

PB Conversations with Kathleen Damiani

Editor's Note: This brief document was created by Mrs. Kathleen Damiani during PB's visit to the USA in July, 1977. Kathleen was the wife of Paul Damiani, Anthony Damiani's son. She and Paul lived in Valois, New York very near Wisdom's Goldenrod Center, which was one of the three places PB visited that year, and where he was staying for this visit. Anthony Damiani was PB's primary philosophical student and the founder of Wisdom's Goldenrod; three of his six sons – Paul, Louis, and Steve – were active members of that group, as was Kathleen herself. This file was created by Kathleen herself and was not reviewed by PB; we have left her formatting intact whenever possible.

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 – including page and para numbering – please see the file titled "Introductory Readers' Guide." We have introduced minimal changes to the text; our changes deal with inconsistencies of spelling, educated guesses at illegible words, and the rare modification of grammar for clarity's sake. Whenever there is any question as to whether what is typed is what PB wrote, please consult the associated scan of the original pages, currently to be found in a pdf of the same name. – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2020

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(3-1) PB notes – (his visit to Valois) from conversations with KD**

EM:³ PB, do you think you could come to dinner sometimes?

PB: I'll have to ask my Boss.

K: Will you accept dinner invitations?

PB: I don't know... I don't think so... it would only be under rare circumstances.

EM: ...(I think here she expressed some opinions about the world situation, or the benefits of staying one place over another, don't remember)

PB: You should go out and preach instead of cook.

([Later,]⁴ to me, referring to some cooking he liked (?): "your husband is a lucky man")

(3-2) (at dinner)

PB: there's only 3 things you really have to know:

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³ Referring to Ella May Damiani – Anthony Damiani's wife, Kathleen's mother-in-law.

⁴ The original editor inserted "Later," by hand.

- (1)⁵ that there is a higher power
- (2) the law of karma
- (3) there is a connection between you and higher self

(3-3) (next day, private conversation:)

PB: Men take longer to find out who they are, (their purpose in life) – takes till age 30. Women know sooner. They (men) find out through these events (ie, emotional relationships).

Family members reincarnate in same family over and over until they can be harmonious.

(You have to) give and take. Sometimes older soul has to be more tolerant than younger soul. PATIENCE. Fine line between being tolerant (allowing other to be himself) and being true to your own development. ...Think about situation, ask someone older like Ella May. Parents are helpful, they've been through it. Detachment is important. ...Can Tony⁶ really predict a marriage with astrology? (I had had a dream just before of him asking just this question. I told him and he just gave a big smile and repeated, "can he predict...")

(3-4) (next day)

PB: Takes women until 35 or 45 to recover their ideas and ideals. The instinctive life is very narrow and restricted. The average woman wants to love and be loved and have children. Others aren't satisfied with that. You have to make your own decision. Some decide to have family then realize it's not for them. ...

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(5-1) PB: Men don't have to go through passionate involvement (ie, there are other ways) ... PB then asked me about job. "What time is the interview? You are going to meet your destiny"... (I told him that I wanted to do – I think it was to make others happy) and he said: "Oh, maybe this job is a beginning... (he trailed off and was silent...) so I asked him "beginning of what?" He said, a beginning of a life of service to others ... you may start a movement." I asked him about dilemma of job and career vs. Center⁹ and study. He said, "there comes a time when you must find your teacher within."

⁵ The original editor inserted and arrow and " | " next to this list by hand.

⁶ Referring to Anthony Damiani.

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⁸ "2" in the original.

⁹ Referring to Wisdom's Goldenrod Center for Philosophic Studies – founded by Anthony Damiani in 1970.

(after being hired for job, I was upset over having to leave PB during the day. I considered telling them that I had to go to the hospital to get a cyst removed and therefore couldn't start work for several weeks. PB laughed and said "watch out. Don't lie; what you say might come true").

(5-2) (next day)

K: "That salad was out of this world!"

PB: "Absolutely!" with a big grin.

PB: ...(I had been telling him about me and Devon¹⁰ working on papers together.) [Talk turned to Egypt -]¹¹ "That's why her marriage broke up. If relics she brought back were authentic and (from) Tutenkammon... many others even remotely connected met tragic end. A lady interested in Egypt dropped dead of a heart attack in the streets of Cairo. It's a nice tourist place - sunny. But not if involved or attracted to occult... I received hieroglyphic message which the British Museum curator translated, telling me I would meet a Syrian at such and such place in Cairo. Two years later I did - a Syrian Christian, not a Muslim, a young jeweler, very interested in Philosophy; closed up his shop and spent the afternoon with me ... [we]¹² went to an Arabian restaurant. He went with me when I spent the night in Pyramid. He meditated outside, I inside. I never did find the Secret Chamber. I was told "not at this time." The pyramids go back much further than 4000 years - they go back to Atlantis. Scientists' instruments only record up to 4000. (There is) passage from Sphinx to Pyramid... blocked wall at Pyramid.

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(7-1) ...I asked him if I had guardians watching over me and he said yes. I asked him if the Sons of Man were still watching over the world and he said, "yes, from the astral plane."

(7-2) PB: ..."Mind is unique ... as soon as you have one, you have two, three, four, five... space is the form of World Mind... It's necessary to approach this (problem of World Mind) from different points of view.

(7-3) PB: The earth will get knocked around. 1/3 to 1/2 of the people will survive; (there will be a) cataclysm. Nature gets angry (at mankind) and shrugs her shoulders. ... (The

¹⁰ Referring to Devon Cottrell.

¹¹ The original editor inserted "Talk turned to Egypt" by hand.

¹² The original editor inserted "we" by hand.

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¹⁴ "3" in the original.

same thing happen in Atlantis)... streams flowed to countries; Africa arose. Everytime a continent sinks, a new one arises.

(7-4) PB: Tony was from Alexandria.¹⁵ He is most enthusiastic about Platonic ideas. Plotinus studied then. Either Plotinus or Proclus went to India... Sicily is right across from Alexandria. Alexandria was the meeting place of many cultures. Those who studies there brought together many points of view. That's why Tony is synthesizing East and West, etc... Maybe Tony will find out who he was when his book is published. Then he can compare it with Thomas Taylor. In the future, this will be called the Ithaca¹⁶ School of Philosophy (smiled).

(7-5) PB: Hypatia¹⁷ was tall like you – 59 feet (laugh), oh I mean 5'9", very athletic and well built. She swam a lot.

(He also told me about Blavatsky, that she swore a lot to get rid of insincere ladies. He also talked about Annie Besant, how she left family and lectured for HPB).

(7-6) PB: ...you should be an actress... (you're) intelligent, fast, and efficient.
...you're an individual...
...go now, conquer the world. Off to Washington!

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(9-1) PB: Jnana is knowledge of Brahman.

Atmananda meditated for 5 years. Teacher came one night and they disputed until Atmananda broke through. Jnana was necessary. He [(Atmananda)]²⁰ had to raise all doubts and be certain about them. Ramakrishna merged with highest. This was not enough. Someone came and told him this was not the highest, that he needed Jnana. There is still duality with merging. You come out of bliss.

...you have been around for a very long time, (he smiled).

(9-2) (On meditation and fear of death)

¹⁵ Ammonius Saccas was a famous dock-worker who influenced Plotinus and Origen; Anthony Damiani was a deep student of Plotinus and started out life as a dockworker – an interesting parallel. – TJS '20

¹⁶ Ithaca, New York

¹⁷ Referring to the Greek Neo-Platonist who lived in Alexandria in the 4th Century (and who was stoned by the Christians).

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¹⁹ "4" in the original.

²⁰ The original editor inserted "(Atmananda)" by hand.

PB: You must make the attempt to understand. It brings you out of the ego. (I then described the blissful feeling arising when a real question arose in me.) He agreed and said that "the same thing happens in meditation only almost everyone stops just short of the goal because of the feeling of annihilation – fear of death arises and stops person from achieving the highest. But he should persist and keep aiming at the highest. It's really very simple. There is nothing to fear. You only have to let go. You don't lose anything.You must try to understand then let go and let the higher power work. Realise you are not the one who does the understanding. This takes Grace – when the higher power works. You must wait – but with understanding."

(9-3) (Discussion on difference between nirvikalpa and sahaja and nirvana states)

K: ...the relation between Mind and World-Mind – distinction only in thought, from point of view of understanding? Knowledge or thought creates the problem and it is only thought of understanding that can unravel it?

PB: But you're thinking of human thought. What about World-Mind's thought – it is not in time. World-Mind is (like?) a point of light, contains (all?) possibilities.

K: World-Mind doesn't see a universe – people see the universe. World-Mind needs finite mind in order to project universe. So the connecting link seems to be Overself – it connects World-Mind and world.

PB: (smiled) Now go home and sleep on it.

10²¹

11²²

(11-1) During the conversation about Atmananda, PB had gotten very animated and seemed to be really directing intense attention to me. It was after dinner, the table was still uncleared, dessert not yet served, yet PB kept talking. He was telling e about Atmananda raising all doubts with the teacher all night. The atmosphere was ready to burst with electrifying intensity. Just then the doorbell rang. I almost popped. It was Louis Desarno²³ bringing spring water for PB. The tension was still unbearable as PB invited him in and asked him if he had any questions. I didn't know whether I should offer Louis a seat, or dessert or tea. Then I relaxed and figured it was up to PB to act, not me. Louis said no, he didn't have any questions. PB went on about Atmananda, engaging Louis in conversation. Louis remained standing but very relaxed and friendly; the atmosphere was still charged, and PB animated. Then we talked about the World-Mind. I was getting excited. PB turned to Louis and said, "her mind is quick, very quick, quicker than anyone I've met here." [Smiled and said "But that could be a

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²² "5" in the original.

²³ Louis Desarno was a student of Anthony Damiani and was Kathleen Damiani's neighbor.

problem.]²⁴ After Louis left, PB was still animated. I think he asked me what I wanted or what was my spiritual goal, can't remember the exact question I told him I couldn't say honestly that I wanted mystical visions, trance states, [bliss,]²⁵ or even truth, but to be a channel [for Overself.]²⁶ I said I thought man's highest function is to bear witness to the wisdom of God – to be a channel. He had walked out of the kitchen while I was talking, into the den; he stood with his back to me. Then he turned around, his face radiant with a beaming smile. "You have done that tonight. (pause) You can't always give expression to the highest. You must also worship silently. Go now." He stayed standing in the den, smiling, and I left.

(11-2) PB: Tony should retire if he wants to write a book.

(11-3) PB: It is important that you bring a fresh wave into the studies. You have more intelligence. You can go further.

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13²⁸

(13-1) I had mentioned to PB what I had recently been studying, Plotinus, the 5th Ennead; and had written a paper (on difference and non-being and [one/it]²⁹ as it related to IP). He asked if he could read it and did so.

PB: Your paper is original. It is saying the same thing as other traditions but in your own words. You got the point.

The³⁰ attempt to grasp (see) the Absolute – the expression of it actually defines who you are. It always expresses your own point of view.

Your³¹ higher Self is at once Being and Knowledge of itself; when you get a flash, this is recognition of Self-knowing-itself.

Every³² expression of the Absolute is really an expression of yourself; this is all it ever can be. St. Thomas Aquinas gave up writing – he realized that the attempt to describe the Absolute is the expression or definition of yourself – your own point of view only; that's all it ever can be.

K: You mean just like World-Mind or IP, in its attempt to grasp the Absolute it becomes intelligence – IP. It becomes defined as who it is – it becomes itself, a self.

²⁴ The original editor inserted "Smiled and said "But that could be a problem" by hand.

²⁵ The original editor inserted "bliss," by hand.

²⁶ The original editor inserted "for Overself." by hand.

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²⁸ "6" in the original.

²⁹ The original editor inserted "ONE/IT" by hand.

³⁰ The original editor inserted a check mark in the right margin of this paragraph by hand.

³¹ The original editor inserted a check mark in the right margin of this paragraph by hand.

³² The original editor inserted a check mark in the right margin of this paragraph by hand.

PB: The knowledge process is a spiral: going out and coming in – yin/yang. Every universe – World-Mind – must if it will manifest go according to this process.

(13-2) PB to Tina: Tell Elizabeth we're in the garden. (he meant me)

(13-3) PB: A disciple pressed Ramakrishna and he admitted there was a trace of ego left to carry on in the world.

(13-4) PB: Nirvikalpa Samadhi is a temporary state, you go in and come out. Sahaja is continuous. It is not true that a sage doesn't sleep. The body needs rest and one must conform to that need. Consciousness reduces itself to a pin prick but is still there.

(13-5) PB: (was relating how he was poisoned by hotel owner in India)...

India was highest and lowest – witchcraft and devilry. "Thugs" were a tribe of mean brutes in India, this is where the word came from.³³

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15³⁵

(15-1) I was telling PB how he might like to live in this area, rent a house with a garden of live in the guest cottage.

PB: Yes it's a good idea.

K: What's a good idea?

PB: Either one – renting a house or living in the guest cottage. But I'll have to ask the World-Mind.

K: Don't ask – plead!

PB: World-Mind doesn't listen. If he did, everyone's wishes would contradict each other. There's the law of Karma, too, which must be obeyed. (pause) I'll have to live in a hotel for awhile while I get my things in order.

K: What about your furniture?

PB: I'll give it away.

K: The boys³⁶ will make furniture for you in the Fall – anything you like.

PB: All's I need is a small bed – single – with a tilting bottom and top, adjustable, and a small round table – low – for eating so I can squat while I eat. I have library

³³ The so-called Thuggees or strangler-gangs of India, persecuted during the 1830s, the thugs were targeted for eradication by the Governor-General of India, Lord William Bentinck, and his chief captain, William Henry Sleeman. Current scholarship suggests the thuggees were a creation of the British Raj as a means of suppressing rebels without due process. – TJS '20

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³⁵ "7" in the original.

³⁶ Referring to Paul Damiani, Vic Mansfield, Andrew Holmes, and other members of Wisdom's Goldenrod who had built all its buildings. – TJS '20

shelves – adjustable. The furniture must be very light and easy to move. (pause) You must not think too much about the future – or the past – you must live in the eternal Now.

(15-2) PB: The Center needs someone like you to take charge of the neurotics and see that they straighten up. No one should be allowed to study philosophy until they take their therapy course. You have common sense.

(15-3) PB was discussing a question Om had about Christianity, on sin etc.

PB: "Crucifixion is symbolic of crucifixion of ego which is necessary for salvation."

(15-4) Last morning, just before his departure: (he asked if I had any last questions)

K: I don't feel I have any pressing needs or wants. I feel that everything I need is within, that I have been on the right track and that you've totally affirmed me.

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(continued from the previous page) PB: You mean you feel more self-reliant and self-sufficient?

K: Yes.

PB: Yes, you are on the right track. You needed confirmation from a source outside yourself.

K: I want the higher power to flow through me – to subjugate the self-will.

PB: You must learn to distinguish feeling from .(?). Don't always go by circumstances, they're not always correct. When you choose something right, try to remember what accompanied the decision or idea – what you felt like when choosing. If you're on the wrong track it may hit you sharply, otherwise it comes gently.

(I was also dying to ask him if I was in Alexandria but Tony and Jeff³⁹ came to the door to take PB to the plane. I got as far as asking PB if we were in Alexandria and he said "don't you think Tony was?" I said "yes, and how about you, were you there?" and he said yes. Then he had to get his things together. As he left the house, he stopped and turned to me. His parting words were, "I'll be with you."

(17-1) ** When () is used in the middle of a quote, it is my own words or an interpretation when I couldn't recall PB's exact words.

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³⁸ "8" in the original.

³⁹ Referring to Jeff Cox, member of Wisdom's Goldenrod.

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