

Charlene Temple (formerly MacDowell) & Richard MacDowell's Interview with Paul Brunton in Hector, NY June 1, 1977-a

TOPIC: PB Interview

SUBJECT: Charlene Temple & Richard MacDowell

SUBSUBJECTS: The Quest, Philosophy, Meditation, Realization, Balance, Patience

CONTENTS:

PB's relationship with Anthony and shared fundamental interests
Warning about maintaining balance and equilibrium
Philosophy as "love of wisdom" (original Greek meaning); not limited to any particular cultural or religious philosophy; philosophy for human beings as human beings
Metaphysics as beginning where physics ends; theory and practice beyond physical investigation
Psychology drawing from multiple schools; personal study and experience; original thinking required
Investigation of self and inner being; understanding the external world
Integration of both halves to make complete whole; involvement of whole being: mind, emotions, feelings, intuitions
CT's realization about individuality and freedom; PB's response about alternating periods of clarity and frustration
Discussion of obstacles serving a purpose; emphasis on patience, especially in meditation
Balancing worldly responsibilities with inner work
Daily practice of turning inward; establishing contact with Higher Self
Rewards of the Quest: peace of mind; finding truth and reality; ability to commune with divine element within
RM's frustration with grasping infinite concepts; PB's explanation of the impossibility for finite mind to grasp infinite
Necessity of letting go and surrendering to higher power; transition from intellectual effort to intuitive understanding
Discussion of faith vs. starting without faith
Recognition of inner pushing/guidance as sign of help; inner aspiration and inner guidance working together
PB's personal testament: lifetime commitment since teens; finding the Overself; natural, undramatic quality of the realization
Assurance that even partial attainment is worthwhile
No escape from the spiritual quest - it returns in other forms
Individual pacing according to personal strength

Life itself as the source of the calling

NOTES:

- This is the first of two entries for June 1, 1977. See also 1977 0601b (Metaphysical Chart Class).
- Dating note: originally misdated 5/1/77; corrected to early June 1977 based on PB's arrival timeline and scanned transcript notation. Tentatively dated June 1.
- At Anthony Damiani's request, Paul Brunton visited the United States in 1977. The purpose of this visit was to meet the Ohio PB study group (long affiliated with Wisdom's Goldenrod), meet all of Anthony's students at Wisdom's Goldenrod, and consider the possibility of spending his final years in or near Wisdom's Goldenrod. PB resided at the home of Bert and Terri Salmirs, in Hector, NY, and met with students individually or in small groups. Some of these interviews were held at the Salmirs' home.
- Two other versions of this transcript exist: one in PB Visits 2 (More Interviews) (available at <https://www.pbarchives.org/archive/document/writing/96>, pp. 107-115 of the text-searchable PDF) and another in the archives' scan files (1977 0600 PBI by Charlene MacDowell.PDF). These transcripts differ significantly in several ways. First, the audio recording for the present transcript is incomplete. The other two versions are based on more complete audio and contain material not present here. Second, the transcribers of the other versions did not transcribe everything audible on their recordings, representing editorial choices rather than incomplete audio. As a result, this present transcript contains sentences and passages absent from those versions. Third, the transcripts reflect different interpretations of the audio in numerous places, with words and phrases heard differently by the respective transcribers and punctuation varying in ways that affect flow. For the most comprehensive understanding of this interview, readers are encouraged to consult all three versions, as each preserves different aspects of the conversation.

TRANSCRIBED Verbatim by IT, LCB 2025. **Archival verbatim transcript – V14a.**

AUDIO FILES: 1977 0601a (formerly 0501a). [Note 1: Mediocre sound quality, lots of background static. Note 2: This is an incomplete recording—portions of the interview are missing from this audio file.]

**1977 06/01a Charlene Temple (formerly MacDowell) & Richard MacDowell's
Interview with Paul Brunton in Hector, NY
Archival verbatim transcript**

[Audio File 1977 0601a (formerly 0501a) Begins]

PB: Well, Tony is of course, he founded this place and he's teaching what interests him. [RM assents] Of course, I've known him for many years and he's been interested in what I've written, but he's also interested in other branches of the field and other writers so I'm not familiar with everything he is teaching here. And, what may serve his students are things which he is also studying. But on the fundamental, which is some philosophy, some psychology, some metaphysics, some meditation, we hold some common thoughts. On that I can of course say something.

Well, [10¼ second pause] the basic need is first of all to understand that a balanced approach is necessary. You must keep your equilibrium in this work. And you probably know that there is, unfortunately, a tendency to go off balance among a section of those who are interested in these subjects. And you should avoid following their example. Firstly, keep your feet on earth while you look up towards heaven and use your common sense. Otherwise there are temptations to err on one side or the other or become fanatical, extreme, and even to get sidetracked into undesirable areas and subjects which can even be dangerous. So, you must have a certain amount of caution and prudence. That's a preliminary warning.

Well apart from that, since we are seeking an all-around knowledge and understanding of, first of all, our own being, and especially our inner being and our own self, especially the highest and best layers of that self, we have to learn to be prepared to have to stretch our minds 'cause we're entering uncommon studies, although they'll be getting more and more known now, and unfamiliar territory. So, you will be compelled, if you want to go on with it, to push yourself, push your mind as far as you can stretch in these directions and not attempt a work which cannot be done only with the equipment which is needed for all ordinary studies, the ordinary conventional studies. And there I particularly refer to those two fields, first the meditation and second of metaphysics.

In every case, I use words which may be used and have been used in ordinary study in a certain conventional way, but I try to use them in their original meaning. For instance, I call this philosophy, and you hear of all sorts of philosophies. And, I take the word 'philosophy' as it was used by the men who invented it, and the Greeks making up the name from two Greek words. It is the love of wisdom. The word 'wisdom' there originally had not only the inclusion of the meaning of a well-ordered, very knowledgeable, and balanced knowledge, but also a profound penetration into the meaning of life here. What-- what we are finding as purpose in life. And what is the wisest purpose we can find. And what is the meaning of self. What is our nature in its full extent and not merely the physical, intellectual, emotional. So, you mustn't limit yourself to the thought that this is merely another attempt to add one more philosophy. But it's an attempt to be as comprehensive as we can, as wide, and take in the meaning which is behind *all* philosophies, at least what they hope or believe to find as the best.

So we cannot label ourselves, we cannot say this is Christian philosophy and this is Turkish philosophy, or that this is British philosophy, American philosophy. We can't. They may come in [RM assents] as

offering contributions, fragments, but we want something which is above all these limitations of what a particular group or tribe think and believe.

We consider ourselves as human beings looking for a philosophy for human beings. That what race, what religion they belong to is not the important matter for us. So we can't limit ourselves. So we search and try to understand what has been understood and it's what-- not only in the past by the ancients or by the medieval people or by our modern people.

And then we try also to use our own thinking process and think for ourselves, not only about what we studied, but by what we've experienced in life. So we try to bring it all together, and using that for our own search and our own personal quest as a whole human being. Each one has in the end to search and judge, think for himself and come to his own conclusions and not just copy any particular group, even if it's his own group. He has to still think for himself and there's only one place and that's within himself. So that's philosophy.

Metaphysics we look upon as beginning where physics ends. We are not scientists in the trains-- in training the work of science. Some, maybe, it may be their job, but we're just using intelligence. And we try to take science as it is and respect its attitude, but we think its attitude is not enough. It's not wide enough. And so we look into things in areas where science refuses to enter, but which we think since it deals with-- with things which have come up in the experiences of quite a number of human beings and in their thinking, we must look into also and not limit ourselves to the investigations of official science. So that is done too. And so we go beyond physics and hence 'meta' meaning beyond. We go beyond in theory and practice. And so on.

With psychology, we don't belong to any particular school of psychology. We look into most of them and also the ancients of-- and, we go through them, and then we look into our own study and experience of ourselves and of others. Out of it all comes psychology as we understand it. And you may find bits of different teachings from different people, but you also find some original thoughts. You have to learn always to think for ourselves as well and not depend solely on what others say, then you're at their mercy. That's all together with the investigation into self and with the teachings which have been given us by the religions of the world. We don't reject them, we don't accept them, but we look into them and we try to see what-- what of them seems sound. We try to test them and respect them, but we don't judge them. We again look for what seems sound [one word inaudible] us as individuals, and we can let the rest go, whether it's true or not. You find according to our ability to weigh a thing, and we have to weigh it.

So, we come out of the knowledge of some knowledge about ourselves. But then what about this, the world is outside us. Science explores the world outside and the world within as far as it can. We therefore cannot ignore the world without, and, we have to deal with it as well and find out what meaning it has for us. We try to find out the meaning of self and now we have to look for the meaning, the place, of what is outside ourselves, the world. And, with that and with self, we get two halves of life. There's nothing else but ourselves and what we find ourselves, outside ourselves. The two together constitute the life experience.

So, we cannot limit ourselves either to pure mysticism on the one hand, which is occupied with finding what it can inside and inside our consciousness or inside religion. But we have also to understand our experience in the world. What is the world? What am I? The two have to be put together to make the

complete whole. And that is that all-ness. The all-ness of the experience is as much a field as we can cover and all we need to cover. What is the meaning of the world, and what is the meaning of life, and what am I. All that we would look into. And to the extent that we can, we find that we may not fully cover that [one word inaudible] but we try.

And secondly, since it is an investigation on living also, not merely a study, we have to bring in our body and its behavior and its conduct, its reactions in the world. How we do it, why we do it, and what *should* we do with it, how *should* we behave, how should we conduct ourselves and our relations with the world and relations with other human beings. All that has to be looked at, not only with the intellect, but just as much with the feeling nature. We have to feel also because we are human and we *do* feel. We have feelings, we have passions, and we have intuitions. We have to make use of all this and learn how to make use of it properly, and if possible, in harmony with that mysterious mind, power, being, what people call God, and which seems to be behind the universe. Everything in the universe, including us, and our relationship with God, all of that must also be found. So the mind, the emotions, and the thoughts, the intuitions, everything is thrown into the work, it's a search with one's whole being. It takes time. And, it will take a lifetime with most of us. But that's alright. We could do what we can and leave it at that.

And we don't feel that we're missing anything. It in itself has a satisfaction. Even if we don't succeed in learning everything, we feel we're moving in the right direction. It's true you will find some people who feel they found very little or there's something else, just a better use of their energies. And they accordingly withdraw and look at something else which offers better results.

CT: Lately, I've begun to just slightly realize my individuality and-- and it's such a freeing feeling because when you envy others or when you think you can force yourself to fit into a certain path that just doesn't feel quite right it's very-- it's very suffocating, and, when you start to accept yourself it just seems like everything is possible to do what you can.

PB: Yes, you get some periods and moods when that occurs. [short pause] Although it's punctuated with most people by the opposite kind of period when you seem frustrated and things are difficult. This is all in the beginning stage. Yeah. They're obstructions to be overcome.

CT: Shouldn't they serve good purpose?

PB: Everything serves a purpose. There it is. But one has to learn patience. A very necessary thing. In this study, and, especially in meditation, if you want to know meditation, you can't expect to go through it in a few weeks, or in a few months, and reach the goal. That happens but only for very few, the geniuses, but normally one must be prepared for the exercise of a greater patience 'cause you're asking for one of the greatest things--the control of thought. Normally the thoughts are very much addicted to wandering around. You can't deny that fact. So they have to be trained and disciplined. It's very difficult to do it by yourself. So, you do what you can and your own Higher Self will come in at a certain stage of your efforts and complete the work or carry it further forward. It will help you, but you have first to try to help yourself, to show you're earnest, the (earnest) of your intention. [16½ second pause]

So, all this has to be done with balance. Balancing what life provides. [short pause] So that you're able to cope with the world and do what you have to do with the world [couple words inaudible] and all that sort of thing. And yet you have to also-- to be able to forget it all at certain times of the day when you can

steal five minutes or half an hour, forget all that, turn 180 degrees around and look at something which is quite a different nature, to look at within you. [17 second pause] And thus you establish eventually contact or communion with your Higher Self. You can call it God (if) you like, but it's the-- it's a part of God in you. It's the contact you have with God, a cable which runs between and through that. And, you have the chance eventually of fulfilling (this--) your incarnation in the world.

All that's just a rough, you know, brief glance at a part of what philosophy covers. [short pause] But we're trying to deal with it as a reality, as something that is not merely a theory. It's something to be lived and therefore it has its rewards. And the greatest reward is first of all the peace of mind it bestows. There are other rewards, and you discover them later. But the first thing coming as a human being, and every human being has cares, difficulties, anxieties, and (movements). To let all that go is to feel, you know, as if a great weight is gone off your shoulders and that is peace of mind. [14¼ second pause]

And then there is a-- a father grade again, which is possible, but not so easy as getting the peace, and that is finding truth. Truth is knowing, feeling, understanding of what is the reality which is, and that is the only reality, this thing which connects you with God and which is the element of God in you. The ability to commune with that at any time is also worth a great deal. And it's something that eventually everyone would have to do. It's not-- It's the purpose of living life. [40¾ second pause]

Have you any other question that comes up in your mind as a result of the reading of my book?

RM: I find it difficult to-- something that's so beyond my own experience, I find that I'm frustrated because I know that-- that the philosophy has an infinite basis and I keep trying to make a finite basis for my concepts to understand them.

PB: Yes, well that is true of course, the finite and the infinite. Apparently the finite mind can never grasp what is infinite, but-- That is true on this side, this level. [9½ second pause] So at a certain point you give up trying what seems impossible. How can the little finite mind take on what is immeasurably beyond it? What transcends it is on a different level, and not even on a level. Beyond levels. So it seems impossible, and it is impossible. Therefore, at a certain point, you have to learn to let go of your reference. You don't try anymore at a certain point. You let go and you turn the whole problem of-- you give up. You say, "I can't (master) this. I can't grasp this. And I know no way of understanding what is beyond my puny capacity. So I turn it over to you." Whatever greater mind is behind us, you know, you turn it over to that. You let go. And you try to wait as calmly as you can, and, keep as quiet as you can, not trying to do anything. It would be impossible for you perhaps to stop your thoughts, but then you can quieten them down and wait. And you can go on doing this once a day and leave it at that. Put your feeling into it too of course. And leave it at that. Leave your request with the higher power. 'Cause the action has now to come from it, not from you. And it will begin sooner or later to open the way for you to understand with your intuition. With that you-- you can feel, know, and be simultaneously (on point) what you cannot with the intellect. That is what you should do. And you're baffled. And you acknowledge it, confess it, and let go.

RM: That's difficult. (weeps)

PB: I know, but you have to try now. You have to work at this. But don't overload, don't use yourself, your ego, to try to do everything. It can carry you to a point and there you let go, can't go deeper. It has then to learn to receive, to accept. [10½ second pause]

So you need hope. [55 second pause] I suppose it also requires at the beginning some amount of faith. So you have to be willing to give that but-- One could also win through starting without the faith, only it's harder. It's incredibly (hard). If one could find the faith then it's easier. But it still requires the work to be done. [9¼ second pause]

Anyway, the very fact that you take some interest in this, that you looking, beginning to look into it, and all of the difficulties and doubts that may arise along (with it), but still you-- you're trying, shows you are being pushed. What is pushing you to do this? It's not pushing you maybe to do it. It doesn't care. Why you-- It is pushing you. Its pushing you [12 second pause] is itself a sign that you're being helped and that your very queries and doubts are being prompted because you're being made to interest yourself, and through that interest to work and to find a way. And that which is pushing you will also help you to find. It works both ways. Part of it works as the inner aspiration that you have, and a part as the inner guidance that is being given from your own Higher Self. [9½ second pause]

Anyway, I can tell you, I must be double your age, that it's-- it's a worthwhile quest, and I've been at it since my teens. I've gone through the periods of skepticism, of foolish but complete faith that was misplaced, and all the other attitudes that the intellect, all that the emotions can pull you into. And I've come out of them and found my way to something that is there, that I know is there, and that is very real and does not deprive me of my practicality or common sense, and yet is very, very far away from this world. It is there for me and it's very real, but it doesn't-- it doesn't seem to me anything more than something that is there as much as this table. And the ability to recognize this seems perfectly natural to me. And the peace of mind it's given seems quite ordinary and natural to me. And what measure of truth I found also seems perfectly natural, that's what is. That's how it was (with me). And that's as it is, there's nothing dramatic about it. [15½ second pause]

So you too can get some measure, even if it's only a part or a fraction, still it's something and it's worthwhile. It repays the time given. But there's no escape here. If one drops the thing, you can drop it for the rest of your life. Well, you don't escape. It comes back in another way. [9 second pause] Well, some come back more quickly and others take a very long time but they have to come back. Why-- [23 second pause] But you can make your own pace, you can go slowly, quickly according to your strength. You're not asked to be a genius and do too much too quickly. [short pause] And it's life itself which is asking you.

[Audio File 1977 0601a (formerly 0501a) Ends]