I no longer call myself a student of Maharshi. That's why I don't have any connection with Maharshi, his followers, his teachings, and the ashram anymore.

3. I have sent a copy of the enclosed printed letter to all students without exception: I am releasing them from any obligations to me. I did this because a number of these students came to me based on my close connection with Maharshi. All students who were my students must from now on consider themselves to be independent of me. I would be grateful if you could translate this letter into the Czech language and give the information to those students who have considered me their teacher.

4. I published an interview in the Indian newspaper in which I announced that I had cut off further contact with all yogis. However, due to the devotion you have shown to me, I will not leave you. I will help you on your path of Truth as a friend but not as a GURU. This will leave both sides altogether free.

I am looking forward to Czech translation of “The Inner Reality.” You did well to write a short introduction, so that people will write their letters to you. Concerning my book about Jnana, I feel sorry that I {stopped}⁵⁶ its publication. I am writing a book about the history of today’s world, its relationship with karma and reincarnation etc.

Please do not lose courage because you’ve lost your GURU. I will never leave those who are faithful to me. Please do not worship personalities whether it is Maharshi or Brunton, but devote your highest devotion to Principles of Truth. The Truth is something which is not afraid of reason. The age of blind faith is over. I have the highest respect and devotion for Maharshi, but I can’t be a blind follower. That is what I learned from the study of Jnana, which I never acquired from Maharshi but from somewhere else.

I am sending you my peace and blessings.

With love

PB

Extract from a letter from {Josef Hoznourek} to Mr. J. Poborak⁵⁷

PB wrote: YES, I hope that the time will come when the initiation into the mystery will be relaunched. I am waiting for the proper state of the world and the appropriate help.

{Milada Capkova writes:}⁵⁸ The book which was supposed to be published in Czechoslovakia in 1940 - “A Hermit in the Himalayas” - didn’t happen. The occupation of our country by Nazi Germany⁵⁹ began in 1940. PB departed to the East,

⁵⁶We have changed the translation “deleted” to “stopped” for clarity. This probably refers to “The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga,” which PB rewrote to dovetail with “The Wisdom of the Overself” (in which he discusses WWII and the other topics mentioned above). – TJS ‘22

⁵⁷My educated guess is that this letter is from Hoznourek. – TJS ‘22

⁵⁸We have inserted “Milada Capkova writes:” into the text for clarity.

⁵⁹Historians say that Czechoslovakia was ceded to Hitler in March 1939; various parts were occupied by troops thereafter until the end of the war (when Russia grabbed it). – TJS ‘22

living in India and other countries there.⁶⁰ We were miraculously protected during the occupation, even though several PB students were interrogated by Gestapo. We were watched. The Germans thought that our interest in the spiritual path was only a front and that there was an underground Hitler movement behind it. We luckily survived our country's darkness. We did not receive any news from PB until after the war was over and the peace had begun. After the war ended in 1945, we tried to establish a written contact with PB. Finally in July 1945 the first message arrived.

{Editor's note: The following letters are from after the war. See Appendix for more information.}

Telegram, 24 July 1945, South India

I've received your message. Sending many greetings and peace to all my friends. I always hold you in my mind.

PB

30 July 1945, South India

To all my Czech friends:

It is my deepest joy to be able to break the silence of the six years of war and write to you again.⁶¹ I am grateful for your kind memories and assure you that I have not forgotten you during the terrible trials of the Nazi attempts to destroy the religion, culture, freedom and happiness of Europe. I sent you my support and strength to endure your suffering through my meditations.

Remember that I predicted that this war was inevitable and that your nation would become a victim of the German barbarians. To help understand the spiritual significance of this war you may wish to read a chapter about it in my book, "The Wisdom of the Overself,"⁶² which was published two years ago. It is the ending of an era of old thinking and the opening of a new one. Mankind is brought to God in a variety of ways, but this result will not be clear enough until other amazing events

⁶⁰Actually, PB was in India when war was declared, and as neither a soldier nor a civilian needed by the army in India (or elsewhere), PB—and many thousands of British ex-pats—was stranded in India, as all forms of transportation were reserved for soldiers, their civilian aides, and their families. This problem persisted through 1946, which is why PB eventually traveled further east, in hopes of getting back to England via Japan, Hawaii, the United States, and finally all the back to England. Because of censorship he was not able to communicate with individuals not living in England or India during these years. —TJS '22

⁶¹This silence was in large part due to censorship: The British government wouldn't send mail to Czechoslovakia, and the German occupiers wouldn't have let it in anyway. PB did withdraw from all communication with others in the early 1960s when he went to Australia, but during WWII he maintained correspondence with his students in England and America. —TJS '22

⁶²PB is referring to Chapter 10: The War and the World; Chapters 9 and 11 also have some discussion of WWII. —TJS '22

occur.⁶³ I am pleased that you were able to keep your faith during the war and want to continue your spiritual quest.

My answer to your questions: During the war I spent whole time in India;⁶⁴ however, I was seriously sick with tropic fever for the last two years. I was on my deathbed twice. I am better now, but I lost a great deal of strength and can only do half of the work that I used to do. Unfortunately, I can't get out of India due to the difficulties caused by the war. I was told to wait for another year or two.⁶⁵ I will wait patiently. I have an inner connection with Maharshi, but no physical contact at all and my relationship with other Indian yogis is similar. I am pursuing my independent path. I am convinced that the West will have to find its own way to the divine grace of enlightenment. The East can contribute with its ancient texts, but those are not accessible to today's people.

My friend the Maharaja of Mysore⁶⁶ died five years ago, and my life here has been lonely. But the war meant that I made a lot of progress in my understanding. I see now that I made some inadvertent mistakes in the teachings I gave to you. Even so, the basic principles remain the same as always, and the quest must continue through using prayers, meditations, moral improvement, selfless service, profound thinking, constant effort and desire. I am sorry that I didn't realise the importance of keeping all these various efforts in balance sooner.⁶⁷ No effort on a single type of practice is enough.

Those were such joyful weeks that we spent together in Prague studying and meditating every night. I hope the result of those weeks helped you to survive the terrible years of occupation that came after. I look forward to getting news from you about the general spiritual conditions and prospects of all students I met in Prague before the war. But I have to ask you please do not call me GURU; I am your friend. I consider myself to be student also. I'll be satisfied if you call me just PB.

With this letter I am sending you all my peace and blessings... with my best regards,

PB

⁶³Among other events PB predicted that there would be WWIII involving the same countries as WWI and WWII "before 2050." – TJS '22

⁶⁴PB did manage a trip into Tibet from Tehri Garwhal during this time—much of which was spent in the northern provinces of India. – TJS '22

⁶⁵See footnote to the letter to Mr. J. Poborak above, which explains why PB and other non-military British citizens were in such a fix after the war. – TJS '22

⁶⁶Referring to Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV (Nalwadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar; 4 June 1884 – 3 August 1940), the twenty-fourth maharaja of the Kingdom of Mysore from 1894 until his death in 1940. He is popularly called Rajarshi ("sage king"), the name which was given by Mahatma Gandhi, for his administrative reforms and achievements. PB stayed with him from time to time—but both men were very busy in the 1930s. – TJS '22

⁶⁷This theme of balance became the central tenet of PB's post-war teachings: the balance of heart and mind, as well as the balance between ordinary "householder" life and spiritual practices. – TJS '22

14 February 1946, South India

This letter was written to the address of Josef Hoznourek.

I have permanently left Mysore. I feel much healthier since doing so. All my work undertaken during the war is finished. I am preparing to travel abroad. I have to return to the US first, where I hope to make some money by writing. With American dollars I can travel to Czechoslovakia. It is sad that I can't return to Europe and England first; I would prefer that. I am trying to get a flight, but it looks like I'll travel by the cargo steamer. I prefer to pay for my all expenses by myself. Please do not send any monetary contributions. I will come to you out of love and my duty. I hope I'll be able to send you my new address in America before I leave India. Please send all correspondence to Mr. Hoznourek, who can ship it all in one envelope to me. Do not send individual letters separately.

Many aspirants have had a telepathic contact with me because they are mentally and psychically sensitive. This isn't because they are spiritually advanced or that they have reached philosophic insight.⁶⁸ This telepathic connection is a mixture of my influence and their personal psyche. Both are blended into a single result. All this happens subconsciously. Such contacts should not be completely accepted or taken to be fully complete.⁶⁹ Critical judgment is necessary to separate human error from higher inspiration.

In the previous letter I mentioned that I am sorry for some inadvertent problems in my books. One of them is that I stressed the importance of meditation and didn't emphasise the importance of improvement of one's own character enough. Regarding this latter task, whatever mistakes individuals have made in the past can be corrected in the present; the prerequisites for real redemption is sincere regret and concrete desire to make amends. Spiritual searching is hard; slipping and falling is easy.

I am happy to be able to help anyone who is aware of their mistakes and sincerely wishes to continue in searching under my guidance. In that case we have to leave the past and bury it.

PB

14 February 1946, Madras, India

Dear Arnost!

Thank you for your letter dated 3 January 1946. It is very encouraging to me that you believe my books will be useful for students. I am pleased that you wish to transfer from the mystical truth to the philosophic one. In these tough and difficult times, we

⁶⁸PB sometimes used this term for the state often referred to as enlightenment. – TJS '22

⁶⁹PB's view was that all psychic contact is heavily colored by the ego and culture of the individual involved (e.g., Christian saints don't have visions of a Hindu goddess). Even when there is some authentic message contained in these experiences, they are never complete, because life goes on and the applicability of the insight will either wax or wane over time. – TJS '22

need to become strong and noble, which will allow us to face life bravely rather than to run away from it. Only philosophy can give us what we need.

When I return to the West I will never go back to India. The West is suffering from materialism, but after the war, the West will appreciate philosophy far more than it is appreciated in India today.

Do not be upset that you haven't gained a sufficient degree of philosophic character development. It is a lifelong task and needs patience and perseverance. If you were perfect, you wouldn't be here on this Earth. It is enough that you are moving in the right direction. With this progress of yours it will be easier to quickly guide you to the Short Path practices next time I visit Prague. You will become the channel for Enlightenment with your abilities and can help less advanced students.⁷⁰ Meanwhile try to gain a more accurate understanding of the meaning of the Path, philosophy's connection to external life, and what you have received from your teacher and what else the teacher can do for you.

I remember with pleasure our last meetings in Prague. I hope and feel for sure that our next meetings will be spiritually helpful and useful. Thank you for expressing your devotion.

With peace and blessings
PB

Note about a PB letter of 10 June 1946, New York

I⁷¹ received two airmail letters from PB. He says that he hopes to continue on his way across the Atlantic Ocean, so he will leave New York around the 15th of June. He is taking the American cargo ship Arin Arow.

Last time he wrote from Cairo. At that time, he was preoccupied with the Sphinx and pyramids. He wrote about the great change that has taken place within him. He said: "I have little time and not much energy to write letters because I am much older now; however, I have more telepathic sensitivity which balances this. A miraculous change taught me how to get rid of the psychic hostility I found in Egypt on my earlier visit... There are many new excavations around the Sphinx... it is very interesting."

PB also wrote that as a precaution he sent his manuscripts, files, research work and papers by air; the other baggage was sent by cargo ship, and he himself traveled by yet another boat. So now eight large boxes await him in New York. If he hadn't taken these precautions, he would have lost everything.

PB describes his shipwreck in detail in his letter of 1 May {1946.}⁷² There were twelve passengers on board a light Norwegian cargo ship. A heavy cargo tank steamer

⁷⁰This is an unusual statement for PB to make; even in the 1940s he was usually hesitant to predict enlightenment for anyone—even though he did tend to write in the vein of 'positive thinking' at the time. It is worth remembering that this has gone through multiple translations; something of the original may have been lost. —TJS '22

⁷¹It's not clear who "I" is here... possibly Milada Capkova or Hoznourek. —TJS '22

⁷²We have inserted "1946" for clarity. —TJS '22

ran into it in the Gulf of Suez, hitting the hull about 2 meters from PB's cabin. He was thrown out of bed and his cabin was suddenly flooded. He saved himself in a plastic raincoat, but lost all his luggage.⁷³ Afterwards, he lived in a hotel in Suez and had to buy the bare necessities that he needed. He cabled me to borrow some money until his bank could set him up again. Travel was very challenging because of the heat, but he wasted no time and traveled to Cairo. He meditated in the Pyramid, and while there he confirmed his earlier impression that it was a temple for initiation.⁷⁴

PB wrote a second letter which said: I am going to Cairo; I have a minor leg injury, but I feel much better here than in India, so I am considering staying in the Mediterranean.

It would be very nice if PB stayed in Europe because Europe needs him more. In the USA they are not yet ready for a pure spiritual path; they live too superficially.⁷⁵

3 September 1946, New York

This is a group letter to the readers of my books who wrote to me this year.

I have to emphasise again, as I did in the letter of July 1939, that I am not a Master with students; I am more like a classmate, if maybe a little more advanced. I cannot become your Teacher because I cannot take such responsibility. When I visit your country, I will try to give interviews to some of the people who wrote to me, but I can't give anyone more than a single interview.

Since my return to the West, I haven't restarted lecturing or giving lessons, and I have no intention to do so. I don't want to work the way I used to. The real progress of student doesn't depend on these lectures, as the average seeker thinks. Although I don't have enough time for correspondence, as soon as a letter arrives, I read it immediately and respond mentally.

Thank you for appreciating my books and sending me peace.

PB

P.S. I also received a telegram from the Czech students celebrating the anniversary of my visit in Prague. I am grateful for this memory and the expression of

⁷³PB told me that he had his horoscope read when he was in Cairo in the early 1930s, and the astrologer predicted this shipwreck—which he reports in "A Search in Secret Egypt." In 1980 PB told me that he took the doomed ship anyway to test the astrologer's accuracy—because the astrologer had made other predictions PB wanted to be able to have some confidence in or to reject. In the event, he taped his passport to his chest so that his body could be identified if he drowned. He also took photographs of the sinking ship and their eventual rescue, which can be seen in the Paul Brunton Papers Visual Media Series (Items LP-3X5_047 "Ship 'Taiwan'", and LP-4X5_051 "Partially submerged ship, The Taiwan"). —TJS '22

⁷⁴In para 3-1 of the file "Paras from Various Eras," PB says that he spent every night for a month deepening his experience and going beyond that original initiation. —TJS '22

⁷⁵It is not clear who wrote this or when. I am guessing that it is Milada Capkova writing at the time of the receipt of the letters, but it could be Hoznourek. —TJS '22

their devotion. However, the memory that would please me the most would be your renewed pursuit of your self-perfection, improving your moral character and renewing the decision to rule out your weaknesses.

22 October 1947, New York

Dear Josef,⁷⁶

I received your letters dated 30 September 1946, December 1946, 1 January of this year (1947), 30 March, telegram of 5 April, 13 April, 29 April, 11 May, 24 July, the summer of 1947 without a date, and 1 October.⁷⁷ I apologise again for replying to these letters so late. My time is spent researching, meditating, and writing, so I have little time left for correspondence. Please remember that your letters are always welcome and that I read them immediately. My silence doesn't mean indifference on my part; on the contrary, I am still very interested in the spiritual process of you and all my Czech friends and students.

Because you have urgently asked for changes to the translation of "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" and the "The Wisdom of the Overself," I am sending them today...

Peace to all
PB

P.S. I have arrived in the Arizona desert where I plan to stay through the winter until April 1948. Send correspondence to the attached address in Arizona. Of course, my address in New York remains my permanent address for the Western Hemisphere.

25 October 1947, New York

This⁷⁸ letter was written to Mr. Josef Hoznourek.

This is a continuation of my letter of 22 October, 1947. I am now writing a book about the world crises assessed from a spiritual point of view and about the material future and spiritual destiny of mankind. This book will be finished next spring and will be published in English the first week in December.⁷⁹

I am grateful to hear how much you are looking forward to my visiting your country and how many people are expecting my arrival. If all my difficulties

⁷⁶Referring to Josef Hoznourek.

⁷⁷The original order as translated is "December 1946 and 30 September 1946; and letters from this year dated 1 January, 13 April, 30 March, 29 April, 11 May, 24 July, the summer of 1947 without a date, 1 October – and the telegram of 5 April." For clarity, I have straightened out the sequence in the body of the text. – TJS '22

⁷⁸Page 88 in the original; this sentence is in the original. – TJS '22

⁷⁹PB is referring to his final book "The Spiritual Crisis of Man" which wasn't published until 1952. – TJS '22

concerning traveling to Europe are solved, I should be able to arrive in your country next spring.

I would like to warn you again against the danger of falling into the trap of psychics and searching for phenomena, visions, miracles and other things which are still a subtle form of materialism and which are always associated with the personal ego. The true spiritual experience is higher, pure, and leaves you absolutely still and calm, while psychic visions leave you excited. The deepest spiritual experience goes beyond thoughts and feelings, beyond the personal ego. Only then can one contact the infinite life force which is behind everything and which is the true goal of this quest. You will reach the highest state by avoiding selfishness. The universal life force must take hold of your heart and mind. The thing that is the big obstacle {to achieving this}⁸⁰ is the personal ego, which thinks that it is complete and that it is separated from the universal life force. Only the philosophic discipline can overcome this selfishness of the ego; as Jesus said, you must lose your self to find your true Self.

To all Czech students who followed this discipline I again say:

Peace stay with you.

PB

The Works of PB (from pages 91–97)

{Translator's Note: These pages contain comments about the book "A Hermit in Himalayas." This book was supposed to be published in 1940, but because of the war it couldn't be published. It was translated by Ing.⁸¹ Jiri Elger and was published in 1947.

The first part of the book "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" was translated by Marie Maresova and Ing. Arnost Capek and the second part of the book "The Wisdom of the Overself" was translated by Ing. Jiri Elger. These books were published in the year 1947. –Marie Folprecht, 2022}

The Second Visit of PB to Prague in September 1948 (from pages 99–113)

{Editor's Note: The title of this section is: Instructions for pupils. During his stay in September 1948. The master dictated several pages for the private use of the students. The specific talks are on: The Vegetarian Question; Therapeutic Exercises for Sick Pupils; Character as the Basis of Spiritual Work; Prayer – An Exercise of Devotion; World Crisis; & Guru

The remainder of this section includes:

Page 127: Letter from PB, London, September 22, 1948 (Sent to J. Hoznourek)

Page 129: The Spiritual Crisis of Man (PB's final published book)

Page 131: Short letter from PB in 1958 & letter from PB in 1959

Page 133: Letter from Bianca Lussi, PB's Secretary 1965

Page 146: The Long Path and the Short Path (a common theme of PB's)⁸²

⁸⁰We have inserted "to achieving this" into the text for clarity. – TJS '22

⁸¹"Ing." is a title for those with a Master's degree. – TJS '22

⁸²I could not determine if this was a paraphrase of something PB spoke or wrote—or an essay based upon his teachings. – TJS '22

The second half of this book, from pages 155 – 235 are primarily student recollections of their interviews with PB. – TJS '22}

Editor's Appendix

Here are a few facts about life in Czechoslovakia during WWII. These "facts" are by no means exhaustive or even entirely accurate: they are drawn from history websites which have already gone through their own cycles of simplification and presentation. Unfortunately, only a few books about that time are available in English today, and most historians – say the reviewers – consider them unbalanced.

Suffice it to say that the experience of Nazi occupation here was as uneven as it was in many of the neighboring countries. Some of that is due to the demography of Czechoslovakia – part of it was already German-speaking, and another part was effectively Russian, while the remainder held on to their autonomy as best they could. Once they were occupied and chopped up into regions of Germany, Ukraine and Hungary (see the map), the Czechs were set to work producing munitions and armament for the Third Reich. Because of this, the Nazis needed their workers healthy(ish) and happy(ish) – and so they got better treatment than the neighboring nations which lacked the raw materials and factories to feed the German war machine. Ironically, the weaponry supplied by the Czechs helped Germany overrun Poland and France – who had thrown Czechoslovakia to the Germans in hopes of satiating Hitler's ambitions.

The German High Command also considered some of the Czech population capable of "Aryanization" and treated people of Germanic extraction considerably nicer than the rest – which obviously created further schisms within the Czech population itself. Since half of Czechoslovakia was taken inside Germany and another third taken into the Hungarian Empire, the fate of minorities was grim and also hard to get much information about. As one of the earliest such annexations, on the one hand, things were better at the beginning (for the non-Jews), and on the other, they got much worse as the war drew to a close. Eventually the Czech refugees were able to mount some troops to fight with the allies – but that earned them the notice of the Soviets, and that became their reality for many decades more.

It is my hope that this additional information is useful to the reader of PB's communications, which sadly have become timely once more. – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2022

