Richard Rose's Psychology of the Observer: The Path to Reality Through the Self

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Foreword

During the autumn of 1976, I first encountered Rose's teaching in a Los Angeles college on a poster in the Psychology Department. From the last line on it: "The Final Observer is One," I intuitively recognized that the person who wrote that "note in a bottle" to the rest of us drones in fantasyland had stepped outside our total realm into objective reality and Knew. I joined the local group, then went to the Farm for two weeks in the summer of 1977 to meet Rose and the others. After finishing the first half of graduate school in 1979, I moved to Pittsburgh and spent six years actively involved with the group in all aspects. In 1985, I moved back to California to finish the PhD program in Counseling Psychology. In part, I intended to make my career and identity a form of ladderwork. Another reason was that I knew I needed to totally immerse myself in Rose's teaching, work through every single aspect of it to the best of my understanding, and compile it into one comprehensive treatise, for my own benefit as much as for anyone else's. This manuscript was that dissertation. I hope it does service to Rose's genius and helps seekers clarify the path for themselves.

- John Kent

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Dedicated in gratitude to Richard Rose for his generous gift to us, and to my fellow "Rosebuds" of the TAT Foundation who labor to make it Reality.

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Re: "Killing the Buddha": According to Rose, a crippled chicken can still lay a healthy egg. And according to Zen, after Realization, as mountains are once more mountains, thus too chickens are once more chickens. Nonetheless, while this finger pointing at the moon is crooked and dirty, its aim is true. Sometimes, the Buddha commits suicide for us...

Abstract

This study describes the system of Transpersonal Psychology of spiritual philosopher and Zen teacher, Richard Rose. He calls this teaching the Albigen System, which has as its core the set of principles of mental inquiry referred to as the Psychology of the Observer.

The aim of this work is to approach Reality. The system recommended provides ways and means towards this goal through the purification of one's state-of-mind and self-definition. Based on his own experience, Rose claims this process of inner and outer work will lead the seeker to Enlightenment or Self-Realization, if diligently followed out to the end.

Rose considers this search for ultimate sanity to be the real work of psychology. His system is a practical, common-sense approach to Validity and incorporates esoteric principles dealing with the correction of the mundane, human psyche, as well as the navigation through the more transpersonal aspects of the mind-dimension. A methodology is offered for the transmutation of energy in the process of "becoming the Truth." The goal of the work is to arrive at the absolute state-of-being, which is said to forever answer all questions and resolve all desires.

This study presents Rose's teaching in an organized, systematic manner, explaining the meanings of and interrelationships among the principles involved, and ties in relevant material from similar spiritual doctrines, such as Advaita Vedanta, Gurdjieff's Fourth Way, Vipassana Buddhism, Kundalini, Jnana, and Raja Yogas, and Zen.

Rose's transpersonal "map," called Jacob's Ladder, is the central framework of his introspective system and is described in detail, including both its therapeutic and mystical aspects in refining the definition of Self as the final observer.

Chapter 1

Psychology of the Observer:
Origins and Purpose

I am a mirror that madness looks upon and sees a hope surmounting foolishness. (Rose, 1982, p. 95)

This book will present a system of transpersonal psychology called the Albigen System. This teaching is claimed by its creator, Richard Rose, to lead one to the direct realization of the Absolute stateofbeing, or in religious terms: union with God. Rose considers this experience to be the ultimate meaning of Selfdefinition; the final answer to the question, "Who am I?" His work is devoted to fulfilling the Delphic Oracle's maxim: "Know thyself, and all the gods and universe shall be known to you as well." Selfknowledge is the cornerstone of the temple.

Richard Rose: The Man And His Search

Rose devised the Albigen System to be a comprehensive transpersonal map to the Self. His purpose has been to lead the seeker as quickly as possible to a personal realization of the final goal pointed to by the highest spiritual teachings throughout history.

One might justifiably wonder at this point how Rose came to know about spiritual matters and by what right he claims to be an authority on the subject. After all, if a student of truth encounters a teaching that purports to guide one towards Godhood, at the expense of much time, energy, and commitment, one should have some tentative confidence that the teacher's convictions have been validated by experience and are not based on mere conjecture or salesmanship.

This very question was once posed to Rose at a lecture in which he was making critical comments of evaluation about assorted religious doctrines and Godconcepts. The questioner may have been religiousminded and was offended by Rose's opinions, or perhaps himself had reason to be wary of possibly one more fraudulent religious teacher. Whatever the motive, this skeptical person asked a legitimate question; one which Rose too would have asked had the positions been reversed.

The fellow asked: "You're talking a lot about Godbut what makes you such an authority on God?" Rose faced him and unflinchingly replied: "I am God." There was a tense, deadstill hush in the room at this seemingly blasphemous, grandiose claim. Then, he added: "And so is each one of you. The big difference is: you don't know that. I do."

Rose's assertion is that he has experienced the final goalstate of the spiritual quest, and thus is able to offer commentary and advice to fellow seekers from that vantage point of realization. His stated desire has been to save people time and unnecessary hardship by describing what he considers to be the most direct path through the long maze of duality and delusion.

His own search had been largely a blend of intuition, experimentation, struggle, and luck. From this process, and the answer with which he claims it culminated, he was able to define the essential principles of inner work that he feels every serious seeker needs to know, as well as point out the common traps and tangents that may seduce or divert the unwary traveler (Rose, l986b).

Referring to the factors that make for success and the destiny that seemed to shape his own life, Rose admitted that he had always felt himself to have been born under a "lucky star." In retrospect, he considered himself to have been guided through different phases of search, by an unseen Intelligence, towards an answer he did not anticipatenor would have desired.

Rose entered a Catholic seminary as a teenager to study the traditional church doctrines. He found that the personal search for God was not encouraged there, and was even actively thwarted. His desire for honest answers to questions about religious issues was not satisfied. He was instructed to believe that knowledge of theological dogma and devotion to the church was all to which one could-or shouldaspire, as God was forever unknowable to the human being, and accessible only indirectly through religious symbolism or faith in a designated intermediary.

Rose was not willing to accept this as a conclusion to his spiritual search, and left the seminary after a few years. In college, he turned towards science, working on the possibility that if he could come to fully know the composition of matter and the workings of the physical world, he might be able to take an inferential step from there and discover the nature of the metaphysical reality beyond its boundaries, and perhaps even the Creator of the universe.

After a few years of such study, he realized that this external, materialistic domain of search would never lead to the comprehensive answer for which he was searching, but could only result in further fragmentation and complexity without end. He did not think it was possible in one lifetime to ever know all the factors and their interrelationships that make up the physical dimension, and that even if it was, there was no guarantee that such knowledge would result in the spiritual understanding he really wanted.

By this point in his early 20's, his intuition had developed to the point where he realized more clearly what he was after and what it might take to find it. The existential doubt about the value of life, while the nature and meaning of that life was unknown, grew. He had the conviction that life was not worth living if he did not know who was living and why, and that he must do everything he could to find out.

Having exhausted his hopes of finding philosophical truth through materialistic science alone, and with his religious upbringing still fresh within him, he began to suspect that much of the answer to his questions about life could only be found from an objective vantage point outside of life; in other words: in death. He thought that possibly in the realm of death, the illusions and limitations of life would be dispelled, and the true perspective on existence, as well as one's relationship with God, would be found. At this point, he was still expecting the spiritual quest to culminate in the encounter with an objective, benevolent, personal God, separate from himself.

Rose would also later admit that much of his philosophical desire was motivated by fear: the fear of death, the fear of dying in ignorance, and the fear of oblivion. So, with this as an additional motive, his curiosity led him to wonder how he could come to know about the reality of death. The

obvious answer that occurred to him was: if one wants to know what death is like-find a dead person and ask him.

This took Rose's search into the domain of spiritualism. Although well aware of the dangers of desiremotivated hallucination, as well as outright fraud, his studies led him to believe it might be possible to witness genuine materializations of the souls of the departed, and inquire into their knowledge and experience of the other side. But, in this too, Rose was to be disappointed.

After studying the psychic/occult world for awhile and going down numerous dead ends in spiritualist exploration, Rose claims to have finally experienced at least one genuine encounter with the astral remains of some deceased persons in a séance. But, the answers he received from them to his questions about the nature of the deathstate, the larger significance of life, and their knowledge about God or Christ were all vague, and their quality or presence of mind was mediocre. Realizing now that people do not automatically become wise just because they become dead, Rose was forced to conclude that they knew no more about Reality than he did, and that indeed, as Christ stated: "The dead know nothing".

At this point, Rose arrived at a major insight about the nature of his path; one he was to repeatedly emphasize throughout his subsequent teaching. He realized that he would never be able to find the truth, as a condition or state apart from himself. He also intuited that the truth was not something that could be learned or acquired, in the sense of one's looking for the ultimate philosophical conceptstructure or beliefsystem to embrace and maintain. The answer would have to be somewhere inside himself, not out in the world of things and thoughts.

His intuition told him that, whatever the final answer might be that he hoped to eventually find, he would have to experience it personally and directly. He also sensed that for such an interior realization to occur he would have to undergo some process of personal refinement, so that he would be able to more meticulously search for the truth, as well as "receive" it, should the truth be found. He would have to know and perfect himself as a seeker.

There was another significant implication to this need for accurate selfdefinition. As the fear of death strengthened his urge for survival, and there was little hope of the body's becoming immortal, Rose realized he would have to more precisely know who it was who was faced with death, and exactly what aspect of himself might realistically hope for immortality.

It was at this point that he made the commitment to himself that he would dedicate the rest of his life to doing everything he could to find "God," or the final answer that incorporates all of life and death. He felt certain that this would be the most important thing he could do with his life, and that life itself would have no justification if this effort was not earnestly made. And, while knowing that there was no guarantee of success, he consoled himself with the thought that, at the end of his life, should he still not have found what he was after, he would know that he had not wasted his life chasing shadows, and could face death with selfrespect.

Faced with the task of selftransformation, Rose wholeheartedly embarked on a multilevel manner of search. From age 21 to 28, he followed a strict yogic lifestyle: vegetarian diet, yoga exercises, celibacy, and long periods of isolation. He studied every available religious, philosophical, and psychological teaching. He experimented with different forms of meditation. He traveled to find groups, teachers, coworkers, and systems of inner work. He isolated the principles and techniques from each source that seemed meaningful and applied them to himself. He studied himself, intensely, from all angles. He did everything he could do to find wisdom and "God."

Rose was rewarded with peace of mind and emotional contentment. He had tremendous vitality and mental clarity. He could see the beauty, wholeness, and perfection of the natural world.

He was in harmony with himself and walked in balance with the flow of life. He experienced mystical bliss. He was free of all external concern, all temptation, all fear. He was his own master and felt that, in a sense, he had conquered the world. He imagined God was smiling down upon him from Heaven.

But yet, after seven years of this, Rose knew this was not the final answer he was seeking. A part of him was still seriously unsatisfied. He saw the grandeur of the world, but did not know what the world was, or Who created it. He felt the joy of life, but did not know what life was, or for. He believed himself to be blessed by God, but did not know this God or His purposes. He became a free man, but he still did not know who he wasultimately. And he knew he was not free of death.

Rose became acutely aware of the passage of time and that the reflection in the mirror was becoming less flattering. He was forced to admit to himself that this long period of tranquility, punctuated by moments of ecstasy, did not really answer his core concerns about the real nature of existence. Furthermore, he was aware that death was always waiting in the wings to finally negate his experience of paradise.

Rose began to feel that his quest for spiritual verity was hopeless and wondered if he had not been kidding himself all along with a massive exercise in egotism. There no longer seemed any justification for him to assume that God was around the next corner, ready to reveal Himself. He had lived in expectation that at any moment, the heavens would part, the bugles would blow, and the angels would descend in their golden chariots to greet him and whisk him away to glory. But, as Rose wryly noted, "They never came."

With his reclusive, ascetic lifestyle, he also felt that perhaps the life and simple joys of an ordinary human being were passing him by. He had exhausted every form of inquiry and discipline he could think of and it had not worked. He did not know what else to do. So, he quit.

Or rather: he tried to quit. He made motions to reenter social life and pursue the more conventional goals of family and career. Yet, despite the conviction of seeming futility, he continued to find himself in libraries, studying philosophy, doing his yoga exercises, and relentlessly examining the subjective issues that obsessed him.

He became more frustrated. One reason for this was his being able to find little reliable information and experienced guidance during his years of eager search. Rose did admit to going through much philosophical material during this period that was thoughtprovoking and served to bring up personal issues which he needed to examine; Blavatsky's Theosophy and Paul Brunton's works in particular.

Still, Rose considered much of the spiritual teachings available to him to be either too shallow and simplistic or lacking in practical methodology to be of much help in leading him to valid answers. He found most of the existent groups that he investigated to be filled with sham and pretension, rather than a mature, sensible approach to philosophical inquiry. But, most infuriating to him was his discovering that too many of the spiritual teachers he encountered were phony. He realized that they not only did not have the real "goods," but often had motives with their students that were mercenary, predatoryor sexual.

These experiences had a strong impact on Rose, and would influence much of his own later teaching. One result during this period was his making the vow that should he ever find anything of value at the end of his search, he would make it readily available to whoever was interested, plainly and without a fee. He was later to explain that he believed this vow to have been an important part of the formula leading up to his Realization. He suspected that it might not have occurred had he not first made this commitment to pass along whatever might be "given" to him.

These experiences of frustration and disappointment in his search, while proving to be grist for the mill of self study, had a second, significant effect on Rose: one that may be reflected even in the tone of this report. This attitude is best summed up in his insistence that doubt should be the chief mode of inquiry, rather than belief.

Rose learned the value of discrimination and rejection of the false or less essential throughout his years of philosophical investigation. He intuitively followed the path of negation, and did not hesitate to criticize what he considered to be inadequate, or altogether absurd. His aim was to arrive at a stateofmind that was free of all impurity, and not be misled into the complacency of an unproven and possibly unworthy faith.

This combination of anger and discernment resulted in a style of teaching that stresses judgment, not acceptance. His views have sometimes been criticized as being "negative", but to this he routinely responds, "Negative to what?". By this, he means that the negation of negativity (the false) is true positivity, as versus the indulgence in the affirmation of rationalizations, born of laziness, desire, or fear that this term often really means.

This seemingly irreverent attitude likewise manifests throughout this report in the attention paid to Rose's critical evaluations of the numerous philosophical and psychological issues that must be examined. In addition, his tendency to encourage turmoil and confusion in the seekeror rather, to provoke one to see that this really is one's usual statein the process towards genuine knowing, will also be much in evidence. He explains:

> If I can create a hypodermic, it has not been intended for any sensitive posterior, but is rather aimed at the heart and head. I feel that time is short and that honest men will appreciate honesty in the long run. I wish to reach those who prefer to encourage wakefulness... (Rose, l978, p. 70).

Rose continued to walk his path, not quite knowing what he should do, yet "playing the drama of life with one face and looking eagerly to heaven with the other" (Rose, l973, p. 224). The tension between dual desires, and the apparent impossibility of satisfying either, tore him apart at the seams.

Then, what he refers to as "the accident" occurred. Whatever finally precipitated the crisis and transformationwhether a crack in the pavement or an errant thought, Rose would recall: "...once the catalyst started the change of mind, absolutely nothing mattered. I had no attachments beyond myself...once I became...more deeply" (Rose, l978, p. 225).

It would be indiscreet at this point, as well as create confusion, to describe the full nature and implications of that experience. The realization, and the knowledge that derived from it, will be much further referred to in Chapter 17, in its proper context.

It is sufficient at this point to state that Rose claimed to have had undergone a profound and traumatic change in being that resulted in his discovering Essence, or the Self. He had arrived at the final form of existence, beyond (or prior to) life and death. He had witnessed the entire universe, along with Richard Rose in it, disappearyet, his "I," as the nameless observer, remained. He realized himself to be one with the Absolute. In this experience, Rose found his answer, once and for all (Rose, l978, p. 229-236). This realization of Truth was not what he had been led to expect, however. The experience was not one of cosmic rapture or communion with the Divine. Rose elaborates:

> You pick up a book on Zen and you read about satori, which is the 'wow' experience. A fellow says, "I went to such andsuch ashram, I stayed there so many months or years, and one daywow, I know it! And I had a beer with the head master and we went away laughing togetherwe got it!" This is not Enlightenment. Because if this man had

> experienced Enlightenment, they would have carried him out on a stretcherit's that drastic. You don't die and then laugh and say "wow!" Death is more final than that. (Rose l985, p. 86).

The experience showed Rose who "he" was, forever. He realized the identity of the ultimate Self. From this vantage point on the other side of death, he was able to correctly view the real nature of life, and the relationship of the realms of life and death to the Self.

Who did Rose discover himself to be? I recall once hearing, the possibly apocryphal, account of the Buddha being asked by several followers who he was. They asked him: "Are you a God? Are you an avatar? A saint? A magician? A prophet? Who are you?" Supposedly, the Buddha bluntly replied: "I am awake." According to his testimony, this is who Rose is. The same One is awake in them both.

Not only did Rose believe that his previously mentioned commitment helped provide the critical momentum necessary to propel him into that experience, he felt it was also responsible for his being returned into the worldwhat he now recognized as a dreamdimensionin order to share his discovery with whoever could hear him. He presents his offering this way:

> For those who are somewhere in between the folly of youthful hedonism and the indifference of old age, some system needs to be salvaged from the experience of those who managed to make a grand assault upon definition, and who admittedly found an answer. (Rose, l979c, p. 73).

This intention resulted in Rose's beginning to talk about what happened to him, and attempting to make contact with those of a like mind. Gradually, people gathered around him and an esoteric school was formed to further the work.

Rose called the group: T.A.T., standing for Truth and Transmission. He chose this name to signify that Truth is the ideal, the unknown goal which is sought, as well as the primary meanstruthfulness in all waysby which the end is attained. Transmission refers to the ability of the fully Enlightened teacher to convey a profound spiritual realization to a student who is ready to experience it, as well as to the efforts of the people within the school to help others on their own level of work, towards this end. By this, the commitment is maintained and perpetuated. This dissertation too is a part of this chain.

Also, it may not be a coincidence that the word "Tat," in the Hindu religion, refers to Reality, Brahman, or That Which Is.

(Preceding section compiled from: Rose, l978; l985; plus numerous lectures and personal communications).

Still, given all this information, how is an honest seeker, who does not wish to be deceived or misled, to know for certain whether or not a teacher's testimony can be trusted? In a domain as abstract as spiritual research and discovery, one's "credentials" to verify authenticity can finally only be of a nonmaterial, nonrelative dimension. A higher level of reality cannot be measured or validated by the tools and standards of a lower one. Yet, this very principle can be used by a false teacher as a ruse to deceive the naive, much like the humbug Wizard of Oz.

Admittedly, anyone wellversed in mystical literature, with a talent for communication, and a charismatic or authoritarian manner may profess to be a guru and concoct and promote a teaching for some selfish, rather than benevolent, purpose. Other individuals may have a useful, though incomplete, teaching, yet claim their meditation technique or psychological principal, for example,

constitutes the entire path to Godhood. Some may be sincere in their intentions, although erroneous in their convictions, especially if the convictions came from drug use or excessive emotionalism. Others may even be mentally ill and not know it, yet seduce the unwary or susceptible.

Seekers find themselves in an awkward position. Without knowing in advance what Enlightenment is, or even that such a state really exists, one must still have some reliable way of judging the worth of a teacher's offering before trading valuable years for the expected ticket to eternity.

No exhibition of powers or expression of profundities alone is proof positive of an individual's spiritual stateofbeing, as magicians and scholars can provide the same display, yet without their having arrived at the Source of all power and knowledge. God seemingly awards no doctorates, black belts, or gold medals as indicators of attainment. The Enlightened person brings back no such souvenirs from the Absolute to substantiate the claim of visitation.

Rose admits that a person cannot know for certain the level of spiritual realization of another, nor can the latter claimant prove the reality of his state to the former inquirer through words or deeds alone: "We cannot hope to know, by relative mentation, that which another has come to know or realize by a directmind experience" (Rose, 1979c, p. 60). The only way the teacher's veracity could be determined would be for the student to apply himself to following the recommended map out to its finish and experiencing that goalstate personally. Also, in the special instance of transmission, the student's mind, when readied by such preparation, can become one with that of the teacher, whose mind is an everpresent, direct channel to Reality (Rose, l975, p. 55). Still, how is a seeker, who is looking for a reliable teaching with which to work, to decide if the commitment to a particular path is worth making? Finally, a student has no choice but to go with whatever appeals to his intuition. One has to follow the course that best suits one's own nature and capacity, once the person knows himself well enough to maturely judge this and not be swayed by lesser desires or rationalizations for weakness (Rose, l986b).

Other criteria for judging will be further discussed in the main body of this book. The most basic measure, however, is that of knowing the goodness of the tree by its fruits. A valid teaching will prove its worth to the student as each step is taken, with or without the teacher's personal involvement. As this category of spiritual work discussed here is aimed towards selfdefinition and "becoming," seekers can realize as they go along the extent to which the practice is resulting in greater selfknowledge, mental clarity, and mature being.

Above all, Rose fully endorses Christ's declaration: "Seek and you will find." His own individualistic, and at times uncertain, manner of exploration suggests that how one seeks is almost less critical to success than the sincerity and determination with which one seeks.

Also, Rose does not claim that his teaching is for everyone or is the only valid path:

> If I have a system, it is simply a system by which Truth is reached by the continual analysis (not breakage) of various transcendental poses, and by a constant vigil over the many factors within the self. I make this statement because it worked for me, and in my lifetime. The system is not new nor mine alone. I only hope to clarify things a bit. (Rose, l978, p. l93).

His teaching is meant simply for those who recognize that it speaks to them. The Voice calling the seeker home speaks different words through different mouths, in order to be heard by different ears, but it is the same One speaking. And perhaps listening.

In its original form, the manuscript was a PhD. dissertation, hence its somewhat scholastic tone, for which I apologize to the non-academic reader.

Historical Antecedents

The focus of this book is the description of and elaboration upon Rose's system of inner work. However, as original as Rose's thinking will be seen to be and individualistic was his own search, his teaching is really a modern reformulation of principles found in several rich spiritual traditions.

The systems of thought most aligned with Rose's own include: Advaita Vedanta, Zen, Gurdjieff Ouspensky's Fourth Way psychology, Kundalini, Jnana, and Raja yogas, Vipassana Buddhist meditation, and the collection of mystical writings generally referred to as the Perennial Philosophy. A brief description of these teachings here will provide some contextual reference for Rose's work. These and other pertinent sources of wisdom will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 2.

Advaita Vedanta teaches the essential unity of the human soul (Atman) and God (Brahman). The objective of the quest, according to this teaching, is the direct realization of the Self. This "Overself" (Brunton, l970) refers to both the ultimate identity of oneself and the spiritual source of the universe, which are found to be the same.

Advaita Vedanta describes a path of nonduality towards this goal. This has several aspects:

1. All phenomena—sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, "things" (including the body), etc.—are recognized to be apart from the spiritual "eye" or awareness that is witness ing them.

2. All such varied phenomena are really an undivided whole, as their existence is grounded in the single, unbroken field of consciousness that experiences them;

3. As the view cannot be the viewer (this view including one's human self), one ceases to identify with what is seen on this videoscreen of consciousness and one's "Iness" retreats further back into the observing Self; and

4. Only the absolute, anterior Self is real and is found to be the true source of all phenom ena, which are a projection from this Self (Balsekar, l982).

Philosophically, nonduality refers to the Self's existing in totality and unicity within itself (the "I am that I am" of the Bible) as well as with the Creation which it contains. There is no division between the seeker and the "God" that is soughtthere is only the Self. All seekers and gods are within this Self.

This principle has a key psychological significance. The process of search is not conceived of in dualistic terms, as in many religious teachings, i.e. one's going from "here" to a better "there", performing some technique or practice of selfdiscipline to achieve a desired result, or looking for an answer or experience apart from oneself to satisfy oneself. Rather, one is guided towards the maturing recognition that one is not so much on a path to somewhere else, but is the pathinto greater being. The real transformation consists of one's going back more deeply into the source of awareness behind the mind until fully merging into the final Self. The goal is not conceived of as the seeker's finally being in communion with God, but rather the transcendental experience of absolute Isness, with no "I" or "Thou."

To realize this, it is recommended that through the development of proper discernment one learn to perceive all phenomenainner and outerdirectly as a whole, undivided experience in consciousness, and to identify with this sole anterior perceiver or "experiencer" of this consciousness that one really is. In this way, one is extricated from identification with the complexity and delusions of this projected experience and attains freedom from duality.

There is a paradox in this teaching, as in most spiritual philosophies. All perceptions arise and all experiences occur within the Self. There is nothing "other" or "outside"all is Brahman. However, the Self transcends this phenomena, and in this sense is considered separate from the content of the consciousness perceived (Godman, l985; Maharaj, l982; Wei Wu Wei, l964). As Ken Wilber puts it, God is both the top rung of the ladder and the very wood from which the ladder is made (Wilber, 1983).

While Advaita Vedanta is the core psychological component of the Hindu religion, originating in ancient India, Zen may be considered the intuitive essence of Buddhism, which was transplanted from India to China, and then to Japan.

The aspects of Zen that correspond to Rose's teaching are similar to the Advaita Vedanta principles described above. These include: l) reconciling all forms of duality so that the unity of all experience is recognized, 2) pure mental apperception uncontaminated by ego, concepts, or beliefs, 3) using the mind to overcome the mind, and 4) looking into the origin of the "who" that one is as an idea in consciousness, getting behind this mental self, penetrating into the state prior to its inception, and directly observing this impersonal reality (Chang, l959). Once this seeming void is entered and the essence of mind, or "suchness," is realized, one may then come to understand its relationship to the world that is perceived.

The experience of a nonverbal, mindtomind transmission between teacher and student of spiritual realization is also a key principle in Zen.

Zen also involves an existential attitude of one's focusing on the immediate, naked reality of experience, without buffers, interpretations, or dichotomies in mentation. This allows the intuitive sense to unfold, freed of egocontamination, thereby clarifying one's attention and guiding one's understanding. One can then see the world as being new for the first time (Benoit, l959; Blofeld, l958).

The teaching of Gurdjieff, a Russian mystic and philosopher, shares Rose's attention to the workings of the human mind and how its failings prevent one from attaining the higher spiritual ideal to which Advaita Vedanta and Zen point.

The purpose of this teaching is largely to transform the individual from a confused, hypnotized automaton into a dynamic, clearminded seeker. Gurdjieff accused mankind of being asleep and taught that the mechanical and frequently negative qualities of human nature prevent one from awakening to objective consciousness.

He developed a system of psychology that helped the individual seeker to do "the Work" in several ways:

1. To become more aware of the complexity of one's experience, thereby correcting the errors, waste, and delusions inherent in mechanical, unconscious living;
2. To unify and harmoniously develop the diverse aspects of oneself into a mature, masterful individual who has the capacity to "do" something that is meaningful; and
3. Through prolonged selfobservation and the raising of energy to higher centers, to nourish the soul or being behind the cluster of egos and experiences called the person, in preparation for a final transformation in consciousness to the real Self (De Ropp l968; Gurdjieff, l975; Ouspensky l949).

Each of the three yoga systems referred to previouslykundalini, jnana, and rajaemphasize a major aspect of these above processes that relate to Rose's own teaching.

Kundalini yoga is designed to awaken the dormant power residing at the base of the spine through various mental and physical means and raise it to its terminal apex at the crown of the head. This results in the experiencing of a transcendental state of consciousness in which the individual's mind merges into the spiritual mind pervading the cosmos. This psychic and neurological evolution is the reversal of the "Fall of Man" (Krishna, l975).

This practice of sublimating and transmuting human energy from its expenditure on the baser functions and desires is also for the purpose of fueling the more subtle work of selfdevelopment, for nourishing the faculty of intuition, and for redirecting one's attention from the physical world to the inner workings of the mind (White, l969). This is where Kundalini yoga blends into jnana and raja yogas.

Jnana yoga is the path of intellectual discrimination in the analysis of the real nature of phenomena. This involves the psychological work of sorting through the complexities of mental functioning and experience, and finding Brahman through a process of elimination of the transient, apparent, and superficial (Patanjali, l969).

Jnana yoga also involves the formal study of teachings of wisdom by those who have attained spiritual Realization and learning to apply these philosophical insights towards selfunderstanding. This mental understanding may then, with increasing maturity and persistence of purpose, result in the transformation into Beingunderstanding (Balsekar, l982).

Raja yoga is said to be the highest yoga, incorporating aspects of all the other forms of yoga. Specific techniques of meditation are practiced for the purpose of controlling the mind and turning one's attention away from the fruitless distractions of thought and sensation. To do this, various methods of concentration are employed, such as devotional prayer, repeating of a mantra, watching the breath, focusing on different chakras or psychic centers, or contemplation of images of divinity. The selfenquiry into the root of the "I am" is the Advaitic form of Raja yoga (Rama, 1976).

These exercises develop one's power of clear observation and result in detachment from the conceptual content of the mind. As this is gradually accomplished, the identification with the objects of consciousness cease and this observation is free to turn back in on itself. It then focuses on the pure awareness behind all mental processes, leading to the interior source of the self. Direct, intuitive insight into one's essence is thus achieved (Sadhu, l976).

Vipassana Buddhist meditation emphasizes the common theme running throughout these teachings: the pure watching of all mental processesthoughts, sensations, emotions, memories, reactions, etc.without identification, judgment, or reaction. This serves to bring about more thorough selfknowledge, nonvolitional correction of error, a perfected ability of observation, a mind that is still, quiet, and receptive, and greater awareness of one's essential condition (Goldstein, l983).

In Chapter 2, this will be seen to tie in with ideas in modern PhenomenologicalExistential psychology as well as the form of meditation taught by Roy Masters.

The Perennial Philosophy is a collective term for a body of spiritual teachings that can be considered the mystical end of religion, on the other side from theology. The main points in this philosophy are:

1. All religious teachings have a common, underlying unity of direction and meaning;
2. The human soul is an extension of God, in which all souls are found to be one, and not separate from God; and

3. The reality of this ultimate Self can be directly experienced and not only maintained as a concept of faith (Huxley, l970).

In addition, the field of transpersonal psychology has developed in recent years to more specifically implement the aims of these traditional spiritual teachings. Its intent has been to translate these perennial philosophical principles into personal, psychological terms, so that the nature of the work on oneself towards SelfRealization can be more clearly understood by the individual. Researchers, such as Ken Wilber, have worked to devise accurate inner "maps" of consciousness that can serve as useful guidelines in subjective exploration (Wilber, l981; Tart, l975).

Reasons For Presenting This Study

1) The initial reason is that, after 20 years of studying the fields of psychology, religion, philosophy, and metaphysics, searching for skillful guidance towards crucial answers about existence, Rose's teaching has been the most thorough and workable one I have yet found. Rose has a skill for identifying the primary points of relevance in other, diverse teachings and synthesizing them into a more comprehensive system.

For example, he draws out the key aspects of the different schools of yogathe transmutation of energy, mental refinement, and purification of observationand shows how they interrelate. Another example is his explaining the significance of various meditation techniques, principles of mind science, occult doctrines, etc. and how they fit together into a hierarchy of practical value in working towards SelfRealization (Rose, 1981). He anticipated the work of later transpersonal psychologists, especially Ken Wilber, in specifically defining the essential factors involved in this work and outlining a realistic "map" of the territory to be covered.

2) In working towards this end, Rose has not been satisfied to provide scholarly analysis alone of all available theories. Likewise, he has not pretended to "prove" the validity of his claims by describing a conceptstructure or beliefsystem that is of such logical symmetry or inspirational value that one should be made to feel safe in inferring its likely truthfulness.

Rose's intention has been to describe a process that he claims leadsand led him to direct, personal (so to speak) experience of the Absolute. As such, his ideas stress an attitude of boldness and urgency in defining a shortcut towards the goalstate, unencumbered by excessive dogma, conceptualizations, or mechanistic ritual.

3) Related to reason number two is Rose's emphasis on presenting a practical, selforiented system of ways and means aimed specifically at inquiring into and identifying the source of the seeker, rather than exploring any number of tangential and derivative, although admittedly fascinating, paths that he claims do not lead to the essence of the matter, but only to further diffusion, fragmentation, and externalization.

When Rose refers to a teaching or procedure as being tangential, he does not mean that it is necessarily false. His assessment of the worth of a philosophical principle is always in relation to its usefulness in helping one to achieve one's desired objective, and not as an absolute value in itself. Different goals will require different means of attainment. The path to power will be somewhat different from the path to peace of mind, for example, which in turn will be different from the path to knowledge, and so on. The path to truth has its own stringent criteria.

Rose insists that the central issue in the spiritual search is that of selfdefinition; the answer to the question: "Who am I?," all other concerns being extensions of that. As such, his evaluations about various areas of study, techniques, etc., and his own recommendations for further work on the self, are always based upon how directly and completely they address the answering of this question.

For example, the study and practice of divination, psychic phenomena, healing methods, religious ceremony, or secular psychotherapy, may all be quite helpful in their respective domains. One may become healthier, more intuitive, or more efficient through these disciplines. Rose only suggests that there is a line of inquiry that goes directly to the core of the matter and incorporates the most pertinent aspects of all these and other teachings. This serves to save the seeker time and energy, as well as works at satisfying the real desire found to underlie all forms of seeking: the wanting to find one's essence (Rose, 1984).

4) It is a formidable task for a teacher to communicate clearly and unambiguously about abstract, subjective matters, of a dimension that is at first largely unknown to the seeker, yet without paying the price of oversimplification. Likewise, it is important for students to find information to which they can relate as readily as possible, given the inherent difficulty of this entire line of work, even under the best of circumstances.

Many traditional religious and philosophical systems convey their messages in terminology and a style that can make their inner meaning and relevance hard to grasp. The numerous diverse, and sometimes conflicting, interpretations of Biblical scripture, for example, indicate how uncertain the real significance can be of teachings that originated in a time and culture much different from our own.

Not only this, but the very nature of mystical experience, the inadequacy of language to describe it, and the apparent nonrationaleven nonvolitionalmeans of attaining it, lend themselves to a strong tendency towards metaphor and symbolism in order to convey the message. Unfortunately, this mode can also prove to be frustrating in one's efforts to decipher the elusive, intended meaning with precision.

In addition, the recorded information about Christ's relationships with his disciples, as well as the history of Zen Buddhism and Raja Yoga, indicate that the real inner meaning of these teachings could only be transmitted in some direct manner from Master to student; the full reality of which could not be translated into words for the benefit of a third party (Blofeld, 1958; Meyer, l986; Rose, l975).

One more hindering factor is that many of these ancient spiritual doctrines were formulated to appeal to a largely unsophisticated, uneducated, and even illiterate population. This necessitated the guru's message being communicated in a way that would be more generally inspirational, than specifically instructional, as the average person could not appreciate the subtleties of mental processes and philosophical discernment that such advanced teaching would require.

As a welcome contrast to the above obstacles to communication, Rose's reference points, cultural background, and language style are contemporary and Western. The path he forged for himself, which he refined into the path described in the Albigen System, is very much a product of 20th century American culture. This is evidenced by his attitude of irreverence towards all authority, his selfreliance in defining his own values, and the existential discontent that propelled his search.

There is also a refreshing candor and realism in his commentary. Rose speaks to the concerns of the common person, in plaineven bluntterms, and his emphasis is always on actual human experience, not theory.

He considers the perspective in many spiritual teachings to be pragmatically misleading to the seeker, however accurate they may prove to be as philosophical concepts. The basic assumption in them is generally that the human soul is inherently divine, that we have forgotten our true status as children of God, and we merely need to be gently reminded of this in order to bring about the necessary correction in understanding.

Rose reorients the seeker's direction of search from the beginning and insists there is serious work ahead to be faced. He claims the honest person needs to start by admitting that one is really ignorant about what is Real and knows nothing about one's soul, much less about divinityor that either even exist. When scrupulously examined, one's actual status is recognized to be primarily one of delusion, rationalization, and probable suffering, or fictional joy. The only facts that are certain are the inevitability of deathand the hunger for something more...something as yet unknown. Rose claims that when this is acknowledged, one can then begin to search for the Truth in earnest: "If by some method I can lead your mind into the realization that things are not what they seem to be, it may give you some impetus to look further" (Rose, 1985, p. 69).

Compared to religious teachings that provide assurance of one's automatic spiritual destiny, once one accepts this belief, Rose's emphasis is instead upon doubt, cosmic uncertainty, and the awareness of the passage of time relentlessly moving one towards the grave. In this, Rose blends existentialism and Zen, and takes them to the limit. His motive here is not to promote morbidity, but honesty with oneself and a warrior's intensity in preparing for the battle ahead. (Rose, l982, p. 134136).

True to his selfadmitted role as gadfly, Rose delights in repeatedly pointing out that our core condition is not as comfortable and secure as it may seem, as long as our center and foundation remain unexamined. He asserts that some courageous, persistent effort will be required to face oneself and to arrive at a state of genuine knowing.

In accordance with the Gurdjieffian notion of mankind's being asleep, as well as Zen's use of tension to promote serious thought, Rose deliberately intends his words to be provocative and disturbing, yet with his own testimony of success being a promising goad for action.

5) Related to reason number four is that Rose is still alive and available for personal consultation and guidance. Most of the great mystics, sages, and philosophers throughout history who have left behind records of their findings are dead and unavailable for further questioning on the meaning and application of their teachings. It is invaluable to be able to have access to the source of such material in a living person, who can verify by his very presence that his commentary is indeed genuine and undistorted.

6) There is one, final motive for my focusing on the Albigen System in this study. It is simply that Rose's approach answers to my intuition about what is most sensible and realistic in this search for Truth, and that it would benefit from this expanded discourse. His convictions on the subject having been validated by his own experience add a quality of authoritativeness to his commentary, and makes them worthy of serious consideration.

One's personal sense of recognition about what is necessary in this work and what suits one's nature and capacity is the most fundamental form of conviction possible in choosing a path of inquiry. It may be the only criteria there is.

People enter the path from different angles, for different reasons, with different levels of understanding, and differing strengths and weaknesses. As the search is for the Self, one must start by

knowing oneself and becoming a seeker. One has no choice but to begin with one's condition as it is, with whatever personal "tools" are at hand, and take the next step from there, according to the requirements of truthfulness. This very process towards selfknowledge inherently involves knowing one's real motives, one's capacity, and one's nature. These, and the manner of one's search, may then change as the work towards selfknowledge progresses (Rose, l986b).

Rose stresses that a perfected intuition is the most important faculty one can rely upon when journeying into the unknown. Yet, he cautions that one must refine this sense so that it does indeed perceive and guide truthfully, and is not contaminated by ego, wishful thinking, or emotionalism, which may slyly masquerade as intuition. As the genuine intuition emanates from the real Self, tracing this Voice back to its source is in itself a major part of the spiritual work.

7) And, finally, my recognition of the value and validity of Rose's testimony is based, in part, on a personal, spiritual experience that occurred several years before Rose's work was encountered (and thus was not "suggested" or influenced by it). This served, in retrospect, as direct "proof" to me that the direction in which he was pointing was indeed accurate, as I recognized that he had been to the same "place" tooand beyond, to the end of the road.

This statement is, of course, not intended here to imply verification of the teaching in a scientific sense, but simply to indicate the most personal reason for my appreciation of this material and recognition of its relevance.

Background of the Problem

Humanity has perennially been lacking in sanity and wellbeing. The human condition is generally one of suffering and ignorance; the world a vale of tears (Jacobs, l985).

The world religions developed as an attempt to remedy this chronic status quo, which has been defined in theological terms as our being separated from God. However, the evidence all around usviolence, disease, poverty, anguish, fear, and lonelinessindicates they have been inadequate to the task, even in uniting all religious people in a shared belief system (Mehta, l978).

Modern psychologies developed as an attempt to resolve personal and interpersonal troubles within the psyche, yet the growing, widespread incidence of mental illness and social discord, as well as disagreement within the field of psychology itself about a valid definition of sanity, have proven them also to be woefully insufficient (Masters, l978; Szasz, l974).

The numerous schools of philosophy have attempted to define the meaning in and of life through reason, yet have resulted only in a Tower of Babel of confusion and pretense, rather than a unanimous understanding of truth (Krishnamurti, U.G., l982; Rose, l978, l984).

There is still insufficient information available from all of these disciplines to help guide the individual to a satisfying answer to the deepest human need for meaning, validity, and identity (De Ropp, 1968; Klein, l988; Ouspensky, 1949, 1974).

Statement of the Problem

The great spiritual sages throughout history who have transcended our world have perennially proclaimed that the primary cause of our suffering and discontent is the ignorance of our true nature and source (Aurobindo, 1971; Maharaj, l982; Osborne, l959; Wei Wu Wei, 1964).

There has been a tremendous need for a system of inner (and outer) work that will lead the individual seeker to true selfdefinition, in both the human and transpersonal senses. This means that the truthseeker must first know precisely who he/she is, and then from there, the Absolute Self containing all persons, their worlds, and godsthe "I am that I am"may be realized (Brunton, l970).

The processes of such work have been scattered throughout all spiritual and psychological teachings (Capps, l978; Happold, l970; Hixon, l978; Huxley, l970; O'Brien, l964; Reinhold, l973; Stace, l960; White, l984), yet are too often vague and confusing in their illdefined complexity, for reasons mentioned previously.

The field of transpersonal psychology has evolved in recent years to answer this need by blending all relevant teachings into a more focused and comprehensive system of inner work, and translating them into modern terms (Ferrucci, l982; Kent, l972; Wilber, l981). The translation of traditional religious principles into that of personal psychology has been emphasized so that their essential unity can be understood, and the teachings more effectively implemented. There is an urgent need to formulate a set of principles along these lines that are as specific, accurate, and complete as possible (Jacobs, l985).

Richard Rose has made a major contribution to this work in his Albigen System (Rose, 1975, 1978, 1979a, l979b, 1979c, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, l986a, l986b). Although, as was stated earlier in reason number four, Rose's language is modern and his reasoning is commonsensical, the complete scope and significance of his teaching have not been conveyed optimally in his own writings. Due to a combination of strategy and personality, his meaning has often been indirect and his style of writing idiosyncratic. What he teaches is plain. However, his manner of communicating it has somewhat obscured his intent.

Another complicating factor for someone encountering Rose's work for the first time is that the full range of his work has never been presented in detail in one comprehensive volume. His ideas have been spread out over several books and articles, as the components of his system have been further delineated over time, and much else of his message has never been written down, but only communicated in personal dialogues, lectures, and correspondence.

In addition, as so much of the Albigen System is an extension of Richard Rose as a person and a seeker, one derives a more distinct, holistic sense for the teaching by studying with him personally and getting to know his character. I have been privileged to have known the man and worked with him in his school for a number of years. I saw him as a walking alarm clock; his presence serving to constantly tell people what time it is: time to wake up. This sobering, galvanizing quality is irreplaceable and difficult to convey on paper, yet must be attempted.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this report is to organize, analyze, and explicate Rose's system of transpersonal psychology in as clear and concise a manner as possible, incorporating additional ideas and angles that have not already been published.

Readers of his books have often commented to him and to me that they sensed there was something meaningful and novel in what Rose was attempting to communicate, but they could not quite get a clear understanding of it. Many people have found his material, as presented, to be thought provoking and insightful. However, the comprehension of the complete system these diverse ideas and their practical implications comprise has been harder to achieve, as Rose has left this job of followthrough to the reader.

Rose had also commented to me that he thought a concise, streamlined presentation of his system would be useful in making his teaching more accessible to interested seekers (personal communication, 2/87). He had expressed disappointment that he had not gotten his message across to people as well as he would have liked, considering the profound importance of his teaching and the difficulty of effectively communicating subjective, subtle, abstract ideas to an anonymous audience, with differing capacities and biases, on paper.

Jim Burns is an acquaintance of Rose's and mine. He had arrived at the same experience of final SelfRealization as had Rose, although through his own means, after years of intense effort. Rose has the rare assessment about Burns: "He is a man who truly knows the answer" (personal communication, 1/88).

Burns had remarked to me that he too would like to better understand what Rose has been teachingthe detailed principles of his "way"so that he could compare his ideas on higher psychological work to Rose's and offer commentary on it (personal communication, 3/87). Burns had expressed difficulty in picking up a balanced overview of the Albigen System from Rose's assorted writings and personal comments, and stated that a study such as this one would be most valuable, not only to him, but to all serious students of transpersonal psychology.

There are several reasons why this study can add to the value of the original writingsalthough certainly never replace them. This is partially related to why Rose has written and taught as he has.

Rose's teaching has been based on his life, his search, and his experience. As such, his testimony has been a personal onewhich is the only source of validity possible in this field of inquiryand his message has been presented through a rich personality. This personalitystyle can manifest in the form of anecdotal illustrations of character and principle or opinionated pronouncements about human failings directed at the reader. This style may be perceived by some as an excessive layer of colorization or egoderived emphasis that inadvertently obscures the basic meaning of his points, while nonetheless adding to the passion and conviction generating them.

The Albigen System is a distillation of his lifetime of learning and realizing, as Rose explains:

> Man, in his quest to find himself, has intuited the need for a catalyst. The catalyst takes on different forms because of the uncertainty of any human mind as to the type of catalyst it thinks it needs. The catalyst, if it is a system, bears the stamp of the originator because it worked for his type of personality, or was accidentally discovered by him. (Rose, 1978, p. 213214).

The student's ability to fully appreciate this material can thus be affected by the degree of rapport one feels with Rose as a person. This study attempts to distill his body of work one step further by partially filtering out this idiosyncratic style of communication, while leaving behind the essential, impersonal, universal principles in his message. This may help the reader to more readily grasp his meaning.

Paradoxically, the very personality that has, to some extent, been an obstacle to getting his points across has also been the "magical" catalyst that has conveyed his intent more directly to people when they have met him, and gotten to know the living statement made by his character, perspective, and attitude. This study will attempt to blend in this added dimension of inspiration, yet without its frequent effect of overpowering his message.

Another problem inherent in all psychological, philosophical, and spiritual teachings, however skillfully conceived and communicatedand especially in Rose'sis that the "system" described is largely subjective, abstract, and guided by intuition. Everything cannot be spelled out and quanti-

fied, although commonsense and consistency can and should be essential standards by which to work.

Also, partially due to Rose's having chosen to teach in the manner of Zen, as well as his particular personalitystyle, many of his points have been made indirectly, through examples or some oblique comment in passing. His intention has been to convey his message through inference, as well as to provoke further thought in the reader by bringing up disturbing issues that have no easy answer.

Rose has fully admitted that his meaning is often "between the lines" and that the student needs to read with intuition, to get in rapport with his mentalstate, rather than reading words alone, with logic. This study will attempt to describe the actual structure of his system as lucidly and straightforwardly as possible, considering its nonlinear, nonmechanical nature.

Another aspect of Rose's somewhat indirect, informal, and slightly disjointed style of teaching has been that he often states a major point, bluntlyand then drops it; moving on to something else. His comments about the parasitical and seemingly cruel symbiotic system of Nature in which we find ourselves is one disturbing example (Rose, l975). He has left it up to readers to work out the implications and applications for themselves, to resolve the many troubling paradoxes in life which he forces us to confront, yet provides little elaboration upon the different levels of meaning in his ideas and how they tiein with other aspects of his system.

To a large extent, this strategy has been deliberate and functional. He intends to taunt us, to challenge us. What Rose is really offering is a guidebook for the student's own journey, rather than providing a prepackaged description of the road that is so vivid that readers may be carelessly lulled into believing they have made the inner trip themselves, vicariously, by riding on the author's shoulders. As such, Rose insists the individual think things through completely for oneself, and make the insights one's own. For this reason, the work of coming to thoroughly understand this teaching for oneself is itself a critical part of the seeker's process of personal inquiry.

Nonetheless, the tendency towards elusiveness and insufficient organization in his various offerings, despite his best intentions of strategy and execution, has been an obstacle to many students. By showing in clearer relief what his overall system actually is and drawing all the critical themes together into a cohesive whole, the separate pieces of Rose's mappuzzle are assembled to make anat bestincredibly difficult journey a little easier.

Another tendency of Rose's has been to give little attention to other teachings and systems of inner work, other than in the form of primarily critical assessments of their shortcomings. It should be noted in fairness, however, that his judgments were proven by his own experience to be valid, as this study will indicate.

Rose does refer to isolated quotations or principles from various spiritual and psychological schools of thought, to indicate precedents or corroboration for his own convictions. Still, this could be elaborated upon further and valuable information could be provided about what <u>is</u> considered valid in these other systems and traditions. Therefore, this study will add some contextual perspective on his teaching by describing the teachings of those individuals whose ideas either relate to his own or supplement them.

Finally, there is one major difference between Rose's original writings, lecture material, etc., and this study.

One of the central themes throughout Rose's system in regards the search for truth is that of "retreating from error," rather than advancing upon a postulated desired conclusion. As a teacher,

much of his emphasis towards this goal has been on providing detailed critical commentary on the numerous psychological, theological, philosophical, and social delusions that can hamper one's progress, and even become deadly traps if not avoided. He has likened this part of his presentation to first digging up the earth and clearing out the rocks, weeds, and underbrush, before planting some new, good seeds.

There is a step before even this can begin. Much of Rose's preliminary commentary consists of the insistent exhortation that this entire psycho philosophical inquiry is essential to begin with, for every serious, honest person. Concurrently, he mercilessly points out the many critical questions about existence that are unanswered and the invalidity of our lives and identities, as long as they remain unexamined and undefined. His aim has been to rouse people from sleep and irritate them into action, rather than soothe them into complacency.

However, for the purpose of this study, mostalthough not allof this deliberately provocative , preparatory material will be omitted. More of the focus will be on presenting the core principles of the Albigen System itself, so that those individuals who are ready may begin to work on themselves. This will assume that any seeker looking into this level of inquiry is one who has already evolved to the realization that something must be done to end one's condition of recognized ignorance, and has some tentative, maturing intuition about what form and direction of work seems most worthwhile.

Theoretical Framework

This study falls into the category of transpersonal psychology. The main premise of this orientationthat differentiates it from the Analytic, Behavioral, and even Humanistic schoolsis its emphasis upon defining the self as the totality of all consciousness and experience, rather than only the individual bodymindego, as is the assumption and baseline in most traditional psychologies (Deikman, l982; Khan, 1981; Masters, l978; Rama, 1976).

Likewise, wellbeing is considered to derive from the truthful relationship of the personal, human self to this larger "transpersonal" dimension and, finally, the identification with its source. This is in contrast to most conventional therapies that define mental health largely in terms of statistical "normalcy", in the form of adjustment and accommodation to the mundane status quo, in physical, emotional, and interpersonal terms (Jacobs, l985; Rose, l978, ch. 2).

Transpersonal, or spiritual, psychology is based on the principle that there is a point of study where religion, psychology, philosophy, and metaphysics overlap and become one direction of work, rather than remaining separate, barely compatible domains. This point is best called SelfEnquiry (Godman, 1985), and moves at a rightangle (so to speak) to experience, thought, belief, and personalidentityinto Becoming [term further defined in Chapter 6].

There is a body of literature, from diverse cultures and spiritual traditions, that has presented this direction of search in detail [see Chapter 2]. The core principle throughout all these teachings, and especially in Rose's system, is that of "Becoming the Truth". In mystical theology this is called "union with God", and in yoga is referred to as "SelfRealization". The common denominator among them is the final experience of nonduality described earlier, in which the seeker does not "find" the answer as something apart from oneself, but awakens to the realization that the real Self is the answer, and contains both the individual seeker and all possible gods (Maharaj, l982).

The Gurdjieffian system of esoteric psychology calls the form of inner work leading up to this, the Fourth Way (Ouspensky, l971). This manner of search blends all the different paths of yoga into

one wholistic process and results in a transformation of being. This Work is the point where these diverse fields of study meet. Everything else is commentary.

Frankl, Jung, and Assagioli were early pioneers in this field, before the term "transpersonal psychology" was coined, and focused their work on the soul's search for meaning and ultimate selfhood (Fabry, l980; Jaffe, l975; Ferrucci, l982).

Principles from PhenomenologicalExistential Psychology and the philosophy of Solipsism (Puligandla, 1981; Strauch, l983; Valle, l98l; Zaner, l973) also relate to Rose's system in their study of the psychology of perception, experience, and knowing.

The medieval alchemists claimed that the Philosopher's Stone (meaning: the spiritual identity in the center of one's being), when found, answers all questions and resolves all problems (De Ropp, l968; Kerrick, l976). The traditional myths about the hero's quest for the Holy Grail, Golden Fleece, or some secret prize of the Gods, have the same meaning (Jaffe, l975).

Research Goals

This study will not attempt to prove a hypothesis, as is the case in standard research. This will instead be the description of a subjectiveyet scientificprocess towards a personal state of realization. The only form of "proof" that is meaningful in this form of work is the direct experience of this "becoming", from having undertaken the process for oneself. Rose admits that he does not intend to prove the validity of his teaching to anyone. Neither can this report. The task here is to more accurately depict the map that is the Albigen System, from all available data. The validation, as such, that suggests this form of inquiry is worth the effort and may lead to the stated objective is the testimony of those individuals who have made of their bodies and minds a research laboratory, and their entire lives an experiment in philosophy, and then reported their unanimous findings. Even short of this, however, the partial validation for the student is in the occasional signposts of progress along the way: the increasing mental clarity, development of the intuition, refined sense of stable selfhood, improved vitality, effectiveness in daily living, and freedom from manifest foolishness.

The issues being examined in Rose's work are thus: Is there a valid process towards both human and spiritual selfdefinition? Are there universal principles of the mind, the body, and of life that can be known, and will lead to personal evolution when heeded? Is there a genuine intuition that can be found and developed? Is there a direct, commonsense form of therapy that heals the mind and body, and serves as the necessary foundation for the transpersonal work? What are the common errors and traps that must be avoided along the way? This study will show how Rose has addressed these and many other points.

Importance of the Study

The science of psychology is still far from being a complete system. Psychotherapy is still very much a blend of art and luck, with little agreement among clinicians as to what is valid therapy and what is not, nor is there a shared agreement on the fundamental nature of the pathology to be treated (Benoit, l959; Jacobs, l985; Krishnamurti, l983; Nicoll, l984).

Some of the most basic questions in psychologythat are the profession's duty to answerremain unanswered. This chronic lack of attention to the study of these issues, or the reductionism or ridicule to which they have sometimes been exposed, suggests that even the necessity for asking these questions has often been denied (Masters, l978; Rose, l979).

Questions such as: What is the mind? What is thought? What is awareness and where is its source? *Is awareness in usor of us?* What and where is the origin of the universe we experience? Is there an identity or essence apart from the bodymind; one that may survive death? Who or what is the Self? What are the factors that determine sanity and insanity? What is sanity? What is true, natural sexuality and how does misuse of the sex function affect the body and mind? What is the nature of the spiritual experiences reported by mystics throughout the ages: some form of delusion or dementiaor an objective reality for which mainstream psychology cannot account, and which draws into serious question the entire paradigm in which modern psychology functions?

The answers to these questions and the other points mentioned previously would benefit the professional psychologist who wishes to offer the greatest help possible to confused clients, as all psychological and interpersonal problems are somehow related to faulty selfdefinition and misperceptions within an erroneous paradigm. Along these lines, such understanding would be of even greater benefit to the individual seeker who admits to being troubled by existing in ignorance and is willing to engage in the personal work necessary to arrive at a satisfying answer to the problems of life, and death.

Such knowledge also has broader social implications, as the turmoil and madness we witness about us on a global level is an extension of the individual's plight, and viceversa (Holroyd, l980).

One aspect of Rose's system that makes it so valuable in regard to this is that it explains in detail how the domains of individual psychology (therapy) and transpersonal psychology (spirituality) relate. Although they are separate, but concurrent, phases of work, they are inseparable parts of one, whole process of inquiry. The personal psychological work of selfcorrection is a prerequisite preparation for spiritual realization, and the larger philosophical work towards this latter transpersonal goal inherently answers all mundane concerns along the way. This principle of "becoming the truth" is the common thread running through both aspects of work.

The need for further study and refinement along these lines has been previously stated by several psychologists.

Thomas Szasz has questioned the validity of the entire paradigm of psychology, and suggested that the true definition of mental illness and the process towards mental health have yet to be found (Szasz, 1974).

R.D. Laing has likewise challenged conventional psychiatric assumptions about the spectrum of sanity to insanity and has claimed that we need to seriously rethink our entire approach to the problem (Laing, l967).

Charles Tart has devoted his career to exploring the unknown psychic territory beyond the fringe of mainstream psychology. He admits to still having more questions than answers, but claims that substantial evidence exists of phenomena and laws of an occult nature that are as yet unknown to us, and that radically alter our assumptions about the mental dimension (Tart, l975).

Carl Jung described his understanding of the process towards genuine selfhood and spiritual awakening, but made it clear he did not pretend to have the final word on the subject for everyone and that the principles of this work could be further refined and personalized (Jaffe, l975).

Viktor Frankl developed his system of Logotherapy to help people define a meaningful, realistic orientation to life and to establish a clear connection with their higher intuition or "unconscious God". He specifically exhorted his students and associates to take his basic observations and build upon them, as the work involved in this "pursuit of meaning" was far from completed (Fabry, l980).

The Holocaust, perhaps more than any other major event in history, symbolized the total absence of meaning, justice, sanity, and Godhood in human affairs. From the individual's perspective, it was seemingly the experience of absolute negation of validity: personal, collective, terrestrial, and cosmic (Brenner, 1980; Kent, 1972).

Elie Wiesel has spent a lifetime searching for the ultimate spiritual answer to the crucial questions posed by this experience, as did Frankl. He has studied religious, philosophical, and psychological teachings for decades, as well as agonizingly inside himself, for a satisfying, comprehensive solution to this problem, and his voice speaks for millions more, alive and dead. He admits to not having yet found the truth of the matter, and has rejected all conventional explanations offered. He has displayed admirable integrity and courage in not settling for false answers to fill in the painful void, and in keeping his search open (Estess, l980). In response to my personal testimony to him and further inquiry regarding these difficult issues, Wiesel wrote: "I wish I could say I have all the answersbut I have none. All I have is a need to question. Will He answer? That too is a question" (personal communication, 3/87). The direction and manner of search described in this study is an attempt to find one possible way to that elusive answer.

Scope of the Study

The primary content of this report will be the Albigen System, as described in the works of Richard Rose, as well as my personal contacts with him and practice of the teaching with his other students over a 15 year period.

Although other teachings and teachers of transpersonal psychology will also be discussed, this study will focus mainly on Rose's work for several reasons. This is in addition to the immediate, obvious reason that in this one dissertation it will be difficult enough to even do justice to the full scope of the Albigen System, much less to adequately cover every contribution of importance in the whole field of transpersonal psychology.

The primary reason is simply that I believe Rose's innovative contribution richly deserves this consideration, and a thorough study of it like this one has never before been written. Even in the whole field of transpersonal psychology, which is itself little known to either the general psychological community or to students of esotericism in particular, Rose is not well known. This is a terrible waste of a rare and invaluable reference source.

The singular system he has developed has been found to be extremely insightful and practical by those who have managed to encounter it by fate, reward, or accident. A scholarly discourse on it would be most helpful in making his findings more readily available to those who would appreciate them. I consider Rose to be a modern giant of spiritual psychology, and a serious overview of his findings can be considered as one grateful tribute to his offering.

While Rose does not claim to have invented something entirely new, the material he provides does have a functional advantage for the seeker of Enlightenment over many other existent spiritual teachings. Although various principles in the Albigen System are also found in other sources, often each teaching is either not a complete system in itself, but only focuses on certain issues, laws, or aspects of the path, or does not go into enough practical detail about the complete path it may be describing, leaving the teaching open to misinterpretation or misuse by the immature student. In addition, Rose does stress specific principles crucial to this level of search that have seldom, if ever, been presented in other esoteric teachings, such as pointofreference, becoming the truth, and retraversing the projected ray.

As an example of the hazards of implementing an incomplete teaching, Rose considers the techniques involved in mind science and hypnosis to be valid in themselves and that they parallel material in his own system. People can create things, adjust circumstances, heal bodies, empower themselves, and change their statesofmind through such psychological means. Yet, Rose believes each method or discipline to not be a complete path to SelfRealization in itself, but only one aspect of it.

A common example of the danger in misunderstanding a profound teaching is the material out of the Vedanta and Zen traditions. The teachers of the original works may well have been genuinely Enlightened and were indeed describing their perspective on existence from the vantage point of Reality. Yet their affirmations about the true Self or the BuddhaMind, and their exhortation for the student to awaken from the illusion of Maya require tremendous psychological insight on the part of the student to know how to work out the myriad details of one's own path to that realization. But without the sufficient maturity and intuition to do this, one can easily become trapped in the comfort of the inspirational value of such teachings, or the more insidious trap of entertaining the reassuring concept of one's automatically being this ultimate, transcendental Self, while in all honesty not really "being" that, but still stuck in some personal Maya of one's own.

As mentioned, much of the writing in the field of esotericism has been presented in such symbolic or archaic termsand possibly even these being imprecisely translated into Englishthat its exact meaning has been hard to pin down, and its practical utilization even harder for the modern, western reader to determine.

For example, St. Paul's famous declaration: "I die daily," and the Buddha's defining the root of all human suffering to be "desire" have had diverse, uncertain interpretations by subsequent teachers, depending on their own orientation and level of understanding. To "die" might refer to selfmortification of the body, to the submission of one's will to another authority (human or Divine), or to the diminishment of and detachment from one's egos. To be free of "desire" might refer to all objects of desire, to only the objects of false desire, to sexual desire in particular, to the very nature or process of desire, or to the mistaken identification of the true Self with the fictional egoself that is programmed to have these desires.

The seeker's course of action in implementing these teachings will thus obviously depend on what one assumes the original teacher to have meant, and if guessing wrongly, one may be going off in a misguided direction. The former dictum may result in selfmutilation or even suicide, and the latter in years of passive stagnation from denial of even the desire for truth and selfhood.

Much of the material in transpersonal psychology during the last 25 years has done the seeker a great service in remedying such ambiguities by describing the actual inner mechanisms of the search in a more accessible manner in terms of human experience.

However, a major difference between much of this material and Rose's offering is that most of such writers (as seems to have perennially been the case in the fields of religion and philosophy, from which modern psychology evolvedor devolved) have been primarily scholars, speculative thinkers, students of other teachers, or researchers with only incomplete findings.

What makes Rose's testimony especially valuable is that he claims to have personally experienced the final goalstate to which all the mystical teachings throughout history have pointed, and as such, his witness to the validity of his convictions is from the Source. Furthermore, he has had detailed insight into the mechanics of the process of inquiry that led him up to that Realization, in addition to being able to explain the nature of that experience as well as it can be explained, in personal terms. Because of this, he has been able to describe critical psychological principles of selftransformation that have been verified, by him, and are workable by the individual.

Although the Albigen System will be the main content of this study, supplemental information from other sources will be blended in where it is appropriate.

As has been mentioned, one advantage of Rose's teaching is his distinctive and masterful blend of psychology, philosophy, and religion into a holistic, living process of inquiry with a common aim, rather than their remaining as separate, barely compatible paradigms. However, as was

also explained, Rose has not tied in other pertinent systems of thought with his own as much as would have been possible, which would have served to place his specific message within a broader perspective on the overall search.

This study will thus be a good opportunity to expand on Rose's system by drawing in relevant elaborations and crossreferences with similar teachings. (The original source material will first be formally discussed in Chapter 2). This very effort is actually an example of how the student needs to continue to search for additional "ways and means" to help in applying the teaching to oneself; this followthrough being itself a part of the system.

And lastly, the reason for my focusing so intently on the Albigen System in this study, rather than doing a more general overview of the field of transpersonal psychology, is a personal one. As Rose's own life was largely the raw material from which his teaching was compiled, my own life of the last l5 years or so has been a living research project largely based on Rose's ideas, by putting this system into practice every day, on many levels. And so, as life can be considered an experiment in philosophy, this study serves as a recording also of my own journey; a primarily generic description of what has also been a personal process.

My choosing to respectfully examine and present Rose's work in this dissertation is only fitting. The personalyet impersonalexperience of a partial glimpse of Validity that originally enabled me to recognize Rose's own testimony as being valid was what forever fused my life with the path and objective he has described. This study is completing that circle, at least conceptually.

Outline of Review of the Literature

The main source of information for this study is the writings of Richard Rose, plus material from numerous lectures and personal notes from years of studying with him and working with his other students. All quotes not otherwise specifically referenced as to source and date are to be understood to have been from informal group discussions.

Relevant information will be included from writings on Zen, the GurdjieffOuspensky system of Fourth Way Psychology, Vipassana Buddhist meditation, and the teachings of the Advaita Vedanta tradition by Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharaj, Jean Klein, Krishnamurti, and Franklin MerrillWolff.

Valuable material will be included from Jim Burns, who had experienced a major spiritual realization resulting from a complex psychological process similar to, although independent from, Rose's system. He accumulated many critical insights into this direction of inner work from his efforts and discovery.

Additional background information on spiritual psychology and sexuality will be presented from the works of Roy Masters, who is a teacher of a JudeoChristian mystical orientation.

Research in transpersonal psychology, best exemplified by Ken Wilber, will be discussed, as well as numerous other works about the Perennial Philosophy, meditation, and yoga, as described by Richard Bucke, Sri Aurobindo, Paul Brunton, Van Vliet, Van Der Leeuw, and others.

Methodology

Rose's system of higher psychology will be presented in an organized, concise manner, the meanings of all of his significant points will be explained, and the structure and interrelationship of

his system as a holistic process will be analyzed. Themes that are referred to indirectly in his writings will be brought out more clearly, and there will be further elaboration upon the relevance and implications of Rose's ideas beyond what he has originally provided. Material derived from Rose's personal contacts with his students will also be included, to give a better sense of the character and humanness in his teachings than his books alone can convey.

The purpose of this dissertation is not to prove that Rose's teaching is true, but merely to describe the Albigen System clearly and in toto, and then let readers decide for themselves its value in their own search. Even if verification had been desired, surveys and statistics would not be appropriate means for determining the validity of the information presented, due to the subjective nature of the issues involved.

In fact, no form of scholastic, inferential proof for the benefit of vicarious seekers can be possible in this kind of research, nor has it been the aim in Rose's own work. This is because the answer that is ultimately found is not apart from the self that is searching for it, nor can the reality of this discovery be shared by any second party.

The only form of "proof" that is possible is that of the direct experience of those who have applied these principles of search and selftransformation to themselves over a long period of continuous effort, and have followed their commitment through to completion.

As such, what will be offered are the firsthand testimonies of inner work and transpersonal realization of several individuals: Jim Burns, Mike C., Mark J. (two of Rose's students), Alan K., and Richard Rose himself. My own partial experience of Validity will also be mentioned. These accounts are not meant to convince the reader of anything. They are merely records of the corroboration by some individuals that Jacob's Ladder (the "map" that is the core of the system), does indeed lead to where Rose claims it does.

Results

This form of study is analytic and explicative in nature. In addition to presenting the information on Rose's system of psychology, the significance of this teaching in regards to both psychotherapeutic work and transpersonal states of realization will be explained. Most importantly, this study will provide the functions of cohesiveness and explicitness in bringing together all the salient points in Rose's complex teaching and clarifying their personal meaning for the benefit of the seeker who wishes to embark on the journey that Rose recommends, yet could not clearly enough understand the "map" described in its original form.

There is also one unique matter involved in presenting the results of this kind of study. It relates to the previous comments made about the necessity for the personal experience of transformation and SelfRealization, and by some extension, the ability to then help others along these lines with the knowledge and perspective that has been so gained; this being the "evidence" of validity of such inquiry.

Subjective experiences are usually discounted in conventional psychological research (other than in phenomenological studies) that attempts to be scientific and objective, in a narrow sense, by excluding all data from consideration that cannot be measured by physical means and interpreted according to the standards of a materialistic paradigm.

However, Rose has maintained that if certain principles and processes of mental functioning can be subjectively validated by experience, through perfected introspection, then these are, in fact,

objective facts as well. *The difference is in the reference point of the observer*. This touches upon the central theme of the entire teaching.

Usually, only the researcher studying the subjects, as apart from them, issomewhat presumptuouslyconsidered the only possible valid observer and judge. However, in the kind of research being discussed here, the individual becomes both the subject of one's own research and the objective inner observer of oneself as well. When properly done, this procedure is just as scientific and the findings just as meaningful, if not more so, as that of the materialistic, external researcher. This process of studying the mind with the mind, from increasingly superior points of reference, results in the perfection of that mind and the quality of its observation, and the refinement of the definition of the self as this observer.

The process of inquiry to be discussed is an objective form of subjectivity, so to speak, or a subjective form of objectivity. The final Realization, as described by those who claim to have attained it, is one in which subjectivity and objectivity are ultimately found to be exactly the same thing. All duality is finally reconciled into one, at the Source.

This is something that cannot be known by the armchair investigator. The journey must be made personally.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Before exploring the Albigen System in detail, it would be helpful to examine those categories of philosophical investigation throughout history that touch upon Rose's teaching. They collectively represent a sequence of inner work that lead towards defining ultimate meaning, ultimate identity, and ultimate validity. This progression of questioning and answering will be reviewed until we are brought to where the Psychology of the Observer begins.

We are confronted at the outset of our quest by the question: What is Truth and how are we to realize it? Whereas religion has traditionally been the final bedrock of unquestioned security and purpose for those who were able to believe in the assurances of scripture, this past century in particular has seen the emergence of the "Outsiders," the "Underground Men" (Abood, 1973; Wilson, 1956). They are the vanguard of a new consciousness, the tragiheroic personification of modern spiritual malaise. They are the ones who either dropped out of "normal," mainstream life, were kicked out, or were never able to fit into it. They cannot help but see and feel more than their fellows and know that something is horribly wrong, but can do no more than struggle desperately to find some cure for it. They are stripped of comforting ideologies, the benevolence of a Divine parentfigure, and the joys of the community of humankind. They sensewith keen, even morbid sensibilitythe absurdity of life as it is commonly lived, the emptiness of values in an apparently meaningless cosmos, the estrangement from Nature, the madness of the masses, the decay of culture, the seeming abandonment by God, and the nameless craving of the soul for what is trueto the point of shattering their illusion of sanity and hurtling them into the void.

Their characteristic attitude is the negation of all the falseness they encounter within and without them, more than the affirmation of anything positive and certainother than their right to have a valid existence at any cost. This results in their constant state of tension and uneasiness, which is the fuel for their movement. Their existential despair is the necessary price for the search for truth, and their gnawing emptiness is the necessary prelude to finding it.

Although Freud was supposed to have claimed that as soon as a person questions the meaning of life, one is sick, and that selfknowledge is the ultimate form of aggression, others consider these concerns to be a healthy indication of the latent soul starting to recognize itself. Logotherapy was developed by Viktor Frankl to more specifically address this yearning for spiritual rootedness as a process of psychological inquiry leading towards one's commitment to a higher cause (Bulka, 1979;

Fabry, 1980). This is similar to the first step towards spiritual redemption in the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Step program in which one admits to being helpless and lost, and surrenders to a subjectively defined (or humbly undefined) "Higher Power".

Frankl bridged the personal and transpersonal domains by advocating that one should be the master of one's will and the servant of one's conscience. Carl Jung evidenced a similar conviction by teaching that we must agree to fulfill our fate, to live out our personal "myth of meaning", and by so doing, "to break the mirror of life, that we might look being in the face" (Jaffe, 1975).

Frankl inadvertently provided a Zenlike response to a basic issue in Advaita Vedanta by stating that the limited egoself is transcended through paradoxical hyperreflection upon this self and its operations. Intensely confronting the self leads to one's becoming free of it.

Frankl was attempting to provide a workable solution to the host of modern "metapathologies" that growing numbers of Outsiders in the post"God is dead" (as a humanized concept of belief) era are experiencing, including the "ennui" of spiritual poverty (De Ropp, 1968). He was forced by extreme circumstances to expand the experiential definition of "meaning." He was not allowed the luxury of a God who resides only in a pretty flower garden or a Maslowian sunset at the beach. God has to be real in the garbage dump tooor even a concentration camp.

Logotherapy does, however, make a least three false or ambitiously overstated points in regards to the principle that the struggle to live despite all adversity proves that life is inherently meaningful, and we all have this innate spiritual conviction within us: 1) the survival urge is a natural, physical implant and is in cockroaches too, 2) the psychological egoself does not wish to die either and will resist its dissolution to the end, and 3) the fear of death and the unknown is usually more the motivation for struggle than is the affirmation of something positive or inherently spiritual. These reasons alone are not indications of a profound, selftranscending urge for meaning or that such meaning necessarily objectively exists. To dramatically claim: "Life is sacred" is imprecise. Awareness is sacred; protoplasm is not.

A further deficiency is that Logotherapy on its level of inquiry can deal only with discovering the meaning in life as a relative value, not the meaning of life as an absolute fact. The latter must still be taken on faith only as one's ultimate ground or context of beingbut what if one cannot? A million times zero is still zero. Meaningfulness within meaninglessness is still meaninglessness. The self can know no lasting satisfaction once it becomes aware that the Self is not known. Frankl posits virtuous, courageous living as analogous to playing out one's role in a chess game properly, given one's specific circumstances on the board at any time. Yet, he never seemed to seriously ask: Why play the game or in the game at all? Who is playing it? Whose game board is it? It is hard to determine what makes it so, but some people are pushed beyond a certain line where they must have the answers to these questions and cannot content themselves with merely learning to play the game well or even to win at it.

Alongside Frankl, others have also regarded the Holocaust as undoubtedly the greatest metaphor for spiritual darkness and existential horror in modern history (Brenner, 1980; Estess, 1980; Kent, 1972), and thus symbolizing to the extreme the Job in every seeker demanding to know the truth of God's justice. Many individuals have been stranded somewhere between faith and despair. The real issue raised by this incomprehensible (on the human level) experience is at the point where religion becomes spirituality. The living experience that the conception of God as a loving "Santa Claus" figure does not exist forces one to contemplate the question: What then is the <u>real</u> "God" or Absolute that oversees all of life and death, and runs the universe by some unknown Divine standard? The God that was present even in Auschwitzand survivedis the only God worth finding. How are we to do it?

Yet, how can we ever hope to see the truth while we look through a glass darkly? Many esoteric sources indicate that the reality we perceive and experience may not be entirely, solidly real, but is the result of mental projection based on belief. Furthermore, we do not even suspect nor question that the egomind that creates this fiction is itself a product of that larger, collective fiction. The role of conviction in the creation of a personal paradigm has been described, as well as suggestions on how to escape this mental prison cell into a more objective state, thereby allowing healing, psychic perception, and instances of magic to take place (Pearce, 1971; Steiger, 1971). By understanding the ways in which our minds have been conditioned into delusive categories, we can learn how to undo these filters of interpretation and see reality more directly, as a whole, from a position of untainted awareness (Puligandla, 1981; Strauch, 1983).

Even our afterdeath status is said to be largely defined by our stateofbeing during life, with the warning that all possible dimensions experienced subsequent to death are as fictional as our current condition in the "real world"; every afterdeath state being another sheath of maya covering the real Self, with no automatic graduation into GodConsciousness occurring merely due to one's dying. Rather than waking up at death, one might be only switching channels and becoming wholly engrossed in the new scene. So, the question then becomes: what dies and what does not? What watches all possible dimensions? What is required is for one to isolate this Self prior to all mental projection and reside fully in that, rather than fabricate more illusions for endless lifetimes ahead (EvansWentz, 1960).

Although there is some evidence of there being a transpersonal, universal aspect to the experience of death, regardless of one's specific beliefs or degree of preparation, it appears there is still enough measure of diversity in the accounts described to suggest there is some hard to define quality of spiritual maturity involved that determines one's capacity for appreciating the reality of death (Moody, 1976). To suspect that death is not the end of existence is not enough. One must come to realize what exactly survives. In other words: who precisely is experiencing the afterdeath state? Where is the boundary between this being of awareness and the experience it is witnessing?

The study of hypnosis gives us a tremendously valuable clue to how our minds really work. From this we may come to recognize and humbly admit how our usual state of consciousness is actually one of hypnosis, rather than awakeness. Likewise, by understanding the mechanics of our wakingsleep, we can work to undo our somnambulistic state and live with or through a true mind (Santanelli, 1980).

One researcher blended his knowledge of hypnosis, mindscience, and esoteric psychology into a system designed to enable one to create "reality", thereby transforming one from being a bewildered consequence of life's events to a master of one's fate (Alexander, 1954). The drawback in this approach is that as long as one regards the human being as the center of the universe (and one's self as the human being), as well as its final appreciator, any reality one may create would still only be a projection of that ego's desires, rather than the uncovering of *what is*. The underlying nature of impersonal reality would still be unknown. Likewise, the issue of one's ultimate identity beyond the inevitable death of even the most masterful egoself would still be unresolved.

Percival wrote a magnificent opus of metaphysics that took this line of thinking a step further (Percival, 1946). He reiterated the central occult theme that energy follows thought and thought creates our world and life. However, he stressed that the actuality of this principle also inseparably involves the recognition that what can be created by the human mindascreator is not objective reality, nor has the human mind created itself. He advocates the highest application of this power of directed consciousness to be the inversion of this usually outward attention, to full realization of this Being of Consciousness itself. The important point is to not identify with the projected creations of mind, nor

to identify with the egomind self that is the conduit of the projections, but to use thought to transcend thoughtto the discovery of the ultimate Knower.

The field of existential phenomenology (Valle, 1981; Zaner, 1970), as originally developed by Husserl and Berkeley, provides an introspective methodology for the line of metaphysical search Percival was endorsing. Its emphasis is upon the cultivation of direct perception of the objects in consciousness (including all thoughts, feelings, reactions, etc.), and thereby to know more precisely the nature of consciousness itself. The more purely this consciousness can be experienced, the closer one comes to the realization of the sourceand identityof the perceiver. This work is essentially that of defining the meaning of actual experience, as apart from interpretations about experience.

A metaphorical joke is told in the study of perception that illustrates the need for this added dimension of perspective from an objective or universal awareness. Three baseball umpires are discussing the respective philosophies behind their craft. The first modestly says: "I just call 'em as I see 'em; that's all I can do." The second one more boldly states: "I do better than thatI call them as they are." The third one offers the intended clincher by authoritatively claiming: "What I call them makes them what they are!"

As philosophically convenient as this sounds, there is an error in this reasoning in regards the search for truth. This latter conviction is that of egocentered solipsism: the belief that reality is only that which the human mind decides it is, and nothing more. The assumption is that objective awareness of experience does not exist, or that even if it does in principle, it can never be discovered; that only the conditional, relative consciousness of the individual is experienceable. The third umpire is leaving out the possibility that the slow motion instant replay of the action on film would be the truest determinant of the proper call, and it might prove his perception and thus judgment inaccurate. His more precise statement should have been: "What I call them determines what I assume they are from my vantage point and through my eyes, and is their functional definition, until found otherwise."

In other words, objective reality might still be something other than how we regard things, and to discover this one must step outside the boundary of the distortive egomind. The person on a psychedelic drug trip may be fully convinced of being able to fly, but if one should thus confidently leap out of a high window, the final decision on validity still belongs to the pavement below (at least in this dimension). Keeping this perspective in mind will keep the truthseeker more humble and motivate the effort to purify one's quality of seeing until it is objective and universal. Much of the Psychology of the Observer is aimed at such seeing.

Rose's system has firm foundations in the entire range of mystical teachings called the Perennial Philosophy (Capps, 1978; Happold, 1970; Hixon, 1978; Huxley, 1970; O'Brien, 1964; Osborne, 1969; Reinhold, 1973; Stace, 1960). He has compiled an anthology of his own of what he considers to be some of the highest esoteric doctrines from all spiritual traditions, which had influenced his own path, his method of teaching, or corroborated his subsequent transcendental findings (Rose, 1988).

All these titles are collections of the testimonies of saints, sages, and seekers throughout history, from every religious orientation, who offer their insights about the spiritual life and the GodRealization with which it culminates. Their common message is that all of phenomenal life, all categories of consciousness, and all forms of individual existence have as their ultimate ground or essence, one supreme source that can only be called Reality or the Absolute. Furthermore, it is claimed that this fundamental stateofbeing can be directly experienced and need not be merely believed in, and when thus realized, this God and one's essential Self are found to be the same. It is added that while the actual nature of this final experience is beyond all human imagining and cannot be adequately conceptualized nor communicated, it is assured to be the answer to all questions and resolution of all desire. One is at home at last.

Two volumes (Bucke, 1969; White, 1984) focus in more specifically on the nature of spiritual attainment through the biographical statements of major religious figures throughout history. Discussed are the common denominators in the sequence of inner work and resultant changes leading up to revelation, the personal qualities of the individuals involved, and the hallmarks of the final experience itself.

One remarkable testimony evidencing mature wisdom is by a littleknown, lone seeker named Charles Essert (Essert, 1973). His understanding of the requirements of the path goes right to the core issues, his description of illumined spiritual perception reveals a new world, and he speaks with the firm authority of one who has been to the Source.

Another modern mystic described the path to death and resurrection as the Infinite Way (Goldsmith, 1956, especially p. 149 177). His understanding of what it means to be a truth seeker is uncompromising and his advice sage. A few sample comments: "Rejoice as the outer building tumbles down, for the inner Temple is to be revealed"; "The mind of the individual seeking help is the Christmind awaiting recognition"; "Attainment comes only as one is loosed from all concepts of Truth, and this comes only by Grace"; "Do not expect the power of God to function in the dream, but rather to break the dream"; "To know that one has been functioning in the dream is the beginning of awakening"; "To refrain from seeking the help of God is to be functioning in reality"; "Begin your spiritual life with the understanding that all conflicts must be settled within your consciousness"; "All that is objectively witnessed must be understood to be mental images or mind projectionsnever spiritual reality"; "Prayer is the inner vision of harmony. This vision is attained by giving up the desire to change or improve anyone or anything"; "God is not in the human scene. If you were aware of the significance of this statement, you could lay down your life and pick it up again, at will".

Rose has expressed great respect in particular for two books (Hartmann, 1980; Van Der Leeuw, 1966). Hartmann presents the essential themes of the Western mystical tradition, referring to the alchemical work of transmuting energy and desire into Selfknowledge as "white magic." Van Der Leeuw writes a brilliant discourse on the multifaceted nature of illusion as contrasted with what can only be called the Absolute. As the path to Reality requires first the recognition and rejection of mental error, his systematic evaluation of our experience of illusion as reality gives the seeker much material for further contemplation.

The Gnostic Gospels provide us with some lesser known sayings of Christ, possibly humanity's foremost authority on the Perennial Philosophy. These are a few of his comments pointing to the most radical way: "Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds, he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the All"; "Recognize what is in your sight, and that which is hidden from you will become plain to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest"; "Men think that it is peace which I have come to cast upon the world. They do not know that it is dissension which I have come to cast upon the earth: fire, sword, and war"; "Jesus said: 'Become passersby'"; "Strive to know yourselves, and ye shall know that ye are in the City of God, and ye are the City" (Anonymous, 1979; Meyer, 1986).

All of these traditional teachings, from the highest sources, indicate to us a direction towards Reality and promise that this Reality can be experienced. However, the message often lacks enough of a specific methodology about how we can accomplish this to usefully guide us. The texts serve primarily to awaken our intuition and inspire us on to further personal inquiry.

Much work has been done in recent years in the field of transpersonal psychology by those rare therapists who are of a spiritual orientation as well as the researchers who explore the workings of consciousness, in order to devise ways and means of implementing these lofty mystical principles

into personal, human terms on the path. Several substantial volumes have been compiled that summarize the therapeutic, phenomenological, and transcendental levels of work on the self (Boorstein, 1980; Tart, 1975; Wilber, 1977, 1981). Material is also available using references specifically drawn from the rich Sufi perspective (Khan, 1981) and Yoga tradition (Rama, 1976).

Several psychologists offer systems of inner work that aim all the way to SelfRealization rather than stopping only with selfsatisfaction. Assagioli developed a system called Psychosynthesis which contains procedures to draw together a whole person with a sound mind, healthy heart, trustworthy intuition, and growing sense of Self and purpose (Ferrucci, 1982). One teacher of an esoteric school integrates a wide range of spiritual and psychodynamic material that is instrumental in cultivating "essence" (Almaas, 1986). Another transpersonal psychologist blends Freudian psychoanalysis, Buber's mystical existentialism, and Advaita Vedanta in leading to the isolation of and abidance in "I Amness" (Kent, 1972). One therapist pinpoints the specific issue in the counseling context to which Rose devotes his entire system of work: extracting the observing self from the contents of consciousness and experience (Deikman, 1982).

Rose has referred to Gurdjieff as the greatest psychologist of the 20th century. Much of the Albigen System parallels this teaching of the "Fourth Way." Gurdjieff had developed an extensive understanding of the mechanics of human nature, as well as a holistic system of "Work" for alerting "sleepwalkers" to the reality of their dismal condition and developing in them the capacity to be selfdetermining seekers of objective consciousness. He advocated the harmonious development of all centers (mental, emotional, moving), which in turn also develops the magnetic center or "philosophic 'I'", somewhat analogous to Rose's term: being. He also taught an elaborate scheme of cosmology, including the dynamics of energy, which also relate to Rose's principles about transmutation.

Several books by his students and associates present the system in fascinating detail. His foremost disciple referred to the challenge and opportunity in this Work as "The psychology of man's possible evolution" (Ouspensky, 1949, 1971, 1974). This carries the serious implication that we cannot rely upon spiritual growth as being our automatic destiny, but must deliberately attend to the inner pathways of selftransformation if we wish to become anything more than anonymous automatons. Another wrote a well thought out set of commentaries based on the works of both teachers, as well as his own insights as a Jungian psychologist (Nicoll, 1984). A good, general introduction to the whole system derived from Nicoll's synthesis also blends in Krishnamurti's nondualistic approach to revealing the pure Self (Benjamin, 1971). As Gurdjieff's teaching was inseparable from his own awesome yet perplexing character, understanding the man and how he interacted with his students helps one to better assess the intent of his system, and adjust for how the seeming defects in his nature influenced the transmission of the actual teaching (Webb, 1987; Wilson, 1986). Another student emphasized how so much of Gurdjieff's instruction in his school was in the form of a living, direct interaction with his students, the benefit of which could not entirely be conveyed in a written discourse of theory and methods (Walker, 1969).

As there was no official "lineage" for the teaching after Gurdjieff's death, the material continued to be reformulated and refined by each student who worked with it and went on to teach. Two excellent books reintroduce his ideas with the author's own creative elaborations. One explains what it means to play the highest game in life, and the only one worth playing: the Master Game (De Ropp, 1968). Another exhorts the seeker to engage in work that will result in a complete transformation of being, and not only emotional comfort or personal enhancement (Gold, 1985).

Following is a collection of Gurdjieff's sayings that depict his vision of committed spirituality: "We attract forces according to our being"; "Men have their minds and women their feelings more

highly developed. Either alone can give nothing. Think what you feel and feel what you think. Fusion of the two produces another force"; "Sincerity is the key to selfknowledge and to be sincere with oneself brings great suffering"; "Sleep is very comfortable, but waking is very bitter"; "He who can love can *be*; he who can *be* can *do*; he who can *dois*"; "In the river of life, suffering is not intentional. In conscious life, suffering is intentional and of great value"; "Know that this work can be useful only to those who have recognized their nothingness and who believe in the possibility of changing"; "One of the strongest motives for the wish to work on yourself is the realization that you may die at any momentonly you must first realize this, and learn to keep it in mind"; "Remember yourself always and everywhere" (Gurdjieff, 1975).

The Fourth Way is a step beyond religious belief, humanistic positivism, or existential despair. Common with all esoteric teachings is the notion that we are living fictitious lives, from a mistaken sense of self, and through a deluded mind. Three of our primary illusions are: unity, consciousness, and effectiveness. Much of Gurdjieff's message is that once we know we are robots and do not do, but are done towe are becoming awake. Enlightenment comes from the knowledge that one is mechanical. Yet, despite the seeming grimness of his approach, he also adds the Zenlike twist that the attachment to one's suffering only serves as another excuse to not do the Work.

Rose has expressed great respect for Zen as the highest and most direct form of psychoanalysis. He also appreciates Zen's approach to reconciling the paradoxes inherent in the dualistic mind, both in terms of his manner of teaching and the student's inner experience of discovering.

Two books offer a psychologist's thorough exploration of the actual subjective dynamics involved in this mental transcendence as well as the experiential practice of egodetachment or "letting go" (Benoit, 1959, 1973). Due to its 'neither here nor there' nature and the need to acknowledge the impossibility of attaining its goal before the goal can be attained, Zen is probably the most difficult spiritual doctrine to explain in words. Garma Chang wrote one of the best overviews yet attempted that conveys not only the key principles in this nonpath to Here, but the attitude or intuitive understanding that enables this nonfinite leap to Realization to occur (Chang, 1959). The central Zen theme of "direct transmission of mind" is best apprehended by studying the actual words of the master, Huang Po, to his students (Blofeld, 1958). Finally, the relation between the 'immediate' quality of Zen and the nonduality of Advaita Vedanta needs to be understood in order to better utilize the specific guidelines in the Psychology of the Observer (Powell, 1983).

One of the most superlative philosophical minds of the modern era has been that of Franklin MerrellWolff. His detailed description of the personal odyssey that resulted in unexpected Realization is a classic of spiritual literature and the subsequent volume that explains the precise ramifications of his new perspective on existence stretches one's comprehension to the limit (MerrellWolff, 1973a, 1973b). His path was a blend of pure mathematical abstraction and the Vedantic teaching of Shankara, and the twin volumes evidence his capacity for highly intuitive subjectivity as well as rigorous, impersonal discrimination on the mental level.

His findings about the real nature of things are fully in line with the Perennial Philosophy, while his specific guidance for the seeker is communicated in the more accessible terms of transpersonal psychology. Following is a sampling of his conclusions gathered from a lecture. They closely parallel Rose's own testimony.

MerrellWolff states that the container of the potential knower and potential known is ultimate reality. He refers to the realization of this as introception. He distinguishes the phases or levels of identification on the path as realism (the world of objects), idealism (that which is conscious), and introceptualism (consciousness itself). These categories will be seen to closely coincide with the three mental domains comprising Rose's transpersonal "map", called Jacob's Ladder.

He claims there is no separate experience of this introceptive recognition: "I am what I seek." At this pointone gives up and arrives. He adds that nothing relative can make this absolute recognition occur. All effort is to remove the barriers that would prevent this from happening. At some point, one ceases to search for "God" as an object or state outside the self, and instead sinks back completely into the Self. He assures us that the True Self lies behind the false self, which is projected before it. He states that the world, life, and the "me" is actually a partial obscuration of consciousness. Clearing through this consciousness results in "one's" death, which then opens into Reality.

He makes this summary definition of his findings: "Substantiality is inversely proportional to ponderability. Reality is inversely proportional to appearance." He is thus claiming that we really know when we cognize nothing. The enlightened person's consciousness would be considered our unconsciousness, while our consciousness is actually unconsciousness. This ultimate consciousness without an object and without a subject is introceptualism.

MerrellWolff's philosophy is one Westerner's personal testimony giving voice to the wide range of teachings out of the rich spiritual tradition of India. It is impossible to do justice in this short space to the profound message coming from the following teachers, who embody his antecedents. However, a few key points from each will be enough to indicate that Rose's own convictions have roots deep in the purest existing doctrines that aim at discovering Reality.

One of the principle source texts by a specific teacher for much of later Indian spirituality is the collection of yoga aphorisms of Patanjali (Patanjali, 1981). This is a concise elucidation of the way of raja yoga: the practice of mental refinement, concentration, and detachment that leads to liberation from the world of ignorance and to the realization of Atman, or the spiritual Self.

Another classic text, a companion to the previous work, is the Crest Jewel of Discrimination (Shankara, 1978). This is the foundation material for the Advaita Vedanta teaching referred to earlier. Likewise, many of the key themes presented in Rose's work can be traced back to Shankara. The teaching describes the path of nonduality, of discrimination between the real and unreal, of disciplining the mind and passions to become free of delusory distractions, and of backing into the ultimate "I Am."

Sri Aurobindo's massive teaching called Integral Yoga (Aurobindo, 1971a, 1971b) is a blend of karma, bhakti, jnana, and raja yogas, along with tantric and advaitic elements, that provide a detailed blueprint for human and cosmic evolution towards the ultimate goal of attaining the Supermind, or Mind of Light. He believed the individual, through committed effort, could attain the selfperfection intended by the higher order of Nature. His guidance through the personal intricacies of yogic work is most knowledgeable and compassionate.

Ramesh Balsekar is a modern jnani yogi who stresses the nonvolitional aspect of Advaita Vedanta (Balsekar, 1982, 1988). His explanation of the objective philosophical context of spiritual evolution is most lucid, although he could be faulted for underemphasizing the personal, subjective experience of searchingthe other side of the paradox of nonduality. He does take strict conceptual understanding of the real nature of phenomenal existence and the awakening into true identity as far it can go. His insistence that this shift from ignorance to realization happens purely by itself may well be finally true, but it may deceive the fictitious seeker into a dangerous misunderstanding of what it means to wait passively for Grace. There is indeed nothing for the Self to do, for it already and always IS but for the small "s" self, as we find ourselves to be now, there is much that must be done, even though it may not be doing anything of its own independent will.

Furthermore, the seeming lack of "soul" or mature "presence" in his discourse suggests the possibility that the experience on which Balsekar has based his teaching was not full Enlightenment,

but what in Zen is called Satori. This is what results when the student's determined course of searching and struggling reaches a climax of exasperation and there is an instantaneous, gestaltic comprehension of the truth of existence. Yet, as Rose explains, this is still a mental experience, and not a leap into the realization of Essence. There is tremendous philosophical insight and mental clarity, but one has not yet arrived at fundamental Beingness. The truth is known in principle, but it is knowledge still subtly apart from the knower. One has not *become* it. Hence, the ability to fully understand the nature of the critical, final transition, the relevance of the inner work leading up to it, and the paradox that must be recognized and respected throughout the inquiry could be missing.

Balsekar's stress is that since there really is no such entity at the center of experience that can be regarded as an individual seeker, there can be no one in bondage, nor can there be free will, as there is no "person" who is separate from the All and so could do something by choice. Thus, there is no effort possible by a nonexistent entity to attain freedom from a state that is illusory to begin with. The realization of all this at once is what he calls Enlightenment. His sole aim in teaching is to convey to the receptive student the understanding that all human beings are only the indivisibly interrelated instruments through which Totality functions. This becomes "beingunderstanding"when it is time. Following are a few of his comments from lectures: "True meditation is when there is no meditator"; "The 'me'" is an eclipse of the Truth"; "When the seeker ceases to seek, the seeker becomes the sought"; "Enlightenment is an impersonal happening"; "The individual person is like a dot in a photograph in a newspaper, made up of a million dots. The picture is of the face of humanity."

The paradox in all this, that the Albigen System incorporates, is that what one is "supposed" to do by fatei.e. "Thy will be done" (is anything else even possible?)is to do what is required on one's path. This effort may then not be that of a vain ego pretending to operate separate from the truth, but rather its obeying the programming from this Source to work out the details of one's evolution in manifestation. In other words, the Self may want the self to make efforts within the dream to help the awakening occur. The "automatic" process of transformation and transition to which Balsekar refers may <u>include</u> this, and not be apart from it and be thwarted by it. It is true nonduality to see that we live our fateit does not happen "to" us apart from us. The problem here againan ironic trap in Advaita, one unintentionally implied through clumsy discourseis in misidentifying the Self with the person rather than with the awareness <u>of</u> the person embedded in the bigger picture, thus resulting in a false passivity within experience, instead of true detachment <u>from</u> experience, to which the teaching is meant to lead. And, sadly, this misunderstanding may keep one from making the necessary efforts to enable one to ever actually realize this.

As a curious aside, the question could be pondered as to where the line is to be drawn between what the self is "supposed" to do according to its role in the master plan, and the false egoself's interference with and projection onto its lifeactions. This relates to the issue in Christian theology as to whether the Fall of Mankind was "our" spiteful doing, or likewise, for some unknown reason, instigated by "God" and misinterpreted by the guilty ego as its being responsible for it. Perhaps there is no line.

To continue, Balsekar's claim that the nonexistent individual can do nothing to end itself may be philosophically accurate, but is experientially misleading. "I" have been able to awaken myself from within a dream, once realizing that what I am experiencing is a dream, by a peculiar kind of inner effort of inverted attention, knowing that the awakening would undo the "me" who is making the (illusory) effort, yet would bring the <u>essence</u> of me to reality, or to a more valid stateofbeing. A traditional metaphor is that of a stick being used to stoke a fire in a funeral pyre, and then tossed into the flames after it has done its job.

A concise but most intense exposition on the perspective necessary to attain freedom blends Advaita with Taoism and Zen (Wei Wu Wei, 1964). The central principle it explores is again the illusoriness of the convictions of individuality and hence freewill. The teaching is that the understanding of the indivisible wholeness of experience and the impossibility of freedom within experience leads to the only true state of freedom from bondage possible.

A few of its main points are worth emphasizing. It is claimed that neither the seeker nor what is sought really exist. When this is realized through precise introspection, one becomes the Truth. To realize that one is being lived and has no will shows who one is not and points to who one is. The actuality of nonvolition, of there being no egogenerated action, is in the recognition that action moves itself through the "me"and I watch it happen. To know there is no self who can be willful and that one is merely watching the moving of oneself is the doorway to freedom. In thus failing to find the nonexistent self and this self's "god", there is the awakening to Truth.

One unusually provocative, iconoclastic book offers a deliberately perplexing twist on this entire theme of how to attain the "natural state" (Krishnamurti, U.G., 1982). The author described having undergone a spontaneous transformation in his stateofbeing after years of arduous, convoluted, frustrated effort, that he subsequently claimed was useless. His "teaching" is most radical in that he says this unconditioned state cannot be attained by any means whatsoever and that all forms of spiritual, philosophical, and psychological processes towards that end are misunderstanding the real issue. He negates all premises, supports, and expectations about the quest, and the "mystique of Enlightenment", leaving one in a quandary with no solution. His is a most disturbing, yet thoroughly honest, message. One suspects that he did experience egomind death, yet his "being" may not have been prepared well enough to be able to fully appreciate the nonstate that remained, so his realization was somewhat polluted or distorted. Still, this book is pure Advaita, presented in the manner of Zen, for the benefit of those brave seekers who can endure it.

As will be explained in detail, the highest aspect of Rose's psychological system corresponds most closely with the nondualism of Advaita Vedanta. The complete path is intended to raise one above all dichotomies and externalizations, to the realization of totality, to where there is no longer any "other." This approach is why Rose's teaching can be considered existentialism in the purest sense, and the negation of all forms of dualistic belief and projection, for: what isIS. Seeing the truth for what it is and becoming the Seer that contains the All is the path.

There are four modern sages of the Advaitic tradition who are worth special attention here. Each in his own way points to the same essential lessons of life and the nature of transcendence to which Rose's elaborate pathway leads.

J. Krishnamurti disclaimed the title of teacher and denied that he was offering a teaching. Yet his quiet comments, when fully heard, bring the listener into close consideration of what is crucial in the way of seeking and his words bring the seeker into closer appreciation of the meaning of silence (Holroyd, 1980; Krishnamurti, 1983; Mehta, 1978). A few of his general comments follow, collected from various talks, essays, and articles.

"Distrust everything, including yourself. Go with distrust to the very end, and you will find that all that could be doubted was false and only what can stand the fire of the fiercest doubt is true. Because what remains is life, of which doubt is the selfcleansing process"; "What matters is to observe your own mind without judgementjust to look at it, to watch it, to be conscious of the fact that your mind is a slave, and no more; because that very perception releases energy, and it is this energy that is going to destroy the slavishness of the mind"; "Wisdom and truth come to a man who truly says, 'I am ignorant, I do not know'"; "Addiction to knowledge is like any other addiction; it offers an

escape from the fear of emptiness, of loneliness, of frustration, the fear of being nothing"; "If you face and live the truth in life, life will give you what you need"; "The fundamental error and delusion is 'Iamthisness egoity'; this separation, isolation, and fragmentation is the very nature of thought"; "Wisdom comes into existence when sorrow, or self, ends"; "The conditioning of the mind is like the programming of a computer; the I or ego is no more than the selfhood of a programmed network of thinking; then one must move beyond the chattering of thinking which inhibits perception of truth, to the silence wherein truth exists"; "We cannot put an end to thinking, but thought comes to an end when the thinker ceases, and the thinker ceases only when there is an understanding of the whole process"; "Observe that self in operation, learn about it, watch it, be aware of it, do not destroy it, do not say 'I must get rid of it' or 'I must change it'; just watch it, without any choice, without any distortion; then out of that watching and learning, the self disappears"; "Truth is not 'what is', but the understanding of 'what is' opens the door to truth".

Possibly the greatest spiritual figure of the 20th century was Ramana Maharshi. He fully exemplified the archetype of the transcendent Gurufigure. His central theme was the procedure of "selfenquiry": for one to look directly into the origin of the selfasmentalexperience, and in discovering finally that it does not exist as a genuine entity, one realizes being in aware space and that one is this formless Self. The question "Who am I?" has no answer, so it collapses into itself. One must look into who is asking the question and then finds there is only the watching of the questioning and answering, until only silence remains. *One becomes.* He considered this the highest and most direct path. Several excellent books are available describing his teaching. Some are anthologies of his dialogues with seekers, along with the author's commentaries (Godman, 1985; Osborne, 1970), and others are written by advanced students of his who provide their own insights gained from years of experience in working closely with Maharshi (Sadhu, 1976; Who, 1961).

The following two brief statements indicate the substance of his message. Although sounding deceptively simple, the words contain a tremendous depth of meaning: "Concentrating the mind solely on the Self will lead to happiness or bliss. Drawing in the thoughts, restraining them and preventing them from straying outwards is called detachment. Fixing them in the Self is spiritual practice. Concentrating on the Heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. Heart is another name for Self," and "Your duty is *to be*. 'I am that I am' sums up the whole truth. The method is summarized in 'BE STILL'."

Paul Brunton was a great seeker and philosopher in his own right, and was largely responsible for introducing the teachings of Maharshi to the West in the 1930's. His series of books, both the original major treatises on Eastern mysticism and the posthumous collections of his aphorisms, give a mature, realistic, and sober description of the entire philosophical path, leading to union with the Overself (Brunton, 1970, 1984, 1988; Rose, 1979). Rose has expressed great respect for Brunton's material and the sincerity of the man's intentions. His practical explorations of esotericism from the viewpoint of personal experience made him an early forerunner of the Transpersonal Psychology movement.

Nisargadatta Maharaj's dialogues in I Am That read of pure wisdom. One has the sense that if "God" could talk and respond to seeker's inquiries, His words would be that of Maharaj's. As did Maharshi, he speaks directly from the condition of Awakeness and states the blunt, unadulterated truth about every issue raised. His is a mind that never sleeps and a vision that does not blink (Balsekar, 1982; Dunn, 1982, 1985; Maharaj, 1982; Powell, 1987, 1992). His teaching is to point to the fundamental Self or unconditional Being prior to all forms of consciousness, to the true state that is always behind duality, while at the same time rejecting all that is seen within consciousness as "not I."

A few sample comments taken from the recorded dialogues show clear relevance to themes elaborated upon in Rose's system: "You can know the false only; the true you must yourself BE"; "You cannot abandon what you do not know. To go beyond yourself, you must know yourself. ('What does it mean to know myself? What do I come to know?') All that you are not"; "The way leads through yourself beyond yourself"; "I am that by which I know I am"; "('Does Maharaj follow in the footsteps of his Guru?') He has no footsteps. He has no feet"; "Your world is something alien, and you are afraid. My world is myself. I am at home"; "('You are aware of the immense suffering of the world?') Of course I am, much more than you are. ('Then what do you do?') I look at it through the eyes of God and find that all is well"; "You must watch yourself continuously particularly your mindmoment by moment, missing nothing. This witnessing is essential for the separation of the self from the notself"; "There are twothe person and the witness, the observer. When you see them as one, and go beyond, you are in the supreme state. The only way of knowing it is to *be* it"; "When you believe yourself to be a person, you see persons everywhere. In reality there are no persons, only threads of memories and habits. At the moment of realization, the person ceases. Identity remains, but identity is not a person; it is inherent in the reality itself. The person has no being in itself; it is a reflection in the mind of the witness, the 'I am'"; "There is no 'how' here. Just keep in mind the feeling 'I am'; merge in it, until your mind and feeling become one. By repeated attempts you will stumble on the right balance of attention and affection and your mind will be firmly established in the thoughtfeeling 'I am'"; "('Is the witnessconsciousness the real Self?') It is the reflection of the real in the mind. The real is beyond. The witness is the door through which you pass beyond"; "Seeing the false as the false, is meditation"; "Establish yourself firmly in the awareness of 'I am'. This is the beginning and also the end of all endeavor"; "Meditation will help you to find your bonds, loosen them, untie them and cast your moorings. When you are no longer attached to anything, you have done your share. The rest will be done for you"; "('Why don't we wake up?') You will. I shall not be thwarted. When you shall begin to question your dream, awakening will be not far away."

Jean Klein teaches this same nondualistic path of Advaita, but through a more gentle, delicate medium of expression. His words are quiet, their shades of meaning are subtle, the discrimination he requires is acute, one's integrity in assimilating and heeding his instruction must be impeccable, and the spiritual maturity he demands for his message to be correctly heard is great (Klein, 1978, 1986, 1988, 1989).

The watchwords in Klein's teaching are "welcoming", "opening", "waiting", "allowing", "unfolding", and "listening". He intends to convey a sense of the "natural state" which is always available, behind ego, identification, and effort, and the residing in which is simultaneously the passive correction of delusion and the growing realization of Being.

These are a few of his comments from his dialogues: "The surest way to discover truth is to stop resisting it"; "When you fully see, you realize that what you see is in you"; "When you are not, God is"; "When you see there is no doer, but only doing, there is a stop"; "There is no witness; there is only witnessing"; "('Who inquires?') No one inquires; there is only inquiry"; "You must see how desires never fulfill their promises. You must see the futility of satisfying desire for the pattern to end"; "What is required is realizing, not doing"; "The realization that you are not a person with a problem, and the returning to the self, releases tremendous energy"; "You must see the entity that wants to grasp the state of freedom"; "True seeing requires attention without tension"; "Seeing that the mind is incapable of doing anything to end itself leads to one's becoming free of it"; "When the observer and what is seen are recognized to be one, energy is transformed"; "You are Reality, so every step you take takes you away from yourself".

As can be seen from this collection of sayings and principles from various teachers, Advaita and Zen can be considered the highest and most direct "pointers" to the essence of Self. There is no teaching beyond them, except for dead silence. Or rather: living silence. Their primary message is that all one needs to do to find the self is to peel off the nonselves, the sheaths. We must study the "me"thought until it disappears, revealing the true "I". As this occurs, it is realized that the world exists in consciousness, of which one is aware, rather than our living in a world separate and external to us, as one object regarding another. As this unity within consciousness is recognized, it is seen that there can be no individual doer, despite the subjective experience of free choice and personal responsibility. It is taught that everything happens "by itself", as a whole, whereas we identify with the mechanism of one of its parts. Nonduality in this regard means that what we do and what happens to us are the same. The simplest way of describing the opening to the final answer is that the recognition that there is nothing to do, nothing that can or needs to be done, and no one to do anything to attain realization, is the realization.

These different themes presented in East and West start to flow together. Christ taught us: "Seek and you will find." Advaita advises us to dissolve the seeker. Rose's system of Zen blends the two by urging us to seek by inquiring into the nature of the seeker and thereby becoming dissolved into the truth of the Self.

It can now be seen how this highest mystical path replies to the ultimate existential question posed earlier, represented by Elie Wiesel confronting the Holocaust: "What is truth?" (This clue is alluded to in a cartoon which depicts the stereotypical image of a yogi seated on a bed of nails, as he remarks to a sympathetic onlooker: "It only hurts when I exist" - !) The response is: "Stop asking and you will be answered." He would reply: "I cannotas long as I live, I cannot." The only conclusion can be: "Rightso you must die."

The central pathway of every spiritual teaching is the instruction to "go within": to meditate in order to realize the Self. There are many forms of meditation taught in different disciplines, corresponding to the specific nature, capacity, and inclination of individual seekers (Goleman, 1977; White, 1972). The common denominator in all of them is ultimately: "Know thyself". The different forms of concentration employed are all intended to serve that end. The self must be known before the Self can be realized.

The forms of meditation most aligned with Rose's teaching can be collectively called the path of mindfulness. It is the path of refining the pure awareness of oneself: the awareness that knows, that comprehends, that heals. It is the awareness that one finally becomes.

The doctrine that most plainly practices this with a minimum of related dogma is Vipassana Buddhist meditation (Goldstein, 1983). It is the cultivation of the "choiceless awareness" of which Krishnamurti spoke; the attitude of Klein's "listening" and "welcoming." Vipassana is strictly concerned with the direct watching of all subjective experience, with no interpretation, reaction, or resistance. It is the practice of seeing oneself.

The course of self observation can be said to progress through four general levels of concern: 1) witnessing sensations, feelings, and thoughts as pure data happening in consciousness (phenomenology); 2) intuiting the inner nature and meaning of psychological experience (insight); 3) objectively studying the origin and mechanics of mental experience (impersonal inquiry); and 4) finding a gradual shift in identity occurring to that which is watching what is seen (returning to the Self). This impartial selfstudy brings about the discovery of the insubstantiality of the egoself; the reflexively, habitually presumed "me" at the center of experience. In seeing this emptiness, one becomes a nothingness that is much larger and more real.

This manner of meditation and inner purification has also be formulated in the context of Judeo Christian mysticism (Masters, 1978). Masters takes this practice of selfobservation and then leads one through the deep psychological dynamics that must be acknowledged, corrected, and transcended in order to realize spirit. He advises that we engage in clear witnessing of all inward conditionsour thoughts, desires, reactions, injuries, motives, and attitudeswith total detachment, nonjudgment, and no willful efforts to change anything that we see about our nature. We must see how much we are lost in memory and imagination rather than experiencing the reality of our lives directly, and endure the vision without recoil. This unbuffered confrontation with ourselves can be painful, as we are forced to admit our inner poverty and the forever futile compensations for it made by the ego in its bid for some security and affirmation.

In this practice, we are seeing our lives. Masters insists this hell we witness is us. Yet, he adds that we must persevere in this calm selfobservation with no fear of harm to the real part of us. This objective seeing brings the truth of our condition to the mind's surface where, in the light of understanding and compassion, the darkness is redeemed and released. We become free of the hypnosis of life that had been bound in with the ego. We become clear observers, residing in our true, whole being, and responding to life from spiritual consciousness. Masters is essentially teaching the methodology of allowing the ego to die, of dying to ourselves and the world, so that we can come to know our essence, that is of God.

Some of these principles of inner inquiry seem to run counter to a certain general, popular category of meditation that aims at relaxation and disassociation from one's personal condition through assorted mechanical techniques and visualization exercises, but without facing the reality of oneself in clear awareness, nor becoming more deeply immersed in true spiritual *being* behind the egoself. There is a difference between the fetal preconscious and the transcendental superconscious. While the intention of leaving oneself behind and going in a "spiritual" direction can be genuine, one may not really be leaving the egomind and entering spirit, but only creating another projected dimension or paradigm within one's own mind as a way of avoiding one's unhappiness, as well as the determination required to answer it at its roots.

These methods could be considered positive to the extent the quality of one's consciousness is purified, one becomes somewhat detached from one's chronic fixation in egoselfhood, and the devotion or desire to come into communion with one's God that motivates this regular practice actually brings one closer to the Source behind the scenes. The result of such worship may be less dependent on the specific methodology and belief content of the devotion than the earnestness of the seeker's desire generating it. The Inner Self recognizes and answers the true prayer (and is probably what evokes it in us, to find itself through hearing its own call).

The value of mindfulness meditation as compared to mechanistic and/or devotional practices alone is that in the latter, however immanent God is presumed to be, this God is still experientially regarded as something far away; an object to be acquired or discovered when earned through correct conduct and rigorous discipline. God is believed to be something we will eventually find somewhere over the rainbow if we strive long enough. On the other hand, the Self as *aware beingness* is already right here; it touches us now. It finally becomes a matter of realizing this awareness more and more completely <u>as</u> oneself, in the moment; not finding and winning the favor of a Deityasother.

This is not meant to discount the reality of the genuine Prayer of the Heart and the quietude that enables it to be felt. To the innocent devotee, the Love of God may be experienced as directly in the moment as the Mind of God. Still, the common denominator in both is finally the <u>experiencer</u> the "I am." Realizing this is the aim of Rose's form of meditation. The value of such mindfulness and selfinquiry is that in order to surrender to or "love" God, one must first know oneself enough to be

able to fully surrender to or love this God. Whether one's path is to surrender oneself and merge into God or retreat from egoprojection and become the Self, the final stateofbeing is said to be the same. Awareness is its substratum.

Ken Wilber makes several astute comments along this line, to give a sense for what serious meditation is and is not:

Meditation is not a way to make things easier; it's a way to make them worse, so you will have to grow in the process. The worst pitfall is to use meditation to "spiritually bypass" other concerns; concerns that can only be handled in their own terms, or on their own level. Meditation will not take care of your problems for you. What it will do is to make you more sensitive and aware.

> Many people think that meditation is some sort of panacea, and it isn't. What it is, is a direct way to engage your own growth and evolution, and, as is always the case, growth is painful. It hurts. If you're doing meditation correctly, you are in for some very rough and frightening times. Meditation as a "relaxation response" is a joke. Genuine meditation involves a whole series of deaths and rebirths...
>
> Every form of meditation is, in essence, a rehearsal of death. As Zen says: "If you die before you die, then when you die, you won't die".
>
> Intellectual knowledge is not a bad thing (in regards to spiritual practice). This antiintellectualism, which is common to new age science, is a horrible mistake, a hangover from the dharma bum. Hippie dharma. They confused trashing their intellect with transcending it. My experience is that most people who think they are beyond the intellect actually haven't quite gotten up to it yet.
>
> The new age folks try to come straight from the heart, thus bypassing the obstruction known as their brains. (Wilber, 1987, p. 4049).

Wilber is describing the need for the proper purification and blending of the masculine and feminine components of our subjective nature; genuine androgyny on the psychic level. This is the balancing of the attention and affection of which Maharaj spoke. Rose teaches that the joining of the whole heart and whole mind is the source of the higher Intuition.

To bring all these themes together in a larger perspective, here is one author's description of the two primary levels of discovery that occur in the course of direct introspection:

> The external reality we see, hear, feel, smell, taste, and intuit is actually located in our cerebral cortex. If we ever become immediately sensorily aware of this simple fact, we have a "mystical experience." If a person then takes the next step and discerns that the cortex too is a part of that apparently nonexistent external world, chances are he will find himself in the Empty City. (Kerrick, 1976, p. 112).

Rose places a tremendous emphasis in his teaching upon the transmutation of sexual energy and the refinement of the intuition resulting from this. Many traditional and modern sources provide inspiring insight into the need for this sublimation and detailed information on the workings of this inversion. The subject has been addressed from several angles: the physiological, the psychological, and the spiritual.

Research has been done that evidences how the nervous system and the entire body is nourished from the containment and reabsorption of the substances normally expended in sex action. The chemicals thus retained go to enhance the quality of mental functioning, psychic sensitivity, selfhealing, and holistic apprehension (Anonymous, 1968; Bernard, 1957; Jaqua, 1986). Eastern teachings on Kundalini, documented by Western researchers, indicate that the body contains a vital or life energy that usually remains only on the lower levels of physical functioning, but can be transmuted by concentration through mental and physical disciplines. This energy is said to rise through different centers of consciousness in the body until it arrives at the highest center in the brain, which then opens into the dimension of spiritual Beingness. Testimonies have been given by people who have experienced this (White, 1969).

The foremost researcher on Kundalini is Gopi Krishna, who experienced Cosmic Consciousness after many years of dedicated yogic meditation practice (Krishna, 1975). Ever since, he has taught that spiritual realization is in part a natural process ruled by strict biological laws, and not entirely independent of the state of readiness of more subtle workings within the body. He states:

> Every altered state of consciousness has a corresponding biological change in the body. The whole of our body is filled with a very fine biochemical essence (prana, which) is concentrated in the sexenergy. Normally, the sexenergy is used for procreative purposes, but Nature has designed it for evolutionary purposes also. As the evolutionary mechanism, it sends a fine stream of a very potent nerveenergy into the brain and another stream into the sexual regions, the cause of reproduction. By the arousal of kundalini, we mean the reversal of the reproductive system and its functioning more as an evolutionary than as a reproductive mechanism. (Krishna, 1975, p. 111112).

However, he adds: "The real aim of spiritual discipline is to strive for selfmastery, not total negation of basic appetites and desires, and to leave the rest into the hands of Divinity" (Krishna, 1975, p. 102).

In summation, he is saying there are three main factors involved in this presence and development of kundalini in a particular individual: biology due to heredity (decided by one's karma), biology due to one's efforts in this lifetime, and the psychic consequences of these efforts. Grace tips the scale.

It should be further added that the greater emphasis must be upon the transmutation of energy, than conservation of energy alone in a merely quantitative sense. Maximizing even a moderate amount of energy along spiritual lines may be more critical in the long run than saving up a large amount as latent potential, but not utilizing it completely.

Krishna offers this bit of encouragement:

> Yoga is a transhuman state of mind attained by means of the cumulative effect of all practices combined, carried on for years, and supplemented by Grace. The window of the soul cannot be forced open; it must be opened from the inside. The custodians of the window, in the shape of hidden devices in the brain, know exactly when the shutters are to be opened. (Krishna, 1975, p. 89).

This entire line of work is directly related to the various categories of yoga already described, which aim, through efforts made concurrently on every level of one's constitution, to invert one's attentionand hence energy and identificationfrom seduction by the outer world to one's subjective source of being. Misdirected sex energy is said to create our projected world and keep us in bondage

to it. Attending to the work of reversing its flow is to climb Jacob's Ladder back to Paradise (Haich, 1982).

Sexuality is a difficult issue for most people to deal with sanely, even thoseand sometimes especially thosewho are consciously on a spiritual path. The prompting towards morality, once recognized, cannot be adequately enforced through mechanistic notions of energy conservation alone. The real morality is in response to a call from the higher intuition; a voice that points towards our desire for wholeness, of which sexaction is a misguided reflection.

It has been chronicled how historically the heart's deepest desire that had been expressed as religious devotion to God or Church gradually became secularized into romantic love on the human level, with sex as the primary ritual of worship (De Rougemont, 1956). In our current era, this unfortunate misappropriation of the sex function in life has ironically largely negated the attainment of even this romantic ideal by resulting in gross confusion over what it means to be a man or a woman according to the original intent of Nature, and thus the definition of a healthy sexual relationship (Gilder, 1982).

These cultural and sociological concerns describe our problem with sex from an external perspective. The real inner issues regarding sexuality, in terms of the spiritual psychodynamics animating our sex expression, have been explored more thoroughly by Roy Masters than by possibly any other teacher (Masters, 1973, 1985). He explains in great detail the spiritual nature of the masculine and feminine principles in us and the complexand generally pathologicalconvolutions in their relationship.

Masters states that sex itself is not a sin, but that the sin is in the escape through sex from looking at our fallen nature. His exhortations toward morality do not deal with the transmutation of energy, per se, but with how proper sexuality relates to the purification of consciousness. He states that what the seeker of truth needs is to reestablish a righteous relationship with God or one's spiritual core, and from that as the foundation to manifest love with one's partner correctly. This would inherently involve a reduction in the compulsion for sexual expression, not due to repression, but because the desired communion is being experienced on the level where it really belongs. He describes the inner battle that must be fought to thus regain one's rightful identity and how many of the primal errors in our psyches can be worked out within the context of a relationship committed to spiritual redemption.

Following is an outline of Masters' provocative views on sexuality in terms of the psychospiritual dynamics involved (condensed from Masters 1973, 1985). Just as Jung used the mythology of King Arthur as a metaphor to illustrate the archetypes at work in our inner development towards individuation, Masters turns to the Biblical myth of Genesis and the relationship of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to define the archetype of true malefemale love as the vehicle for our returning to innocence. This is the psychology of inner morality, of which sexual restraint and methods for raising kundalini are only the outer form.

As with the Albigensian doctrine (to be described shortly), the objective reality of the metaphysics involved in Masters' philosophy may not be immediately verifiable. Likewise, the paradigm he is depicting may not be complete nor entirely correct as stated and its style or manner of pedagogical conveyance may be colored by the human personality interpreting it. In particular, his somewhat patriarchal perspective may be a sexist distortion or it may be accurate. The objective truth is difficult to determine and personal preference cannot be the criteria for judgment. Nonetheless, his analysis of human nature cuts deeply into our most basic motives and is worth considering seriously, however painful the selfconfrontation. Also, it is worth devoting an extra amount of attention here to this

teaching because it ties in so directly with many of the themes raised in Rose's own system (not coincidentally dedicated to the Albigensians), and indicates the subjective dynamics behind his philosophical conclusions. By working through these personal psychological patterns to reach the truth of one's nature, one is simultaneously doing much of the transpersonal, phenomenological work as well on the purification of the mind and realization of the final observer.

Masters explains about the Fall of Humanity from spiritual to carnal consciousness, and how the Original Sin that prompted this descent into darkness continues on to today. He stresses the sexual component of this psychic violation. He claims the Fall had nothing to do with eating an apple. Genesis said nothing about an apple, which became a polite, though misleading, metaphor in later centuries for some unspecified transgression against spiritual law. If Adam and Eve had eaten the wrong food, they would have covered their mouths with the fig leaves. But, as it was, they covered their sexual parts, "seeing that they were naked," and fled God, ashamed and afraid.

Masters emphasizes the principle of innocence and uses this allegory of Adam and Eve to describe how our innocence was lost, and has been lost for so long that we have come to assume our current quality of consciousness as being the natural, innate state because we have forgotten the truth of our original condition. He refers to God's initial instruction for us to "not eat the fruit of the tree that grows in the middle of the garden", but to instead "eat of the Tree of Life". He tells the reader that we were deceived into taking the wrong roadthrough hell and purgatory, and not heaven, as we believed.

He describes the flaw at the core of our shared problem as being pride and ambition. This results in the experience of separation from Godastotality and the forever futile compensations intended to soothe the anxiety of our insubstantiality and groundlessness. This is not referring to the healthy kind of pride that is inherent in selfrespect, dignity, and appreciation of life, but rather the forgetting of our true status as beings of spirit and filling the void where our soul should be with the conviction of false ego. It is this ego that traded the promise of absolute being for the identification with relative knowledge (of good and evilseeing the polarity of existence with a dualistic mind as a thing apart from oneself as a separate entity, rather than directly experiencing the whole Tao, through a single "eye"). This deceitful condition of self manifests in different ways in Man and Woman, in tragically complementary patterns, using our vital energy to perpetuate its spell. It is this ego's influence in us that attempts to prevent the soul from recognizing the truth about itself and returning to rightful consciousness again.

In the domain of fallen consciousness, women need men and men need sexor believe they do. The codependent psychological dynamic is that a woman feels what a man feels and a man feels what a woman projects. Out of this tangled web of delusory emotion, desire, and reaction develops the lifedrama that defines who we are.

Masters' assessment of our sexuality is unflattering. He says that men have traditionally been oversexed animals, barely keeping the savage beast in check. This is their proud curse. The evil nature within men has deceived them into believing that their indiscriminate demonstration of sexual prowess is the measure of their manhood, when ironically, it is what drains them of it and evidences their lack of real manhood.

Many women feel sexually abused by bestial men, or learn to use sex to acquire from them the semblance of love they really desire. But yet this powerful habit of mutual degradation keeps both partners enslaved in a dishonest dance, with neither getting out of the relationship what he/she needs. Masters tells his female students that their original intuition about men was correct all along: they <u>are</u> usually after just one thing! He urges women to recognize that their real strength is in their virtue, not their ability to tease and service a man's lust, and care must be taken to protect it.

He elaborates on the woman's condition. (It should be remembered that he is speaking largely in terms of masculine and feminine archetypes, as did Jung, and not strictly about individual male and female bodies.) The fallen woman realizes her having been deceived into forfeiting her rightful place in the Kingdom and feels cut off from the source of spirit. Due to the lack of a virtuous, moral man to correctly love and appreciate her, or her failure to attract one, she feels handicapped in undoing by herself the curse that has claimed her. On the purely spiritual level, there is no masculine and feminine but only Being, and it is erroneous to regard oneself as only half of a self or soul. However, in manifestation on the human level, we are in polarity, and until we realize our wholeness, Masters teaches that we can better work out our psychic imbalances in a proper relationship with our complementary partner. Eve was meant to be Adam's partner, not subordinate, although representing the receptive end of the lifedynamic or Tao, to his aggressive, thereby also being more vulnerable to his failures as well as benefiting from his redemption. Thus, within this context, the woman recognizes her own impoverished condition, knowing she was not meant to be stranded in this world alone, without a king to complete the dynamic of Nature. Knowing herself to be without full authority of her own, nor really wanting this power, her false selfas are the forces of evil that tempted herdesires to steal the coveted life energy from the man; her sexuality being her primary weapon. Masters says that a woman can hold a man by appealing to what is worst in him. She is attracted to a sexually weak or violently weak man. He is not necessarily weak in muscles, brains, social power, or ego, but weak in fundamental character; being cut off from his own status as a spiritual being. The woman lets the man think he is in control, but knows she is really the boss, having the power she has absorbed from the man through sex and his emotional projections onto her.

Her form of vanity thrives on this adulation, as she becomes the object of worship, more than is the GodNature within them both. The whore becomes the real ruler of the kingdom, not the king and queen as partners who are both subjects in service to God. Yet, at the same time, she is killing off much of her very hope for salvation. If the woman really loves her man, why would she want to destroy him (and viceversa)?

Her true spiritual husband is what she really wants, but due to an ancient flaw in her nature, as well as in his, she has fallen into a nightmare, and lacks his aid in rising back out of it, while being the ballast for his continued fall. For what she has succeeded in doing to him, while the evil part of her gloats and relishes the unholy victory, she actually resents him for being such a weakling in his sexual nature. She despises him for his abuse of her, as well as for his failure to be a real man for her. While degrading herself, she degrades him as well, and her anger mixes with her shame at what the both of them have become.

Yet, she too is locked into this wicked pattern as is the man. She (again, meaning the false ego in her) feels threatened by a genuinely strong, moral man because she recognizes that he would be subversive to the power she has deceitfully acquired from him. However, the true part of her welcomes his efforts to raise his own nature from the carnal to the spiritual, and to help save her from herself. This attitude of resistance may also be reinforced by her fear of surrendering to a weak man who might let her down.

Masters describes the man's half of this "sindrome" as being equally tragic, thereby negating the likely feminist charges of chauvinism. The man realizes that he is essentially a fraud, for he has forsaken his true spiritual heritage while only pretending in effect that he is himself God. To buffer himself from his guilt and despair, he falsely projects the yearned for divinity onto the woman (meaning, onto what is false in her) recalling De Rougemont's thesis on romantic love, and then sells his soul to the evil one within them both in order to win her favor, thereby propping up his own proud, though fragile, ego. In this desperate arrangement, a woman's love is felt like the blessing of God to

a spiritually impoverished man (and, of course, viceversa). This is an ironic reflection of the truth in that the feminine does genuinely symbolize the Life of Nature and the masculine does symbolize the authority of Spirit. This attempted ruse, however, precludes the real order of things from ever manifesting.

To perpetuate this status quo, she fortifies him so that he can go out into the world and be the most ferocious beast in the jungle. Whether he wins or loses in this task, he feels remorse at his plight and returns to his woman's arms to be renewed for another battle tomorrow. All that he has accomplished and acquired in building his false kingdom he sacrifices to her, through the rite of sex, in return receiving the illusory reinforcement of his lies to himself. He needs her approval and the feeling of pretended security that comes from her "love." But what is actually happening in this mock bargain of love is that she consumes him while he destroys her. While seemingly a king, he is really a pauper; a slave.

His spiritual failing blends with his projection of false worship onto the woman, which he experiences as lust. Sex is the only form of love he knows how to give. Rather than seeing his wife compassionately as a person and friend, he regards her as a fantasy sex object of escape and judgment. And she, desiring love as much as he does, accepts this arrangement as the best she can hope for.

He uses her body as the altar on which he sacrifices his selfresponsibility, which has become frightful and burdensome to him in its accusation of his inadequate being. In doing so, he satisfies the false ego in her, which she nourishes as a consolation prize, while escaping his guilty conscience. The greater the pressure within him from the tension between what he should be and what he has let himself become, the greater is his need for the woman to relieve the pressure of that guilt. And by doing this, she controls his rage, while numbing her own resentment of him for his failure to love her as she needs to be loved.

The exercise of his lust makes him feel as if he was powerful, a conqueror, and makes her feel wanted. He tries to lose himself in the illusory affirmation of pleasure, but yet, a voice within him cries out that he is an imposter and that his debt grows bigger every day.

All this time, he also grows to resent the woman, while she resents him, because he realizes that she knows what he really is and is the constant mirror of his failing.

The sin of false pride creates lust, which leads to guilt. The guilt, trying to escape truth, commands more lust to arise. So, he continues this cycle of using the woman to escape his hell, and her using him to escape hers, all the while this process driving them further and further into shame, anger, denial, and flight from God's voice.

Masters believes that what the woman really wants is for the man to tenderly love her and honor her for who she really is (behind her false, vain self), rather than for her sex and for what she can do to soothe his bruised ego. She needs a man who will call her bluff, as he too needs a woman who will not allow him to lie to himself, while dragging her down with him.

She has to have the strength to resist the lustful advances of her man, while taking care to not reject <u>him</u>. The good in the man will recognize this goodness in her and will be at first ashamed, but will then appreciate now being free to cast off his own false mode of relating to her and will respond to her instead with kind affection.

He likewise has to make the effort to challenge his own lustful impulses and overcome the urge to use his wife like a prostitutepriestess in a ceremony affirming his mock glory. While fearing at first that she will consider this a sign of inadequacy on his part, she will actually recognize the great effort he is making for both their sakes and respect him the more for it. He needs to become the kind

of man the true woman he wants would want. Innocence is what threatens this false, unholy alliance that has possessed both for so long and is what this false self avoids most, because it knows its stolen authority is going to be taken back.

Masters presents a vision of how he sees proper relationship between Man and Woman. He believes that when a bond exists between a man and his conscience, there is also a loving authority over the female nature in the woman. This does not make man the ruler of the Kingdom, only a caretakerGod is the ruler. Adam is the head of the household. Eve is the heart of the household. Their children are the household. There is no competition between the Yin and Yang. Their difference is one of relative function, not hierarchy of importance. God gave Adam a woman to love, honor, and appreciate, in her role of nurturing Life. He failed her, as he also continues to violate his fellow man in suicidal frustration. His duty now is to own up to his disgrace and to become a true man, in the image of the one Who created him. He must help lead the woman out of the female, and the female out of her private hell, as her faithful virtue ennobles him to the task. Masters teaches that it is openness to God's holy spirit of Love that saves man from his weakness to woman and saves the woman from the sad deceit in herself.

Masters does not claim that sex in itself is evil, as many wellintentioned, but clumsy moralists have done. He believes an honorable woman feels no shame in sex with an honorable man, in a marriage committed to the truth. There would be no battle over domination or victimization. Yet, due to its very sacredness, they would no longer dishonestly indulge in the "little bits of death called sex" and call it life. When sex is occasionally appropriate, they will appreciate it more in the proper state of consciousness. They will then move towards true Life, of which the other is but a cheap imitation.

Masters teaches that the woman has to have faith in the conviction that her virtue will win for her the kind of love from a man she really deserves. And the man has to have faith in the conviction that his virtue will enable him to love her as he knows he really should. They must strive to save each other, as they save themselves. But without an innocent nature that realizes the necessity for this struggle and provides the courage and faith to make it, all is lost; the Serpent wins.

The first step is to recognize and acknowledge the Original Sin that still lives in us and through us. What caused that destructive pride to come into existence was some primordial trauma to the spiritually immature selfits nature, reason, and instigator as yet unknownresulting in an amnesic estrangement from our essence, and is what perpetuates it in us now. Fear and resentment are the indication of our falling away from reality. Our bond to false sexuality is due to the pain, emptiness, and weakness we feel inside, and is their intended compensation.

His recommendation is for us to turn away from the shadows on the wall of Plato's Cave, free ourselves from the seductive force of imagination, and confront our aching lack of true identity at our center. As explained in the comments on meditation, we then begin to see the truthand become it. By directing our life energy back towards its original source, we starve out the parasitic, evil ego that holds us captive, by no longer feeding it with our belief. What violates us, enslaves us. Much of spiritual work is that of becoming free of the pain where our souls should rightfully be. This rending of the carnal veil is what will lead to our freedom and affirmation of being, as we clear away a space for new Spirit to claim us. Then we will know what the Tree of Life means.

The occult dynamics behind the sex function have been further delineated, explaining the larger purpose of sex in the evolution of life and how the correct manifestation of the desireenergy it contains leads to illumination and immortality (Fortune, 1982; Percival, 1946). Recalling Gopi Krishna's earlier quote, Fortune defines the central issue this way:

> The keynote of esoteric asceticism is the concentration of energy, not the avoidance of evil; for the esotericist holds nothing evil which God has made, but right in its own time and place, and right for him too, however lofty his aspirations, at a certain phase of his development. His asceticism is practiced by directing the lifeforces to those planes whereon he requires them, and inhibiting them from those on which he does not require them at the moment; not because such use would be evil, but because it would be wasteful. Until he has gained (such) mastery, he cannot control the forces of the inner planes, which, if they were prematurely placed in his hands, would turn and rend him. Hence the secrecy which guards these forces, for on the plane of mind, a thought is a thing and a mood is a place. (Fortune, 1982, p. 94).

Even beyond the physiological and psychological reasons for perfecting one's moral nature, there is the essential or most subjective reason, which is the desire to be true to the highest yearning within one's nature. Several books provide lucid insights and inspiring testimonies about the meaning of virtue in the spiritual life (Brunton, 1984, 1986; Van Vliet 1959, 1962).

They emphasize the most basic reason for morality being that our true spiritual identity is nonsexual and hence free of the carnal gravity that would tie us to the earth. The attachment to sexdesire as a mundane form of "salvation" is a misidentification of oneself and misunderstanding of the experience of union one really craves. We have fallen in love with our image in the mirror and become its servant. The seductive diversion into dualistic projection that then results is a misdirection of one's vital attention and thus a hindrance to realizing one's original, complete, selfsufficient nature prior to externalization. Therefore, our efforts to refine this carnal urge and invert the desire it embodies back to its source allows us to ascend to and reside more fully in our true Self, from where the love for creation initially emanates.

Brunton explains that animal desires belong to the body, but asks if we really are only that, or are a mind using a bodyor even Mind using a mind and a body. Van Vliet's books in particular alone counter every popular modern rationale for uninhibited sexual indulgence as being a formula for happiness and provide voice to the greatest souls in humanity who promise us the ultimate satisfaction waiting on the other side of sex's beguilement. In the words of Jesus: "Blessed is the lion which becomes man when consumed by man; and cursed is the man whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man" (Meyer, 1986, p. 20).

Despite mainstream religion's emphasis on repentance for one's wicked deeds and the morbid masochism this can encourage, these above authors are collectively making one key statement about the relationship between healthy sexuality and entering the Kingdom of God. It was best summed up in a film about St. Francis in which he was lamenting to the Pope of his unworthiness before God. The Pope kindly responded to him: "In your concern over Original Sin, do not forget your Original Innocence."

The spiritual path is not without hardship. The ignorance that we are does not wish to let us go easily. As the seeker is drawn towards True Being, there is still adversity from within the realm of delusion that serves to keep us here and reinforce the status quo. Whether this adversity be regarded as predatory evil from without or private ghosts from within, the warning is given that we must be wary of forces that would deceive us, usurp our energy, or cause us to abort our paths. One aspect of the Gurdjieffian teaching is that the earth is a closed system meant to use the earthlings that inhabit it for food, and that escape from this dreary dimension is a difficult undertaking, possible only to the intensely determined and sly. An additional angle is that the door is left slightly ajar to allow the most skillful survivors of the path to leave. However, one must keep in mind that only a few are allowed on the Ark (Kerrick, 1976).

This is not all a reference to the simplistic notion of a Christian "Devil" who is the enemy of God, with the human soul as the battleground. The image is more that of humanity being asleep and our forgetting our innately Divine nature, while hungry creatures living in the nightmarish world that fell along with us conspire to outwit our every attempt to realize the truth, while living off our stolen vitality. "Satan" is the gravity of the illusion. "God" is what is forever aware of this dualistic nonsense and waiting for us to awaken. It might not even be accurate to regard the Devil as the "evil" half of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He may be the whole damned tree.

Detailed commentary in Yogic psychology and strategic advice to seekers is available about this "opposition of the hostile forces" from one who has overcome them (Aurobindo, 1971). Two excellent stories of fictionwhich may not be entirely fictionalpresent a disturbing scenario regarding intelligent forces, or "mind parasites", that hypnotically influence our experience of life and selfhood into further entanglement in maya (Heinlein, 1947; Wilson, 1967). If the hint in them is taken seriously, how one views the happenings of one's life and the subjective reactions to them will be permanently altered. One will be instilled with an uncertainty, a wariness, and a vigilance that marks the Zen warrior. One will never be complacent again.

This entire theme ties in directly with the Albigensian doctrine, to which Rose dedicated the title of his first book and his entire esoteric system (Rose, 1986; Rougemont, 1956; Wakefield, 1969). Although the full objective reality of our predicament in this dimension cannot be known from our vantage point within it or on our level of consciousness, even as metaphor this doctrine serves to keep us alert to the problem at hand and point in the direction of greater reality. Briefly, the picture presented is that of the world of matter being a fictional projection masterminded by an ambitious pseudodeity, unauthorized by the true God of Spirit. Souls are seduced into being born into this place and then trapped here through deceit, desire, and domination. Sex is considered the greatest crime for it provides the doorway through which immature or unwary souls are brought here, as well as the vital energy that continually recreates the dreamstructure of this world. The seeker is urged to shun identified involvement with the world of projection and to purify one's mind to where one is able to reenter the domain of Spirit. This is all the metaphysical correlate with the spiritual psychodynamics of redemption taught by Roy Masters. As dualistic and incomplete an understanding as this doctrine may be (keeping in mind the Zen principle: "Nirvana and Samsara are one"), it serves the legitimate purpose of eliciting the crucial response towards discriminating mindfulness and proper action that the seeker of eternity must make.

Finally, comments will be included from one very wise and remarkable man: Jim Burns (Jacobs, 1985). As Rose is a master of transpersonal psychology, Burns is a master of personal psychology, taken to its transpersonal endand learned the hard way. He is the perfect exemplification of Gurdjieff's statement that only conscious suffering has any value. As such, Jim Burns is a most conscious and valuable man. His insights and recommendations (as well as those of Roy Masters) fill in the details of the deeply human phase of the path to relative sanity and wholeness, which must be accomplished before the leap into spiritual identity or Essence is possible. A few of his choice comments will be presented in the section on personal testimonies.

Occasional observations from Woody Allenish philosopher, Ashleigh Brilliant, are also included to remind us to regard our search with humor and compassion.

Chapter 3

Introduction to the Albigen System

Listen to the confusion of ignorance. For that which is wisdom belongs to the silent. Are you of the tumultuous masses that agonize for definition? Then of the human babble of voices, can you hear this voice? For this voice speaks words, and all words define nothing. In the abyss there is a path, that is invisible, that leads to the garden. Oh, what foolishness, to speak to the blind, and to those who hear words... (Rose, 1982, p. 89)

Everyone is looking for the truth. This is the common desire among all people. Based on each person's point of view, range of perspective, background of experience, clarity of vision, and depth of understandinghe or she is right. No one is deliberately wrong. Within the particular paradigm individuals finds themselves, people do the best they can to find a better existence and a better understanding of life. One's "moccasins" walk the only path one knows.

Everyone searches for a state of satisfaction and permanency, one's own way, whether the domain of endeavor be social, physical, or psychological. One may pursue knowledge, art, money, power, or love. One may worship nature, pleasure, humanity, "God," or oneself. Individuals adopt philosophies, lifestyles, strategies, and personalities in the attempt to deal with their lot in life, overcome obstacles, make sense out of confusion, and find something worthwhile for which to live.

Yet, this effort is seemingly too often in vain. Collisions occur with people on other paths. Despite the person's best intentions and mundane successes, the soul remains restless for some elusive resting place. This core dissatisfaction and unanswered yearningwhether conscious or notis the other commonality among all people.

What is wrong? Some part of the formula seems to be missing. One aspect of this is our not realizing what the true desire motivating all our other desires really is. Another is our misidentification of ourselves and misunderstanding of our status here on Earth. The fundamental principles on which our existence is based are seldom questioned nor adequately defined.

What do we really know for sure? Honesty forces us to admit: not very much. Do we know the reasons behind life and death? Do we know the origin and destiny of the universeor ourselves? Do we know the nature of our relationship with the source of all things? Do we know the real cause of our suffering and the real nature of our contentment? Do we really know the self that is searching for wisdomor is victimized by delusion? Is anything really certainbesides the grave?

Is reality only what humanity, individually or collectively, believes or wants it to be? Is there any way to find out what is truly real, apart from the assumptions and projections from within one's paradigm, born of conditioning, delusion, and makebelieve? Is there a state of objective Validity and is it attainable?

Plato's parable of the Cave of Illusions and the sunlight of reality outside its door suggests there is, but that we cannot hope to find it so long as we remain hypnotized by and identified with the shadows on the wall inside our respective "caves", or the cave of humanity as a whole.

With selfhonesty and reliable intuition as one's most valuable allies, one must find the way out of the cave, into the light. But how? Humanity's efforts to find its God and its soul have been perennially thwarted by the Tower of Babel syndrome that curses our search for Truth into further confusion and conflict (Rose, l984). It has been difficult for seekers to work together harmoniously towards this common aim, or even to agree on how to best go about it.

Why should this be so difficult? This quest is indeed the highest of all human endeavors. And while it is the attempt to determine an individualized path into the unknown beyond, this process of inquiry can nonetheless adhere to some sensible, objective criteria. One common problem has been that many of the spiritually oriented teachings available tend to "beg the question" rather than ask it, and work to answer it (Rose, l978, p. 167). Too often, we are presented with an attractive answer right from the start, asked to simply have faith that it is true, and assume that this faithstate is equal to genuine *knowing* or *realizing*. This approach leads to a conflict of convictions and futility of results.

In this quest, what is required is not systems of belief nor buffers against discomfort, but a manner of searching that is honest and dependable; a way that is foolproof and selfcorrecting. We must find a path that we can trust to lead us out of our state of unknowing, despite our unknowing, and into relative truth. And from thereto absolute Truth, if this is possible.

Christ's response to Pontius Pilate's question, "What is truth?" was silence (John, 18:38), yet the answer in this silence was not heard. Can we do any better?

What follows is the testimony of one man who has claimed to have found what all people ultimately seek, and the road map to it he has left behind.

Introducing The Teaching

"The aim of this work is to approach Reality" (Rose, 1978, p. 11).

The Religion Editor of a newspaper once interviewed Richard Rose and asked him to explain his system of spiritual work in 25 words or less. Rose replied, "Forget it. It would take 2500 words just to get you confused, and then even more to try to approach the explanation of that confusion" (Rose, 1985, p. 114).

Describing what is essentially an invisible, intangible path from the state of relative unknowing into the greater Unknown of Absolute Reality is nearly impossible. As he soberly testifies: "Enlightenment is a difficult subject to encompass justly; especially when you have witnessed not only the vanity of words, but the vanity of life" (Rose, 1978, p. 12).

Rose's teaching is an especially challenging one to convey due to the highly subjective and intuitive nature of the inner work he recommends. It is not so much a path of techniques and disciplines, as one of progressive selfconfrontation and direct insight. This difficulty is further complicated by his acknowledgement that no collection of concepts and directions can ever be adequate to the task of bringing one to the state beyond all concepts and directions. Still, he does have a systemor a body of principles that is as systematic and consistent as anything can be in such individualistic, abstract matters. Through all this, the essence of his message is plain, as is the meaning in the traditional metaphor of Zen's "finger pointing at the moon."

The labyrinth through which Rose's map guides the seeker is treacherous and convoluted. However, he qualifies this by explaining: "Zen [his chosen style of teaching] is not complex. It is made complex by the many different types and levels of ignorance" (Rose, 1982, p. 184). His task has been to devise a system of spiritual search that is rigorous in its methodology, while not pretending to offer a simplistic formula that would obscure the individual's responsibility for finding one's own way out of one's personal maze of delusion. His teaching is the distillation of over a half century of research and experience, and so he has attempted to compensate for this innate arduousness of the path by building shortcuts and "tricks of the trade" (so to speak) into the system that he, as a veteran of inner work, has learned.

One reason for this difficulty in spiritual instruction for both teacher and student is expressed in Krishnamurti's famous dictum: "Truth is a pathless land" (Holroyd, 1980). Rose agrees with this assessment in his insistence that there can be no uniform, mechanistic, linear, predictable, and "objective" (in the sense of the process of search being external to the self who is searching) method possible for arriving at the condition of impersonal totality, or Reality; one that is thoroughly definable in advance, accounts for all variables, applies equally to each person, and is guaranteed to lead to a predesignated goal. He repeatedly admonishes those who look for techniques of incremental selfdevelopment to practice that "there are no buttons to push" to induce transcendence.

In fact, strictly speaking, Rose's form of Zen agrees with the paradox implicit in Advaita Vedanta that no collection of dualistic, ego mind generated efforts by a nonexistent "person" within a relative dimension can causally result in an Absolute realization. How can an illusory "self" do anything to find reality when it is itself the obstacle to its realization and any effort to end itself only strengthens its seeming selfhood? Capital "T" Truth is indeed "a pathless land".

Nonetheless, throughout the history of mystical or esoteric teachings, those who have attained GodConsciousness have been able to define common denominators, both of personal psychological functioning and impersonal laws of life, which do bind all seekers together and offer hope of a valid approach to Reality. Rose sums this up by stating:

> There is a path to Truth. From ignorance to relative knowledge. From relative knowledge to an awareness of the limitation of such knowledge. And finally, we pass from that which we recognize as loosely associated intelligence to a reality of Being. (Rose, 1978, p. 194).

The path Rose describes is profoundly subjective and one of immanent discovery directly for oneself, of the Self, and cannot be merely an externalized formula to be conceptualized or created and applied to oneself, in the search for an answer apart from that self. As such, while many of the critical factors involved in the search for Truth can be gathered together into a mature, generalized system of inner work, Rose assures us: "Each man's Enlightenment is a different trip."

There is a reason for the necessary uniqueness of this personal search and the impossibility of an "assemblyline" method of promoting spirituality. Much of the inner work consists of first eliminating the obstacles to truthfulness in one's thinking, feeling, perceiving, and acting, rather than attempting to start out by presuming to authoritatively define God, based on belief or desire, and then imagining one's assumed position in relation to this divine figure. Without knowing who one is, without knowing who is searching or worshipping, such theology is empty of genuine meaning, as is similar conceptualization about the reality of the "soul", without proving it.

This process of undoing the myriad factors comprising and maintaining one's state of ignorance is highly individual. Rose explains: "The path is complex because each set of egos is rooted differently." Likewise, our reaction patterns to the seemingly unavoidable traumas of life are diverse. It is these egos of distortion and falsehood that prevent one from seeing the truth, and this tangled web in itself includes the difficulty of one's seeing the egorooted gestalts themselves and being able to free the real part of oneself from their seductive spell.

This is why it is so helpful to be able to work with a teacher who can see the intricacies of the student's mind with objective perception from outside the mind and point out the next step towards the state of valid being. With or without access to such a teacher, the student must work to refine that faculty for clear witnessing of oneself and reside in that more deeply. Gradually, this process of selfrefinement brings about the development of the higher Intuition, and it is this voice or sense of guidance that then becomes one's "inner guru."

To start out the description of this system, it should first be stressed that what Rose is referring to in this entire line of work is the *personal experience* of selfinquiry and resultant discovery, and not merely the vicarious satisfaction of the intellectual philosopher who attempts to build the ultimate conceptstructure toward heaven and then presumptuously places himself on the throne on top of itas a thought. This procedure can never be sufficient, for the brain will inevitably die, along with all the noble thoughts it hatched, including the belief that reality is definable in intellectual terms and that one is the thinker (which is itself later found to be no more than a thoughtcluster that believes in itself). The entire conceited, though possibly sincere, Tower of Babel collapses.

Likewise, Rose claims that one need not remain satisfied with the static worship of an unknown "God," with the assumption that the maintenance of this beliefstate will be sufficient to automatically carry one through to the end of the quest, or that this devotion alone is all the quest can ever be. Faith is a thought too, just as subject to decay as the rest of the vehicle of faith. Furthermore, devotion with a dishonest motive can be more an attitude of arrogant complacency than humble worship and submission to higher guidance. One must know oneself well enough to know the difference.

Rose insists 'The Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth' cannot be known until it is found (or rather, realized), so it cannot be comprehended or appreciated beforehand. Rose discourages excessive speculation about cosmology or the nature of Enlightenment, explaining: "(The Absolute) is not a problem to be solved or a philosophy to be proven. It is THE TRIP not the a priori road map" (personal communication, 1977).

Despite the determination with which he expresses his convictions, Rose does not claim to have the only valid teaching to guide one to the goal and acknowledges that people throughout the ages, from all cultures and religions, have arrived at the same answer through other means. He admits: "The Truth is not in (this system) alone. The Truth is found in the minds of men if they look deeply enough. It is inaccessible to those who are undetermined, only" (Rose, 1982, p. 134).

Rose explains that the diversity amongst even genuine spiritual teachings is due as much to the human personalities of the teachers through which the instruction is conveyed as to the requirements of the varying levels of capacity of their students. Yet, this individuality of style and process is only in the domain of the relative and casts no shadow on the objective reality into which one enters at the culmination of the search, which is said to be impersonal and universal. All fingers point to the same moon. For this reason, it is unwise to cling too tightly to particular paths, doctrines, and styles as being exclusively correct. Rose claims: "The only thing Enlightened people have in common is that which they have found" (Rose, 1984, p. 28). In assessing the style of this teaching, the student should remember that Rose is a human being too, however the One behind his mind is awake to itself.

What he offers is his own testimony of seeking and the experience of finding, to whomever would value them; this body of information being the substance of this study. He states his purpose in teaching this way:

> What I'm saying is that I discovered, although I don't know how many can discover through the same procedure. But I feel compelled to pass on my discovery to somebody else. I can draw diagrams and make noises, but I think each man has to find things for himself. (Rose, lecture, 1979).

As to the teaching's reliability, all he can candidly admit is: "It worked for me, and in my lifetime" (Rose, 1978, p. 193). Although Rose stresses the need for awareness of the uncertainty qualifying all of one's efforts along the way and the necessary unpredictability of their results, he does not want to imply the extremist view, which can be a rationalization against action, that any spiritual awakening occurs purely by Grace and there is nothing anyone can do to bring it about. This attitude also includes those overly simplistic interpretations of Advaita Vedanta and/or Zen that stress non effort, claiming there is nothing to do, no "person" really there to do anything, and that any attempted effort along spiritual lines would be inherently selfdefeating, as any such exertion would only reinforce the conviction of individuality, willfulness, and desire that is the delusion that must be ended in the first place.

Rose would explain that these arguments for one's passively waiting for a miraculous revelation to occur by itself fail to recognize the reality of the paradox on our level of duality and are thus incomplete understandings of our status and obligations. Taking into account this other side of the paradox, tremendous effort is required before the state of true nonvolition can be attained.

He sums up much of the Albigen System in one succinct sentence, and in doing so describes the full course of this transformative experience in selfdefinition: "**You are what you dountil you realize that you do nothing; that you are an observer**" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). The theme is reiterated in another image: "Life is the only game in which the players are indistinguishable from the pieces on the board" (Brilliant, Potshots). Both lines are addressing the paradox that we must make lengthy efforts as seekers in order to arrive at the realization that one is not the actor after all, and there is no time, motion, or existence apart from the anterior Self. This is the discernment, the razor's edge. Rose has also answered this argument more humorously: "Enlightenment is an accident, but you canand mustwork to become accidentprone!" In other words, we can make a difference in having the impossible be less unlikely to occur.

As will be described in greater detail, much of the work involved in becoming thus "accidentprone" is that of eliminating all obstacles that would prevent realization from happening, and preparing oneself in capacity and maturity to 'receive' the Truth, should it be forthcoming. While one does not know at the start what will be found at the end of the "Yellow Brick Road," the path

begins right where one stands at the moment and the beginning steps are quite obvious, once the reality of one's predicament is recognized.

As the process of inquiry continues, the work towards selfdefinition develops a growing sense of purpose and justification of its own. Experiencing a movement towards greater sanity and relatively true selfhood becomes thus an additional source of motivation. And, finally, while one may have no guarantee of success at the outset, Rose plainly assesses our dilemma and eliminates all possible excuses for stagnant resignation by simply noting: "There is no reason for moving, and less reason for not moving."

At this point, the objective of all this effort and desire should be plainly stated:

> The highest form of spiritual work is the realization of the essence of man. The final definition of man. And with this definition the definition of all things, and a realization of the Nature, Absolute, or God behind all things. (Rose, 1984, p. 27).

In other words, this entire pursuit gets down to the most basic desire to know. To know the truthabout life, about death, about oneself, about "God", about the meaning of it all. It has been said that life is the only game in which the object of the game is to learn the rules (Brilliant, Potshots)and who is playing it. For Rose, the search had as its basis the uncompromising urgency for answering three essential questions: l) Who am I (ultimately)?, 2) Where did I come from (before birth)?, and 3) Where am I going (after death)?

This is not a casual, inconsequential concern; an adolescent luxury that passes when maturity (and a fulltime job) sets in. Rose had had the conviction that life was not worth living if he did not know who was livingand why. He complains: "It's a protest with me that people are acting without knowledge of the essence of being; acting without definition" (Rose, lecture, 1979). In other words: who is living our lives, and is it really "ours" if we do not know? Likewise, who is it who is faced with death? Can either life or death really have any significance to us if we do not know?

Rose is again pointing out that we have not properly defined who we are, fundamentally, but only assume our intrinsically established selfhood, while remaining transfixed by the tumultuous parade of life we helplessly witness and vainly call "ours." "**Experience is a worthless and transient existence, unless the experiencer is known,**" is his blunt, merciless verdict to all those unwitting actors who do not question the validity of their lives and identities, and an inviting challenge to those seekers who realize they must.

The message in this assessment is that, contrary to our natural programming to indulge in life, what is more important than enthusiastically identifying with "our" experience of life is to *directly realize the nature of the experiencer*. Rose refers to this key issue of selfdefinition when he states: "Science tries to prolong life, but not to define it. Intuition tells us something is missing. We seem to know more and more about the show, but less about the Real Viewer" (Rose, 1985, p. 304). We must turn our attention around to look the other way, to see who is looking at, or through, us.

Rose becomes even passionate in addressing the central issue:

> A mystic is a person who says, "StopI don't care about the promotions, I don't care about making a million dollars; I want to know who's talking. I WANT TO KNOW WHO I AM! This, to me, is logical thinking...that a person wants to know who's pulling his strings. (Rose, lecture, 1986).

It was this intensity, this purity of desire and maturity of purpose that carried Rose through his arduous years of search, and that he has insisted is an indispensable attitude for the serious student of truth.

Yet, as noble as this quest seems and the questionable value of life unless it is known for certain, there is much internal resistance to making this crucial effort. Rose's assessment, as usual, is blunt:

> People are able to continue living or tolerate life by putting serious thoughts as far back as possible. Something inside the individual does not wish to examine its potential for oblivion. The human mind does not want to see anything negative about itself. (Rose, 1978, p. 27).

Once the harsh reality of our status as ignorant beings killing time on Death Row is fully confronted in existential awareness, the imperative to do something anythingto try to lessen that ignorance and move towards any possibility of greater knowing becomes undeniable, as would the futility and shame of doing anything else. In a burst of merciless insight, a student of Rose's, Larry F., once exclaimed, "Everything is procrastination!" (possibly even most misguided efforts on the "path").

By this he meant that the core of the work, or the "way", consists of the direct, naked confrontation of oneself in totality in the existential now, apart from all beliefs, imaginings, egoindulgences, and projections, including even timebound methods of incremental spiritual development, and focusing all of one's attention on the immediate issue of selfinquiry; the only question there is that really matters: "WHO AM I?" As this work is possibly the most difficult and critical undertaking in all of life, one that threatens to negate all that we know, have, and are, one encounters tremendous resistance to this inquiry on all levels of one's (false) being; hence the massive, chronic pattern of procrastination and piddling that we call "living."

As if being a silent, mocking reminder of this truth, Rose displays in the ashram a candle shaped like a gravestone, on the headstone of which is engraved: "Relaxit's later than you think."

This heroic search for the key to Heaven's Gate, for the final answer, has been a theme running throughout the history of mystical literature, however clothed in symbolism. Rose alludes to the answer to this mystery:

> There is some key not yet found that might unlock the whole puzzle of creation...the visible creation, that is. ...the quest for the Philosopher's Stone, the universal catalyst. The alchemists were really looking for a key that would answer spiritual questions. ...the hunch or intuition that whispers convincingly that there is a universal constant, a key, which when found, will open up perspective in all directions and possibly answer all questions. (Rose, 1975, p. 3).

This, then, gets to the justification for the seeker's willingness to leave behind comfort, complacency, and convention (although, some do not have any choice, e.g. Colin Wilson's Outsiders), and the closest one can come to envisioning in advance the unknown goal. There is even a nostalgic poignancy in Rose's description of the goal of the path: "Our aim is to bring man to a condition where he will not need to question anymore" (Rose, 1978, p. 108). What this implies is that there may be a million legitimate philosophical/religious questions plaguing the seeker, yet they all have as their common denominator one's improper selfdefinition and thus vantage point on existence. This line of inquiry suggests it is best to put these secondary questions aside and work instead on answering the critical one; this resolving all the other ones as well.

Throughout his teachings, Rose counters the traditional notion that belief in God or a Savior alone is sufficient to bring one to the direct realization of that Godstate, or the more modern, "hippyZen" attitude that goingwiththeflow and beingherenow is all that is necessary to bring about this Grand Awakening. A belief in a God that is unknown or possibly nonexistent (the honest Truthseeker must acknowledge this in the beginning, until proven otherwise) that does not result in some meaningful action towards finding that God can accomplish little. Likewise, one cannot automatically assume that the perceived flow of mundane life inevitably goes towards one's spiritual objective, as the scheme of Nature may well have different requirements and purposes than does the domain of Spirit, or even that one can be anywhere, at anytime, without first clearly knowing WHO is being, where HERE is, and what NOW really means, outside of time.

This point was well brought out with a questioner at a lecture:

Rose: "I [have found that] the soul of man is God."

Q.: "Where did the soul of man come from?"

Rose: "Does it have to come from something? Or couldn't it just be? IT IS."

Q.: "If the soul of man can just be, why can't we just be?"

Rose: "Because we are not the soul of man. We are not the soul of man! We are the shadows in the cave of Plato."(Rose, 1985, p. 49).

Later, he added the disconcerting averment, "Reality IS, but it is elsewhere." (Rose, 1985, p. 261).

In other words, Rose sees what we consider to be life to be only a shadow of true being. Once, in response to my comments about the Albigensian doctrine, he replied: "I agree we are but figmentary characters in a nightmare, dancing to makebelieve" (personal communication, 1978).

The reader finds other statements in Rose's work that run counter to commonly assumed notions about spirituality and the attainment of its goal. These comments can trouble the seeker, but serve to test one's real objective as to whether one is looking for the bare truth of what is, at any price, or for some state that one wishes was the truth, because it is more attractive, desirable, or seemingly deserved. Likewise, if the seeker refuses to consider a recommended process of inquiry that involves struggle and insecurity, and eagerly opts instead for one that promises ease and selfflattery, one's real motives in the search are suspect. The harshness of some of Rose's assertions also evidences the sincerity of his intentions in teaching, as his willingness to present information that is not readily appealing to conventional human values indicates he is not trying to sell something, or himself, by distorting what he declares is the truth so that it fits into a pretty package.

One such understandably attractive assumption is that spiritual attainment will enable the individual to engage in life with more gusto and appreciation; the world being then experienced as one's playground. But Rose confronts the reader with a sober testimony from an unexpected perspective:

Some approach this attempt (at spiritual work) with a foolish reservation that they must hurry at it, and get Enlightenment so that they can go back to a "normal" life quickly and reenter the game of life. They never stop to think that when they reach Enlightenment, they will possibly have little or no interest in the game of life. (Rose, 1986, p. 2).

Later on, the point will be further explored that one's unquestioned notion of valid individuality, one's reference point of identity, and hence "one's" values and motives, may be found to not be

the same after such an experience. As Larry F. intuited: "You can't take you with you!" This recalls Balsekar's assertion that there is no such thing as an Enlightened person, as what that experience actually involves is the realization that no individual entity exists who "finds" God; there is only the Self, and the forgetting of the former duality.

Rose has a starker way of describing it, in this poetic excerpt:

> I have looked on death and lived, but my life is as empty as death. I have been dumbstruck, and crawled from the sacred unknown, bearing the look of horror and regret, and pain; for I went in and another man came out. (Rose, 1982, p. 74).

Another student, Keith M., once intently studied Rose's manner of interaction during a group dialogue session and later, privately, confronted him with the insight: "You're an actor, aren't you?" Rose quietly admitted he was. In fact, he had to be, as there was no longer anything left of him but the actor. (We are no different, but do not realize it.) Elsewhere, he confesses: "The true teacher needs to invent a reason to live." This gradually becomes true for the student as well, as the insubstantiality of one's games and compensations becomes too obvious to deny any longer, and the quest itself becomes the only legitimate reason for continued movement.

Rose's testimony is sometimes surprising, and even painful, to hear, for those accustomed to spiritual teachings that cater to human desires and notions of justice. In response to a questioner at another lecture who inquired aboutwhat he expected to beRose's heightened enjoyment and delight in daily, earthly life, once the state of Truth has been realized, he gravely replied: "The longer I live, the more I dislike this place" (Rose, lecture, 1980).

He taunts the reader with a vision of the human scene that is merciless in its rawness: "**The urge to live is as meaningless as the fear of death.** We do not really know the reasons for either life or death" (Rose, 1978, p. 198). This Zenlike perspective on existence also suggests that what really is important, in Rose's view, is to work to isolate the part of oneself that may survive death and "the vanity of life." He sees all else as being procrastination and indulgence in fantasy.

At another talk, an undoubtedly sincere person asked a long, involved question about what it is that needs to be done to "save the planet," "help humanity evolve," and generally promote the world's welfare, in relation to one's spiritual aspirations. He naturally wanted an equally serious, detailed answer. Ever the Zen master, Rose simply replied: "There is no world. There are no people," and moved on (Rose, lecture, 1979). The fellow remained stunned and speechless for the rest of the lecture. He was left to ponder the basis and value of his convictions about what the path involves, in light of this unexpected new assessment of his assumptions.

The uncompromising purity and singular intent of his message was conveyed in another dialogue. I had been wondering aloud about the religious principles concerning the "Fall of Man," i.e. what went wrong in the divine scheme of things, whose fault was it, the meaning of Original Sin, and such. I asked, "How did we get off the Yellow Brick Road?" Rose looked me square in the eyes as said: "There is no road. There's nobody here. Nobody's doing anything. You have to realize that. There's only a roomful of dummies sitting in the dark, asking each other: 'Are we dummies?'"

It should be acknowledged here again that the paradox is intrinsic to the path every step of the way, including in the example of the previously mentioned scenario. For some people, efforts at social betterment, ecology, etc. (karma yoga) may well be a legitimate part of their spiritual path, either in manifesting their convictions of principle, eliminating egos of selfishness, or developing strength of character. But for others, it could be a tactic for avoiding facing their own inner work and an indulgence in conceit or presumptuousness. A blanket rule about this cannot be stated in advance and applied to everyone equally. This is one example of why Rose stresses the individuality of the

path and the necessity for defining the specific requirements of one's search based on knowledge of one's own nature.

Rose elaborated further on this important point and anticipated much of the "New Age" movement to come in its general exhortation that the purpose of the spiritual path is to "create your own reality," "be whoever you want to be," "put God to work for you," and promising that "you can have it all." Again, the conclusion he found undermines most of this philosophy:

> The blueprint has been made, and all dies cast. The program for each robot is cast also. All that man can attain is a knowledge of his true nature, and some restricted ability to affect things which are not really realmeaning mental projections in which we believe. (Rose, 1979c, p. 38).

Rose counters the common assumption that the process towards spiritual attainment is synonymous with efforts at improving outer conditions, and alludes to the location of the real work of correction: "No true possessor of Cosmic Consciousness would change anything but his own erroneous view of things" (Rose, 1978, p. 212). In other words, the problem may not be so much in what we see, but what we see with, or through.

He adds another surprising twist to this theme; one that calls into question our notion that spiritual work involves remaking Earth into a Paradise according to our standards, and suggests there may be more to this story than we know:

> Zen is an eastern system which takes into account that much (but not all) of the game is already fixed, and that it is a good idea to see things as they are rather than to try to change things which cannot be changed. (Rose, 1982, p. 145).

In the following quote, Rose is again dispelling the appealing, popular notion that Enlightenment involves the ultimate maximizing of the human ego's potential and thus one's enjoyment of the benefits from its conquest of the world. He offers here a valuable glimpse into the meaning of spiritual maturity, with a quality of nostalgia as if seen from the perspective of an ancient soul who has paid the ultimate price:

> People try to gain power and prove wisdom by wielding power. Those who have really experienced the Absolute and viewed life from a Direct Appraisal of things lose all inclination to change any part of the theatrical mental reflections. An adult simply loses interest in the toys of childhood, and it matters not who has the marbles now. (Rose, 1978, p. 124).

This misunderstanding of the nature of Realization, and hence the inadequacy or even falseness of many of the means employed in the attempt to reach it, is best revealed in the following dialogue. An interviewer, who had only a simplistic understanding of what this search and its culmination involve, asked: "Mr. Rose, now that you are Enlightened, are you happy?" He replied: "I am freeof happiness." Stunned for a moment by his casual dismissal, as if being an annoying distraction, of what is usually the highest aspiration in most people's lives, the interviewer regrouped her thoughts and reformulated the question: "Well then, would you say you have found perfect, eternal contentment?" Rose gently answered: "Yes...you could put it like that."

If he has found that traditional notions of happiness are somehow missing the point, then what <u>is</u> the real point? Rose here again zeros in on the crucial issue as being precise selfdefinition and the accurate apprehension of life that this involves: "You cannot be happy until you know what happiness really is. But more important: who is being happy or deluded."

This is the central issue; the foundation on which the whole teaching is based: selfdefinition. The ancient adage: "Know thyself". Ramana Maharshi's, "Who am I?" It is this essential theme**what exactly is the self and what is it not?**that runs throughout the entire process of search, in all it's aspects.

Why must this be so? There are several reasons. The primary one Rose has given is simply that, whatever the Reality is that may be found, it must be the aware self that would be appreciating it. This is equivalent to Nisargadatta Maharaj's claim that the "I am" is prior even to all possible gods, which are contained in this ultimate Self.

Likewise, this is similar to the principle in Gestalt psychology that meaning is a function of being. In other words, whatever the truth may be, whether on a mundane or cosmic level, it is directly, inseparably related to and derived from the self that is experiencing this meaning or answer. This, in turn, ties in with the theme in Logotherapy of the pursuit of meaning and how the fulfillment of one's destiny first necessitates deep selfunderstanding in order for one to know what must be done.

The common message shared by these different teachings seems to be that whatever meaning or validity there is to existence is conferred by the consciousness of the observer. One discovers that in seeking after meaning, or "God," what one is really doing is holding up a mirror in front of oneself and describing one's own reflection.

It is partially for this reason that Rose rejects as being presumptuous the traditional theological approach to spirituality of one's attempting to right away define an unknown "God" and pretending to be thus "Godlike" in one's character or outlook on life. He bluntly states: "A theology that expects us to know the nature of God when we do not even know our own nature is manifestly absurd" (Rose, 1978, p. 125). He is indicating that this usual direction of search is clearly backwards. Before there can be any hope of attaining GodConsciousness, one must become conscious as a human being first. God is probably a lot bigger than we are. We would be better off starting with something closer to our own sizelike ourselves.

Likewise, Rose discourages the kind of meditation that intends to directly worship God, without first accurately knowing who is doing the worshipping and through what possible filters of projection. The work involved in the Albigen System thus designates it as a path of mindfulness, not a path of devotion. Although not intending to dissuade the homing instinct residing in the sincere religious impulse, nor the magical value of prayer in attuning oneself to transpersonal intuition, he declares: "You contemplate what's in front of you; not something way up above. You <u>cannot</u> contemplate God" (Rose, lecture, 1979).

This seems to directly contradict many devotional spiritual teachings that advocate meditating on God. This can be reconciled by understanding that Rose is speaking in literal terms of one's honestly admitting that one cannot contemplate something that is unknown. The humble devotee may well have a sense of guiding conscience, purpose, and holistic genuineness, all manifesting as the conviction of one's living in a state of grace. However, Godas ultimate realityis, at the outset, unknown to the seeker. If one did fully realize one's Godhood, there would be no reason to meditate; no longer any division between meditator and Deity. The introspective focus of the quest is thus not: "Does God exist?" or "Should we worship God?," but: "What is truth and how is it to be realized?"

To illustrate this, in answer to the courtroom question: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?," the only honest response can be: "LookIf I <u>knew</u> the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, I would BE God!"

A more precise understanding of such devotional meditation, and one that would be more in line with Rose's approach to the inner search, would be for seekers to instead contemplate their desire for truth, selfhood, contentment, innocence, Divine acceptance, etc. This would then not be the dualistic trap of projecting some idealized concept of belief outward from oneself and then worshipping this in the effort to reunite with it. Rather, it would be more meaningful to fully face oneself and look into the nature of that yearning for what one can only call "God." This form of meditation would serve to bring the person into greater selfawareness, unity with one's essential condition, and purify the quality of that longing coming from the center of one's unknown being. Also, recalling Jean Klein's teaching, this form of introspection would direct the attention back into the very root of the presumed selfhood that desires spiritual realizationresulting in a startling surprise. Rose's understanding of true devotional prayer would be the surrender of one's egoself to the higher Intuition and *becoming* the truth of the path which it presents to us. Only by following this desire back to its source, deep inside oneself, can this duality between the seeker and the soughtforGod be reconciled.

Along similar lines, in response to one of my usual naive, intellectual questions about the nature of Realization and its cosmological significance, Rose replied: "Your aim can only be at finding your Self, your definition, your origin and destiny. You cannot aim at emptying out Nirvana until you know what Nirvana is". He is repeatedly cautioning against being too grandiose in one's imaginings, whether theological or metaphysical, and urging the seeker to devote full attention instead to first defining the self who is searching.

There is also another reason for this emphasis on selfknowledge, and it relates as well to any kind of investigation in any field. The scientist who is attempting to understand the nature of the physical universe, whether the focus of study is on the stars or atoms, has to first perfect the instruments and methods of observation before there can be hope of accurately determining the facts. A defective telescope or microscope, poor eyesight, or faulty preliminary assumptions will render the findings erroneous.

Another, more personal way of saying thisand summing up the main theme of the teachingis that we do not see things as they are; we see things as we are. Therefore, only those who are real can know reality.

It is for all these reasons that the emphasis in this category of seeking is not on religious devotion, philosophical speculation, or simulation of assumed spiritual symptoms, but on turning the attention back upon the undefined self from where the concerns originate. Rose explains: "We must find out who is searching. We must know the self. The small "s" self has to be discovered first before we can hope to find that lesser or greater Self which may lie beyond it" (Rose, 1979c, p. 74).

Rose reiterates this point continually from different angles, as will this report, because he feels it is so important and so often overlooked by overzealous seekers whom he considers to be either too immature or lazy to do the necessary work of preparation for discovery. His message is repeatedly that one cannot hope to attain capital "S" SelfRealization without first having thorough small "s" selfknowledge. One cannot "know God" without first knowing the self who would know God. One cannot transcend the mental dimension without first knowing one's own mind intimately. One reason why this effort is too often skipped or only lightly addressed is that of the common, false assumption of the automatic legitimacy of the self as the baseline of the search. Answering the question: "Who am I?," by confidently proclaiming: "I'm me," is not sufficient; however genuine one experiences this meness to be. Without first having a complete, precise definition of this "me," the pursuit of happiness, success, selfactualization, Cosmic Consciousness, "creating your own reality," etc. can have no valid foundation or reference point. Rose even suggests that to do anything, to strive

for any goal without such knowledge is meaningless: "Why build anthills before knowing what an ant is?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 39).

This, to Rose, is the direction of real philosophy and psychology, and is the end towards which he devised the mental system to be described. He explains:

> The type of wisdom that is most important to have is definition. People presume that they are. This presumption isn't adequate. True psychology is knowing who you are; a permanent understanding of yourself. And when you have that, possibly there's a little dividendyou might know what you're here for. (Rose, 1985, p. 220).

This indicates an entirely different understanding and expectation of the meaning of true psychology than its selfdesignated modern definition as a behavioral science. Rose has little respect for most of mainstreamor what he calls "robot" or "hog pen"psychology, and feels the central issue of selfhood is either ignored or treated in a shallow or utilitarian fashion. He has noted that modern, materialistic psychology's attempts to define the self is like trying to determine the essence of the core of the Earth by studying soil samples or the effects of fertilizer upon the growth of grass, adding that even knowing this would tell us nothing about the origin and destiny of the planet.

Rose considers true psychology to be a sacred science and not only a tool to promote social compatibility or oil the mechanism of Nature. The purpose of mainstream psychology is to make people functional, so they can go back to paying taxes, reproducing, and indulging in illusions of success and happiness, in compensation for suffering and meaninglessness; not to ask themselves disturbing questions that have no immediate, reassuring answers. "Sanity" is an issue that is not brought up. Rather than Rose's being negative, as he sometimes appears, this compromise is real negativity. This is cynical.

He believes the real task of psychology must be more ambitious: "The perfect psychology will find the soul. The perfect psychology will take you to God" (Rose, 1985, p. 232). This is where personal and transpersonal psychologies overlap. Not only that, but Rose has found this to be the intersection point with true religion as well: "The desire to know God and the desire to know the Self are almost identical."

This, however, is not an easy nor obvious task. As he keeps reminding us, before finding the truth about existence, one must first know the true nature of the self that is searching for it and hopes to realize it. Yet, this self is then in turn being sought for by the self one finds oneself to be at that moment in the search, and that self is even less accurately defined, conscious, and reliable in its assessments. This becomes quite a dilemma, as Rose acknowledges: "The path to Truth begins with the self. We cannot properly isolate, identify, or analyze the self, because it is the subject about which we know the least" (Rose, 1982, p. 141).

Thus, the required process of inquiry is an inverted one. Rather than the search being conceived of as going outward from a solid, authentic, and reliable investigating self, which is the unquestioned baseline in most of both scientific and religious explorations, the inquiry goes in reverse, directly inward, to correctly and absolutely define the nature of our unknown source, from where all questions and all answers are found to emanate. What this search, then, becomes is one of continually refining the process of search itself, and in turn, refining the definition of the self that is doing the refininguntil finally culminating in the realization of unicity in Truth.

Despite the seeming reluctance of many people, even those who consider themselves to be spiritual seekers, to make this effort to know themselves, and the paucity of trustworthy guidance towards accomplishing this, Rose declares: "Every sentient being searches for his cause and his defi-

nition" (Rose, 1985, p. 6). Frankl regarded this primary urge in somewhat externalized terms as the desire for meaning in life. Rose would translate this into mystical terms as the desire to experience one's essence, which is the source and final appreciator of life.

Yet, there are some catches to this. Rose adds: "Each man hungers for the truth according to his understanding. However, man on all levels is lazy and is attracted to duality and emotion...and he procrastinates...fatally" (from lecture poster).

This discomforting evaluation again points out the necessity for seekers to first work on perfecting themselves as a tool for seeking, before there can be any hope of finding objective reality. Rose describes our status at the beginning of the quest:

> A common denominator in esoteric teachings is that man is fooling himself [or being fooled], and that he must first get a true perspective before he can proceed with any pretence about discovering the nature of God or the universe...or the true inner nature of man. (Rose, unpublished group papers).

This point cannot be overemphasized. It really is an obvious priority, yet one that is generally overlooked in most teachings that claim to aim directly for Godhood, total philosophical comprehension, or selfactualization. The factor that is too often overlooked is: **Who is it who wants the truth?** How would one be able to recognize and receive it without the perfected intuition and capacity to appreciate the truth? We get the image of an astronomer peering out through the telescope, looking for the Earth, without stopping to wonder on what the telescope's tripod rests. How can we actualize a self that is unknown, without running the risk of actualizing a self that may not be us?

Rose is thus painting a picture of the seeker's plight that radically diverges from the usual, unexamined, premise that the search proceeds from an automatically valid basis of selfhood. But without a solid foundation, the mightiest cathedral will still crumble. Because of this, he is describing a completely different manner and direction of seeking. He is "reframing" the entire nature of the philosophical quest. He explains this approach in a poetic passage: "I say that the Truth is in thee... (But) to know thyself, thou must first know that which thou art not, lest thou mistake thy alterego for the real" (Rose, 1982, p. 87).

He defines the seeker's real status in this particularly troubling image: "Is not a man a question asking questions, frustrated by the unanswered, laboring to answer himself...and creating a mountain of questions in the answer?" (Rose, 1978, p. 231). Recognizing this, and being able to go on, evinces a major point of maturity on the path.

This brings us to one of the fundamental principles on which this entire teaching is based: that the search must start from zero. Zero convictionstate. No assumptions, no beliefs, no projections, and no restrictions on the possible answers or the means to reaching them to be considered acceptable. One must start from a reference point of admitted ignorance, not because this is part of a mechanical formula to follow, but because this really is the truth of one's condition when strictly examined, and is something the honest seeker will acknowledge before being able to continue. How can one hope to find the truth while searching for it in an untruthful manner? That would be an inherent contradiction that would invalidate the search from the beginning. For, after all: what do we really know for sure? Honestly. At first, we seem to only be a body, with an awareness, a sense of self, and collection of experiences somehow associated with that body. We also realize that this body will definitely die, along with whatever convictions of meaning in life, philosophical understanding, loving bonds, personal worth, or religious faith we had assumed or created. That is then the end of us, as far as we know, unless we imagine there is some other form of continued existence for us

beyond the grave, or a deity of whom we are a part and to which we will automatically return after we expire. Yet, to complacently rely on these beliefs alone would be an enormous gambleand a possible bluff that death will inevitably call.

But how are we to know what is true? Everything written in all the esoteric books might be false. All spiritual experiences described by others may have been hallucinations. All concepts about lifeafterdeath may be wishful thinking. All assumptions about the value of one's current life and identity may be pure fantasy. Rose sternly advises: "From the very beginning of our search for truth, we should realize our insignificance as regards our present, unproven state" (Rose, 1982, p. 144).

Rose is quite harsh in his evaluations of our condition: "In gloating over our [presumed] superiority over animals, *we neglect to see our own meaninglessness*" (Rose, 1978, p. 185). He taunts the reader with the unknowing pressing against us from both sides, like bookends: "Giving birth is the same as killing someone. In both cases, you're doing something you don't really understand." Along with exposing the ignorance that undermines our urge towards any kind of Godworship or selfworship, he seems to almost take delight in also negating any reflexive impulse one might have towards Natureworship as being a misguided, and perhaps lazy, gesture of surrender to a higher power: "We must not hurry to deify the planet. It too, is dying, waxing or waning" (Rose, 1978, p. 198). He adds:

> It matters not if the earth has a spirit. It matters whether or not the human unit has an individual spirit, or whether or not the human can find for itself an extension of its being which is beyond the dominating power of Nature. (Rose, 1978, p. 224).

At its most base, such Natureworship may also be a sly bid for eliciting condonation for a propensity toward hedonism.

Rose pushes this line of thinkingand our insecurityto the limit, and by doing so, like an archer increasing the bowstring's tension behind the arrow, pulls the starting point of the search back to zero. Challenging the very foundations of epistemology and solipsism, he makes the outrageous assertion: "There is nothing proven. We know nothing for sure***we don't even know that we exist***" (Rose, 1985, p. 82).

This is a frightening admission to contemplate. We have no proof that the human being is real, any more than a character in a dream with which we identify is real. For truthfully, how can one know the objective validity about **anything** without <u>being</u> in the state of absolute validity, from where all knowing derives? In discussing the difference between relative perspectives and Absolute Realization, and warning against any form of spiritual smugness or self satisfaction short of attainment of the goal, Rose insists: "You know <u>nothing</u> until you know everything" (Rose, lecture, 1979).

We do need to start realistically where we are and so have to tentatively begin with the experiential premise that we do seem to exist as distinct, individual entities who can choose to do something, otherwise another step would never be taken. But we must acknowledge that even this is still only a highly qualified status, a functional postulation, and the revelation at the conclusion of the search about our true nature may surprise "us". There are two main reasons for maintaining this attitude of rigorous doubt. The first is that, as the search in its purest form can only be for THE TRUTH OF WHAT IS, the primary criteria for finding it must simply that of <u>being truthful</u> in all ways. This is the central theme, in its various aspects, weaving throughout the entire process of inquiry.

> Rose describes the proper mental attitude to be maintained throughout the search:

> We cannot shut our mind to any phase of reality, and still have a capacity for truth in another field. For if we rationalize about one thing, then rationalization may well be a mental habit cooperating with our laziness or desirethinking, and we are liable to rationalize about vital things. (Rose, 1984, p. 19).

In other words, we do not start out looking for what we expect or would like to find, nor strictly defining how we are willing to go about it, based on our desires, fears, and conditioning, and placing limitations on what we will accept as our methodology or findings. The investigation must start out from zero, from admitted unknowing, and proceed with an open, truthful mind towards greater knowing; or rather, as will be further explained<u>becoming</u>. This attitude is critical because for one to place any advance requirements on the goalstate from a point on the path that is innately inferior to the stateofbeing that may be realized at the end of the path is to risk thwarting one's efforts to ever attain or "receive" it, and substituting instead some lesser, humanized condition for Reality. Rose suggests that this brand of spirituality is, in one sense, no different from the philosophy of atheistic materialism: "Man demands that God prove Himself in terms of our symbols and paradigms or be considered as nonexistent" (Rose, 1982, p. 137).

In fact, one <u>cannot</u> accurately estimate or even imagine what the final answer beyond all answers may be. It is best not to speculate about what can only be incomprehensible to the mundane mind nor to drag the infinite down to our level and pretend to define it in finite, relative terms. One may be in for a rude awakening. Rose provides a disquieting preview of the final discovery in this testimony: "You never know that which you are going to find. I did not want to find Nothingness. I always wanted to assert my individuality to the greatest degree of intensity" (Rose, 1982, p. 141).

The spiritual search could be likened to a qualitative analysis in a chemistry lab to determine the nature of an unknown substance. The researcher does not go into the testing procedure with the deliberate intention of finding gold or uranium because this is what he would like it to be. One simply works to find out what the substance is and accepts the results as they manifest. In other words: shoot first, and whatever you hitcall that the target (Brilliant, Potshots).

This manner of searching requires tremendous vigilance and selfhonesty; especially so here, since the real object of study in spiritual work is oneself. *To lie to oneself is the greatest sin,* and is the great curse of duality. Yet, this task is made doubly difficult and precarious by the fact that one is initially forced to rely on tools of measurement and judgment that are imperfect, and become more or less accurate depending on the choices one makes at every step of the way.

To argue that the full truth can never really be known and that the endless paradoxes of the relative world allow for whatever interpretation of truth one wishes to embrace is a cowardly rationalization that would sabotage the search before it begins. This would be an unnecessary, fatal compromise with lesser motives and standards.

Rose here offers another description of the simple, yet critical, standard to maintain in this work towards selfdefinition and "becoming the truth":

> Absolute Truth is not absolutely inaccessible to us and relative truth is definitely accessible. There is but one truth. We might ask here: "How shall we know the truth? What is reality?" We can only know the truth by teaching ourselves to face the truth in all things. If we encourage our computer to come up with erroneous answers, because they are more desirable, then we are developing a computer that we may never be able to trust. TRUTH IS THAT WHICH IS. (Rose, 1984, p. 1921).

As a pertinent example of this quality of mental honesty, one does not start out the spiritual search with the intention of finding "God," because the term itself already presumes there is something to be found called God, and that one has a fairly good idea of what this Being or ultimate state is to begin with. The term has been so heavily used and misused over the centuries, with various anthropomorphic or politicized qualities projected onto it, that the term is nearly useless as an objective in a pure search. As Rose explains:

> I don't use the word "God" because (in using the term) you give it such credence that the majority of people don't see any need to find God. This is the catch. I don't say there is no God; I just say, 'How about proving your point?' (Rose, lecture, 1986).

He considers the glib use of the word "God" to be a form of shameless namedropping, when people do not really know what they are talking about.

Rose prefers that one use the neutral term "Truth" or "the Absolute" to designate the unknown goal at the inquiry's conclusion, as this presupposes and demands nothing. It has no personal, cultural, or theological colorations. He describes it this way: "It may be said that the Absolute is a state or essence from which all untruths have been subtracted, leaving behind a region of pure fact; a state undefinable" (Rose, 1978, p. 206). While it is undefinable by a cognizer separate from it, as there can be nothing apart from the Absolute, nor can it be the object of contemplation by someone contained within it, mystics testify that it is realizable by one's coming into unity with it. Truth is thus a clean term, and has the advantage, as previously mentioned, of being its own criteria for discernment as one goes along in the investigation and is thereby constantly, intrinsically selfcorrecting in its workings and findings.

Although a seeming platitude, totality is likewise its own measure in that the Truth is all there is. This is a difficult principle for the relative mind to appreciate. When the tangled domain of duality has finally been transcended and the sole primordial Self realized, there is no longer any "other" to which it may be compared or by which it may be evaluated. Reality is itself the final yardstick. One can know the Truth has been found only by *becoming it*. As Rose explains: "We cannot conceive of a condition of absoluteness as being invalid because it is a condition of absolute validity. Absoluteness is final validity" (Rose, 1982, p. 133). Or, as the sign on President Truman's desk said: "The buck stops here."

Along these lines, should one finally arrive at this realization of Truth, it could then be called God in retrospectif it is still important by that point to call it anything, and then only for the sake of communicating with those seekers who need to conceive of Reality in religious terms and cannot appreciate any answer that is nondimensional and nonindividualized. Rose does testify, however, to the possible dismay of those hoping for a loving, cosmic deity who will be eternally delighted by our human, corporeal self: "The Absolute is forever impersonal" (Rose, 1978, p. 171).

The second reason for this emphasis upon starting the search from zero and going on from there is not one of strategy or technique, but that of fastidious honesty with oneself. The simple truth is that we do not really know what the truth is. To merely accept spiritual doctrines on faith from supposed authorities, without also acting to somehow realize their truth for oneself, is to not be a seeker but to only remain as the identification with the belief in a conceptstructure. It is less important to seek after gurus and sages than to seek what they sought. To pretend our status is otherwise would be dishonest on a deep level and would belie one's lack of real commitment to spiritual work. Rose declares: "We find the common denominator of all seekers to be ignorance" (Rose, 1978, p. 91).

What understanding about our status can we start with as an honest basis? We can ask ourselves: What are human beings for, on Earth? In other words, if life is for living, then what is living for? Courageous candor forces us to admit that our manifest purpose seems to be reproduction prior to death and our becoming fertilizer afterwards. All the rest may well be fantasy, vanity, and projection. Despite our desperately wanting to assume so, if there is some ultimate meaning to our experience of life, it is not known from our human, terrestrial vantage point. Nor do we know for Whose benefit this massexperience is seemingly occurring. Rose tells us:

> Even discounting the force which we ordinarily call God, there is an order in the universe.... This natural plan must be known, and not only guessed atand it may go deeper than we think. It may go beyond the fertility of the soil. (Rose, 1979c, p. 46).

To confidently claim that the world exists for the purpose of our education, growth, and/or enjoyment is an embarrassingly egocentered presumption that still fails to conclusively determine who is living, experiencing, enjoying, etc., the larger purpose for all this struggle for evolution, or the nature of the ultimate Appreciator of our adventures. Likewise, Rose mocks any inclination of ours to feel pride in our roles as integral agents of Nature, on either end of the breeding process, as if we were deliberately participating in something important and masterfully expressing our creative power:

> Man comes into the world amid the confusion of two individuals who thought they were combining two alternative principles, only to discover that they were merely creating limitless varieties of newly paralyzed and frustrated units which they called children (Rose, 1979c, p. 35).

Many passively accept the pictureshow of life and their experience within it as it happens to them, just trusting that a wise, compassionate God is running the show and all is as it should be, even though they do not know this God nor feel any compulsion to try to find out. Or, even if life seems absurd and unjust, and the existence of a divine overlord is doubted, many feel there is nothing they can do about the situation anyway and so must accept their lot in life as it is, without further questions or protests. Some even use their hardships and frustrations as proof that there could not possibly be a sensible deity in charge of things and so it would be futile to look for one. A few remaining people are unable to accept any of these philosophies and have no choice but to work to expand the boundaries of their unknowingor to break through them.

One form the attempt to answer this riddle takes is to immerse oneself in the thorough study of metaphysics and mysticism, and then, as a conclusion arrived at through logical synthesis and conceptual inference, to proudly announce: "I am God!" This, however, is a meaningless exercise in selfflattering bravado if "I","am", and "God" all remain inadequately defined. Neither the feeble human ego nor frail mortal body can be seriously considered an absolute self to worship, the "God" that we assumed we must be is still an awesome mystery, not a known reality, and the "am" supposedly equating the two has no substance, source, or conscious validity.

To merely proclaim that we are undoubtedly cherished characters in a divine play for God's amusement (the doctrine of Lila) means nothing, if we do not know who we essentially are, what God is, nor the nature of our relationship to that God and His creation. Likewise, to remain content with the belief that God loves us, and so everything must be alright, can only be a comforting, lazy bluff, if we do not know the real nature of that love, but only project mere human desires and motives onto the Creator of the universe.

Rose casts a critical eye towards conventional religious notions of a kindly parental or conjugal deityfigure: "We take too big a step when we conjure up a God that surmounts all time and space

and then pretend to know Him on a firstname basis" (Rose, 1978, p. 80). Perhaps God "loves" us the same way we love cattle: we can be milked and we are edible! It is certainly understandable for the human being to want to be loved and valued, but it is dishonest philosophy to project this desire up into the sky and assume that Reality is thus obligated to run the universe according to our wishes.

Rose's entire teaching is a dictum that says it is more important to work to transcend and comprehend the manifested universeincluding the "i" living within itand see it correctly from the vantage point of that which we call God, than to try to create a philosophy of life from incomplete knowledge from a relative viewpoint within duality, that can only be the product of mundane imagination; the source and mechanics of which we cannot even claim as our own. Without knowing the truth directly, Rose insists our existence is invalid, however much meaning we may create for ourselves, within the unknowing. Only when seen from outside it as a whole unit can the Cosmic Drama of Life be understood for what it really is. Most "New Age" metaphysical doctrines still tend to imagine spiritual attainment in human, personal, bodycentered terms and are reluctant to contemplate the possible necessity for the complete death of the known self. Yet, with these above points, Rose is also alluding to the fact that the final realization of Truth is not merely a more subtle or exalted, yet still egomind based experience within the relative world of Plato's Cave, but is an experience of actually *being out of one's mind,* which is the Cave of humanity. It is stepping into the Self; into something totally unimaginable.

Rose is also generally unenthusiastic about traditional religious paths consisting of faith alone in the benevolent mercy of an unknown God and the hope that one's prayers and rituals guarantee salvation. While he acknowledges there is some magic contained in genuine prayer, Rose feels emotional devotion is an incomplete formula and such followers are begging the question rather than asking it, and working to answer it. "Belief is no proof for belief" (Rose, 1978, p. 77), is his assessment of any circular argument that floats in ignorance, with no verifiable reference point in established fact. Again, the Albigen System is a path for seekers, not devotees.

One common example of how this legitimate desire to found one's life upon some bedrock of absolute truth can become trapped in rationalization is the fundamentalist's reliance on scripture. A believer says: "Such and such a principle is true." One asks: "How do you know?" The reply is: "Because it's in the Bible (Koran, Torah, Vedas, etc.)" "How do you know that what's written in this book is true?" "Because God wrote it." "How do you know God wrote it?" "Because it says soin the Bible (etc.)."

A similar process occurs when the reliance is on a specific Guru for one's conviction of certainty about some spiritual or life issue. "The Guru says so and the Guru is God, so it must be right" might be a trustworthy policy to work withif the seeker can be certain that the Guru in question is genuine. As it cannot be automatically assumed that everyone who claims to be GodRealized is truly so, and that even spiritual teachers who are legitimate often have differing teachings, the seeker is still the one who must finally decide which source or authorityfigure to trust the most.

An additional point is that even believing in a concept that is true (assuming there was some way to determine for certain that it was, such as having a document signed by Christ and notarized by God!) would still not be equivalent to one's being in that state of total realization where this would be known directly. It would always remain an article of faith, or secondhand knowledge. The only value of such belief would be if it prompts some action that might lead to experiential validation of the belief.

Thus, one can never successfully "pass the buck" of responsibility for one's path elsewhere, however strong the inclination may be to transfer authority to the object of the devotion, and however discreet or sincere the attempt may be. The reference point of judgment ultimately resides in the

seeker who is choosing to accept one doctrine or Guru as the truth over another, hence the need for one to become truthful inside. One must realize that the seeker is always prior to any considered teaching and one's reasons for being attracted to a particular teaching are finally inside one's own psyche, and not innately justified in the doctrine, guru, church, etc. itself. One must be able to objectively, critically assess why one is attracted to a particular path: whether it appeals to sensibility and intuition, or to any number of character defects or egogames. It is for these reasons too that Rose's emphasis is on knowing oneself, more than knowing about "God" or any body of teachings.

In this, Rose is countering one of the most fundamental principles in all the world religions: faith. (Actually, a sober, unsentimental look at the scene indicates that religion tends to provide more evidence for Satan than for God!) Most, if not all, exoteric religious teachings contain as the core of their message the fervent urging for people to believe in God. To disbelieve is generally considered anything from foolish to blasphemous. Yet, Rose wonders about the value to a sincere seeker of believing in something that is unknown, for then: in what exactly is one believing, other than a symbolic concept, and upon what reality is the object of this belief based? And, of course, the believing then all too often becomes a comfortable substitute for the effort of finding God for oneself.

He brings up a rude question regarding this matter of faith as a key factor in religion:

> The exhortation to have faith to many seekers seems like the lament of a hopeless lover about to lose his mate. I wonder at the need to exhort men to have faith. Is the religion in question so lacking in appeal, intrinsic value, or in evident virtues, that one must be exhorted and reminded to believe, or that we must constantly remind ourselves that we must be in an accepting frame of mind? (Rose, 1978, p. 105).

Although there is undoubtedly a sincere spiritual desire motivating such belief in many people, Rose finds philosophical dishonesty in much of this attitude. There is an inherent contradiction in the notion of "believing in God." To believe in something means that one does not absolutely know the truth about the matter, and so the belief can only be the hope that what one wants to be is actually true. If, on the other hand, one does know or has experienced the goal of the spiritual quest, then the need for any belief would be made obsolete.

If the desire to "find God" is more precisely understood to be the desire to realize or comprehend the truth about existence, then the path towards this goal inviolably necessitates one's being truthful, and any such massive theological rationalization would be a lie to oneself about what is most important.

In regards to spirituality, there are generally two categories of people: those who believe in "God" and those who disbelieve. (Those who do not care either way are irrelevant here.) In a sense, they are similar in that both are believing in a concept that has been created by or given to them at the start, but which they have not proven. The former lazily believe in a God they do not know, and the latter contemptuously believe in the non existence of this same unknown God. Neither knows what is true for sure. Their Godconcepts, whether pro or con, remain untested postulations; mostly projections of personal inadequacy.

Both are really worshipping the same thing: their beliefstate, and never bother to peer outside the closed paradigm this creates, nor suspect there is anything possible beyond it. If they are luckyor if their fate is merciful, something may break down this wall created and maintained by the ego mind and force them to acknowledge a new perspective on things.

The agnostic mind may be even more pathetic in that it is afraid to even have a conviction about the matter one way or the other nor any hope of ever finding out the truth. Such people would

certainly not risk making any effort that might threaten the comfort of familiarity and futility, possibly resulting in some jarring transformation. The agnostic pretends diplomatic openmindedness, when it is mostly needlessly languishing into oblivion.

There is a third, smaller category, however; one that is neither belief nor its opposite: disbelieve. This is the path of **directly seeking for the truth of what is** from a starting point of neutrality within the unknowing. (The perennial philosophy hints the path may also end here, in a higher sense...) This is where exoteric religion becomes esoteric. This path does not accept some principle of spiritual verity on faith, nor does it arrogantly state knowing as a fact that it is false. Either would still be an assumption, not a realization. This third path starts out honestly from a beginning of conscious ignorance, and inquires with an open mind in all possible ways, with the aim of finding out for oneself what the true nature of things is, especially about oneself.

Rose offers another description of the proper attitude in beginning the search:

> There is only one time to start and this is now. The manner of searching is to use the tools at hand until better methods are discovered. Of course, in order to begin a work we must have an objective. And the objective need not be immediately negated by declaring that we do not know that which we expect to find, when we announce our objective to be the truth. Such a stated objective actually means that we aim to come to a point of noignorance and being. Our objective is to find our definition, whatever the finding entails. (Rose, 1978, p. 179).

He adds: "You must be prepared to find that which isnot that which you wish to findeven if it is oblivion" (Rose, 1982, p. 141).

Rose noted that Christ gave out, what seemed to be, two divergent categories of teachings in the Gospels. On one hand, He advocated that people should believe in Him as the Son of God and the Savior. On the other, He proclaimed: "Seek and you shall find". Rose considers believing to be different from seeking, and suggests the former was meant as an exoteric teaching for the masses, to make them feel secure and behave morally, and the latter was an esoteric teaching for those who were capable of appreciating the higher road He revealed, and traveling it.

Rose here notes an even further challenging distinction: "Christ had at least 70 disciples. There were only 12 apostles. The percentages of people who have ears still aren't the percentages of people who have the ability to act" (Rose, 1985, p. 242). He is constantly reminding us of the need to take action on our convictions, so that they will become real; or rather, so that <u>we</u> will become real.

This apparent dichotomy in Christ's message may be reconciled if one takes "believing in God" or "believing in Christ" to mean believing that: l) fundamentally, Reality or Being IS whatever it is, and is the source, context, and final standard for all things, 2) a path to realizing it does exist and one is capable of walking it, and 3) possibly some aid from an unknown agency is provided to the sincere. In this sense, "believing in Christ" (or the Guru, etc.) would symbolize one's following the road to the Kingdom that He described; the bearing of one's cross along the way. This would then also mean: "seeking". The distinction between the two forms of belief can be described as this: one form of belief prevents one from moving, as the belief justifies one's staying comfortably stationary, while the other form of belief motivates one to seek, as the belief is in the promise of finding.

This, now, brings up another one of the basic principles in Rose's teaching: <u>doubt</u>. He insists: "The sacred science is doubt, not belief," and: "To know is to know that which is. To believe is to weave" (Rose, 1975, p. 68). The seeker must take care not to create, project, fantasize, visualize, rationalize, or hypnotize, but work to "*become*," in ways to be explained in the rest of this study. One

must not underestimate the ability and inclination of the human mind to deceive itselfor be unwittingly deceived, especially when it is motivated by desperation, lethargy, conceit, or immaturity. Rose stresses that a healthy doubt is a primary tool of discrimination in this investigation into the unknown. But what does it mean to correctly doubt?

Doubt, in Rose's usage, does not refer to its conventional, erroneous meaning, which is actually the "disbelief" attitude described previously. Doubt does not mean to claim that something is known to be false and is thus rejected. "I doubt it" actually means to acknowledge not knowing the truth about something at that point in the inquiry, and that one will look into the matter further to determine what is finally true. One may later find that the issue being considered was indeed true all along, but then this would actually be known personally, and not merely assumed. Doubt may be regarded as the chisel the philosophical sculptor uses to carve out the naked truth from one's amorphous slab of raw experiencedata.

Rose claims that this is what Christ was referring to when He stated that His aim was not to bring peace, but rather a sword. Rose's interpretation is that this was referring to, what in Zen is called, the Sword of Prajna, or discrimination between the real and the unreal. Rose teaches that this attitude is not merely a technique to be employed or a bit of dogma to be mechanically enacted, but is an essential aspect of this process towards personal realization. He has a less poetic way of stating this than did Christ: "There is garbage and there is stuff that smells worse than garbage. Discrimination is knowing the difference" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). He elaborates: "When you get into subjective matters, you get down to a point that the only thing you have to go by is how well your intuition is perfected, and how slowly you jump to believe something that sounds good" (Rose, 1982, p. 147). This principle is best stated in a highly significant saying by Zen master Po Shan, in regards the "doubt sensation": "**The greater the doubt, the greater the awakening; the lesser the doubt, the lesser the awakening; no doubt, no awakening**" (Chang, 1959, p. 95). As will be explained later, this gap between doubt and realization also directly relates to the Zen principle of tension in preparing one for the final breakthrough. All this is also somewhat analogous to Christ's parables about the futility of pouring new wine into old skins, and the necessity for dying, so that one may find Life.

This attitude of naked inquiry, of starting with no presumptions about oneself, the path to be followed, nor what one insists on finding, is deemed a prerequisite for arriving at a genuine answer; one not contaminated by human imaginings and ego. The only qualification Rose adds is: "Doubt everything, except your ability to doubt" (Rose, 1985, p. 82). In other words, one must believe that one has some measure of ability to search in a meaningful way, and that one step will lead to another, otherwise one would never do anything and be paralyzed into limbo.

The maintenance of this doubtsensation also prevents one from ever falling back into the complacency of the familiar and settling for a false sense of security within the unknowing, thereby precluding the continued search for truth. However, beyond a certain point of commitmentor obsession, this is no longer possible anyway; much like the thousandpound weight that one cannot put down. Once the Question has been asked, existence is recognized to be hauntingly empty until it is answered. Once on the path, the door to higher awareness opens only in one direction, and then closes behind us. One can procrastinate, but never go back.

Rose strips away all buffers and poetic garnish, and describes the human condition uncompromisingly, as one who sees our sad world from a place beyond life's hypnotic spell:

> We live in a cloud of illusions and rarely realize that we are spinning this web of fiction for all the hours and days of our lives, unless we are fortunate or unfortunate enough to die slowly. Perhaps slow death may be the only moments of reality for the total life

> of many earthlings. Because the dying person is forced to face the fact that he is about to become zero. Nothingness has more meaning to him now. This dying man knows too late the value of the doubt, and the foolishness of faith, unless that faith be in his own power to solve the problem. (Rose, 1984, p. 20).

This recalls the bumper sticker that says: "Hell is seeing the truth too late."

This insistence upon determined action, based on a wholehearted conviction about the urgency for such action, is stated quite emphatically by Rose: "Christ said 'Seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you'. When He said 'knock', He meant put your head against the door and rap with your head; not just with your knuckles!" (Rose, 1985, p. 116).

To sum up much of the material up to this point: Rose's basic message in introducing this work is that the real quest does not consist of our trying to "find" God, like some longlost relative. God is not lost. Rather, we need to find ourselvesthe one who is looking. We are lost. God (meaning: Reality) is already here, for there is nowhere else to be but HERE. Butwe do not know where "here" is nor *"who"* is here.

Nothing is wrong. Ignorance is the only problem. **We are the ignorance.** We do not need to wait for the Messiah to arrive to save us. The perennial philosophy is that the Messiah has always been here, waiting for us to wake up.

Chapter 4

Further Basic Principles

How is one to find a sure path to the Truth, given our generally ignorant state and the inner and outer obstacles to such work towards selfdiscovery? What must it involve? At times, the difficulty of the task seems overwhelming and one may feel inclined to abandon the quest, resigning oneself to one's fate. But the situation might not be that bad. As Rose explains: "Man is complex. The Truth is simple. The path to the Truth needs to be complex only in coping with complex interference by man's mind. As that interference is removed, the path becomes proportionately more simple" (Rose, unpublished group papers).

This work is the true psychology: the preparing of oneself for revelation. A big problem the seeker encounters in looking for reliable guidance from traditional, mainstream psychology in working through this inner maze is that the field has generally not taken the issue of sanity and ultimate selfdefinition seriously, nor does it have a dependable rolemodel for such a state to rely on as an authority.

I once asked a respected psychiatrist for his definition of sanity. He replied that the term was meaningless to him and his only job was to get people functional enough so they can be discharged from the hospital. In the realm of the already functional, psychotherapy still largely aims only at getting people to coexist harmoniously with others and to learn how to satisfy their own desires effectively. This is what Rose refers to as utilitarian psychology: a discipline for people who wish to remain wellbehaved potted plants, lawabiding statistics, and hungry consumers who can successfully earn "a nickel for Kroger's [market]."

The field of humanistic psychology developed partially in reaction to this lack of higher ideals in the existing paradigm of psychology, whether analytic, social, behavioral, or psychiatric. The source of the basic flaw in the development of these psychologies was finally recognized. Most theories of personality, pathology, and therapy were based on the numerous case histories of troubled clients with which clinicians worked over a period of years. These accumulated experiences, processed through the clinicians' own incomplete knowledge of themselves, resulted in the particular paradigm of the inner self that each devised.

The error in this method is that the exclusive study of sickness can result only in a sick psychology, as there is no reference point of sanity to which they can refer as an objective standard of measurement, and there may even be the tacit agreement that no such condition exists. This is much

like a physician studying only cancer and coronary patients in the effort to understand how the body works in its optimal state, instead of studying Olympic athletes or yoga masters.

The humanistic camp realized this error something that should have been obvious all alongand went about looking for such a higher standard of superior functioning. This effort took the form of their studying an assortment of great artists, scientists, and social leaders as role models for defining the common qualities of healthy human nature.

This was a fine effort, reaching in the right direction, but did not go as far as it could have. The highfunctioning people that were studied were certainly closer to exemplifying the most noble human qualities than does the average person, but their standard still falls short of the ideal. If we want to know what sanity truly is, *we must examine someone who is absolutely sane.*

It is not necessaryor even validto study the bellshaped curve of personal diversity, and from that to derive a statistical average of what it means to be human. Studying people as they are does not reveal what they ought to be in their optimal state of awareness and spiritual maturity. It does no good to vote on this with statistics. An honest look at the world around us indicates the majority of people can be wrong. Even those at the upper end of this range may not know what really needs to be known and are still functioning within the paradigm of the normal, albeit extremely well. There is evidence that those rare individuals who are truly sane are beyond the boundaries of all our paradigms entirely.

As the references in Chapter 2 illustrated, there have been people throughout history who have claimed to have awakened from the normal state of consciousness, which they have unanimously regarded as sleeplike and false, and arrived at what they can only refer to as Reality, the Self, or GodConsciousness. If we can be fortunate enough to encounter even one or two examples of such people who are fully sane (meaning: having a true mind, free of all egoic delusion and fragmentation, thereby existing in objective reality), then the mind of such a person would be a valid prototype of <u>the</u> mind in its pristine, natural state. The testimony of one such person is more meaningful than the statistics of a million crippled or foolish ones.

When personality and cultural factors are filtered out, the insights they provide into the workings of the mental dimension are found to be consistent with one another and as close to having the assurance of validity as one can get, short of direct realization for oneself. Any "transpersonal map" offered by such pioneers into spirit would be well worth taking seriously by any traveler of inner paths, however individualized its application would need to be.

The perspective on normal human consciousness from the vantage point of an awakened mind is humbling. During a discussion once on the different levels of awareness, I asked Rose what our minds look like from where he "is." He replied forthrightly, yet without what would seem to be arrogance: "Like ants." Another time, he was remarking mockingly on the pomposity and ridiculousness of most human ambition, considering our actual status of slavish subjugation to primal, biological programming. I asked him: "Do you consider people to basically be sophisticated animals?" With a straight face, Rose answered: "Nothey're not that sophisticated."

Yet, what could be regarded as offensive condescension could be reframed by the student into being a gentle slap across the face to rouse one out of a hypnotic stupor. One can join in Rose's humorous japing by using such pointers to get wise to one's victimized condition, rather than remaining helplessly identified with it, and thus seeing one's predicament from a position of relative freedom.

Rose loves to subvert the common human tendency towards selfimportance, likewise implying that the error is in our attributing importance to a false notion of self and false understanding of

what life really is, thereby not taking seriously what really needs to be taken seriously. He chides: "The cosmos is laughing at you," creating an image of a chuckling Buddha watching a chicken proudly parading around with its head cut off. Coupled with his other statements along these lines, he seems to be telling us that life (as we know it) is a dismal joke, and death is the punch line. We must find the alternative before the curtain comes down.

He offers some guidance in a kinder way, while nonetheless knocking the starch out of the listener's vanity: "Don't take life seriously. It doesn't take you seriously." He is again exposing our groundless conviction of selfimportance and makebelieve meanings, and suggesting that rather than life on Earth being a playground for our enjoyment, we may be being used as bit players in a larger story by some agency that may not have our ultimate welfare as its priority. He is alerting the reader to pull back from the moviescreen of life with which one is usually wholly identified and take another look around. The true perspective may not be as flattering to us as we have assumed. To discover this true perception first requires removing the previously mentioned interference in one's mind that prevents one from seeing clearly <u>what is</u>, thereby allowing one to become more in unity with the truth.

However, for any Sage who has attained liberation to devise a legitimate system or teaching by which to help the student still stuck in Maya is no easy task. One can only dimly appreciate how difficult it must be for one who has awakened to Reality to return into an illusory world, to talk to people who are fictional, into ears that are hard of hearing, in words that are meaningless, about something that is incomprehensible, and to which no linear path can lead. One can only be grateful for whatever guidance is made available, as idiosyncratic as its presentation may be. He explains his hope in teaching:

> I don't believe that anyone can give you any more than his own personal reactions and allow you to choose your own. But by talking, sometimes someone with similar questions and a desire for a certain [quality of] answer or completeness of philosophy may receive an intuition and you may have the same direction. (Rose, 1982, p. 143).

Rose is one who claims, "*I have been there and back*" (Rose, 1978, p. 224). His challenge as a teacher has been to provide a methodology of search that is as scientific as possible, while acknowledging that one is dealing with intangibles and that the seeker's path must always be an individualized process; one in which all the factors can never be known or controlled.

Too often, any form of introspection, whether psychological or spiritual, has been considered by materialistic scientists to be unreliable and unverifiable. However, by "scientific," Rose means several things: 1) there are certain consistent laws or common denominators in subjective work that can be described and utilized, 2) there are signposts or milestones of progress on the path that can be recognized, 3) reason, commonsense, and thoroughness in the investigation must always be employed and should corroborate, not contradict, one's intuitions, and 4) as one's status as a genuine observer is better established and one's perceptions are more clearly seen, one's inner visions can be more legitimately regarded as objective knowledge, of the most direct kind. This <u>is</u> scientific research.

However, Rose's system does differ from most such research, and most religious teachings, in one particular aspect. One of the standard requirements in scientific work is that one's findings be predictable and repeatable, otherwise they are deemed spurious. Rose turns this around with a surprising twist by claiming that one's findings in spiritual research are more likely to be genuine if they are NOT predictable and occur seemingly of their own accord.

There are several reasons for this. The primary one is that the aim of the search is *objective discovery,* not the creation of a desired goal. In the search for the Truth, by definition, one does not know what the ultimate, comprehensive "answer" may be when one starts out looking for it. To presume to know it in advance, even if basing the assumption on the testimony of those who have possibly found it, can still be only a feeble conceptualization at best, compared to the experience of Reality they have described. By having some definite objective in mind and then practicing disciplines in order to experience it, all the while fortified by strong desire and belief, one may well find exactly what one has been looking for. If one listens for an allegedly significant "cosmic" sound, looks for some form of celestial vision, wishes for a particular feeling of joy or distinctive mental state, these may indeed be experienced. The "God," "Goddess," or "Heaven" one seeks may well be found. However, one may never be able to know for certain if the experience is <u>real</u>, or is only the product of tremendous desire and projection. This may also prevent one from ever finding the real thing, which such imaginings can only simulate. Rose warns us:

> That which occurs by accident is more reliable (for evidencevalue) than that which is born out of an intense desire of faith, because the human mind is the matrix from which many weird things are hatched by faith. We must be careful not to conjure up a preconceived idea of the Absolute. (Rose, 1978, p. 214).

Rose has referred to the occult doctrine that afterdeath states, whether of heavens or hells or something inbetween, are largely the result of one's lifetime of indoctrination and conviction about the matter, even if subconsciously maintained, more than objectively real places or dimensions. Likewise, he believes that psychic phenomena, encounters with spirits, and such, are more likely to be genuine if they occur spontaneously and without eager expectation (which may also well negate the likelihood of their happening). Again, the emphasis is on preparing oneself to receive a realization of truth, rather than running the risk of creating some desired experience beforehand and then embracing it eagerly as the answer.

The search needs to be openended because what the process really entails is the gradual negation of oneself (as one currently finds oneself to be) and making "room" for the discovery to occur. The false egoself is the obstacle to the truth, not the one who will "acquire" it. To not fill in the vacuum of spiritual poverty by oneself, but to work and wait for it to be filled, is the <u>real</u> act of faith.

The other reason for Rose's stress on unpredictability also somewhat counters the requirement in scientific research that the investigative procedures must be consistent and standardized. Rose rejects the notion than any such regulated, regimented approach to spirituality is possible, beyond the elementary stages of preparation and the implementation of certain universal Laws of Life (to be described). He does not consider any one mantra, breathing exercise, chant, posture, object of visualization, etc. to be a standardized tool that will bring about pre determined results to everyone in equal measure.

As his "Jacob's Ladder" indicates, Rose is not suggesting that the mental dimension and what is found beyond it varies from person to person, but that the specific maze in each individual's mind is unique to that person and is the course through which one must navigate in a unique way; one that cannot be fully planned out in advance. A general map can be provided, but the details must be filled in by the individual seeker, as one goes along.

What the Albigen System essentially is then is a blend of psychological, phenomenological, and philosophical refinement in tracing back one's source of selfhood. It is naked inquiry into the question: "Who am I?" The path is its own reason and validation. Any other motive than the desire

for the truth will be exposed in time, and one will either fall away from the task or realize that this quest is the only thing worth doing. Rose explains the situation plainly:

> The Albigen System does not pretend to offer any somatic advantages or improvement of physical faculties, nor does it pretend to be a spiritual placebo, nor to improve your business, nor to flatter your estimates, nor to lengthen your life, but it does hope to use some of that brief span of time to its best advantage in finding selfdefinition and essencerealization. (Rose, private group papers).

Once the individual has gotten to the point of recognizing oneself to be a seeker of truthin fact, having to be, how does one begin? What is the first step in this enormous task? This brings up one of the key principles in Rose's teaching, having implications beyond what is obvious. In response to an early query of mine, he stated:

Two things are necessary to begin: have hunger, and get dynamic or angry enough to start digging. Third: **commitment** a simple pledge to yourself and any god who might be tuned in. All books and philosophies beyond this are only words.

For Rose, commitment is a sacred term, containing a magic beyond its mundane meaning of one's promising to do something. It has the significance of a holy vow. It is the key that opens the doorway into a new dimension of life; a door that would not open without it.

Fitting with Rose's early, jocular nickname for the groupIgnoramuses Anonymous, the vow is essentially: "I realize I am ignorant and lost (in terms of ultimate values). I admit my life and identity have no fundamental validity while I remain in the unknowing. I give up. I want the Truth and nothing else matters anymore. I dedicate the remainder of my life to doing everything I can to find what is real. I would appreciate any aid that may be available. I will see this thing through to the end, no matter what. I know there is literally nothing else to do that is of any value. Now what?" Whether the vow is overheard by some compassionate deity or by one's inner self, the result is the same: something magical begins. The beginning of a path that was previously invisible now becomes seen.

This notion of a commitment relates to another term Rose uses: the **vector**. This is originally a principle in physics, meaning a unit of force, of a certain magnitude, moving in a certain direction. Rose says that this is what the individual must become in his own life: a vector, towards some objective. He adds that this does not only apply to spirituality as a goal, but to anything. If the person wants the million dollars, the gold medal, the Nobel Prize, or anything else, one still has to become focused enough in intent and discipline to follow the course through.

Rose notes that most people do not bother to make of themselves a conscious vector in regards to anything. He sees the majority of people as generally just drifting through life, moved by a thousand forces of programming and influence they do not recognize or suspect, all the while pursuing the individual aims of any number of egos and appetites inside themselves that are oftentimes at conflict with each other and almost never questioned as to their source, meaning, or legitimacy. With one's energy and attention going in a number of mundane directions at once, if towards anything beyond survivalmaintenance, the net result for that life is seldom anything significant. Even if it is, the victory gained could not really be called one's own.

To become a vector means to know oneself well enough to know what one's real issue or drive is in life, and to have enough selfcontrol and determination to devote oneself to manifesting that with everything one has. This is a serious matter. It cannot be forced. It comes with maturity, although sometimes life itself forces such a sense of mission or duty upon us.

One student, sensing his only intermittent conviction about the Work and feeling some mild remorse about it, once asked Rose: "How can I desire the Truth more?" He answered: "You can't." One may desire to desire more, but it cannot be forced. A lesser part of oneself cannot commandeer the rest of the psychic organism and make it more serious than it is able to be. The outer personality cannot reach inside and manipulate one's core state in accordance with an egovalue. This impulse can only derive from the deepest part of oneself. If the part that desires is primarily only an ego, even if originally prompted by some dim intuition from the inner self, the interest will soon wane when newer, more appealing interests come to the fore, or the tentative commitment encounters adverse circumstances that intimidate further effort. This conviction has to come to maturity in its own time, which only then becomes the impetus driving one's spiritual vector and animating one's egomind actions.

In another instance, one of Rose's collegeage daughters became curious about what it was her father was teaching his students, as she had little understanding of it at the time and he had never attempted to impose anything on her that was not solicited or welcomed. She read through The Albigen Papers. He casually asked her: "Well, what do you think?" She sat there for a long time, in silence, looking off into the distance somberly. She finally replied: "DadI've got games to play." He discreetly walked away without another word. She was speaking on behalf of the young soul that admits to its compulsion to first pass through the Garden of Earthly Delights before putting away the toys of childhood and beginning to seek its source in earnest.

He has even lamented that his own longtime students are seldom serious enough about their commitment to the path or their utilization of him as a teacher. He once made the remark: "Nobody is knocking on my door, or if someone does, they run away to hide in the bushes when I open it." Yet, what seeker, on any path, can claim to have never turned away from the confrontation with blunt truth that he represents?

Keeping all this in perspective, Rose cautions about overambition as well; the fanciful, unrealistic notions about conquering the world and chasing every rainbow. He advises: "Don't get yourself confused with too many ideas, or too many drives; you can only make one major commitment in life" (Rose, 1982, p. 1467). This is reminiscent of Christ's allegory of the builder contemplating the construction of a house, meaning that one needs to seriously assess one's capacity and conviction before committing oneself to a major undertaking.

What ideally happens, whether one's vector is aimed at a spiritual or secular objective, is that gradually all the aspects of one's life merge together into one, harmonious effort in a given direction, much like numerous strands of fiber weaving together to form one, strong rope. One is no longer passively drifting or working at crosspurposes amidst one's diverse desires. Every value, every expenditure of energy revolves around that one, central vow. It may even be said that whatever a person loves the most is one's God, and is the God that will reward one for that devotion.

There is another major reason for Rose's repeated emphasis on one's making a commitment. (It should be noted that he does not mean a commitment to him or to any group or church. The commitment is to the quest itself, in the name of one's unknown essence.) He is convinced that the formal making of this vow initiates a process that is larger than the individual who is making it; something of a significance and scope the person cannot yet comprehend. He explains:

> I believe that once the commitment is made to find your Truth at all costs, some interior or anterior self sets up protection. It may even set up the whole path. You can call it God or the Guardian Angel or a spiritual alliance, if you wish [the dotted line on the right side of Jacob's Ladder]. Something sets up protection. Now, I do not want you to

> feel too secure, because uncertainty and despair are part of the formula, it seems, for finding the final door or breakthrough. The despair is necessary to pop the head, after the long ordeal of running between the raindrops. (Rose, 1979c, p. 69).

Rose suggests that one's life may be little more than a haphazard collection of experiences, over which one has little control, until such a commitment is made. At that point, however, if the commitment is sincere (and the capacity for wholehearted sincerity will vary depending on the unicity and ripeness of one's nature), from the truest part of one's character, something magical begins.

After launching one's "noisy vector" for Truth, a path that may not have even existed for that individual previously now becomes apparent, and the first step is revealed. As Rose states, the part of oneself that is realthe only aspect that *is* realmay well arrange the entire path that the finite egoself will need to tread to arrive into Awakening. The small "s" self would not know what to do or where to go if such guidance from behind the scenes was not provided.

The individual will find that events occur, fortuitous meetings with special people take place, inner resources become aroused that one may not have known one had possessed, and circumstances generally arrange themselves to lead one down the road towards further opportunity for learning and change. One becomes under the auspice of some unseen guiding power. One may even feel in a state of grace. This recalls Gurdjieff's notion of the accessibility of higher influences, in that "normal" people's lifepaths are determined largely by Nature, karma, and accident, whereas seekers and strivers inhabit a dimension of magic; one more "alive" and purposeful than that of those living in a world of sleep. Rose adds: "A true seeker is a very unique person. Outwardly he will not appear to be different from anyone else. His uniqueness comes from the particular game that he plays. He allows himself to become addicted..." (Rose, 1978, p. 207.

The rules of the game are different now; in fact, the person is now playing an entirely different gamewhat DeRopp called "The Master Game." The person is living consciously for perhaps the very first time, in the search for what comprehends all consciousness. The person is no longer a statistic, a victim of life's sorrows and joys, but has become a warrior.

Rose's conviction about protection is a bit more imprecise, as seemingly negative or unjust occurrences will undoubtedly continue to happen, despite one's most noble efforts and virtuous lifestyle. Some events possibly attributable to karma may need to be played out. Certain hardships might be the natural adversity to any kind of ambitious endeavor that seems to be rudely built into life in this realm of duality. (However, the later section on "betweenness" describes a magical shortcut through this maze). He does believe that if the seeker is true to the commitment and does not "cheat" against oneself or break the rules, then no major, insurmountable form of opposition will rise up to counter or harm the individual. Something higher than our human selves will see to it that we escape the worst and see the quest through safely. Regardless, Rose's only comment about all this would be that we cannot, nor should not, presume to make any final judgment about our lives until the race is run and we can then see the entire story at once. From that transcendental vantage point we may find that events which seemed at the time to be negative or adverse to what we thought would be best turn out to have been just the right thing to occur in our story at that moment, to bring about some necessary result or opportunity. Rose has remarked having always felt he was born under a "lucky star" and that, in retrospect, he could see how some Intelligence beyond what he could imagine from his mundane perspective had masterminded his whole life, even setting up the events triggering his final Experience.

The implication here is that there is far more to the workings of the quest than individuals can know from where they stand on the road. He claims the myriad interdependent factors inside and

outside the seeker are so overwhelmingly complex that one could not hope to plot out one's course to the Truth from one's own store of understanding. Seemingly, once the commitment has been made, the path largely unfolds by itself, carrying us along with it if we are cooperative. We become aware of a larger destiny; one that may have plans of which we have now become a willing part.

There is an implication to this, which will be corroborated by one's experience. It is that beyond a certain point of commitment, one may not be allowed to quit the path and go off in a different direction. Once the promise has been made, there is an understanding that the commitment is a twoway agreement between oneself and Something Else. Once begun, one may be able to procrastinate, but never leave the path. Yet, Rose has qualified this with another consideration. He once submitted the ominous prophecy that, as the years go by, certain students in the school would "descend back into the illusion, while a few others will go on to become the spiritual giants of the future" (Rose, unpublished group papers). Every seeker recognizes the challenge and threat in this statement.

There is a further aspect to this principle. It relates to the Law of the Ladder, which will be described in a later section [see also "Definition of Terms" section]. One becomes part of a larger process that involves many other people, energies, and Laws of Life, and the maintenance of one's commitment is crucial to keeping this sacred process in operation. As Rose explains:

> (Commitment) makes an eternal spiral...from the mundane to the Absolute. By his commitment, the teacher reaches down to help the helpless. The helpless, before receiving help, should make the commitment that when they succeed in any degree, they will help in sincere desire to help their fellows. Before the helpless become (reach the Absolute), they have thus made a commitment that will have set in motion at least their minds and physical bodies in the direction of teaching and helping others and even setting an example. All of which may seem to be foolish to them when they enter satori, and see the insignificance of all mundane effort. (Rose, unpublished group papers).

As anyone who has ever vowed to break a bad habit or embark upon some new discipline knows, the lower, unruly parts of oneself can work to thwart the more ambitious part that makes the commitment. It is difficult for a fragmented, mechanical, heavily conditioned, semiconscious "person" to make a major life commitment, and fully follow through with it, without inner resistance. Yet, this determination is what is essential, especially in this most important of all ambitions.

There is a critical reason for doing this. As Rose warns the prospective seeker: "(Regarding commitment): If it's a spiritual thingdon't do it halfway, because you're only going to get halfway. And halfway to eternity is nowhere. That's still ignorance, because **you know nothing until you know everything**" (Rose, lecture, 1979). He is obviously referring to a special kind of conviction that is in a category by itself. Its real significance is more than the making of a promise. It means giving oneself up to the higher reality one hopes to realize.

Rose defines the essence of the matter in this key dictum: "**You will become the percent you commit**." This is again similar to Christ's sayings about one's needing to die in order to find Life, as well as Po Shan's statement about the "doubt sensation." The more one gives of oneself to the process of inquiry and transformation, the more one will find of reality.

This gives a different connotation to the principle of prayer than its usual meaning of one's asking God for help or healing, in exchange for greater faithfulness. In line with Rose's insistence that one must become a unified vector towards the truth, it is seen that the true prayer is not any one

gesture or sentiment of a spiritual desire, however sincere, that stands isolated apart from the rest of one's life. According to Rose, the sum and extent of one's entire life is one's prayer for the answer. It can be regarded that all of one's life is weighed as a whole unit upon some cosmic scaleevery deed, every thought, every desire, every struggle, every act of courage, all the wins and lossesand this then becomes one's total statement of commitment about that lifetime.

Although Rose depicts "Enlightenment" as finally being an all or nothing affair, in another sense, no effort is ever wasted, even if the results do not manifest as an absolute answer in that lifetime. Rose states that from a perspective outside of the relative stream of life, all of one's work and dedication to an ideal is seen as becoming an eternal fact that cannot be erased. The moment of death becomes then the signature on one's selfportrait painted stroke by stroke every day, by every act of one's life, and this story of struggle and achievement remains forever.

To provide any final solace, however, there is still then the obvious question of who it is ultimately who appreciates this eternal fact. One of Rose's students, Eric H., supplied the equally obvious answer: "Why the E.F.A., of coursethe Eternal Fact Appreciator!" More seriously, though, Rose adds: "Be content that your life was not an act of foolishness...and know that this brotherhood fact (of action) is more real than the transient world of illusion, in that some if its members have transcended illusion. (Rose, 1975, p. 58).

It is not to be implied that once the commitment is nobly made, the rest of the road is always to be smooth and joyous, with limitless celestial aid speeding one's journey along. While functioning in the dimension where polarity is the law, and possibly laboring against forces that do not wish us to escape our bondage to this place, one must expect to encounter resistance. Rose alerts the seeker with this warning and promise: "People who make a commitment and are aware of that commitment, will continually find opposition to test the commitment, and with each test comes a redoubling of direction and intensity" (Rose, 1982, p. 144).

Regardless of one's domain of chosen endeavor in life, we are not only tested, but defined by resistance. While one may lament the hardships, sacrifices, and setbacks in one's process of search, the opposition to our efforts that we encounter helps us in a sense by fortifying and determining our character in the arena of daily life.

At a meeting years ago in which several of Rose's students were discussing values and priorities, one fellow, Phil F., spontaneously blurted out a line that has haunted me ever since: "Every mystic has his price." This is an intimidating and humbling accusation; yet even more so, a challenge to the seeker to prove oneself an exception to, what statistically seems to be, an insidious rule on the path.

What he was saying was that at a critical point in one's life, one may choose to identify oneself with the ego that makes the commitment to work for the truth. Then, as life goes on, one is continually bombarded with temptations and distractions from without, and weaknesses and rationalizations from within. The desire to find reality, God, or ultimate selfhood has to be one's unequivocal priority, otherwise, sooner or later, one may find oneself "bought off" by some lower level trinket or gratification, short of the goal; and there shamefully to remain.

This warning is the underside of the First Commandment: "Thou shall have no other Gods before me." Truly, one must be willing to give all to the quest, in order to get All in return. Phil's warning remains to test the integrity of one's commitment, and the thoroughness of one's selfknowledge in rooting out those imps of lower desire that would thwart the grand ambition.

Rose is a man of action. He does not offer a merely intellectual philosophy or emotional panacea. He is not even interested in having people share his beliefs about the nature of things and

the principles of the path. He insists one's philosophy has to be one's life, for the seed to come to fruition. Once the seeker understands what this path involves, one's character must become infused with the determination to fully manifest the teaching one now professes to believe, and not only admire it from a distance or worship it as an idol.

Making this shift from thinker to actor requires selfknowledge. As Rose defines it: "Determination is the awareness of conviction." It is this commitment that is repeatedly tested by adversity and what finally determines one's destiny.

It is not easy to isolate this quality of character and to live from this alone. Facing the truth about oneself without blinking or furtively justifying one's distortions requires tremendous integrity. One questioner at a lecture admitted feeling resistant to committing himself to the work of transformation; his having some intuition about what cost this would involve. In response, Rose confronted him by saying: "You don't have courage. You don't want to accept the reality of yourself."

The principle of selfsacrifice relates to courage in that one must have the faith or conviction that the part of oneself that is regarded as "me," or the paradigm of lifeexperience that one regards as "reality," can be jettisoned in return for the greater reality or selfhood waiting beyond the boundary of one's current understanding. This important theme of the self's division into conflicting selves, and the truer self being hoodwinked by lesser selves will be later explored in greater detail.

Another fellow at the lecture was also apprehensive about diving into this business of personal sacrifice and change. Rose's perspective on human nature and psychological work was artfully revealed in his response:

> You know what you are afraid of. You think you are afraid of losing some part of yourself, but you are really afraid of losing a coward. Let him die. He is not worth the attention. There may be something magical found in the losing of that coward. (Rose, 1979c, p. 69).

He has also made comments in passing that liken the seeker of eternity to a valiant warrior: "Life isn't worth living if you're afraid of dying," or even a kamikaze pilot: "If you intend to die, you can do anything." Rose would also undoubtedly agree with the intent of the old samurai saying: "When faced with a choice between life and death, always choose death." What can die can only be the false.

Rose's comments are not to be confused with suicidal morbidity. Rather, he is intending to inspire the seeker on to a greater sense of urgency and boldness, and to leave the familiar props of psychological comfort behind. Despite his repeated warnings for one to not underestimate the subversive influence of the forces of adversity, he also wishes to encourage the seeker to become fully immersed in the work of, what he calls, the "grand obsession," trusting that life itself respects a commitment well made. While not meaning to promote the childish image of an anthropomorphic, parental deity, Rose does affirm: "Fortune is an ally to the brave."

One's motive for the commitment is not entirely that of noble courage. It is also the mature recognition of the insubstantiality of life as we know it now and the hunger to find what is true on the other side of the veil, while there is still time to hunt for it. Recalling the metaphor of Plato's Cave and the entire philosophy of the Albigensians, Rose's presence constantly confronts the seeker with the admission that, contrary to our apparent experience, we are not real nor in reality <u>now</u> yet there is promise of a road out of the cave. It is the sole part of oneself that is *real* that is able to recognize this Voice of intuition and is moved to act on its prompting. Beyond a certain point, the quest itself becomes the only value that is meaningful, and one smiles knowingly at the memory of the graffiti

from the hippydrug era: "Reality is a crutch"; "reality" referring to the illusion that is now all we know and are.

As will be explained in a later section, Rose acknowledges there being significant differences between the male and female natures that require somewhat different approaches or attitudes to seeking. His stress on doubt, determination, assertiveness, etc. is more geared to the masculine nature, whereas devotion, receptivity, and surrender are more fitting to the feminine nature. Finally, of course, some measure of both must be blended together in each individual's nature, as it is the call of the same higher Intuition to which one is committed or devoted. According to Rose, the common denominator in both cases is: "You have to love the truth"this is the heart of the formula.

Despite the seriousness with which Rose urges the search be regarded, he does not mean to intimidate the seeker into feeling overwhelmed by the complexity and arduousness of the task described. In fact, the hope of success he offers is of the most positive kind: that it is almost entirely dependent upon one's worthiness of hope, according to one's conviction and resultant efforts. Rose's very presence offers the additional encouragement that spiritual realization is not only for mythical, superhuman, godlike avatars who had a blessed destiny from birth, but is attainable by an ordinaryalthough admittedly highly extraordinaryhuman being. Rose claims: "Anybody can do this with just plain determination and common sense, who is willing to face himself and examine his condition and convictions" (Rose, 1985, p. 5).

Rose's understanding of what the search involves, as well as his very style of teaching, preclude any "guarantees" of predictable, measurable consequences, as he rejects any simplistic, mechanistic notions of spiritual work. He does not want to encourage belief in the attractive prospect that, for example: "x" number of breathing exercises, plus one hour daily of chanting the Lord's name ("How do you know what the Lord's name is?," Rose queries the enthusiastic devotee), plus 10% of one's income in the basket, times 20 years = Enlightenment.

However, he does make a bold claim that could be confidently regarded to be as close to a guarantee of success as a mature seeker could want. In fact, this formula can be recognized to run throughout his entire teaching: "The rate of realization is directly proportional to the amount of and quality of energy and attention applied to the quest." Its more concise form"**Results are directly proportional to energy applied**"is like a holy commandment in Rose's group and, coupled with the earlier stated dictum: "You will become the percent you commit," sums up much of the system in this regard.

Their meaning is that, while the consequences of one's actions cannot be assumed to be linear, i.e. "A leads to B leads to C," there is an overall formula that states the process of selftransformation resulting in realization is directly dependent upon the amount of effort one puts into the inquiry. The rhymes and reasons of the myriad inner and outer details of the transformation are beyond the individual's capacity of understanding and are in the hands of some higher agency, but Rose wishes to assure the seeker that the more one labors for the Truth, the more of it one will come to realize. The more one learns to see the whole of one's life process from outside it, the more it is seen that a knowing Hand is turning the combination lock of our minds to free us.

Rose mixes chastisement with hope in pointing out how our misdirected efforts towards ordinary, mundane gratification could be more wisely aimed: "If we applied the same amount of energy that is wasted in any of the material pursuits, we would see spiritual results" (Rose, 1978, p. 195). He is saying that although spiritual work is in a category by itself, much of the impetus and discipline involved in making for success is much the same as in one's working to satisfy any ephemeral, earthly desire. He is asking us to dig deeply into ourselves and reexamine the nature of our desires to define the real desire underneath them all, and work to answer it directly, with the same energy.

An even finer quality of discrimination is necessary beyond this preliminary distinction between terrestrial and spiritual aims. One must be prudent in choosing between possible esoteric paths, as one's decision can bear grave consequences. Rose confronts the seeker thusly:

The questions that you must ask yourself naturally begin with a question as to whether you actually want to approach reality. Another question to ask yourself deals with the amount of time you can or are willing to spend in search of that Reality. Can you afford to waste twenty years of your life, probing and believing a system, only to find that it is incomplete, spurious or of an anodyne nature? That you lose your money in the process is not near as important as the time that is lost, because the older you get the more intractable and calcified the mental abilities become. (Rose, unpublished group papers).

Rose's advice regarding this issue again goes back to his repeated emphasis on needing to develop a reliable intuition as the tool of discernment. When one's judgment is guided by intuition, the seeker must then act to manifest the living commitment to it. As one acts to confirm one's conviction, more and finer intuition will grow from that action for the next step. Although the original motivation to do something may first only exist as an inspired concept or vague inkling, before the full emotional commitment is felt that would bring it to life, Rose assures us that the "feeling" of certainty will follow desire, if the desire is followed by appropriate action.

Rose wants to make a clear distinction between the path of intellectual, scholarly analysis of philosophy, and the dynamic path of holistic work on oneself. He states that while still on the path: "You are what you do, not what you know."

Progress on the path is not always obvious, at least to the individual in question. As periods of hardship may prove to be the most productive in the long run, the subtle inner mechanisms of the psyche may have a hidden schedule for their own unfolding, and changes can sometimes be more apparent to others who see us over time than we notice in ourselves in the slight increments of daily experience. However, Rose urges seekers to constantly monitor themselves and be wary of stagnation. He asserts: "If you aren't moving [progressing], it's because you aren't doing anything."

This brings up one of the most serious, weighty questions he periodically poses to his students (one with an often embarrassing answer): "WHAT ARE YOU DOING?" By this, he is obviously not asking one to list one's daily activities or even larger projects or commitments, such as family or career. He is asking: "What are you doing with your life? What is the meaning of all the things you are doing? What egos, fears, and appetites are you serving? What are you doing to further your ultimate spiritual objective?" These are profound questions, requiring tremendous self understanding and honesty to answer them, and then the courage to act in response to the possibly humiliating answers.

Rose does add some solace to this grave image. He has remarked about his students: "Everyone IS moving (paradoxically), due to his commitmentbut slowly." He is implying that the path to which one commits oneself and the fate that defines one's course through life has a momentum of its own that will carry the seeker along, even if one goes only halfconsciously and grudgingly. But Rose also points out: "You shouldn't settle for going 2 m.p.h. when you can go 1000 m.p.h."especially (recalling his gravestonecandle) if there is no guarantee that one has that much extra time to spare.

To draw some parallels here for the sake of historical context, one can see similarities between the principle, "You are what you do" and the path of karma yoga, in which one's physically acting out the life of search and service is the main "way" of seeking. Likewise, the path of bhakti yoga, which is the attitude and lifestyle of devotion to God as the Beloved as reflected in all of one's interactions with people and the earth, can be regarded as a form of Rose's simple advocation that one must "love the truth."

He also makes a surprising remark about the results of one's introspection. Most of the Albigen System does consist of the inner work towards self knowledge. However, Rose does not want to implyand seemingly condone the seeker's possible tendencies towards laziness and delighting in one's mental gymnasticsthat the whole path consists solely of sitting in a lotus position and serenely "looking for God."

Rose declares: "Wisdom comes during work, not meditation." In other words, he found in his own life that, while he was putting in tremendous effort over a period of many years in studying himself from every possible angle, it was during the actual experience of living, in dealing with people, being confronted by adverse situations, and following out his commitment in daily affairs that insights into his nature and the realities of life would come to him, seemingly when he was not specifically thinking about them. This is also a major principle in Gurdjieff's Fourth Way, that all of life is the path. Spirituality is not to be compartmentalized separate from the holistic flow of experience. Furthermore, there is a connection between the happening of such directmind glimpses and Rose's comments about genuine realization needing to be an unpredictable surprise that hits the individual from out of the unknown.

There is some magical principle of life involved in this; one that applies in any domain of effort. When Rose says: "You confirm a conviction by action," his meaning points at this formula. As his emphasis is on direct realization rather than secondhand knowing or dualistic worship, this requires some such magic to bridge the gap, and it is this: **Action is the catalyst that transforms insight into being**. It is the actual experience of putting one's life on the line that demonstrates the sincerity of one's convictions and is the real prayer that works the miracle of alchemical transmutation from somewhere deep inside.

There is also another, more subtle, significance to this principle. One reason why it is so difficult to concoct a systematic spiritual teaching is that the student is still stuck in a world of polarity and paradox, and is incapable of viewing things directly, with a whole mind. No straightline effort on the mundane plane can result in the seeker's ascending to an objective vantage point of comprehension of that same relative domain. It is the wholehearted giving up of oneself to a process that is larger than the individual, involving the complex interrelationships of factors that one cannot imagine, that brings about by its very selfsacrificing nature, the catalytic means for transforming duality to unicity, as one ceases being strictly an individual entity and becomes part of a bigger pattern.

In a sense, Rose is exhorting the seeker to become a Renaissance man in working towards selfknowledge and selfmastery. Similar to Gurdjieff's principle of "harmonious development of centers", one is urged to develop all of one's faculties to the fullest, in service of the quest. One needs to have a keen intellect, a sensitive emotional nature, a vital body, competence in work, and maturity in relating to the others in one's life. It is not any one aspect of oneself that is important; it is all important. One must learn to keep on top of the numerous details and responsibilities of life if there is to be any hope of being able to successfully work for something beyond ordinary life. As Rose says: "Our success in big things depends on how many little things we can manage simultaneously" (Rose, 1982, p. 144).

He adds a qualifying note of caution. He does stress the need for being dynamic, mastering oneself, overcoming the adversities of worldly life, resolutely challenging absurdity wherever it is found, etc., as versus the "dharma bum"/hippy role of the l960's in which disillusioned youth drifted carelessly into oblivion out of the mistaken notion that any form of will, ego, or accomplishment was "unspiritual" and one should passively "go with the flow." Likewise, Rose does not encourage the stereotypical image of the reclusive mystic as a pale, weak, morose, and forlorn individual who pleads

for solace and forgiveness from a stern, elusive God, after abandoning the world in disappointment or failure.

Patterned after Rose's own character, the Albigen System advocates a rigorously individualistic stance. The honest seeker is not designated a sinner begging for mercy for some antediluvian crime one cannot remember against a God one does not know, but more a disgusted, selfrighteous, proud victim of ridiculousness who demands the right to be returned to the correct perspective on things. In a moment of Joblike blasphemy, one may feel the urge to cry out: "God has sinned against me!" He has addressed this sentiment in a poetic excerpt: "I'll forever question why a man is made indebted to a cause he cannot see, and paid in pain for being blind. Where does justice lie that gives a man the urge to see, but gives no eye?" (Rose, 1982, p. 58). He poses a further question: "There is another disturbing note that is echoed by scholar and clod alike: why do the gods remain hidden?" (Rose, 1978, p. 75).

Despite his discouragement of the strictly monastic lifestyle, he does not for a moment want anyone to mistake his message for one that defines spirituality in physical or social terms, or that the objective is to remake the world into a Garden of Eden, or that any amount of external, relative effort can be traded in for an absolute result. He is always keenly aware of the distinction between the path of mundane life, even when lived for the highest purpose, and the actual inner or esoteric path of selfinversion that aims at shattering the spell of maya and awakening one to transcendental reality. He states: "You must keep your feet on the two paths at once, while keeping the two paths separate at the same time" (Rose, 1982, p. 141). In this, he is recalling Christ's instruction that one must live in the world but not be of the world, as well as Gurdjieff's description of the Fourth Way traveler as a "sly man."

Contrary to the current hopes of many that universal Christ Consciousness will burst forth upon the world scene one day soon if we only think positively enough, he would claim this is only more desperate makebelieve and grandiose projection. There is no "New Age." There is no "Old Age." There is only madness and the awakening from madness.

All of this brings up another key principle in the teaching; a classic Roseism upon which much of the Albigen System is based: "**You have to fatten up your head before you can chop it off!**" (Rose, 1985, p. 186). In this, Rose is referring to his finding, based on his own process of search and discovery, that before the final revelation can occur in which one's identification with a nonexistent personal "self" is permanently extinguished, revealing the greater Self behind it, one must first go through a prolonged period of disciplined effort toward selfknowledge and development of "being."

His aphorism, though deliberately worded in a humorous, grotesque manner, has several serious implications:

1) Relating to the concept of the vector, one needs to gather oneself together into a ball of energy that is strong enough to withstand the onslaught of hypnotic projections by life that serve to maintain one's position in the mundane status quo. One must struggle relentlessly to counter the negative forces acting from within and without to keep one thus trapped in ignorance. Rousing oneself from sleep requires consistent vigilance and determination.

2) As the path is very much a form of "suicide" of the egoself which one currently experiences oneself to be, it is necessary to develop the "being" or "soulpresence" behind this acting self. This is so that, should the experience of transcendence occur in which one finds oneself having no body, no personal mind, no perceptions, and no world to rely upon as reference points for identity, there will be a truer self left over to which the shift in identity can be made by default. Without such an awake inner being sufficiently readied, one could easily become lost in any number of illusory bardos after

death (re: the "Tibetan Book of the Dead"), or disappear entirely like a puff of vapor, as Gurdjieff warned would happen to those whose "souls" remained latent. It is a dangerous gamble to complacently assume one's soul is automatically waiting to welcome one on the other side, after the hypnosis of life has ended.

3) Directly related to number two: as the fictional self, that is now all we know, does not want to die, it is necessary for one's philosophical vector to generate enough momentum to carry one through the actual deathexperience that Rose claims is the doorway to Reality. Without adequately building up this "head of steam", one may not be able to break through the barrier of egodeath, or the individual self's inherent resistance to being ended may keep one restrained within some variant category of the paradigm of relative life.

4) As an extension of number three, one of the many paradoxes of this path is that before being able to transcend individual selfhood and realize the transpersonal state of Oneness, it is necessary to first become fully individual, whole, and true within oneself. Rose has said: "The person who becomes Enlightened has to first become the sanest person on Earth." Attaining this status requires tremendous diligence and work. One cannot "give oneself up to eternity," so to speak, without first going through the labor of achieving mature comprehension of oneself and the realities of life. To "chop one's head off" prematurely through some contrived technique of egodissolution would be an act of bad faith and might result in an incomplete realization or lesser amazement, if not landing one in a state of insanity or oblivion altogether.

This last reason requires some clarification. It is important to start on the path right where one is standing and not in the imagining of where one would like to be. Before getting to the transpersonal phase of meditation, the personal phase of selfunderstanding must be worked through. His previous quote about "sanity" is not an absolute principle in a literal sense. He has also said, in assessing the authenticity of a teaching from any Enlightened person who remains encumbered with a human psyche, that a crippled chicken can still lay a healthy egg. What is crucial is that one know one's mind and nature thoroughly, including all the influences that made one as one is, even if certain preset factors cannot be changed. The point is that one must know the truth about oneself in totality from a point of mental clarity, and thereby come to know of the knower who is free of the person.

5) The most subtle reason is difficult to convey. It relates to Rose's references to Zen as a manner of seeking that aims to shock the individual out of the state of duality through "banging one's head against the wall" of paradox, until one breaks through. (The wall and one's head may be found to be the same thing!) In a sense, as Advaita Vedanta teaches, it is impossible for a relative, finite, mechanical creature to do anything that will result in Absolute Realization, or Infinity. Yet, it is this impossibility that Zen attempts to "outwit" by bringing one to the extreme of conscious, complete, focused selfhood (small "s")and then negating that in death. <u>One divided by zero</u>. All that remains then is the awareness of both existence and nonexistence: the Self.

There is an additional point that may be worth mentioning here. As Rose freely acknowledges, there are many paths to the truth. He does not claim to have a monopoly on the territory. He is only describing the shortest route of which he knows; one that worked for him. It seems there is a common denominator to all valid paths (which is not to imply that every possible path leads to realization or is equally efficient in getting one there). This commonality seems to revolve around Rose's consistent emphasis upon commitment, determination, and honest desire for the Truth.

One can compare the divergent doctrines, techniques, practices, etc. in all the world's religions, and then relate them to the final goalstate; the experience of which is unanimously agreed upon by all mystics who have finished their respective paths. The apparent conclusion we may draw

is that no matter what form of effort is made on one's pathwhether it is primarily psychological, philosophical, devotional, physical, metaphysical, social, or any combination of others, the objective reality may well be that the disciplines themselves are largely inconsequential gestures by a fictitious entity within an illusory dimension.

Howeverthey may be corresponding to something that is real on the other side of the unknowing, and it is this wholehearted desire, intention, attention, and surrender motivating all of one's efforts that is real. This is what works the magic behind the scenes to develop the anterior "being," masterminds the process of shifting the reference point of essential identity, and brings about the awakening to the real Self. The work to "fatten up one's head", however it is done, is one's form of prayer for the answer. Having it "chopped off" is the unexpected doorway to that answer.

As described in Chapter 2, warnings have been scattered throughout the numerous historical, esoteric teachings that the seeker must be aware of adverse influences on the path. All is not bliss and easy progress. According to the Albigen System, the nature of this opposition is generally understood to be of two kinds.

The first refers, again, to the pervasive reality of the paradox that one confronts at every step of the way. Every understanding has an opposite side that may be just as trueor false. One never has the complete picture on anything, while still seeing from a relative vantage point. This becomes most problematic in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, as it is of a more abstract domain than is the strictly mundane. This is what makes it especially difficult for seekers to agree on common principles of the search and work together harmoniously. As Rose describes our plight: "The Tower of Babel (syndrome) casts its shadow on all levels. We are dissembled and mute" (Rose, 1984, p. 27).

This is less a deliberate effort at opposition by some malevolent influence than it is the impersonal result of our unfortunate handicap in trying to solve an infinite problem with a finite, and fallible, mind. As everything in the world of polarity is in balance, every attempt at some movement or change encounters resistance from its opposite, with which it is irrevocably tied. Effort engenders countereffort. As all factors in the relative world are interdependent, as are objects hanging in a mobile, no one factor can be readily moved by itself, as every other factor to which it is related exerts some force upon it to maintain the overall status quo. Furthermore, any effort, however nobly intended, generated from out of an ego state, which is by definition an artificial contraction separated from the holistic flow of life, will, due to its inherently fixated, reactive nature, be to some extent countermanded by the psychic reverberations bouncing off the solidified parameters of that ego's paradigm. In other words: our outgoing energy inverts to thwart us, (e.g. the lesson contained in the Chinese fingertrap toy). We must learn to operate out of wholeness, out of emptiness. Rose's advice on how to bypass these forms of resistance, or pass through them, will be explained in the sections on "betweenness" and "directmind". The second reason is more specificand disturbing. I once asked Rose, after a particularly invigorating and insightful lecture, how seekers can feel so enthusiastically committed to the spiritual path during such moods, but then gradually fall away from the obsession in daily life, as one forgets, compromises, and rationalizes these concerns into the background. He replied: "It's the programming of Nature. You aren't supposed to think about these things."

He teaches that built into the world is opposition from various forces of Nature, as well as specific forces within nature, that wish to obstruct the seeker from escaping this world and attaining the dimension of spirit. He refers to this collective influence as "the Forces of Adversity."

This includes two primary aspects: a) The general intent of the organic realm to keep all lifeforms subject to natural law within the closed system of life which it administers, which acts like a kind of "gravity" to keep the aspiring seeker on the earthly plane; b) More insidious are specific intelligences

residing in the psychic realm that are parasitical to humans and wish to consume human energy for their own purposes, thereby crippling the seeker's efforts at spiritual work. The workings of these influences and how one may overcome them will be further described in the section on sexuality and energy transmutation.

Rose's depiction of humanity's plight and the individual's difficulty in fighting through the maze to freedom is dire:

> Man as a race and individual is unable to continue to fruition the search for Truth. Religions reach a peak and then die. Man as an individual possesses certain years of his life in which he may dynamically pursue wisdom or religion. But then he is overcome by lethargy, circumstances, or despair long before his natural death. Those of us who wish to stop and think about ultimate directions are jostled by the herd and repeatedly goaded by the exigencies of living. I wonder if it is even possible for other than a few to pause in this herd stampede and meditate [recalling the Gurdjieffian/Kerrick principle that only a few are allowed on the Ark ?]. Something inside the individual does not wish to examine its potential for oblivion. (Rose, 1982, p. 145).

Rose explains that seekers find themselves in a doublesided quandary. On one hand, it is important for one to be aware of the fact that there is opposition to spiritual endeavor. One must have the discernment to recognize lies from truth and the courage to act on the distinction. One must be aware of the myriad forms of conditioning acting on the psyche and have the intuition to sort out what is a genuine thought or emotion coming from "within" (so to speakbut more on this later) and what is a deceptive, subversive, or parasitical influence impinging on one from without. One must be shrewd and wary. The humbling acknowledgement of the reality of hypnosis will make one more circumspect in taking the authenticity of one's experience for granted.

On the other hand, Rose warns that it is a mistake to focus the attention on the source of the adversity itself, with the intention of defeating it before being able to go on and doing what one knows needs to be done. Whether the adversity is in the form of disadvantageous social conditions or psychic attacks by unnamed intelligences, what is important is for one to doubt one's own experience, perceptions, statesofmind, emotional reactions, etc. enough to have the time and mental "space" to judge what is valid and what is not. To confidently assume that every urge or conviction is justified simply because one is aware of experiencing it is to leave oneself open to costly mistakes. Again, the serious study of hypnosis reveals some important clues about the potential for error in mental functioning and even how we may fool ourselves in pursuing our spiritual aims. The mature seeker need feel no insecurity in such selfdoubt: the doubter is more real than the person's experiences being examined.

The focus in the search needs to be on one's own psychological condition and correcting the errors in its functioning and processing of information. To angrily dwell on overcoming the Forces of Adversity head on is a trap set by those very Forces to sidetrack the seeker into a needless and futile tangent. Yet, to ignore the possibility of delusion in one's subjective experience due to external agencies of adversity, with the assumption that one's judgment, values, moods, etc. are always flawless or divinely ordained, would be likewise foolish.

What Rose advises is for one to study <u>how</u> the delusive influencesfrom whatever source, in whatever form, and of whatever intent*affect one's own quality of mind and resultant actions, and then determine objectively what is true.* Subsequently, one must act on this intuitive reading. This resultant action may then lead to a vantagepoint outside of the previous delusionstate, enabling one to see the

truth of one's condition. The subtle strategy involved in this adroit maneuver will also be elaborated upon in the section on betweenness.

This relationship between all forms of opposition and the need for selfknowledge in overcoming it is best defined in a brilliant, yet ominous assessment by Keith M., one of Rose's students: "**The Forces of Adversity will block a man on whatever level his being is on**." There is much material in this statement on which the individual may reflect.

What is this warning implying? Contrary to our conventional, cherished notions of democracy, everybody is not equal to everybody else, excepting if one wishes to speculate about some common domain of essence where we are all united at one root in Reality. On the human level, however, people have different natures, different strengths and weaknesses, different programming, different issues, different capacities for dealing with them, different modes of experiencing life, and different levels of maturity or wisdom. One's "being" can be said to be wherever one most identifies or has ascended to on the ladder of spiritual evolution.

What this stern dictum is saying is that on whatever step of this ladder the individual is functioning, this is where the opposition will set in to challenge the seeker about going beyond it. It is not a matter of one's being thwarted by one's inability to contend with some issue or task way above one's capacity. This may not be necessary to keep one stuck.

The especially diabolical nature of this adversity is that it does not only take the form of attacking us at our weaknesses. This mode of approach is obvious enough and predictable. One can be vigilant against this and learn to compensate for it. The person who has a tendency towards drug or alcohol abuse, for example, will find the temptation of intoxication to be the arena where one's character fights to determine one's fate. The individual with a weakness for debauchery has a similar, massive battle to contend with. Those who are hungry for gold do likewise. The Seven Deadly Sins of traditional religious teaching describe some of the main categories here.

Rose alerts us that even these obvious "sins" can be rationalized away as being legitimate convictions. Lust can become: "love or 'my need'"; laziness: "wise relinquishment of the ego of being a doer"; pride: "discernment that I am meant for better work"; weakness: "strength, flexibility, wit, or manifest equanimity"; and procrastination: "logic, gradualism, 'one thing at a time', or waiting for God's will or a sign from heaven" (Rose, unpublished group papers).

That one's weaknesses should be used against oneself is to be expected. However, the adversity seems to know our psychological natures so well as to be able to insidiously use our strengths against us also. The scholarly philosophertypes who take pride in their reasoning ability may find that this tool of intellectualism is being used to seduce them off the path towards selfdefinition and down any number of sideroads that, while fascinating and challenging, only serve to fatten the intellectual ego, rather than to further insight into oneself. The person of an emotional, devotional nature may be tricked into having this potentially admirable propensity be instead directed towards an object of worship that does not lead to ultimate spiritual benefit, whether this is in the form of an unworthy guru or the exclusive demands of mate and family. The dynamic person of action may likewise be tricked into charging any number of taunting windmills, building temples reaching to heaven, or enthusiastically promoting ideals of social change, only to realize too late that one's energy may have been better spent on more selfish taskssuch as the work towards finding one's identity. Even the religiouslyminded may have the humble desire to serve their God twisted around to where, for lack of discernment, their piety is seduced into being subservient to a corrupt teacher or organization in the name of God; this dedication leading them not to heaven, but possibly to doom (e.g., Jonestown).

We have to get wise to ourselves, rather than merely identify with ourselves. This is where Gurdjieff's principle of "chief feature" is relevant: that we each have one major attitude or stance towards life that defines our character and represents our primary obstacle to seeing clearly. One must know one's nature thoroughly: the virtues and the handicaps, one's conditioned tendencies, and the filters that distort one's perception of inner and outer conditions. By knowing one's basic psychological nature, a person may also well find evidence there of the Force of Adversity that is manifesting some issue or exploiting some weakness to prevent one from rising above that level of being. The seeker has to be a master psychologist with himself in order to not be one's own biggest handicap on the path. This discernment also requires knowing when one is being forced to overcome adversity and when it is possible to go around it. Employing "betweenness" will enable one to go *through* it.

Chapter 5

Mental Perspectives

A common message running throughout many esoteric teachings is that, in our current condition, we are the source of the very "maya" we wish to transcend. Likewise, the key bit of advice given about how to overcome this falseness in oneself is quite simple: **to be honest with oneself**. This requires no great knowledge of metaphysics, cosmology, or ancient scriptures. This requires plain self knowledgefor how can we be true to ourselves if we don't know who we really are? Being true to a self that is not us, but is only a deceiving imposter, can take one a long way off course.

This warning is much of Rose's intended emphasis in his assorted comments about human nature and the common traps in the philosophical search. His repeated message is that we cannot hope to find reality so long as we enthusiastically indulge in fantasyespecially if this makebelieve extends to our convictions and premises about spirituality.

In a deceptively simple statement, Rose painfully confronts much of what he considers to be dishonest in spiritual seeking, as well as in the human nature that condones it: **"We accept much. We like to call it faith"** (Rose, 1978, p. 35). He is saying that there is a subtle difference between being sensitive to one's intuition about the direction towards a higher truth that one does not yet fully know, and the mistake of complacently believing in something that makes one feel better and not noticing that this belief has quietly crossed over the line to presumed knowledge. Faith is one of those sacred words (like "God" and "love") that the seeker is not supposed to question, for fear of being labeled a blasphemer, yet it can be as much a powerful tool for transformation as a dishonorable tactic for avoiding effort. One needs to know the difference.

Related to this is another one of Rose's chronic complaints: the extension of private lies to oneself to the collective lies of an entire people. Rose critiques our tendency for defining the truth by majority rule: "We are inclined to think that that which everyone believes in must be true. We have carried our gregariousness over into a massive respect for mob opinion" (Rose, 1982, p. 140).

This is referring again to the philosophy of "the bellshaped curve": the belief that the truth is whatever 51% of the population wishes it to be or has been conditioned into assuming it must be. It is an understandable tendency to want to "go with the flow" of peer values and trust that the para-

digm of convention is reliable. However, whether the issue is religious doctrine, sexual morality, or principles of healthy psychological functioning, Rose's uncompromising insistence is that the majority of people can be wrongand usually are. He does not accept that reality can be defined by democratic vote. The truth must be determined by objective inquiry and experiential validation, not by whatever makes one feel comfortable or justifies one's laziness. He explains:

> Things are as they are and have been since the beginning of time. We try to distort things by trying to force them into our particular paradigm. ...For many people, it is easier to live in a paradigm than to keep saying "Why?". (Rose, 1985, p. 2567).

This is a key distinction regarding honest thinking: does one search for what is, using impartial truth as the only criteria for judgment, or does one base all acceptable values on whether or not something makes one feel joyous or peaceful? Rose's assessment of this latter approach is critical:

> The emphasis in much of the (New Age/Human Potential) movement today is on trying to make people feel good, rather than looking for answers [including answers to why they feel bad]. The pseudospiritual movement today is oriented toward man, instead of toward wisdom. (Rose, 1985, p. 231).

> Just as not everything that tastes good is healthy for the body, we cannot judge validity mentally by what makes us feel good or is attractive.

There is an important implication to Rose's statement. At first glance, it would seem that anything that promotes human welfare would also inherently equate with spiritual advancement. To a large extent, this is obviously true. However, the distinction he is making is that it is possible for a person to become comfortable and secure while still remaining entirely within an imaginary paradigm of "normalcy" and nonsense, whereas the honest inquiry he recommends into the real nature of life, the world, and the mind inevitably brings about personal wellbeing as a byproduct, even though one may need to pass through a process of conflict, tension, and insecurity in order to realize it. For after all, how could any conviction of contentment be valid unless it derives from within the larger context of spiritual maturity?

Many people have an aversion to reality. All too often, unfortunately, they like to call this spirituality. There is a difference between affirmation of truth and presumptuous rationalization in the service of denial. Genuine spirituality is attained by facing reality and defining it correctly; not by denying it and creating something else.

Rose does not see that this shallow, egocentered approach to spirituality works any better on a societal level than it does for the individual. He calls this attitude: "The Goddess of Pollyanna: that urge of mankind for utopia simply through collective pretense that dreaming will make things come true" (Rose, 1985, p. 262). In other words, he believes we have a greater likelihood of arriving at a genuinely civilized state if we first discover what the truth about human nature actually is and have a clear perspective on the larger blueprint of life on Earth, than if we continue to indulge in vain fantasies of how we would like life to be, while failing to cease our violations against it, and assume that the rules of the game will adjust themselves to suit our desires.

Rose is making these seemingly unkind assessments because he is speaking from a position where he feels that there is hope for genuine spiritual attainment, if one goes about searching for the truth in a precise and objective manner. He does not like to see this sacred work being degraded by those with tainted motives. He is attempting to define the true method of psychological inquiry.

To keep this all in perspective: if one has no mature conviction, then by all means it is good to have an honest faith. It is better than nothing. But, it is derivative. Faith is for people who have a limited capacity to know anything or do anything...yet have a desire and faint intuition for something more. Those who canand then live the lifedo not need faith. They become.

I once asked him for a more specific evaluation of the general category called New Age/ Human Potential psychology as being an effort at spiritual work. Rose harshly replied: "The Californiapsychology is not a science, but a rockcandymountain type of projection. Their discomfort comes from (soiling) their own pants, and pop psychology will not make it smell nice for somebody else." This is another way of reiterating the theme that mental clarity is not attained by maintaining a beliefprojection of what one wishes was the ideal way to be, and then pretending one is like that. Rather, one must courageously face the naked reality of one's condition as it is and take the necessary steps to bring oneself into alignment with the truth of things as they are found to be, once the filters in one's perception are removed. The "Emperor's New Clothes" syndrome, as it could be called, of mutual reinforcement of collective lies, is a bluff that only leads to greater pain and disappointment. Rose's role is that of the emperor who instead tells the people: "Lookyou're naked!" He declares: "I am not interested in being a utility. I am interested once and forever in solving a problem which will solve all other problems" (Rose, 1985, p. 118).

He elaborates on his role and objective as a teacher:

> I realize I (often communicate) in a very critical manner. I am or have the appearance of being a very destructive or negative critic of many human habits, beliefs, and disciplines. (Yet), if I am supportive of collective pretenses, then I damn the (seeker) and deny him the chance to reshuffle his programmed conditioning. I believe my message must be as direct as possible, because my desired audience is one that through intuition will pick up the whole picture more quickly if he or she is not teased into changing direction by volumes of argument as to the illogical aspects of logic by popular acceptance. We have no time to change the world, in order to get the message across to a person of intuition. (Rose, 1985, p. 262263).

He adds:

> If you <u>are</u> knowledgeable (about spiritual things), your science is to get into people's heads in as pure a fashion as you possibly can, without any presuppositions or concept structures or nicesounding fairy tales. Just the cold truth. And then they'll come out with a cold realization; no frills. (Rose, lecture, 1986).

He confronts a basic weakness in human nature that hampers the quest for truth: "The great dynamism of most people is to repeat pleasures, not find answers. We do things that give us pleasure" (Rose, lecture, 1985). Our vectors in life, whether we think of it as such or not, tend to be devoted primarily to satisfying desires of sensuality, acquisition, egoaffirmation, and security, and protecting ourselves against death or abandonment. This is where our energy usually goes, and the attainment of these goals reinforces our continued serving of them as our "gods." Unfortunately, this choice of priorities diverts our attention from the pursuit for real knowledge and being, without which all other goals and satisfactions are finally seen to be meaningless.

Rose's view of humanity is not kind. He does not regard us as latently divine beings, needing only to reaffirm our rightful place as joyous rulers of the world. Rather, he sees us as pathetic wretches lost in a tragic farce; victimized by our own lack of character into being inexorably trapped in a

savage jungle largely of our own making, while wanting to imagine we are in Disneyland. His accusation stings: "We are cowards and what we witness about us is a dynasty of fear in a playhouse of desire" (Rose, 1982, p. 140). Behind the mask of collective social pretension, it seems the masses of people have always been frightened peasants, clinging to dirt at the sight of a lightning bolt. If there is a God somewhere monitoring our collective plight and confusion, He does not seem to be much concerned. Rose feels we have no hope of escaping this perennial nightmare until we first honestly face ourselves and admit that our situation is hopeless. This opens a new door. Only then is there cause for genuine hope.

Continuing with Rose's recommendation that one approach the truth by negating the false, it is good to understand more clearly what he considers to be dishonest or invalid modes of searching, in order to leave one free for genuine inquiry.

Many of his criticisms relate to the basic assessment that most forms of spirituality, whether "New Age" or the traditional religions, are largely a reaction to unhappiness, rather than objective philosophical/psychological work emanating from a center of innocent desire. This is reminiscent of John Lennon's famous, brutally honest line: "God is a concept by which we measure our pain." In other words, the search is usually not so much for impersonal Reality, as for some relative condition or beliefstate that will compensate for our suffering and loneliness.

Rose continues to stress that the goal can only be to discover and comprehend the truth; not to pursue some ultimate "good feeling" through selfhypnotic forms of meditation, which he sees as being either a trivial diversion, or a highlevel exercise in egoflattery.

In regards to this common tendency to embrace spiritual practices that promise to bring about an admittedly appealing state of blisstantric sex, devotional visualization, and mechanical kundalini raising exercises for example, Rose's assessment does not so much strictly negate them, as uncompromisingly puts these kinds of paths in their proper place of relevance. He provides a spiritually mature perspective in this key statement: "Ecstasy is not wisdom, and even wisdom is not direct realization or *becoming*." He is pointing out that there are different levels of attainment; different levels of value or completion in spiritual work. This is often not taken into consideration in spiritual seeking, with all various categories of goals being indiscriminately lumped together under the heading of "God." He views any form of emotionally, psychically, or physically based "high" to still be well within the realm of ignorance, albeit an enjoyable experience in it. Philosophical wisdom and mature selfknowledge are more significant in pertinent value, although finally, even this is seen to be inadequate, compared to the actual realization of Essence. The important question this issue poses is: does one seek the Truthor only a higher form of fiction?

Rose criticizes most metaphysical conceptions of "God" in that what too often happens is the devotees project their egoideal onto this postulated spiritual self that they have heard so much about, and then psych themselves into believing they are really "it". This approach, even if sincere, is still backwards. People often mistake their identification with a beliefstate of what they assume spirituality to be with actually attaining it. Rose cannot overstress that belief is not realization, visualization/projection/creation is not discovery, and simulation is not experience.

All this illustrates the treachery of the uncharted, impure mind. One must know one's own mind intimately and correct the psychological pollution in its workings in order for the mind to be useful as a tool in transcending the mind, rather than its remaining the biggest obstacle. One has to always recognize the difference between objective knowing and the mental simulation of such direct knowing.

Rose advises that one begin the quest with a mind that has been cleared of all preconceptions of what spirituality is supposed to be. The sole criteria for judgment in the search is truthfulness, not a symptom of it: peace, simplicity, joy, love, prosperity, power, being "blissed out," etc. Pursuing and indulging in such experiences is not a reliable method for attaining the real goal of all spiritual work: to find the absolute Source of all being. One could well experience these lesser states, yet without their being "authorized," so to speak, by the Source; in other words, without one's actually being in that state of being of which these qualities or consequences might be aspects. These statesofmind may even be false creations and be hiding one's real condition that one is reluctant to confess.

There is erroneous logic being employed in this form of spirituality. One illustration of this false syllogism is: all Rolls Royces are cars, but not all cars are Rolls Royces. One aspect or quality of Realization, based upon other's testimonies, may well be peace, joy, simplicity, love, and so on, but this does not mean that one's being peaceful, joyous, simplistic, or loving (defined in external, behavioral terms) is equivalent to such Realization or is a direct means of attaining it. It cannot be so, without knowing what peace, love, etc., really areand from *where* they are. Simplicity, for example, may not be true unity in the state of totality, but rather the identification with one ego or vantage point still within duality or delusion. Love may be less the emanation of one's felt divine presence than the joy of consuming a desired object, or the bargaining with another empty soul to provide an illusion to buffer the pain of one's aloneness. "Hast thou love, or art thou Love?", Rose asks (Rose, 1975, p. 68).

As another example, the creating of a state of joy for oneself, however nourishing this might feel, has no real meaning in the philosophical quest if there is no larger understanding or wisdom to justify it and give it roots in the objective reality outside the ego's paradigm. "Bliss," as interpreted by the egomind in human terms and experienced emotionally, is not equivalent to the staggering realization of totality. Likewise, the experience of silent, warm, tranquil consciousness in meditation through the use of a mantra, chanting, visualization, incense, calming music, or breathing exercises is more a form of narcissistic, fetal regression than the transcendence to the aware Self behind consciousness. It is a preconscious state, rather than superconscious.

A feeling of peacefulness does not necessarily imply the conscious residing in the absolute knowing beyond all care, in the still of Allness. Such a condition may also be a state of sleep, anesthesia, or the avoidance of disturbing questions and the effort required to answer them. Some calmness is certainly helpful in allowing one to inquire or perceive clearly, but it can also be an obstacle to the work by lulling one into a false sense of contentment, unjustified by one's real status. Rose comments on such common, soporific forms of meditation: "We cannot start at the top. If we are hooked on insisting that a spiritual system should be peaceful and serene, we may be disappointed" (Rose, 1986, p. 37).

A more sophisticated trap is the assumption that peace of mind, possibly acquired through years of diligent Zen meditation, is equivalent to the state of nomind referred to by the Zen masters. Although Rose states that nomind cannot be understood or even imagined by the human mind and one can only know what it is by experiencing it, he does state it is not the same thing as a mind that is extremely serene and quiet. He teaches that all statesofmind are just that: states of mind. No mind means the mind is dead, not only tranquil. Even peaceful, thoughtless meditation, as a human experience, is still a thoughtthe thought of peace; thought by a hypothesized thinker who desires this condition. Nomind means there is no longer any thought, or hence a thinkeror even meditator. *Who* remains when the mind ends is the big mystery yet to be solved.

It is not only false concepts and beliefs that prevent one from progressing on the path. As this above example shows, even maintaining the simulation of a postulated goalstate that is fairly accu-

rate as a conception is still an obstacle to realizing it. The "wineskin" must be completely empty, before it can be refilled with some new wine. Even the finest old wine (our highest egogenerated values) keeps out the new (Revelation from beyond us).

Rose does not mean to disparage the genuine bliss of the mystic who has found relief and salvation in the turning of one's life over to the Lord. However, he makes a surprising clarification about this experience. Although this would usually be considered the goal of the spiritual quest, he states that it is still a relative condition; one still bound to the Earth:

> Surrender may bring joy, but this is no guarantee of a spiritual value, nor is it a symptom of Truth. We are not completely aware of the nature of our own essence because of the joy experience. Joy is still the tool of Nature. The Absolute has neither joy nor sorrow. (Rose, 1978, p. 221).

This whole theme about how to proceed honestly in one's psychological explorations, versus concocting a desired fantasy and losing oneself in it, refers back to the earlier discussed principle of needing to fatten up one's head before chopping it off. One must not "chop off" one's head before sufficiently fattening it up first! In other words, it would be a terrible mistake to erroneously assume one has once and for all arrived at the Reality of infinite *isness,* while not actually having exited the relative mind and entered the Self; to negate one's will and responsibility in regards to further effort as their being "unspiritual", or simply to give up prematurely to genuine exhaustion and passively wait for a miracle to occur. This might leave one stranded on a lower plateau, stuck in an "unripe" condition, with no recourse for continued progress later, nor the awareness that further efforts are possible or necessary.

It is a great temptation (and the naive trusting in incomplete teachings) to assume that since the egomind is the big obstacle needing to be overcome, one should "lose" one's mind as quickly as possibleor sever, numb, or destroy itthus immediately resulting in Liberation. The catch in this (recalling Gurdjieff's emphasis in the Fourth Way Work) is that unless one has first attained a high level of spiritual maturity, or "being," through a prolonged period of effort at selfknowledge and concurrent transformation, one <u>cannot</u> escape the egomindand there would be nothing more real left over even if one did. Any artificially induced means of blotting oneself out of the picture will only leave one in some other form of delusion or greater helplessness. One would still be stuck in one's "head" (meaning: a relative mental state), although, at that point, one might not realize it or it may be too late to do anything about it. Some roads only go one way. The use of drugs, sorcery, or sex magic to attain some transpersonal state are good, extreme examples of this treacherous trap.

Along the same lines as the abovedescribed traps of pseudospirituality, Rose's criticisms about the kinds of mistakes and misunderstandings that can befall a student also apply to teachers. He does not claim that no one else has ever arrived at the final Realization he had, but, likewise, that not everyone who has ever said so has truly "been there"after paying the price. Some teachers may well have experienced *some* kind of realization, transformation, or glimpse of a higher dimension. However, unless the procedure of search was done as cleanly and objectively as Rose claims it must, one may just assume that such an experience must be what Enlightenment is and is the end of the line, when it is not. Their "Enlightenment" may be a lower level, relative state or conditioned reaction, still within the mind, with no objective "beingness" behind or beneath or within it to in itself be the final standard of validity. This does not necessarily make such teachers out to be liars. It only means there are different levels of spiritual attainment (as will be outlined later) and a person may assume that what has been found is the highest answer, when it is actually another rung up the ladder out of ignorance.

Even though compared to mundane consciousness such would be a state of "higher consciousness," if one has not ascended to the Absolute "state" (or more precisely: what is prior to all states), one would still be somewhere in duality, where there is a subtle mental experiencer seeing or having a conditional experience; thus still leaving room for error. This would not be the realization of the All; the residing in the everexistent, nonfinite awareness containing all forms and levels of consciousness. If one's mind had not been totally purified of egoic delusions before one's head was "chopped off", any form of partial awakening or transpersonal experience in consciousness that results might also be tainted by the years of desire and imagining.

All these above points and qualifications serve to indicate one thing about Rose's approach to the inner work: he takes it very seriously and has no tolerance for mediocrity, compromise, or corruption, under the guise of spiritual instruction. He provides a precise definition of what spiritual work is and is not: "Those who teach disciplines, unless the disciplines are for introspection or for dying, are teachers of systems of orderly leisure, autohypnosis, or selfdeceit" (Rose, unpublished group papers).

The full details of the Albigen System of meditation will be described in a later section. For now, though, his reference to "dying" may surprise or frighten some students. He is, of course, not talking about physical suicide. However, the common message in most, if not all, esoteric teachings is that the egoself must be "crucified," the body being the cross, in order for the True Self (or Christ Consciousness, Buddha Mind, etc.) to be revealed. Proper introspection and proper action bring about such a death.

Regardless of whether one's efforts result in the mystical death and greater awakening in one's lifetime or not, Rose offers a comment that ties together all the previous themes about personal integrity and the commitment to make one's life a complete statement of search for the truth: "We have no evidence that entering the valley of death under a spell of hypnosis is any more efficacious than entering it as just an honest and ignorant being" (Rose, 1978, p. 106). The doorway to death is one each of us must pass through, sooner or later. The urge to want to feel secure about the transition, with promises of paradise and a warm welcome by loved ones or Ascended Mastersand to take our familiar selves along with us into death, is understandable. However, Rose is stating that unless one drops <u>all</u> of one's excess baggagebeliefs, hopes, and one's very conviction of selfhood included, one will be too bloated to squeeze through the "eye of the needle," to find the real Answer that awaits the honest, prepared seeker of eternity.

We are getting closer now to defining the workings of a true psychology. Rose considers psychology to rightly be a sacred science and art. He repudiates the bulk of the systems that have been taught in the 20th century, whether analytical or behavioral, and to a lesser extent, the humanistic.

His primary criticism of the various teachings is that, regardless of their specific methodology, they all either avoid dealing with the fundamental issues of precise selfdefinition, the nature of sanity, and sexual morality, or understand them incorrectly. In this way, psychologists seriously mislead individuals who seek reliable guidance from those who are supposed to be authorities on the psyche, but who are in fact little more than robot mechanics.

The main reason for this deficiency was touched on previously: the reluctance of researchers to inquire with an open mind into the objective reality of truth, and instead deciding that the proper standard for human nature is that which the majority of people manifest.

A subtle bit of dishonesty creeps into this kind of professional thinking; one which is paralleled in the individual as well. It all relates to the principle of "normality." In every field of endeavor,

(for example, physics, physiology, or music), there is a foundation or skeleton upon which the whole enterprise rests, whether it is the periodic chart of elements, healthy organic functioning, or the scale of notes and timings. These are objective standards of what is true and correct; the rest of the structure being based upon these principles.

Most of psychology has no such valid point of reference, as the only genuine point of reference could be the aware, sane mind itself, and the actuality of this has not been adequately defined by the profession thus far. Instead, statistics of behavior, social mores, or patterns of prevalent pathology are referred to as the primary measure of identity and correct psychological functioning.

There are two meanings of "normal": one is "correct" or "true," and the other is "common" or "statistically average." These are entirely different meanings. What is common may not be objectively valid. Conversely, what is healthy may not be evidenced by the majority of people. This is really an obvious point, yet modern psychology discreetly crosses this line from the latter meaning into the former, and implies the bellshaped curve is the only legitimate standard for defining the human being, possibly from the lack of hope of ever realizing the true "norm."

What thus results is a paradigm of pathology that can only reinforce itself, and not lead the seeker beyond its boundaries of convention and compromise. Or, as someone once put it, modern psychology refuses to look up and so assumes it is at the highest point. Rather than helping the individual to refine the process of selfinquiry, the person is seduced into accepting a quality of mind that is regarded as sleep and a quality of life that is regarded as a walking death, by those who claim to have awakened to the true life of the inner Self.

This theme touches on one of Rose's strongest tirades: that of the trust and belief in false authority by the naive or lazy. He sees traditional religion as failing to lead the individual to spiritual realization, but only to docile obedience to "thechurchasGod." He likewise considers the psychology profession to be a "secular God" that fails to provide knowledgeable guidance through the mental dimension towards sanity, and only sets itself up as but one more form of institutionalized mediocrity.

Materialistic psychology does, of course, have some partial insights to offer those who are too intimidated by the task to delve into themselves, using their own intuition as guide. As such, the profession does provide scattered fragments of a map to the seeker. However, its lack of completenessyet pose of authoritycan seriously mislead as well as help the confused individual. Or, to paraphrase a famous old maxim, the status of mainstream psychology could be stated as: In the country of the mindless, the blind man is king. Without the valid reference point of precise selfdefinition, psychologists can be psychic chiropractors, at best, and perpetuators of madness, at worst.

Once the seeker concludes that the quality of information about the inner path available from conventional psychology cannot lead one to the highest level of being, one may begin to look around for other sources of guidance. The seeker is then confronted with numerous religious, spiritual, and metaphysical groups, each with some message or procedure of inner work to offer. How does one know which path to take? How does one discern a valid teaching or teacher from one that is not or is lesser? This decision is further complicated by the fact that sometimes a partially valid teaching may be contained in an organization that is itself ethically corrupt, but yet one would not want to throw away potentially helpful information in overreaction. Likewise, sometimes a teacher or group may be honorable and sincere in its dealings with members, yet have a system or dogma that is of limited value as inner work, although promoted as being a complete spiritual teaching.

Rose freely acknowledges that there is not only one valid path. He quotes the old farmer's saying that, while there are different paths up the hill, the cows all find their way to the barn by sundown. From among the various legitimate paths, the seeker will judge which one to take based on knowledge of one's own nature and capacity. However, there are some basic guidelines by which a seeker can evaluate systems and groups for their relative worth, and differentiate those that are genuine in themselves from those that are false or deficient. The integrity of one's own motivations in choosing one particular way over another also needs to be assessed.

These are some of the questions Rose recommends we ask as yardsticks for measurement when investigating a spiritual teaching or group:

1. Simplicity: Does the group present its ideas in a mass of unwieldy, complex logicstructures or arcane symbology, when simpler explanations about life might do?
2. Inflexibility: Is there a guru you must worship, clothes you must wear, rituals you must practice, or dogma you must accept?
3. Sensibility: Does the system appeal to your common sense and intuition?
4. Sexual morality: Does the teaching have as a basis the necessity for the healthy, moral correction and sublimation of the sex function?
5. Pure motives: Does the teaching flatter your ego, excuse your laziness, condone your hedonism, encourage your appetite for power, or provide false comfort against the insecurity of honest ignorance?
6. Existential integrity: Does the teaching substitute conceptbuilding for experiential discovery, or attempt to use bodily means to attain a nonphysical immortality?
7. Exclusivity: Does the group insist that they are the sole possessors of the only path to the truth or that the guru is uniquely qualified to save people, and suggest that leaving the group is thus an affront to God?
8. Bureaucracy: Is the organization highly regimented, with a hierarchy of power within it that keeps the members subservient or leaves room for one to be tempted to ascend it through continued involvement?
9. Priorities: Is the purpose of the group more geared towards social interaction, political activism, or business networking than inner work?
10. Methodology: Does the system promote mechanical, repetitive practices to induce a mood of quiescence or the presumption of incremental progress, or meditation techniques of selfhypnosis, rather than encouraging lucid efforts at selfknowledge and genuine mindfulness?
11. Secrecy: Is the group secretive in its activities, appealing to some childish ego, or does the teaching promise to contain tantalizing secrets within secrets that require a succession of mysterious initiations to acquire before its real meaning can be revealed, thereby making one superior to those without such knowledge, or is the truth told plainly to whomever can hear it and act on it?
12. Theatrics: Is the emphasis more on paraphernalia (incense, music, robes, displays), ritual (ceremonies, Masses, movements), and symbolism (tarot, astrology, kabbalah, etc.) than on simple, direct communication of guidance in proper introspection and righteous living?
13. Dependency: Is the group or a charismatic leader sternly presented as the necessary intermediary between the seeker and God?
14. Cost: Is one required to pay an excessive amount of money to participate in the group, receive instruction, talk with the guru, etc., beyond whatever reasonable amount is necessary

to pay for books, room rentals, mailings, and such? Do they say the truth will set you free, but charge you for the privilege? No one can sell what is already within you.

15. Did you accept the teaching or group because you were too tired to go on looking?

Rose is especially vehement about point #14. He feels that a sacred trust is violated if the teacherstudent relationship is exploited for monetary gain. Money should certainly be collected and spent to the extent necessary to keep a group functioning and the teaching available, but not to finance the lifestyle of the guru. He is adamant that if a teacher is not fastidious in his/her financial dealings with the group, the enterprise in question is either phony or the teaching is a corrupt dilution of information derived from some other legitimate, more readily accessible source. Either way, the student should feel secure in walking away with commitment intact and no fear that any irretrievable spiritual loss has occurred.

Rose states his position on this crucial issue of ethical integrity on the quest: "I take issue with people who charge in this line of work; with people **who eat on the altar**. There is no price on a priceless thing" (Rose, 1982, p. 142). He feels the teacherstudent relationship should be mutually valued: the genuine teacher should be just as glad to encounter a sincere student as the student should appreciate the teacher, rather than regarding the student as a gullible, needy customer who should express gratitude by writing out a check. Besides, even if the Truth could be purchased for a billion dollars, Rose assures us the price would be too cheap.

This prohibition is not only a matter of integrity, but also a measure of the legitimacy of the teacher's claim to spiritual attainment. Rose states as an unequivocal fact that anyone who has witnessed the dissolution of the universeincluding oneself within itand experienced naked Reality will have no interest in acquiring money or power once returning into this world of illusion and nonexistent people. Those who do are proving themselves to be impostors.

Rose appreciates the tremendous importance of a student's decision to trust a particular teacher's influence or information, and likewise the heavy responsibility of the teacher to accept and work with the student honorably. This relationship is especially critical in that the student is delving into intangibles and attempting something akin to walking a tightrope in the dark over a snake pit. The student places great faith in the teacher to provide dependable advice and some measure of protection. A mistake on this level of work can be anywhere from wasteful to disastrous.

Surrendering oneself to the will of a Higher Power is justifiably extolled as a virtue in every spiritual teaching. Yet, when the student is asked to accept that this transcendental authority resides in a specific human personageone out of many such claimants, the issue becomes more complicated and a choice of serious consequence needs to be made. Which questions should be asked and satisfactorily answered preceding such a surrender?

Rose explains the decision point this way:

> We need to be able to trust any man whom we accept as a teacher, because he holds in trust our hopes for salvation or Enlightenment, as well as our sanity, which, until we make the final jump, is the only true communication with our essence or Absolute being. (Rose, 1978, p. 191).

Based on this statement, one could add that the mark of a genuine teacher is someone who would instruct the student in how to become more sane, rather than hypnotized, and direct the student to rely more and more on one's own resources in the search, rather than on the guru's "grace" to make some miracle happen. Rose has remarked that his students should not expect him to "put in

a good word with the Man upstairs" on their behalf, saying: "I have no special standing." To discourage needy projections onto him by the devotionally inclined, he has added: "I have no more God in me than you do."

Rose strongly agrees with Gurdjieff's insistence that it is extremely difficult to walk the path entirely alone. A school, ashram, or esoteric order is helpful; almost essential. He adds that a list of compatible colleagues with whom to share the work is more valuable to the seeker in the long run than a large library of philosophicalspiritual books. As he puts it: "For those who are searching for truth and selfrealization, the need for coworkers is as great as the need for teachers" (Rose, lecture poster).

One reason for this is that, remaining alone, it is easy to fall asleep or stay asleep. It requires tremendous conviction to maintain one's direction amidst the distractions of life and against the onslaught of nonsense and materialism of the surrounding population. It is most helpful to have likeminded friends to work with who have made a similar commitment to the quest for truth and selfdefinition. They can serve as mirrors and reminders for each other, and facilitate each other's process of inquiry into themselves.

Rose considers this bond to be as sacred as that of the teacherstudent relationship. He has found, as do possibly most people who live long enough to have a mature perspective on life, that one of the few things that is really important and lasting after the lesser values fade away is a genuine, respectful friendship between people who share the highest ideal together. He refers to this as one more "yardstick" in evaluating a teaching or group: the regard given for fellowship, as versus encouraging divisiveness or competition. He clearly states: **"There is no religion higher than human friendship"** (Rose, 1978, p. 191). By this, he does not mean that social compatibility or mutual affirmation should be the goal of the spiritual quest or the agreedupon rule for interaction. Much like Krishnamurti's claim that we discover the truth about ourselves in relationship with others we encounter, Rose is stating that the school should be regarded as the matrix within which one's efforts are multiplied; the experience of helping and being helped greatly aiding one's progress, as compared to the more static life of the hermit or monk. Likewise, he adds that no system or dogma should be trusted if it disparages the integrity and sanctity of unselfish cooperation between coworkers or violates the student's trust by tolerating corruption or exploitation in its midst.

He is aware of some paradox in such relationship and offers this quietand either ominous or promising, depending on one's point of viewhint of what is to come: "We must work collectively, yet with a guarantee of our individuality...at least as long as we desire to cling to our individuality" (Rose, 1978, p. 178). In this, he is not advocating losing one's identity into the groupmind or giving up one's selfresponsibility to the guru. He is indicating that the search for the final, precise definition of selfhood has a surprise ending. One's "self" is found to be not quite what one had expected.

As strongly as Rose feels about the validity of his system and his recognition that all people do look for the truth in their own way, he realizes his teaching is not for everyone, and in fact, for only a small segment of seekers. He explains:

> I am not out to save the masses. It is impossible for me to do it and I am smart enough to know it. If I can get a handful of people in my entire life to reach a few plateaus above their own state of confusion, I'll be lucky. (Rose, 1985, p. 120).

He does not at all regard this as elitism for the sake of vanity, as he feels there is little justification for selfsatisfaction in anyone who is still in ignorance, regardless of one's level of ignorance. Nor is this admission of the limited attraction of his type of teaching intended as a sly gimmick to appeal

to the seeker's egotism in implying the challenge of: "Are you good enough to handle this?" Rather, he is simply acknowledging that there are different categories of human nature, that people evolve at different rates, and one cannot be coerced, proselytized, or tricked into following a particular path that is not suited to one's nature and capacity for work.

In this, Rose is in agreement with Gurdjieff's depiction of humanity as being generally of four different types or levels, especially in regards to spiritual aspiration. He knows this runs counter to our democratic social philosophy that everybody is equal to everybody else, and that the only alternative is assumed to be fascism. However, he declares this categorization to be an objective fact of life that can be seen by any honest observer.

Rose sees people on level #1 to be **physical instinctual** in nature. These people have little or no interest in issues concerning ultimate survival, spiritual realization, or anything much beyond the daily process of organic functioning. They live to eat, reproduce, maintain their position of security, and acquire possessions, with the philosophy of "taking care of #1". These people are not necessarily wicked or immoral, although often can be, as the conscience is not well developed and selfaffirmation of a primitive order is their primary impulse. Their joy is in conquest and consumption. Even if they are of a decent nature, they fully identify with their physical experience and the soil, which is their only destiny. These people are fully in the world and of the world. If they do have a religious bent, it will be some form of natureworship (fertility gods, rain gods, etc.)

Rose refers to people on level #2 as being **emotional devotional**. These people have taken a step outside of themselves and their strict identification with their bodies and bodyegos. They have found something beyond themselves to love that is more important or more real than their own isolated sense of self. The object may be a spouse, their children, a community or group, a cause, or a guru, whether an actual living teacher or a historical, mythological figure. Rose considers the exaltation experienced when the person loses himself in the love of this other person(s) and embracing the new value system this initiates, to be what is usually called salvation. One feels in a state of grace and saved from one's selfishness and weaknesses, e.g. intoxication, promiscuity, alienation, insecurities, etc. If such a person enters a religious path, one's primary mode is belief, generally in the form of devotion to a guru or church, with the trust that one will be lead along properly to the goal; generically called "heaven" or "God." In their experience, they also tend to mistake the emotional center for spiritual beingness or essence.

Rose refers to category #3 as the **intellectual** level. These people are actively curious about the world of ideas, and possibly philosophical issues. They use their powers of reason to sort through all the data available and come closer to a global understanding about the nature of things. If this curiosity turns towards spiritual seeking, they tend to become scholastic philosophers, analyzing the systems and teachings they encounter through a process of discrimination and synthesis as a way of building up the ultimate conceptstructure about reality. They delight in the challenge of the hunt and in mastering complexity. Faith turns into inquiry. They take more personal responsibility for their paths, however humblingly foolish this may be found to be later. He calls the exaltation that comes with the graduation from the emotional to the intellectual level the "eureka experience," which comes with the awareness of the possibility of the comprehension of factors in experience formerly unknown. The limitation of such seekers is not only in their exclusive dependence on the finite, dualistic, and fallible intellect as the sole tool of investigation, but also their identification with their intellectual functioning as an ego, and thus their assumption that the goal of the quest is in the form of maintaining some final cosmological conceptualization. They generally lack the intuition to recognize their own pomposity, their mental distortions, the limitations of their mode of study, and the

need to turn their inquiry back into themselves. They do not know themselves. They do not know who is using the mind to search for the answer.

Category #4 is the **philosophical** or **essential** level. These people realize that experience has no value unless the experiencer is known and that this final answer can never be learned intellectually, won by faith alone, or attained by any combination of physical efforts. They have matured now to the recognition that the truth cannot be found as something apart from oneself, and that this self is not the finite bodyegomind one currently believes oneself to be. The truth must be realized directly: one must *become* it. To do this requires the individual to go through a process of personal transformation. One becomes a Fourth Way seeker, employing the aspects of the three lower ways, but now in service of a higher, inquiring "self." This involves using the intellect to discern the relatively true from the relatively false. The emotional center is refined to where its devotion to truth becomes reliable intuition about nonrational directions. One's body becomes a generator of energy and one's actions in daily life become the means for developing a higher quality of being. Intuition and reason blend to become wisdom. The Fourth Way path is understood to run throughout all the experiences and challenges of one's daily life as a total statement of spiritual commitment, and is not relegated to any single practice or stateofmind as being "spiritual." The goal here is not life, love, or knowledgebut realization of essence.

Although they are not exactly equivalent, there are some parallels between these four "ways" and the four forms of yoga discussed earlier. The physicalinstinctual path is similar to hatha and karma yogas in their focus on the body and physical activity as the vehicle for spiritual work. The emotionaldevotional path is similar to bhakti yoga in the attitude of selftranscending love for a saviorfigure, one's family, humanity, etc. The intellectual path is similar to jnana yoga in the use of reason to work one's way to conceptual understanding of life, oneself, and religious truths. The philosophicalessential path is somewhat similar to raja yoga in its utilization of aspects of all the other ways to further one's inquiry into oneself, to dissolve egos, to attain comprehension of all experience, and finally to concentrate on going directly within to the origin of awareness, to its roots in Spirit.

These are all only general categories. People are usually not exclusively in any one category, but may be straddling two of them, or functioning on all of the first three levels in different aspects of their natures, but emphasizing one mode more than the others. Rose believes a person does not graduate to the Fourth Way path without either unusual spiritual ripeness, a rare quality of innocence, or some fortuitous aid or trauma that opens up one's eyes to an entirely new domain of search. Sometimes, if one's mind has been blown to pieces, and the ego dies, and there is sufficient spiritual maturity waiting behind it all, one may become aware of the capacity to appreciate...other possibilities.

Some discrimination is necessary in understanding these categories, as each one has what could be considered a positive and negative aspect. To be a strictly instinctually motivated person is obviously not advantageous to spiritual growth, nor can assorted physical manipulations (exercises, diet, bodywork, or masochistic mortification) alone result in a transcendental realization. Yet, the respect for Nature's laws and the proper care and healthy functioning of the body are important as a foundation for higher work, while devoting oneself to wholehearted efforts in service of an unselfish ideal does promote noble character, free of petty egos.

Rose considers blind belief in any form of religion, guru, or cultic practice to be a deadend for mentally lethargic, gullible people. It holds little promise of ultimate spiritual gain if it does not also involve one's acting on these beliefs in some decisive way so as to come to the personal realization about what is being taught. Likewise, the egocentered pretense of "love" cannot lead to genuine spirituality so long as that love is not rooted in something beyond oneself. Yet, while not discussing

bhakti yoga specifically, he does acknowledge that it is intrinsic to the feminine nature in particular to become transformed through intuitive receptivity and innocent surrender to a higher principle. This quality exists, of course, also in males, although manifests more through the masculine mode of assertive activity and philosophical investigation, in dedicated service to that same spiritual calling.

Rose repeatedly mocks those who worship their intellectual egos and assume they can think their way to the Absolute with their bloated, yet infinitesimal minds, or arrogantly insist that the Truth conform to their smug definitions of truth. He sees intellectual types to be notoriously lacking in selfknowledge and humility. He chastises them thusly: "Hast thou proven everything with worded thoughts? Then great is thy vanity. For thou art caught in the whirling hub of the wheel, not in the seat of the chariot" (Rose, 1975, p. 68). However, he also stresses how important it is to be as logical, consistent, commonsensical, and discerning as possible in evaluating one's subjective states and the philosophical paths being processed.

On the fourth level, one is attempting to transcend the polarities on the other levels between the self and the world, the self and the beloved, and the self and one's understanding. The objective here is to realize the Self that oversees all such possible combinations of dualities. As such, since the inquiry goes straight inwardthe self being both the subject and object of the inquiry, there is less room for error, if one seeks honestly. However, even in this, mistakes can be made. One may be in such a hurry to transcend the egomind or "chop off one's head" that one carelessly falls victim to some form of selfhypnotic trance state or other form of delusion, but now lacks the critical discerning mind needed to rouse oneself from it. This is one reason why a legitimate teacher and/or serious coworkers are helpful for guidance, in addition to perfected intuition, the further one travels into the unknown.

Rose adds one more point of consequence to this description of the four levels of humanity. The shape of the pile is not like a rectangular building but like a pyramid. He sees this in all categories of life, not only in spirituality. The base of the pyramid is broad. The higher up one goes, the smaller is the population inhabiting that level. He sees most of humanity as living on little more than an animal level and never suspecting they are no more than "factors in fertility" as they now exist. Many graduate to the emotional level when the heart is touched and awakened, although few of these take another step beyond devotion or belief in one lifetime. He considers people on the first two levels to be very much asleep. Then, while acknowledging its major limitations, he says relatively few people graduate to the intellectual level of deliberate philosophical seeking. Fourth Way travelers (these exist in all religions and does not refer exclusively to the Gurdjieffian system) are rarer still and are attempting the steepest and most direct path. Rarest of all are those who finally attain the goal of SelfRealization.

People of the different levels seldom understand each other or can work together productively along spiritual lines. It is good to know one's level of capacity before choosing a path or colleagues, although automatic buffers and filters protect one from engaging in work beyond one's level. One recognizes one's level generally when graduating from a lower one and seeing the qualitative difference in experience and awareness. The farther along one goes, the fewerand thus more valuableare one's peers. The Fourth Way path is genuinely esoteric, or inner, seeking, as distinguished from the other modes in which one is looking either for an externalized God, a humanized paradise, or philosophical knowledge. The most concise way to describe the difference is that exoteric forms of seeking lead to an "I Thou" relationship with what is sought, while esoteric seeking leads to the ultimate "I Am" state that transcends duality.

The self longs for the conscious experience of its own essence. This calling is the ray that passes through the individual awareness, leading back to the Source of all being. This is the goal to

which Rose's teaching aims: the realization of validity meaning, arriving at true Selfhood and from this, the direct, comprehensive understanding of the nature of all things. This realization should not be mistaken to involve the admittedly appealing notion that the one experiencing union with the Absolute will then also know all the details of experience within the relative world. Rose explains that Enlightenment is the experience of totality, which does not automatically include precise knowledge of everything within the All. He tells his students: "I know everythingbut that doesn't mean I know how many hairs are on your head." By this, he is saying that he knows what Reality is, but does not necessarily know the whereabouts of every shadow cast on the wall of the cave.

To explain this distinction more clearly, Rose offers a subtle description of what the path he is describing finally involves: "There is a threshold where we may cross from relative understandings and assumptions, to a place without dimension...and know that we are doing it" (Rose, unpublished group papers). Isolating *what knows* is the aim of the work.

Chapter 6

Self Inquiry: Its Meaning and Direction

This study now needs to focus in more on how exactly to come to realize this final Self that is said to wait behind all projected statesofmind. Rose aligns himself with the method of Zen in its recognition of the impossibility of stepping out of dualistic mentation in a straight line by any means. One cannot think, work, chant, grin, believe, ingratiate, copulate, or buy one's way into Enlightenment. The step from relative thought to DirectMind apprehension must pass through the realm of magic. This transformation in consciousness is quickened by a nonrational (as differentiated from rational, and not to be confused with irrational) mode of inquiry.

Zen uses a mental tool or procedure called a koan to prompt such a qualitative shift in understanding. It is traditionally a nonsense question posed to the student by the master; one that has no logical or even possible answer. Some standard ones have been: "What is the sound of onehand clapping?" and "Does a dog have a Buddhanature?" (I had once asked one of Rose's heifers: "Does a cow have a Buddha-nature?" and it replied: "Mu". Even the cattle on his farm were into Zen. I was really impressed by that.) The student contemplates the question, wrestling with the futility of answering it on the level of rational mentation. By focusing intensely on the koan to the point of exhaustion or crisis, the mind of the student is forced to finally stopor blow up.

One's vantage point is thereby raised to a singular position of clarity transcending the apparent paradoxes posed by the absurd question, as the problem represented by the koan is only on the level of the finite, dualistic mind, and does not exist in reality. In this, the koan is a metaphor for the seeming problem of our very existence as individual, ignorant beings suffering in an alien world. Here there is a major paradigm shift to a different mode of knowing or seeing, with oneself as the pivoting point. The result is not so much a "correct" answer to the question, as one's attaining the quality or perspective of mind that comprehends the full range of all relative questions and answers, which was the real purpose of the exercise in the first place. This strategy of work recalls Ken Wilber's assertion that "trashing" the mind is not equivalent to transcending it, i.e. the dreamy devotee or gowiththeflow hedonists who smugly disparage all mental inquiry and selfstudy.

However, Rose has amended this traditional approach and believes it is not necessary or even most expedient to contemplate these kinds of contrived nonsense questions in a formalized way to keep the mind focused on the problem, as is the practice in orthodox, oriental Zen schools. Rather, he points out that we already have many <u>real</u>, urgent questions constantly confronting us that must be

answered, some of which will be listed shortly. We do not need to make up any! The individual's very life, identity, and destiny, while remaining undefined, are koans. This is much the same point as Frankl's claim that it is not so much we who are asking questions of life, but that life is asking questions of us, and demanding the answers.

The fact is that as long as we do not know who we essentially are, the ultimate nature of the world we seem to be experiencing, the relevance of death to life, nor the final beneficiary or source of this mass experience, our very existence is a koan that negates any pretense of meaningfulness until it is answered.

Every serious human being has a personal koan. It may be the purpose of life, the apprehensiveness of death, the torment of unjust suffering, the desire for freedom or immortality, the question of selfdefinition, the existence of God, the meaning of happiness, or the nature of love. For some it may be the curiosity about the world and life aroused by the awareness of unexplained phenomena, metaphysical happenings, or a drug experience that showed a glimpse through the veil. Yet, all such koans are really aspects of the one question, seen from different, personal perspectives: WHAT IS REALITY?

Simply put: everything on the underside of the Cloud of Unknowing is the koan. As the individual is both the seeker of the answer as well as the source of the problem generating it, it is most accurate for one to state: "I am the koan." This is why Rose stresses the work on selfknowledge rather than on one's attempting to know God, for how can one hope to know the Creator of the universe without first knowing *who* is doing the knowing?

This intense focusing on a not readily answerable question, with possibly a nonfinite answer, is another reason why Rose does not teach a method of meditation that puts the individual into a state of peacefulness and ease. This may of course be a good preparatory state for clearer investigations and receptivity to intuitive input, but may also become a good excuse to search no further, as one may be seduced into assuming that tranquility is itself the goal, or may simply be feeling too cozy to be concerned about one's impending nonexistence any longer. Rose advocates instead the active attention to one's basic philosophical or life issues, this requiring great concentration and commitment.

He does not believe that a condition of world peacefor which most humanistic "New Agers" understandably longwould really be conducive to this kind of productive introspection, but would tend to lull people into quiescence and passive acceptance of their ignorant, albeit comfortable, condition. In fact, he has said the absurdity and even horror of the world can be regarded as further goads to incline one towards spiritual search. He states: "The chaos is the koan" (Rose, lecture, 1981); presumably including the chaos inside each one of us as well.

There is a paradox in this stance too in that it is largely our violations against Nature that produce our hardships in life, individually and collectively, and our making the respectful efforts to get in tune with Nature's way would thus enable us to also draw closer to spiritual truth, if we were to regard the resultant peace as a doorway to more sensitive inner work, and not a resting place.

Rose has offered a powerful definition of the meaning of true prayer, which is analogous to Zen's maintenance of attention as being the truest stateofmind while on the path. Prayer, in Rose's view, is not so much asking God for help or benefits, or even experiencing the desire for communion with one's God or higher Self. Real prayer is a constant stateofbeing throughout one's entire life. Rose says prayer means: "**To always be one person, always asking one question**." The koan serves the mind as does a magnifying glass to sunlight. One's identity as a vector is unified and one's aim is onepointed. This is the meaning of attention in Zen: to be "at tension." Prayer is this tension between the seeker and the God or answer that is sought, until the gap is reconciled through transcendence,

which is the answer. The Albigen System teaches one to focus on the endless koan of lifeuntil the mind explodes, and one knows awareness truly for the first time.

Rose explained his affinity with Zen by referring to Bodhidharma's four principles of Zen that distinguish its message and objective from shallower understandings of the religious life:

1. "Zen is a special transmission outside of scriptures." The essence of the Zen teaching is a personal experience of realization that is apart from conceptual learning, and can be directly transmitted from teacher to student.
2. "No dependence on words or letters." The goal of Zen as a living condition of being is not verifiable nor attainable by reliance on scripture.
3. "Direct pointing at the soul of man." Rose adds: "This goes beyond the mind; not direct pointing at the mind; it's the direct pointing at the soul of man."
4. "Seeing one's nature and the final attainment of the Self." The objective of the quest is to know once and for all who one essentially is, and to fully reside in that one true, anterior stateofbeing which is the source of all selves, worlds, and gods. (Rose, lecture, 1981).

As reviewed in Chapter 2, Rose's system can be seen to relate to aspects from several diverse spiritual/psychological teachings: Zen, Advaita Vedanta, Gurdjieff's Fourth Way psychology, Vipassana Buddhist meditation, Kundalini, Karma, Jnana, and Raja yogas, phenomenologicalexistential psychology, thaumaturgy, the Albigensian doctrine, and the Perennial Philosophy. The primary common denominator tying together all these teachings, as they relate to the Albigen System, is in the nature and direction of the search they advocate in their different ways.

The central issue is **selfinquiry**: "Who am I?". This contrasts with any number of religious and philosophical paths that consist of the attention going "outward", so to speak, from the inquiring self (petitioning a god, visualizing a chakra, constructing cosmologies, or manipulating physiology), rather than turning the attention inward to the source of the mind, or deliberately using external means (karma yoga or philosophical study, for example) to further selfknowledge and changeofbeing.

Rose's intent in his teaching is to save the seeker valuable time and energy: "This (system) is directed to lives of less than a hundred yearsthat hope for light within that span of time" (Rose, 1978, p. 78). Many paths may be valid in the long run, but the point he wishes the student to pick up in his messageif often between the linesis: "...the hint of a direct path to the summit..." The path becomes shorter when it is done right. Yet, even the shortest way is so very long.

To provide a clearer understanding of what Rose is offering, it would be helpful to point out some distinctions and similarities between his teaching and that of others.

In simple terms, the main contrast between Gurdjieff's teaching and Rose's is that Gurdjieff's emphasis in selfobservation was on looking at oneself experiencing, whereas Rose's is ultimately on looking into or for the experiencer. Also, the Fourth Way system aims at developing a permanent, dynamic "I" in the seeker, whereas Rose goes a step beyond this (although his principle of one's becoming a vector is similar to this philosophical "I") and points to the final realization that there is no distinct, individual self at the center of experience.

The main similarity between his teaching and that of Advaita Vedanta is the recognition of duality and the need for transcending this to a vantage point of single vision. Rose's ways of stepping outside of duality have been touched upon previously:

1. The inquiry consists of neither belief nor nonbelief.

2. Relating to the principle that every form of egogenerated effort begets a counterforce to thwart that effort, the mode of inquiry is neither to struggle in the work nor not struggle in the work, but to see directly ***what is*** the truth is the guru.
3. The teaching states that the conclusion of the search does not consist of the seeker "finding God," but rather the realization that neither the seeker nor god (as the divine carrotonthestick) exist—there is only the Self.
4. As will be explained further shortly, the central principle in the Albigen System that reconciles all dualities on the path is that of "becoming the truth."

There is one mainalthough subtledifference between Rose's teaching and that of Advaita, and is why he strongly advocates the Zen approach to the inquiry. It is agreed upon in both teachings that the individual egomind is the obstacle that must be overcome in order for the Self to be realized. The difficulty that both acknowledge is that it is difficult to "kill oneself," as "oneself" does not want to die. Yet, both teachings agree that the path is essentially one of progressive suicide of this false self.

It may be argued that the following is a simplistic understanding, but Rose's form of Zen believes in using the mind to overcome the mind, using paradox to escape paradox, while fully recognizing the treacherousness of the mind and its inability to do anything to completely transcend itself, as Advaita warns. As Rose sees it (this relating to Zen's use of the mind to work on one's koan, which results in the stopping of the mind), the mind is a knot that can partially untangle itself; a clear and still quality of mind allowing one to come closer to the truth.

This can be reconciled with Advaita's teaching that "there is nothing to do" if one is identified, not with the Zenmind that is actively engaged in the dualistic inquiry, but with the undifferentiated awareness in which this inquiry is seen to occur. Thus, there is nothing for "one" to do, if one is detached enough from this wholistic process of unraveling to allow it to occur by itself, as it were, knowing that the seer of this socalled person is really Oneself.

In this way, the egoself can be understood to be able to honestly work to end itself during its return to truthfulness, while something more real watches it and will remain. Bringing in Gurdjieff's principle of the philosophic "I," if one is identifying with the truth, rather than with the egoself that forever clings to its life, one may become a "kamikaze" seeker, so to speak, attacking untruth, and dying into it. The ego can be regarded as a boat to cross a river, a ladder to climb up, or a rocket booster to carry a capsule into orbit. It is a vehicle that will be discarded or jettisoned after it has done its job. The seeker has to have some mature appreciation that personal salvation of the individual may be impossible. However, one can live in service of the quest itself and be willing to accept the eventuality that this seeking self must die, so that the true Self can be realized to ever live. Without the strong commitment in the beginning, one may not make it this far against the resistance to selfnegation. This is the Fourth Way philosopher's form of devotion.

One significant advantage I have found in Rose's system, compared to some sources in Advaita and Zen, is that he does not leave as much room open for misinterpretation of his teachings, and consequential "cheating," by students who are either immature or dishonest. It is possible to study very serious teachings that may well be literally true in every word, but yet not know how to translate its meaning into personal terms; into one's life of search. Every genuine spiritual doctrine can and has been perverted by those of lower motives or capacities, often because the original teacher spoke directly from the Source on a level too high for the listeners to really hear and appreciate, yet assuming they would pick up the meaning fully as intended.

Rose tends to spell things out more in detail; the ramifications, applications, and implications of his ideas, in plain, human terms. He does not let the student fall into the common trap of assuming

one is duly following the path and is on a higher level of spiritual maturity than one really is, while still indulging in all sorts of personal vices or foolishness that are not recognized for what they are. He starts his teaching down in the gutterpsychologically if not literally (although sometimes both!)where we generally live, not in the "Kingdom of Heaven" that we know nothing about. Rose knows all the traps and rationalizations to which one can fall victim, and his often blunt, confrontational approach to teaching is meant to compensate for these weaknesses in the unwitting student, even whose best can never be enough to the real task.

In working through the inner maze, whichever way one turns, Rose is standing there at every corner with a twinkle in his eyes, staring intently at the seeker, and gruffly demanding: "What the hell do you think you're doing?"

All the many examples and explanations presented so far about strategies and traps on the path have been meant to draw strict attention to one of the central principles in the Albigen System: **backing away from untruth**. The reason why this same point has been made so frequently, from so many different angles, is not due to a love of redundancy alone. Rose feels that a hazardously false approach to seeking has been promoted by so many diverse doctrines that all the many ways in which this error manifests must be clearly recognized and the message unequivocally driven home that honesty with oneself requires one inevitable manner of search.

In fact, his recommendation about how to search for the truth is the exact opposite from most spiritual teachings that offer an image of a God to worship from the start, with the assumption encouraged that the sincere worship of this image will unfailingly result in one's eventual merging with this God. Possibly this is so. However, he claims this is an unreliable method, too prone to ego contaminated error, is presumptuousand that there is a shortcut.

Rose considers the manner of Zen to be philosophically more scrupulous, and even foolproof, if fastidiously applied throughout the inquiry. He has defined wisdom as a corrosion of ignorance. He refers to Zen as being "the negation of negativity" (Rose, 1978, p. 176). This means recognizing what is false or incomplete and rejecting it in thought and deed. Gradually, what remains is that which is relatively more true or sensible. The false is negative to the true, and negating it reveals the truth it hides. This is not a contrived methodology, but rather the realistic procedure called for by our status as ignorant beings in a relative world. As Rose explains: "We know not where Truth resides. There can be no paths to Truth, only paths away from untruth. There is nothing proven for us in advance. We must experience for ourselves" (Rose, 1982, p. 147).

There is a catch in this. We must be cautious in our experiencing of supposedly higher states of consciousness and take care not to experience something we have projected. Rose elaborates: "We can only find Truth by retreating from untruth, not by postulating a Truth that we achieve by visualization rather than realization"and then advancing on that postulation. The traditional metaphor of truth being like a mountain that one must climb up is misleading because it can carry the implication that one already knows exactly what the nature of that mountain is, including what is at its summit, and that one can assertively march right up to it along wellmarked paths.

In this business of "finding oneself," there is the danger of deciding for oneself who one <u>wants</u> to be, based upon possibly inadequate knowledge of who one really is or should be. The spiritual equivalent to this is one's claiming to have an immortal soul simply because this conviction makes one feel secure, and then simply living as if this was taken for granted, but without actually proving it ("...the soul is like a car that is the most recent style. Everybody just has to have one," Rose chides). He is advocating that one resist this temptation to create a selfdefinition in advance as a concept of belief, whether personal or cosmic, and pretending to "be" that. Rather, he recommends one back

into the asyetunknown truth, and find out what it is. So this becomes a more functional definition of "worshipping God." A more accurate way to describe the honest procedure toward SelfRealization is the old joke about how to make a sculpture of a horse. The answer is to take the slab of stone and chip away everything that does not look like a horse! [Note: See book cover of *The Albigen Papers*.]

This, then, is a form of process of elimination well in agreement with Advaita Vedanta's assertion that one cannot know who one is, but can know who one is not. By backing away from everything that is not "me" until there is nothing left to negatethe "I" of Truth is finally what's left. This has an exact parallel in the Hindu definition of Brahman as being only: "Not this, not that." Nothing else can be said about the Self, or from it, that is positive. As it is itself the ultimate ground and source of all things, nothing lesser derived from it can define it. It can never be "known" by a knower subordinate to it. It can only be realized by one's coming into unity with it.

The principle sounds easy enough, but how does one begin to practice this? How does one discern in regards to values, subjective states, possible directions, etc. while admitting to not knowing what the truth actually is? Rose frequently refers in agreement to the Catholic maxim: "The finite mind can never perceive the infinite," but does not accept its implication that one can therefore never find the Truth, or God. Rose adds that one can take a shrewd step: one "can start by *perceiving the finite mind.* You can see what is obviously false, and is not you (the viewer)." Here he is also indicating that the truth is not an externalized philosophical principle to claim as one's prize, but the experience of ultimate Selfhood. One is what is sought. Nonfinite, aware **beingness** is the final answer.

How does one start to back away from untruth? If one starts from a basis of acknowledged unknowing, has the desire to find Reality (using selfinquiry as the pointer to it) and proceeds with an open mind, one has made a worthy beginning. Rose says that while it is true we do not know what absolute Truth is at the start, we can begin to discern between what is more or less reasonable, more or less complete, more or less *truthful* in any given issue, and go with what is more so, until something better or more valid is found. We start with what is most obviously absurd or harmful, and reject that. In this way, nothing unknown is ever postulated, and each step towards selfdefinition, whether regarding inner or outer factors, is based on a realistic assessment of what can be known at that moment, from that vantage point. This is using Zen's sword of discrimination. He does add the warning that we must take care not to reject something simply because it does not include something that we want to do.

There is much obvious material for the seeker to examine as a start. Is one's body or lifestyle unhealthy (e.g. diet, substance abuse, sexual excess, etc.)? One can readily determine what is wrong and take steps to correct it. Are one's priorities and values foolish or wasteful (in terms of time, energy, and attention), in relation to the requirements of the quest? One gradually learns to discern what is detrimental or tangential, and veer towards what is more conducive to discovery. Is one attempting to satisfy one's core desire through dishonest or derivative means? One must sincerely confront oneself and identify what the heart truly longs for and faithfully ask it how it may be answered. Are one's thoughts, emotions, and relationships pathological and distorted? This is harder to deal with, but some serious introspection and sensitive partnering from coworkers can help one to see the errors in one's psychology and to make adjustments towards what is more genuine. Is one's moral and ethical conduct corrupted by cynicism or selfishness? The hard decisions we make here largely define our character and destiny. Does one maintain philosophical or theological assumptions that with some honest examination could be seen to be rationalizations meant to buffer one from discomfort and the recognition of necessary effort towards personal change?

As one begins by rejecting the grosser forms of erroneous values or delusory paradigms in one's life, one slowly becomes more truthful in one's mind, body, relationships, perceptions, and

convictions. The process continues into increasingly subtler and finer discernments as one matures in the work. This is where personal psychology blends into transpersonal psychology. The inquiring mind is always the pivoting point around which all evaluations and evolution occur. It is the chisel the philosophersculptor uses to discriminate the false from the less false.

There is a common trap in this procedure also, indulged in by those of dishonest inclinations. Some will argue that there is no such thing as right and wrong, that all values are relative and conditional, that all values are only human creations or arbitrary beliefsystems, and that it is best not to judge anything anyway, especially oneself. This attitude is usually less a measure of compassionate wisdom born of transcendental vision than it is an indication one either really does not know the relatively right from wrong and does not want to be confronted about the matter, or privately does suspect one is in violation of truth in regards to some personal issue and is not about to admit it.

Rose has a more authoritative way of responding to this objection that God does not judge and everything should be regarded as valid in its own way, the sun shines equally on us all, etc. He states: "Let us not rationalize here...that there is no right or left in the Absolute. ...Absolute values cannot be understood or applied until the Absolute state has been reached. It is only sophistry to try to apply them before" (Rose, 1981, p. 18). In other words, there may be no such thing as red or green in the Absolute, but one had better know the difference when coming to the traffic light at the intersection and respond accordingly, otherwise one's bluff of transcendence may demand too high a price in this harsh land of relativity.

We can see that each step on the path follows the one preceding it and care must be taken not to allow false premises to remain unchallenged, thereby sabotaging one's finer efforts that are extensions of them. This is much like a rocket that is being shot to the moon needing to be rigorously accurate in its trajectory, as a fraction of a degree of error will result in its missing the target by thousands of miles. One's unexamined and unabandoned inner lies bring the same result in the search for Truth.

This strict adherence to honesty with oneself applies to every aspect of one's life. Rose states this point emphatically:

> We are either right or wrong, in regards to relative truthseeking. In the Absolute state, things may well be neither right nor wrong, or both. And while we aspire to an Absolute state, and to Absolute Truth, it remains doubtful if we will ever attain this if we compromise relative truth, or shut our eyes to reality. (Rose, 1984, p. 1920)

This latter point refers to the common "occupational hazard" in spiritual thinking to project, what Rose calls, a "Pollyannic" coloration onto life and to deny the actual realities of things. For example, we hear the noises that birds make and are seduced by our reflex toward humanistic nostalgia into interpreting it as "singing"; presumably romantic love songs to each other or simply as expressions of joy in living to brighten our days. All this, because we wish to believe in a Walt Disney cartoon world. We want to deny the savagery and mercilessness to the individual inherent in the interdependent carnage of Nature, and superimpose our own puerile fairy tale-land onto it. Rose delights in undermining this projection, however, asking: "How do you know the birds are singing? They might be cursingor screaming in agony!" He wonders how we can ever expect to see the final Truth of existence if we make a habit of lying to ourselves about all the smaller truths of daily life. (Of course, the perception of life as a horror show would be a human projection too. We do not really know what life isto the One whose Life this is.)

Rose often refers to the allegory of Plato's Cave in our need to become free of our identification with shadows and find the sunlight outside in the real world. Yet, he says we cannot simply turn around and walk right out. In a poetic passage, he describes the recommended method of approach:

Turn thy back to the light lest it blind thee, but advance toward it in this manner. Always thy face shall be toward the darkness of ignorance, for thou need not be wary of the Light. Make one step in seeking and make another. And these things shall be made known to thee, and with each step it will be easier to follow the next. (Rose, 1982, p. 88).

The point in Rose's repeated critiques of traditional religious paths can be summed up succinctly: there is a difference between knowing, loving, or seeing God and realizing or becoming God. He makes a crucial distinction between dualistic human experience and pure spiritual experience. He claims that all states of religious exaltation as well as all forms of psychic phenomena are still mental experiences, occurring in the consciousness of the finite human being, or the larger, shared consciousness of humanity, and are not truly transpersonal experiences of the spiritual dimension. These may be legitimate transpersonal experiences in relation to the individual egomind, but they are still within relative consciousness.

He says that all disciplines, study, meditational practices, physical work, prayer, etc. have lasting spiritual value to the seeker only to the extent they result in this *becoming* towards what is real; one's essence coming to discover itself. The brain rots as does the rest of the body at death, and all relative knowledge, memory, and human experience die along with it, however inspired certain states of consciousness may have been. At best, they may propel one into another illusory dimension of one's choosing at death. To be fair, the one conditional value of such "higher" states of consciousness is that one is freed from the confines of the grosser levels of maya and place one in a more strategically advantageous position to apprehend the objective Reality that is wholly apart from consciousness.

All this ties in with the earlier mentioned principle in Gurdjieff's teaching that, contrary to most religious doctrines, we do not automatically possess a divine "soul" that merely waits to be acknowledged, but rather the seeker must develop the capacity for this soul from its latent seed state, or develop the awareness of itor from it. His entire elaborate system of Fourth Way Work was devised for this purpose. This too is the preparation for death, so that when the somatic mind dies, along with whatever gods or heavens it had long imagined, some essential "being" remains afterwards to taste immortality.

Rose has much more to say about how this development is to be accomplished. He starts by citing a highly important statement in Christian scripture; the full significance of which has been historically underappreciated: "'I am the Truth, the Way, and the Life.' **This was the great revelation of the Bible: that Christ became the Truth**" (Rose, lecture, 1986). He goes on to add that Christ did not say he "knew" the Truth or "found" it or was somehow in relation to it he became the Truth. Rose is implying that Christ was not merely boasting that he had some unique stature or favor with God that nobody else could have, but that he was laying out a comprehensive formula or path that one could follow to attain the same realization.

Rose has also laid out as complete a path as possible to this goal. However, each person's psychology and personal requirements are different, and every detail cannot be spelled out in advance for everyone. Much of his stress is upon the individual's learning to implement "ways and means" of personal effort to bring about this becoming according to one's particular circumstances. While some of his previous comments may sound like he is disparaging mental effort, he is not. He is only describing its proper role in the larger work of transformation and transcendence.

Rose puts it like this: "Becomers look for ways to find the truth by processes which involve a change of stateofmind, and this in turn leads to a change of being" (Rose, 1984, p. 28). This recalls the old proverb: "Watch your thoughts, for they become your actions. Watch your actions, for they become your habits. Watch your habits, for they become your character. Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny." Rose would certainly concur.

This is also another way of explaining his emphasis upon the need for commitment to the quest and one's becoming a dynamic vector towards the truth. A common principle in metaphysical teachings is that the mind becomes that upon which it constantly dwells. Chants, prayers, and mantras are a symbolic way of worshipping this goal, and undoubtedly work slowly to bring one more in tune with the object of reverence. Rose wishes to define a more precise and conscious methodology that uses the mind to its best advantage in the work of subjective refinement while simultaneously backing away from it, rather than attempting to distrustfully override it with devotional practices alone.

A very important point was clarified in the following dialogue. I once asked Rose: "If the human mind, personality, identity, etc. are finally realized to be unreal and not 'us', then why should we have to go through this extreme effort to know ourselves, correct our psychological defects, adjust our philosophies, and so on; why not simply meditate on nothingness, or somehow empty out the mind, until the sense of finite individuality disappears, along with all its projections, and only pure awareness is left?" He replied that even though the egoself is indeed fictional, it is important to first work through it and correct its defects because in order to find the truth, we must seek with a truthful mind and become it, merge with it, and becoming the truth means first becoming truthful as a human being. This cannot be skipped. All error is of the ego only. The self is the biggest obstacle to truth, as well as the vehicle to reach it.

This backing away from untruth thus actually involves the negating of the false self that is the very obstacle to truth. If one is still identifying with thoughts, values, perceptions, reactions, statesofmind, physical habits, etc. that are false, then one cannot move past this level by any method to what is more comprehensively true because one's selfidentification is functionally still caught up in delusion. One has to become a clear channel of awareness, with all egogenerated pollution of mental experience corrected, in order for the further development of "being" to take place and the inner Eye to open. One cannot just "leap" to reality straight out of maya. One cannot right away chop off one's head and simply be Spirit. The path must pass through selfknowledge and selfpurification. God is not mocked, as the Bible warns us.

When initially contemplating this path of selfdefinition, of "Who am I?", one may be stuck with the answer: "I don't know." If one resists the temptation to create a desired identity, even a seemingly positive, virtuous one, one is left to wonder what direction to take. Rose says this concern is a misunderstanding: one should not decide what direction to take. One is taken. He explains how this works:

> One should not get sidetracked in preconceptions of what they think becoming should be for them, rather than allowing themselves to change in response to the inevitable refinements of truthfulness, and the parallel labor of constantly retreating from untruth. (Rose, 1984, p. 29).

In other words, we do not make the rules; we are shown the rulesif we pay attention. It is not even a matter of looking for guidance from a guru or from scripture. We must give ourselves to our fate, for as Rose says: "The real teacher speaks neither to the ear, nor the mind, nor the heart, but by

circumstances and acts. Yet the real teacher is not a man, and is known only in that circumstances befall us" (Rose, 1975, p. 68). Frankl had made the similar point that the meaning of life is not something learned or created, but rather by becoming one with the requirements of our mission in life as it unfolds, the meaning is discovered.

Along these lines, the question comes up in psychological work as to which faculty or mode of experience is more real, more fundamental, and hence, more dependable as a "guidance system" for exploration: the mind or the heart. Paths diverge on this issue, with some emphasizing one over the other. Some would say that feelings are derivative of thoughts, and others that thoughts are derivative of feelings. Actually, the cause and effect relationship between them seems to go in both directions simultaneously. They are interwoven aspects of a larger, holistic process of life. Regardless, the main point to acknowledge is that as we now areboth are false, or at least highly unreliable. Much of the Albigen System of meditation is the work to correct the distortions in each mode of perceiving and interpreting experience and bring them into alignment with true thinking and feeling, which only then can lead into clear mindfulness and mature devotion. Ramana Maharshi has stated that when this purity and nonduality is achieved, both Mind and Heart, as supremely aware presence, are finally realized to be one and the same.

Rose has an exquisite passage in a mystical poem that explains this evolution of intuition and becoming:

> That which is important is to know, and to listen to words that will enable thee to know. But logic has only the pretense of knowing. Then that which is important is feeling, but feeling without testing the feeling, even though it be a feeling of certainty, is but pretense. For even as disease at either end of a nerve renders unreliable feeling, so the subject or object of intuition may be rendered erratically. So that there is not one without the other. And together they are Being. To know, and to know nothing. To feel, and cease feeling and become. But before thou knowest nothing, thou must lie with the conceit of knowing... (Rose, 1975, p. 67).

In this kind of teaching, however, one cannot know in advance the entirety of one's path to its conclusion, as might be the case in traditional theological religions that assure one of salvation as soon as one pledges faithfulness within that beliefsystem, or in some spiritual teachings that employ mechanistic techniques and rituals that promise Godconsciousness if one repeats the familiar practices long enough.

The unavoidableness of uncertainty while on the path can be disconcerting to the seeker who feels the understandable desire for security during one's explorations and the assurance of final attainment. However, this need not be an obstacle. If one has some tentative faith in the path and one's own ability to inquire, one only needs to trust that intuition will reveal the next step. If one attends to the generic, introductory work on oneself as described in this paper, the progressively finer and more individualistic extensions of these actions that need to follow will make themselves known from there. This process of intuition can be likened to the headlights on a car: they cannot reveal the next 100 miles of one's journey, but can illuminate the next 100 yards. Then, if one is obeying the dictates of this "life as teacher" and continues to drive to the edge of what can be seen in that 100 yards, the light will continue to reveal the stretch of road beyond it, with increasingly greater clarity.

This manner of approach requires a quality of courage and integrity that is entirely selfgenerated and answers only to one's conscience. The proverbial image of the solitary, fearless Zen warrior, always in balance, who lives in silence, and is willing to die for his mission, is most accurate here.

Rose describes what the serious seeker can expect:

> If you're a student of the truth, you have to accept what comes, not what you can create; no phony answers. THAT WHICH IS is all you want. You never learn the answer; you can only become the answer. You become the Truth, and you find it through an amazingly twisted, persistent, painful process. (Rose, 1985, p. 252).

The cover of Rose's book, *Psychology of the Observer*, depicts this image most vividly. Appearing on it is a statue of a man. Much of the man's figure is still undefined, being born or emerging from within an amorphous slab of stone. Yet, with a tremendous effort of will, he is using the chisel found in each hand to chip away the stone in which he is imbedded to reveal his true form. The sculpture is entitled: "Man carving his own destiny." This is how the Fourth Way psychology of the Albigen System is best visualized. This title is not to imply that one exactly chooses one's destiny, as this would again be dualistic. Rather, one discovers one's destiny as it presents itself and acts it out, thus becoming it. Then, there is no longer a division between the actor and the role life has written for him.

Rose added a corollary to Meister Eckart's famous aphorism: "The eye by which I see God is the same as the eye by which God sees me" (Stace, 1960, p. 157). He said: "God calls you [the voice of Intuition], but you have to meet Him halfway [our commitment and vector]. When He answers you, you realize you answer yourself. This (desire for the truth) is the becoming [when acted upon]." In another passage, he refers once again to that Catholic dictum, "The finite mind can never perceive the infinite." However, he counters this seemingly unassailable "stopper" with another key principle in his teaching: "The mind can become less finite; *it can become infinite*" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). It is the search and struggle that brings about this becoming.

It is difficult to convey the meaning of "becoming" in words for the same reason it is difficult to *become*: its reality is not the linear product of ideas or causes on the same level on which they are generated. This is why Rose rejects mechanistic, ritualistic practices that are supposed to result in a cumulative, predictable outcome. This is also a part of the meaning of his above quote about the path being a "twisted, persistent, painful process." We do not always know exactly what we are doing or what waits for us down the road. We can only know what life is demanding of us at the moment, and answer it by living it. Likewise, the philosophical search demands fastidious honesty and thoroughness in one's mental assessments. The process of inquiry carries us along. It is no longer a question of whether we are "doing" the work or it is "happening to" us. Whether one's approach is more the masculine mode of inquiry, or the feminine mode of surrender, this holistic action is the "becoming."

Rose's earlier statements about "results being proportional to energy applied" may misleadingly imply just such a mechanistic principle. However, it would be more accurate to understand the nature of this law not as being:

efforts efforts efforts = results, but rather:

r e s u l t s

..... efforts efforts efforts efforts .....

The real results are not so much in the improvements one may experience in one's own life or mental state, but in the development of this "being" behind the scenes due to the effort one is making on the stage of life.

This effort consists of many things: desire, commitment, conviction, intuition of factors, work, faith, more work, watching, and waiting at attention. All this results in the becoming. This is the graduate phase in philosophy. We tend to start out life with belief in the goodness and rightness of everything, and the inherent validity of our own identities, as we find them to be. Then, either through trauma, maturation, or fortunate accident, some enter the phase of doubt and disillusionment. Those few who graduate intact to the Fourth Way and fully live the life are the becomers.

One may feel inspired at this point with a noble sense of purpose. However, Rose points out a difficulty in one's effectively living this life of search and transformation. It is the same objection which Gurdjieff had repeatedly hammered home to his listeners and which his system was devised to address: that nobody can "do" anything, as they are now. This not only refers to mature spiritual work, but to anything. Both teachers consider human beings in their "normal" state to be animalistic automatons, with only pretensions of free will, or even divinity. Any effort such a person makes could only be done mechanically, in a state of total identification, leaving one on the same level as where one started, even if somehow "new and improved". Any discipline or ritual that does not bring about greater selfawareness (or Gurdjieff's term: objective consciousness) can only succeed in manipulating mundane consciousness into different patterns. True, complete devotion or surrender to a higher power can lead to such transformation also, if one submits to and serves this spiritual vector from innocent desire and not a subtle ego that slyly intends to hold on to itself.

Gurdjieff said people are asleep. Rose says people are robots, although admits that "sleep" is a more accurate term because a robot can never become anything more than a wellfunctioning robot, whereas a person who is asleep has the possibility of waking up. Later, it will be seen how an even more precise assessment is that "people" are ghosts who identify with robots.

By the inability to "do" something, what is meant is that freedom of will, even some measure of freedom qualified by circumstances, is solely in the domain of an awake mind; one that is not hypnotized by conditioning nor identified with either the egos that have been programmed into that mind or the resultant actions of the body. As we are now, both Gurdjieff and Rose assert that our conviction of will, choice, selfdetermination, etc. is a fraud, as we are nothing more than the product of every factor that has come together to form us. We identify with the sequence of factors defining our experience of selfhood, including inner processes of reaction and desire as well as outer conditions, and then confidently announce that we are forging our own paththe belief in which was also placed into our minds. Or, as Jim Burns vividly puts it: "We are the identification with the face of the wave. We are the crossroads of what happens to us."

In the human being's common state, one no more chooses to "do" anything than does the billiard ball choose to go in a particular direction when it is struck, or a dog chooses to salivate at the sound of a bell. In fact, our very conviction of being selfconscious experiencers of life is also an illusion within consciousness, so long as there is no awareness apart from and anterior to that consciousness. To that extent, such a life can be considered no more than a hallucination in the mind of someone who never was.

What actually happens, according to both teachers, is that we are unaware of the million and one factors comprising our experience of life at any moment, and merely assume that what we are experiencing is the result of our "own" doing. Who precisely is this "we"? In fact, the reality is that we are the endresult of the interaction of these myriad factors and are thus generally helpless to be other than as we are. Those who seem to be dynamic, forceful, successful, etc. are in their own way no less programmed or compelled than those who are ineffectual victims of life. Gurdjieff's Work was aimed at gradually transforming people into seekers who have some partial capacity to "do" something from a conditional will, beyond what they were being made to do by circumstances. The first

step is to become aware of ourselves and realize we are automatons.

Rose acknowledges the reality of the paradox here and says we cannot afford to wait until we are really able to "do" something before actually doing something. We have to go ahead and do something now anyway, whether we really can or not. In fact, this doing, when properly intended and aimed, and however mechanical it may later be recognized to have been in retrospect from a higher vantage point, may be what is required to generate such a qualified will in the first place and transform one by this means into a genuine doer. It should be noted, though, that even this "philosophical 'I'" is only a functional ego, and not a crystallized entity. This distinction can be visualized as the difference between a human figure embedded in a painted scene and one that is drawn in a cartoon with a solid black line outlining its shape, discretely separating it from its environment. This ego is to be used in service of the inquiry and then let fall back into the flux of life when it has done its job; not to be taken seriously as the self. This understanding also reconciles Gurdjieff's and Rose's divergent views on the role of the ego in the quest. Further comments on what it means to live artfully with a transparent ego will be made in the section on betweenness.

Strictly speaking, one cannot help being a "robot." Our bodies are programmed by Nature and most of our mental and emotional processes are directly tied in with this biological programming, however individualistic and spontaneous they may seem to us subjectively. Our moods, values, desires, fears, perceptions, and reactions are largely derived from our physical natures, which are in turn a part of a blueprint millions of years old, according to Rose. Our minds are impressed with more diverse and insidious forms of conditioning than we can keep track of: genetic, organic, social, cultural, psychic, and even planetary.

The study of hypnosis gives us a frightening clue as to how our minds really work, and brings into question how much of our experience of life is actually in some form of hypnosis instead of clear awareness, as we like to assume. All these factors result in our living within a paradigm that is so thick and so pervasive that we have little chance of ever getting a glimpse of objective reality through the cracks, or even suspecting the nature of our bondage. We are fully chained in Plato's Cave. Our "freedom" is in our choice of shadows we cast on the wall, if even that.

Rose's assessment of the human condition is pitiful; the confrontation harsh:

> You are a robot. Your name is legion. The pain you suffer is inflicted by your own claws and teeth. The joys you pretend are only programmed "BELIEFS OF PLEASURE", worthless checks for an actors' farce. Your knowledge is an ability to read the actors' lines. Religion and Psychology are two "actor manias", compulsions that "the show must go on and on." Behavioristic Psychology is a traumatic reaction to DIS ILLUSIONED ACTORS. Your concept of Heaven is ridiculous; your hopes for Hell are masochistic. The man in the audience is the observer. His name is not legion. THE ULTIMATE OBSERVER IS ONE (Rose, lecture poster).

Fourth Way Work is not for robots. Robots can do no more than eat, reproduce, seek entertainment, security, and egoaffirmation, and then die when the organism is used up or that particular character has completed its role in the story. This is all for which the human animal is seemingly built, and to strive for something beyond this paradigm of the "normal" requires a quality of independent thought and intuition that are not in the robot's programming. However, by some chance, trauma, or unusual maturity, the beginning of an external awareness can dawn on the robot, in which it gets wise to its stateand from that moment becomes less of a robot. Rose describes his intention in reaching out with his teaching: "We're trying to contact those robots who have been progressed to the

accidental computerization that makes them aware of their robot state" (Rose, 1978, p. 227).

One significant indication of budding spiritual maturity is that of a person realizing being helpless, but yet not being prevented by this from acting anyway. This acknowledgement and understanding is what allows one to "do" something; to take some tentative steps away from the wellworn path of organic functioning in another direction for which there is not yet a map.

In this context, "robot" can be defined as one's identifying with an uncorrected, mechanical creature, functioning in a world of interdependent, relative factors, for an entirely mundane purpose, and without awareness of (or from) one's anterior or true Self. "Uncorrected" means that not only is the experience of this entity strictly a product of everything that combined together to create it, but that it is usually malfunctioning and not at all even a "healthy" robot. Rose sees humanity as a wretched lot of pathological windup toys, who have dreams of building utopia, while not knowing the first thing about their own real nature or the reasons for their continued suffering.

Actually, as will be further explained in the section on "point of reference," the objective in this Work is not that to which this line of reasoning seems to be obviously leading. The implication of "waking up" is not that the person is not really a robot and should simply stop being one. The goal is not to not be a robot. The goal is to realize who one's self truly is, and at the end, the self is found to not be the person who really is a robot and cannot be anything else. Making this shift in identity also corrects the egocaused errors of the robot.

The real relationship between the robotperson and oneself has to be discovered. But, in order for this to occur, a part of the paradox is that one first has to accept being a robot as one currently is and reprogram oneself into being a seeker of something greater. One can reach behind one's head and poke around inside the cover plate, rearranging the wires and pressing different buttons back there, resulting in a mechanical creature that has some limited ability to function as a selfmotivating entity, serving the cause of its own ultimate welfare, rather than automatically going down the beaten path to fulfill the unintelligible purpose for which it was built, by an unknown Engineer, and nothing more.

At this point, it is important to make a clear distinction between the philosophy of Rose/Gurdjieff and that of behavioral psychology in its purest form, which it may seem to resemble. These two teachings are radically different, however. The key factor is, again: the pointof reference of identity. In other words: **who is the self?**

Rose does not disagree for a moment that we are conditioned beings, responding to reward and punishment, mimicking others' behavior and values, and so on. Where Rose violently disagrees with the strict behavioral philosophy is in its implication that this programmed creature is what we <u>really</u> are and all we can be. The aim of the behavioral approach is primarily to reprogram the robot into being a "happy" and productive one, and interacting harmoniously with the other robots. This is the essence of most of modern psychology in its various forms, which Rose emphatically condemns.

The intent of both teachers is to help the self who is imprisoned in the delusory identification with this automaton to first come to know the workings of this psychophysical machine in its entirety, to correct its pathological and selfdestructive actions, to redirect its energies into the work towards selfdefinition, and to finally sever the identification with this fictional "person," as the anterior Self wakes up to its real nature. Behaviorism essentially justifies and reinforces the robotcondition by making it "better." Rose confronts it as a tragic curse that must be lifted.

There is a way to accomplish this. Rose claims that when Christ said: "I am the Truth, the Way, and the Life," he was not merely uttering grandiose poetry to impress the peasantry. Christ

was defining a specific and complete formula for the spiritual life. Rose also sees these three principles of work as being almost identical to the Buddhist terms: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sanghat.

In the Albigen System, Rose is recommending, "for those not otherwise addicted", a three fold path (Rose, 1978, p. 184). The symbol of the pyramid is used to remind the student at all times the necessity for working on all three levels at once. The manner of following these three directives in turn involves work on three levels within each of them: the Physical, the Mental, and the Essential (or Essence). Much of the work is expedited by working with one's associates, while some of the work on these levels can only be done by the individual for oneself. Rose adds, however, that the final realization of Essence comes about by the help of another person, or by accident. To gamble upon accidental happenings is to risk the dangers involved and to run the risk that Essential realization may never come about.

Following is an outline of the ThreeFold Path (Rose, unpublished group papers). First will be described the subcategories (physical, mental, and essential) that are levels within each of the three primary aspects of this Path. The specific terms and principles that have not yet been defined will be explained later in their appropriate sections of the paper. This outline here is to provide an overview of the recommended manner of search.

PHYSICAL STEPS:

1. Set the house in order. This means we must find some economic security, keep the physical house healthy, as otherwise it will either quit thinking or think unreliably, and we must adjust the domestic scene so that the people with whom we associate will be amenable to the search.
2. Find a person or persons who have been down the road that we wish to follow. Look for books that will advise accordingly or furnish coordinative material. Travel in this regard, if necessary, but never allow travel to become an escape in itself from interior work.
3. Find your fellow seekers.
4. Find a place to meet, and work together with these teachers and fellow seekers.

MENTAL STEPS:

1. Implement regular, periodic, mental exercises with directed meditation.
2. Or use koan concentration.
3. Use self confrontation, meaning finding for yourself ways and means of selfanalysis.

ESSENTIAL STEPS:

Reverse the vector:

a. Find the Obstacles that you must learn in order to avoid them in the process of reversal.
b. Allow the Ego to be eliminated, as it is the main obstacle.
c. Constantly implement the mental and spiritual Laws that govern the process of Work.
d. Find Transmission from someone who has "attained." This is the final realization of the Absolute.

The actual ThreeFold Path, which intersects with all three of these levels, is as follows:

THE WAY [the Dharma]:

1. Set the house in order (as described).
2. Learn to conserve the vital energies. Find determination and desire for direction with the success of conserving the energies.
3. Direct the energies profitably (see sections on meditation, Jacob's Ladder, and betweenness).

THE LIFE [the Sanghat]:

1. Value brotherhood and cooperation. Brotherhood involves spiritual, mental, and physical help, in that order.
2. Utilize and understand the Law of the Ladder. The Sanghat is the matrix in which the Law of the Ladder bears fruit.
3. Become a vector. You must become a vector before you become the truth.

THE TRUTH [the Buddha]:

1. Speak and act the truth in all things relative (physical or vocal truth).
2. Do not rationalize (mental truth).
3. Become the truth (Absolute Truth).

All of the above aspects of work must be done simultaneously. One should not concentrate on personal affairs exclusively and forget the brotherhood or the practice of truth.

One must remove the urgency of habits. Habits are not sins, but can sap one's energy and even cause trouble or death. One should not allow slavery to any habit or appetite. These include a wide range of distractions and obsessions which may not be negative except in relation to the path.

With this energy and desire thus salvaged, add to the intensity of the vector, harmonizing the body, and raising somatic energy to the head. With this mental energy one will then engage in philosophical research by investigating the systems taught in the different schools of spiritual and psychological work. We also meditate upon our reactions, learn discrimination, and learn to react with discrimination. Finally, when the observation of reactions becomes intense enoughthe mind will stop.

The group or sanghat serves to sustain and remind the members, thus keeping them on the path and stimulating their progress. The Law of the Ladder is used. One does not advance without helping and being helped. The Law of the Ladder is the formula by which the group is able to find for all someone to help and someone who can use help.

One must become a vector, and to fully implement the Law of the Vector, one usually needs someone to monitor progress and function as a catalyst at the proper moment. The full understanding of the Law of the Vector involves the knowledge of reversing it. As it is now, it is aimed at the relative world scene.

In order to insure individual and group success, we must once again realize the significance of the term: commitment. As in all things, the commitment should be three fold: body, mind, and essence. One cannot commit one's essence, as it is already committed. We are essentially one as far as the Absolute is concerned. However, there is a paradox in this, which first requires the semblance of individual effort from within the illusion in order for this realization of noindividuality and noeffort to occur.

The ThreeFold Path can be summed up like this: to act and relate truthfully in all ways, and promote parallel effort in working with others is the Life; to thoroughly know the truth about oneself and the world through mental purification is the Way; and to eliminate the false egoself, to see the

truth as opposed to human positivism, and *become* is the Truth.

Rose considers this to be a genuine formula for bringing about Realization, and not only a neat conceptstructure. He declares: "I feel that a sincere seeker, who possessed the determination to find the Truth at any cost, suffering, or expenditure of energy, would most certainly find the Truth, if he followed the ThreeFold Path with an open mind" (Rose, 1978, p. 189).

There is one principle that has been touched upon several times thus far, yet is so critical to one's successfully navigating the path that it requires a more deliberate acknowledgement here. The hard question we face is: How can we come to know the objective truth about things in a world which is not drawn in black and white terms and with a mind that is unable to see the totality of anything with direct perception? Rose describes our predicament: "We can conceive of relative things as being both valid and invalid. Philosophically, the attempt to establish validity in regard to relative things brings us immediately to the paradox" (Rose, 1982, p. 133).

"Paradox" does not simply mean contradiction or the balance of complementary opposites, for these notions are still along the same plane of experience. Recognizing the reality of the paradox involves seeing the entire range of possible values and perspectives from a higher vantage point, and thus seeing how incomplete one's view of an issue will be from any one position on the relative plane. According to Ken Wilber, a simple way of stating this is that the paradox is how the mind in duality sees reality (Wilber, 1983). The directmind view from Reality sees no paradoxes. We do.

This becomes an especially troubling obstacle on the path. Since the paradox permeates all relative inquiry, we never have the final, comprehensive understanding of anything while we are still functioning and processing information within a world of conditional, incomplete perspectives. This is much of the cause of disagreements between people regarding religious principles, interpersonal issues, and cultural values. A large part of this is also due to the nature of language, which does not communicate reality holistically and directly between two clear minds, but further distorts understandings which are already garbled to begin with. Collectively, this is what Rose refers to as the Tower of Babel syndrome in regards the quest for Truth.

There is a positive note in all this. The further along the path one goes, the more one becomes aware of the numerous instances of paradox in one's experience of life; whereas the view may have been misleadingly simple and seemingly obvious previously, while one had been identified with one selective pointofview as the stable truth. One realizes that everything is not entirely as it appears to be and alternate assessments are possible from what one currently maintains. This brings one to a phase of insecurity and confusion, as there are no longer any simple answers in which to seek refuge, yet one must still attempt to discern the more valid from the less valid. However, the more one becomes aware of these multiple perspectives on the relative worldscene and lessens one's egohold on any one of them as having to be exclusively correct and final, the further one is actually retreating into objective awareness above this dualistic plane, and the closer one gets to the absolute, comprehending Mind in which all things are seen as they truly are. Resting in this GroundofBeing is the security.

The path Rose describes is not easy or pretty. It does not promise immediate peace or comfort, social betterment, a loving God, or eventual celestial delights. It promises work at selfunderstanding. The anxious uncertainty of doubt. The dissolution of the mirage of "enjoyment" and egotism that we have used to justify continued living. The tension of existing in conscious ignorance. The challenge of countering adverse forces. The increasing loneliness. The quiet frustration of being stuck between Heaven and Earth, yet having home in neither. The pain of an awareness that is as yet inadequate to answer itself. And, finally, the inescapable appointment with Death that mercilessly exposes all our

lies and makes a mockery of our dreams. Unless one's desire is for the unembellished truth, regardless of the price, one will have little motivation to continue on this kind of path, as long as more attractive sideroads are available.

To recognize the Albigen System as holding out hope for one's attaining that pristine state of sanity outside all relative paradigms and beliefstates currently known requires an unmeasurable, undefinable ripeness, a clarity of perception, a resonant intuition. Some impatient, righteous anger doesn't hurt either. Or perhaps a person needs to be very old inside. This spiritual intuition is not correlated with I.Q., education, psychological sophistication, upbringing, religious indoctrination, or seemingly anything else. It is a singular state of readiness. Rose puts great emphasis upon having people recognize the nonsense all around us and within us; the dream world in which we spend our entire lives. He regards humanity as being lost in a maze of mirrors in a madhouse. He sees little benefit in tantalizing the student with descriptions of exalted states of being and experiences of cosmic rapture. He is more concerned with pointing out how we are constantly fooling ourselves at every turn and preventing ourselves from facing the truth of our condition.

He does add, however, that people do sometimes get wise to the foolishness of their games in life. Unfortunately, this all too often occurs at about the time of death, when it is too late to do much about the admission. It is important to clearly realize the direness of one's real status, yet while still having enough time, energy, and opportunity left to work on solving the problem. Rose has explained his purpose in teaching as being: "I'm trying to age a few young people" (Rose, 1982, p. 143).

Yet, he offers solace in the midst of one's troubles in this work. As in any other pursuit in life, one must pay one's dues in order to achieve. In response to an early question of mine regarding my frustrations in resolving some personal issues, while those around me having fewer evident questions or existential concerns seemed to be having a much better time of it, he said: "Evolution, even through agony and hardship, is growth. Involution can only be a descent into the abyss of confusion on all planes."

This attitude of the necessity for confronting one's koans in life and enduring the struggle and uncertainty involved in this commitment is a consistent theme throughout Rose's teaching. It does seem that all too often we learn more through suffering than from wisdom. His point is not that we need to deliberately pursue hardship, but to recognize the hard questions that life is constantly posing to us regarding our identity, purpose, and eventual extinction, and accept the price that must be paid to answer them.

This is again why Rose does not encourage those forms of meditation or ritual that bring about a state of "bliss" or peacefulness, yet without their being justified by one's having earned that Realization of which these could be considered symptoms. He sees this as one's being "bought off," so to speak, short of the goal by a lesser stateofmind; one that is counterproductive to real inner work. Although spontaneous insights do certainly come during those inbetween moments of quietude when the egomind relaxes, it usually requires some form of outer conflict to bring about the awareness of one's confusion and the motivation to turn inwardly to actively look for the solution.

All this, plus the nature of his own final experience, results in Rose's humorously grim assertion about the course the path must take, up to the period preceding the final breakthrough: "The preparatory condition for Enlightenment is trauma. Indulge in it while you can. You will have enough peace in the cemetery" (Rose, lecture, 1984). From this, it can be seen why Rose does not endorse those teachings that seduce the weary or lazy traveler by promoting a quality of contentment he claims is superficial and only serves to waste time, when there is serious work to be done.

By "trauma" he means whatever it takes to shake loose one's entrenched convictions about

oneself and the apparent nature of things. The ongoing state of trauma he recommends is selfinduced and takes the form of being willing to confront oneself in full awareness of one's unknowing and all the suffering this entails. The death of the egos that keep these mental patterns alive is likewise generally the result of trauma and is experienced as traumatic by the parts of oneself that are dying.

It can be a heavy burden to carry the curse of knowing one does not know the Truth. Paradoxically, this struggle within a state of admitted uncertainty is an essential prerequisite for Realization, since it inexorably forces the relinquishment of the ego's attempted hold on reality. Jim Burns assures us this struggle has a purpose the seeker cannot yet appreciate: "**The unknowing is a part of the becoming**." This relates to Gurdjieff's claim about the value of "conscious suffering" towards the development of one's soul or Being.

Few people are ever willing to question themselves enough to come to the disturbing conclusion that they are ignorant. Of those who do and are willing to make some effort to find valid answers, few seekers get to the point of being willing to remain in the state of conscious ignorance until the Truth is discovered, rather than desperately grasping for some straw of rationalization or makebelieve to soothe the insecurity. Finally, once it is understood that the answer must be a direct realization of essence rather than the maintenance of some concept of dogma or selfinduced mental state, one must exist and continue to work in this tension of unsatisfied desire for that state of valid being which is as yet unknown. This is commitment. To "believe in God" when one can no longer believe in God is really being spiritual.

This brings up another one of the many paradoxes on the path; one that is hard for an outsider to the path to understand, and possibly even for those involved in the Work. The usual expectation is that embarking upon a spiritual path will soon lead one to greater joy, tranquility, success, and security. Yet, when one gets involved in the kind of inner work being described here, life oftentimes becomes even harder and one's psychological condition can feel like a battle zone. All is not immediate harmony and bliss.

The outsider may then assume the path under consideration is spurious or not as worthwhile as one that does quickly bring about a state of calm, assurance, etc. The person who is seriously working on self study, philosophical contemplation, and conservation of energy may find the turbulence, uncertainty, fear, and even pain that is aroused by such digging to be disquieting, and may naturally wonder why this idealistic effort has brought one into a harsher condition than are those who forsake such efforts.

The reason is simply that sleep is more comfortable than the work of waking oneself up, however many bruises the sleepwalker may accumulate from bumping into things. Sleep also includes that category of religious belief that does not require personal inquiry nor the acknowledgement of the unknowing that would have to be the starting point for such seeking. Admitting that one does not know the truth about life is more troubling than to not know that one is ignorant. It requires more courage to face death consciously than to deny the reality of death until the last moment or to maintain some belief in a guaranteed heaven as a buffer against the piercing cold. To look inside oneself and admit to not knowing who one really is, fundamentally, can be terrifying. This is why the majority of people instinctively never risk turning their attention inward and asking themselves some hard questions, but would rather remain as puppets on a stage, never questioning who is pulling their strings.

While the devotee who is honorably living the life of faith will indeed experience less friction against life, and hence walk in Grace and with selfrespect, much of the security and joy that is felt is dishonestly "borrowed" against a God that is truly unknown, but has been created in imagination, however inspired by budding intuition. It is not a total surrender. One is still hanging onto oneself,

subtly.

Gurdjieff summed up this issue with a quiet dignity and poignancy: "Blessed is he who has a soul. Blessed is he who has none. But woe and sorrow to him whose soul is developing" (Walker, 1969, p. 212). The pain of awareness of the unknowing is no disgrace. The bluff of certainty, is. Encountering hardships and setbacks in developing one's soul, carving out one's destiny, etc. is no cause for shame. This is another reason for Rose's stress upon commitment. He does not promise an easy path, and knows that without a firm commitment, most seekers would not be able to endure the tension of such effort nor receive the aid that such a bold commitment elicits. Seeing all colors of meaning bleached from life, all gods exposed to be humbugs, and then looking inside and seeing one's presumed identity devoid of substance leaves one empty and aching, with the resolute desire for an answer being all that remains, echoing within the heart. One's prayers disappear into the void.

With a blend of compassion and anguish, Rose bleakly depicts humanity's plight, in one of his most solemn lines: "In what pitiful hells are the wise; in what blackest abysses are the oblivious ignorant" (Rose, 1978, p. 231). The first half is not meant as justification for the seeker's selfflattery, as the growing awareness that one is stuck within a flimsy, yet oppressive nightmare is no cause for haughty celebration. It is simply a statement of grim fact. The latter half also suggests the chilling prospect that one may be lost in a darkness so blackor, that state of functional oblivion we normally call "living"that one cannot even see the darkness, nor suspect that one's identity, joys, life, and world are wholly illusory.

In a poem called "Truth," Rose describes the existential landscape as seen from a vantage point beyond life; conveying a mood as if solitarily standing beside one's own grave on a frigid, gray, wintry day, when even the memories of all one had known disappear into the fog. This offers a glimpse of what the commitment to truth entails. All of one's buffers are stripped away, as are the props and crutches we rely upon to get us through our days. To see reality nakedly, without the projection of meaning we reflexively superimpose upon it to make the ego's life bearable, leaves one cold and alone. Some excerpts:

> ...No one laughs in the winter like they do in the sun... One by one, the lights go out, or the eye grows dim, and our thoughts are like the wind in a reed, when the tide is leaving... Ah, Truth is a wonderful thing, but a lonely thing, and the fools who frolic on the green are happy fools, but makebelieve is not for hoary head or pedant's brow. And the hollow laugh that finds echo far inside, will nevermore ring for thee. All that rings in memory is the hint, the haunting, wistful hint, that somewhere, back, in a warmer, sunnier clime, we lived and lied and drank of fantasy, more eternal than we. And but for some relentless, judicial clock, we might still be children dreaming in the meadow. But here it is, night...and Truth is too thin a blanket. (Rose, 1982, p. 109).

In another poem called "The Mirror," Rose expresses the testimony of an old soul who, like Job, dares to confront God with unanswered questions. Some excerpts:

> If all is God...can we pretend to be the soliloquy of God?... Can we pretend for a moment that we are all particles of God, enjoying his divinity?... Should we rejoice that God through tiny human nerves experiences all forms of horror and pain, despair and fear? ...Can we imagine the glories of a God so selfwatching, so identified with uswho are so identified with this pointless game? ...Unless we visualize God as infinitely introspective...that watches the eater and the eater, the beater and the beaten, there seems to be no point to this drama (Rose, 1982, p. 912).

Clearly, the message Rose is tossing out as a note in a bottle has a peculiarly solemn tone, staggering in its import, and sent from a place far away. This is not a teaching of celebration or comfort. It is a wakeup call; one that cares not whether one is dreaming of nightmares or ecstasy. Yet, it is a teaching that offers a unique brand of hope, after all other forms of hope are realized to be more illusions. His is a path that speaks of both foreboding and promise: "Only those who believe there is a path will ever find one. Only those with faith will find despair. And those who despair may come closer to truth" (Rose, 1975, p. 67). Truly, only one who can continue to seek after all hope is gone is a real seeker on the final path.

And yet, despite his seeming grimness, Rose never loses his sense of humor. He knows that Reality is neither happy nor sad, and his humor is the attempt to communicate the recognition of the paradox that encompasses both. The solemn tone of the previous poems are meant only to reflect the experience of the final remnants of the human mind as it becomes aware its dissolution in the transition to a nonrelative state. The experience is that of the self's (small "s") dying and so has the perspective of loss. Rose is more reluctant to describe Realization or its aftermath in "positive" terms, or as "affirmations", as this lends itself more readily to fantasy and simulation by the giddy student, who is short of attaining the goal. He is more concerned with teaching about death than "rebirth."

One of his longtime students, Al F., being distraught, wondered aloud if after many years of search and struggle one may reach a plateau or get over some critical hump, after which the rest of the way becomes smoother and more manageable. He asked: "Does the path get any easier after this?" Rose replied: "No, it doesn'tbut it gets funnier!" Not to the seeker, perhaps, but to an observer of the seeker, who sees the necessary folly of all the earnest squirming and comical ridiculousness of the one who battles absurdity.

Before proceeding to discussions of the specific methodology in the Albigen System and how they interrelate, a general summary of premises is offered here as an overview of the main themes in introducing the teaching.

1. The majority of the isms that serve as religious and philosophic guidelines for humanity are permeated by inconsistencies, and that in these isms many of the socalled facts are illusions or halftruths, and that most of humanity's beliefs are the products of fear and wishful thinking, rather than an unbiased search for Truth.
2. The human mind is not infallible in its processes, and it suffers errors as a result of many factors, such as the conflicting clamor of appetites, intellectual limitation, fatigue, inadequate intuition, inadequate reasoning (or common sense faculties), difficulties of the dualmind in solving abstract or absolute considerations, and the lack of individual control over statesofmind. These obstacles can be countered by:
    a. Progressive elimination of concepts and conceptbuilding by eliminating those not as consistent within themselves, not inclusive, and those whose scope does not bridge the range of unexplained phenomena as well as some other system of thinking does.
    b. Selfobservation.
    c. Selfremembering (looking at our past).
    d. The respectful doubt.
    e. Application of the paradox.
    f. Development of the Intuition.
    g. Retaining the identity of the Real Observer in various statesofmind.
3. There is a system of overcoming these errors, the system is practical, and Truth may be realized.

4. The rate of realization is directly proportional to the amount of and quality of energy and attention applied to the quest.
5. Illusions are the great obstacles to Truth, and the dispelling of these illusions involves the improvement of the inadequate factors mentioned in premise Number Two, and better control over them. This process involves an everconscious schooling of the mind, so that it will be an instrument of Truth. (Rose, 1978, p. 1945).

Chapter 7

An Approach to Validity

Once these prerequisite guiding principles of the path are understood as a foundation, how does one begin to inquire? We begin by coming to know the extent of our ignorance. Recognizing one's current state of confusion is the first big step towards wisdom. Rose repeatedly asks us: "**What do you know for sure?** Do you believe more than you really know?" This is a most humbling question. We must ask ourselves serious questions about our nature and identity, about the meaning of life on earth, about why we are driven to keep reproducing relentlessly, about the workings of thought and mind, about the possibility of spiritual knowledge, about *knowing*. When we do, we will become increasingly troubled by the admission of our lack of answers. We come to realize how much of our lives has been lived in a dull haze of assumption and belief, of projection and pretension, in comforting sleep that buffers us from existential terror at the unknowingand become aware that time is running out. Are we anything more than automatic meat, racing on a treadmill to oblivion? We must begin to define the real issues that define what we are.

Following is a series of questions posed by Rose in various writings and talks (Rose, 1979a, p. 3945; 1988, p. 211225; lectures 1979, 1986). It outlines some of the major themes in his teaching. The questions can be seen to form a pattern. They have a direction. They are pointing at something. His approach to teaching is evident in the way these questions negate our common bluff of relying upon unexamined convention, and discriminate between shades of meaning relevant to the central topic of final selfdefinition. The range of questions delineate the territory that must be covered in the search and bring into sharp focus all the specific factors that must be understood in order for one to truly know the self and have comprehension of our experience of life. Each question contains a hundred other questions. Answering the questions is not the whole path, but Rose would certainly say that one is not on a mature path if one is not working to answer them.

The questions confront the seeker headon, and one must resist the reflex to blink and turn away, or lazily rationalize in trust that "God" knows and "that's good enough for me." These questions define an approach to validity. Rose wishes to back the seeker into objective knowledge and discovery. These questions are actually some of the real, living koans that will lead to such knowledge.

What is wisdom?

Why are we here?

Does a man enjoy, or is he consumed?

Are we the highest link in the food chain? Why should we assume that we are? Could anything be eating us?

Does a man really reason...or is it all a complex rationalization?

Does a man rationalize...or is he so programmed?

Can a man become?

How shall he know what he should become?

Is there a God?

What is the nature of God? What are His dimensions?

Why does God need man?

Is there a heaven?

Is it important to know first about heaven, or first, about God?

Or is it not better to know first about man?

What is equality?

Is a baby equal to a dying man?

Was Samson equal to Delilah?

Who or what are you?

What is life? What is death?

Is all religion and philosophy merely rationalization emanating from the mind, to answer constant cellular awareness of death?

Is evil the child of Good...or is it a twin?

Is Satan God's adversaryor employee?

Does God approve the sin game?

Why do we presume that God is good according to our standards?

If a man drives a horse through a plate glass window, should the man be prosecuted...or is it the horse that should be prosecuted?

What is valid? Is a rock valid?

Unless we know that which a rock is to itself, how can we know its validity?

If the rock is only our projection, does it have any validity?

What is real?

Is a mirage real?

How much of life is a mirage?

Is a dream real? If notwhy not?

Is wakefulness a dream? Is it an undefined state qualified by erratic or inferior senses? Is an idea more real than a planet?

How reliable is the mind?

Do we witness the material world through or with the senses?

Is there a pure, or direct sense?

Is all of our Reality merely a collective belief?

How can we have an accurate worldview if we are prone to the projection of a paradigm?

If we can fool ourselves repeatedly about other people, how can we know for certain about subjective matters?

If we cannot see the many instances in everyday life whereby we are fooledhow can we pierce the infinite with this exceedingly finite mind?

Is mind a faculty through which we observe God...as through a glass darkly?

Is God a personal being, or will He forever remain impersonal and nondimensional?

Is it possible to know God before knowing the Self?

Is it possible to know anything?

What must truth constitute?

Are there gradations of truth (small t and capital T)?

Do desires and prejudices do your thinking for you?

Do you lie to yourself? If so, how can you know the truth?

Is virtue established by psychological edict? ...by ecclesiastical vote...or by the requisites of our ultimate essence?

Is truth decided by that which most people think (or want)...or by that which is?

Is truth learned...or is it only experienced?

Is there really a divine essence available to those who seek and are sincere?

What does behaviorism prove? What do the tracks made by an animal prove? Do they tell you about the essence or purpose of that animal?

What is the correct definition of sanity or sane thinking? Is it thinking that promotes or sustains survival (including ultimate survival)?

Are we not running great risks regarding spiritual survival in accepting the evaluation of sanity that presumes average behavior is normal and without price? ("Average means mediocre.")

Can all behavior, merely because of its high rate of incidence, be considered sane, or are there not some actions performed by the majority that are not logically excusable?

Can sanity be determined by logic? Is sanity that state that most accurately approaches the knowledge of things as they really are and the knowledge of the true nature of ourself?

Could sanity ever mean that state of mind with perfect understanding of all problems? A state ofmind in which the altering lens of ego has been removed from our mental vision or perception? ("We see a lot of things through our ego. Do we incorporate ego into sanity? Is the egotistical person insaneto a degree, in that his ego somewhat colors his mental processes?")

Could a state of sanity ever be approached?

Is directmind cognition in relation to true sanity possible?

What is the relation between sanity and reality?

What is reality and how do we find it? How do we determine it?

Can we identify ourselves?

Are we that which we think we are? ("We all look in the mirror and say, 'Oh, you're a good looking rascal. I know who <u>you</u> are. You're the one who's going to get me all the things I want'")

Who are we? An animated body and a suppressed, stagnated soul? What is the self? The body, with a somatic mind? The mind? Is there a self beyond the mind?

When a person asks himself a question, are there then two people or selves involvedone who speaks and one who hears? (Who is aware of this dialogue occurring?)

What sees, what remembers, what reacts to perception and memory?

Is there a soul? What is a soul?

Did it exist before the body, or must it be developed, grown, or evolved?

Do we have a soul? If so, who is it then who "has" this soul? Are we a soul? Are we the awareness of a soul?

Is not identification of the self necessarily the isolation of the self from its environment?

If this is true, where is the boundaryline?

Is the body a part of the environment or is it you?

Have all the prenatal factors for behavior been explained? How far back should you go? Only 9 months? Where do you draw the line between the consciousness of one entity and that of another? (Does the sperm/egg that creates the new person belong to the baby or to the parents?)

Are you a distinct, individual entity or a multiplicity of drives and voices? If there is such a conglomerate, how is the Real Self isolated?

Are we selves having many facets or are we a unique self, artfully invaded?

Is the body part of the Self or a garment of the spirit?

Is the mind part of the Self?

When a man loses his mind, where does his self go? Where did the mind go?

Is our ulterior self in our heads or in our groins?

What is power?

Who possesses?

When you describe bouncing...do you describe the striking object or that which is struck? ("This will tell us something about karma.")

When a tree bends over, does it create wind by waving its branches?

What are we? Are we merely a compound of chemicals and corruption? Are we cast here for a reason or are we a complicated accident?

What is real meaning? (Not <u>your</u> purpose in life; THE purpose of Life.)

Is it not vain to presume that man caused man? Or that man knows why man is here?

Why build ant hills before knowing what an ant is?

Why do we build conceptual towers of Babel about human thinking...before we know that which thought is?

How many full hours do we spend analyzing our thought processes?

Does a robot have any meaning or purpose beyond the intentions of the designer?

Can a robot program itself in any degree?

Can an individual decide on something outside the scope of that which is his limited perspective?

When does a man begin to think, and how can he continue to be the thinker and not a puppet? What is serious thought; genuine thought?

Is there only one dimension? Does not the possibility of multiple dimensions weaken our significance and our pretended potential for controlling our environment?

If we wish to plan our lives, do we not need to consider while planning that it may be all planned, and that we have no choice? How do we plan around that possibility?

What is the mind? What are its limits, its dimensions?

What is thought? Where does thought occur?

Thought ends and the soul begins where?

Is thought a faculty of the body; does the body create them?

Or does the body receive thoughts, poorly, from the mind dimension, and even transmit them?

Does the brain generate thought like a radio generates the message coming from its speaker?

Is thought something received or something projected?

Is thought limited to the brain?

What is the relation between thought and mind? Are they the same? Is thought a mindextrusion?

What are we implying when we say, "I think"?

Do we willfully think, or are we caused to think?

Is thought a possession or an obsession?

Do you think or are you a thought?

If we cannot willfully think, do we ever really make decisions?

What is experience?

Do we experience, or are we experienced?

Are we the view or the viewer?

Do we create the idea of creation? Or are we the created idea?

Is time only a relative conceptualization? What is the reality of time?

What is duration? Does time pass or is it only you who passes?

Is time an illusion that prevents us from experiencing a Self that has no motion?

Is thought synaptic or spiritual?

What is the relation between a synapse (or a reaction, meaning: thought) and awareness?

Do we identify the self with that which thinks? Or is the self identified as that which is conscious...even conscious of thinking?

Is consciousness the same as awareness?

What is awareness? Where is it located?

What is the difference between awareness and the thought of awareness?

Who is aware (of being aware, etc.)?

Is "your" awareness in you...or *of you?*

Who then are you?

Can a man watch himself?

Are there two people in such an act, or is one only the view?

Is thought the viewing of our own projections, and nothing more?

If we can observe our thoughts, who is looking?

If we think about thought, is thought then objective and separate from the thinking self?

Is there a thinking self, or only an awareness that witnesses reactionsand may possibly witness a pseudoself or ego?

Is such a thinker someone who dreams of yesterday, thinking that he watches a dreameror is he a detached watcher of past and present thoughts who is awake and aware of the mechanical man?

Does the body manufacture subtle little essences called thoughts?

Or does the body develop receiving mechanisms or chemicals so that it will be aware of possible external essences?

Would such an external essence be called the mind? If so, would that mind be external to the body?

Are we then a body being influenced by an external mind?

Or are we the external mind?

Does a man's soul or essence make contact with the body of the man in energy generated by the gap of the synapses?

Is the inner man any more than conscious energy?

What is the relation between thought and the glands?

Does gland energy increase or decrease the thought process? ("This is the whole idea behind transmission.")

Is it possible that man can, with energy transmuted upward, produce thoughts with volition, rather than just submit to reacting?

Will you ever be free and at the same time be aware?

Is the photon an intelligent messenger of God?

Is the photon a distractionbeing that dazzles the human eye so that he cannot see the realities found in introspection?

Is real knowing, not knowing?

Shall the finite mind ever perceive the infinite?

Is it possible to attain spiritual realization by any means?

Is it true that the only question worth answering is whether or not we should commit suicide?

Chapter 8

Obstacles and Laws

These are serious questions, and they need to be faced with courage and honesty before one can hope to arrive at the state beyond all questions. One message that may be recognized in this series of questions is that there is a particular direction to the search that is recommended, as well as an attitude of rigorous doubt. Many of the more crucial comments refer to the common theme of one's needing to "become." How exactly does one go about such an abstract endeavor when the path is admittedly a very individualistic, subjective process, with few clear signposts? Nevertheless, even in abstractions, patterns may be discovered.

The greatest difficulties on the path are our imperfect vision, and our limited ability to accurately process and comprehend the information or experiences we receive. So, the next step is to come to understand our limitations and learn how to overcome them. Doing this requires that we know ourselves and our weaknesses so that we can find the obstacles that have their roots within us. Our blind spots do not wish to be seen. Without perfected intuition, we are lost. *But – seeing blindness is already a form of vision.*

Rose says it is advisable to be aware of the rules of the game one wishes to play (the Master Game), in order to bolster one's likelihood of winning. To this end, he has provided detailed information about two of the more important aspects of the path of which every seeker must be aware. One is a "List of Obstacles," and the other is a "List of Laws." The former systematically describes all the major hindrances to one's efforts that will be encountered. These are not necessarily conscious "forces of adversity," but they are factors that work contrary to one's intended spiritual aspirations. One must take them into account so as to be able to compensate for them or sidestep them. Also involved are a collection of possible traps to which almost every seeker will fall victim at some point, including a list of rationalizations which the dishonest or immature mind will use as a gambit for avoiding real work.

The common denominator in the mental obstacles is the ego, which is the identification with the conglomerate of voices, drives, desires, fears, and conceits that make up the human personality, and which is understood to be false.

Most of the following is self-explanatory, although a few comments of elaboration are added.

List of Obstacles

1. Of External Nature:
    A. Visible, terrestrial life and planetary relationships (the programming by Nature to promote organic life).
    B. Invisible, or dimensions beyond our senses (possible psychic influences and from agencies outside of this material plane).
2. Of Internal Nature:
   The appetites (these are the motives that take up most of our attention and energy):
    A. Sex
    B. Security
    C. Food
    D. Pleasures other than sex
    E. Curiosity
3. The Fears:
    A. Fear of dying
    B. Fear of scorn or social harm
    C. Fear of mental or spiritual harm (referring to the apprehension about embarking upon a spiritual path).
4. The Blocks:
    A. The "seven deadly sins" (obstacles to understanding or clear thinking):
        1. Pride
        2. Covetousness
        3. Lust
        4. Hatred
        5. Anger
        6. Envy
        7. Sloth (who can claim to be entirely free of all seven?).
    B. The "six catches" (from DeRopp's The Master Game):
        1. The think-talk syndrome
        2. The starry-eyed syndrome
        3. The false-Messiah syndrome
        4. The personal salvation syndrome
        5. The Sunday-go-to-meeting syndrome
        6. The hunt-the-guru syndrome

       These all refer to common states-of-mind or patterns that can claim immature seekers who get involved in some form of spiritual work or group activity, but who are unwilling or unable to accept the full responsibility for their own paths or have naive misconceptions about what constitutes esoteric work.
    C. Physical limitations (fatigue, poor health, fallible senses, limited brain capacity, etc.).
    D. Economic exigencies (one's time and resources needing to be devoted largely to daily, mundane survival, at the expense of spiritual concerns).
5. Forms of Rationalization:
    A. Procrastination: that we will be able to do the thing better at a later date (includes excessive leaning upon the expectation of reincarnation).
    B. That we will ride the tide of humanity into heaven (or, the philosophy of: "Me too").
    C. That social services or "good works" have spiritual gain (as commodities of barter, as versus means of self-confrontation and change).

D. That the gods have ears: salvation through prayers (unless one is listening to oneself).
E. That the gods have noses and eyes: incense and displays (for whose benefit?).
F. That positive thinking will make gods of us or lead us to liberation (this is a technique or psychological lever, not an absolute law of spiritual consequence).
G. That the guru will save us. (Can we count on this? Should we? Can the guru save us? Should he? Can the guru do much more than show the way and goad or inspire us on?).
H. That faith (alone) will save us (without the action to prove the genuineness of our faith).
I. That the merit of spiritual paths may be evaluated by their popularity (validity determined by voting) or aesthetic appeal (truth measured by its ability to please us).
J. That we can "feel" our way alone: intuition alone (unchecked by reason).
K. That we can do it with our omnipotent reason (that is not in service of the intuition).
L. That God (or Mr. X) will take care of everything. This is a variation of the "Knight on the white horse" rationalization (a blend of lazy vanity and simplistic fatalism).
M. That our present belief shall be our final evaluation of Truth (one is certain that either there is nothing more to be known or that nothing more can be known, and that one's faculty of knowing is now operating at maximum capacity).
N. That everything is hopeless or useless (that all of the above obstacles are a sufficient excuse for one to make no further efforts). (Rose, 1978, p. 176-77.)

The most insidious trap to look out for is the belief that one's acknowledgement of all the possible traps exempts one from being vulnerable to them, due to one's now supposedly superior understanding. But Rose warns: "You may say, 'Oh yes, we know all about the traps...' while uttering the words from the midst of several traps that have been nobly rationalized" (Rose, 1978, p. 162). It may even be impossible to free ourselves completely from all traps, but we can free ourselves to the extent of knowing our chains and being able to resist them in incidents really critical to our spiritual growth.

In case this above list intimidates the seeker into believing every possible step is blocked by any combination of diabolical forces, mundane priorities, or personal handicaps (hence, the final rationalization), Rose does also provide a list of Laws that offers hope. By "Laws", he means existent principles of both life and spiritual work; the knowledge and utilization of which allows one to search more efficiently and save some unnecessary hardships born of ignorance. The Laws are not absolute and all-encompassing in themselves. They are in relationship to and qualified by each other. The application of these Laws must be kept within the dimension in which they are intended and operative.

The Laws

1. The Law of Equilibrium. (All forces and objects are in balance, operating in pre-established degrees of influence and compensation within their domain, however paradoxical they may seem in our limited understanding of things. The spiritual form of this is the regulatory law referred to as Karma.)
2. The Law of Change. (We desperately look for changelessness, yet this Law negates anything as being constant, outside of the Absolute state. Everything is in a state of flux. This is directly related to the Laws of Equilibrium and Relativity. Our final satisfaction and resting place is not within experience, but outside of it.)
3. The Law of Inertia. (Things tend to remain inert or in status quo. Yet, this is paradoxical in that things are also constantly changing. The process of dying is simultaneous with the process of

birth. There is an innate force that goads all forms of life against the inert tendency, specifically in the form of curiosity and desire.)

4. The Law of Proportional Returns. (You get what you give. Effort is rewarded, as long as it works within the laws of our dimension. Helping others inspires help. To implement this Law most wisely requires the concurrent adherence to the Law of the Ladder—[see #11].)
5. The Law of Extra-Proportional Returns. (Also known as the Contractor's Law or synergism. This requires cooperation with like-minded co-workers in an esoteric school. More can be accomplished in a group than by solitary efforts.)
6. The Law of Relativity. (All factors are relative and conditional to all other factors. Nothing exists in a vacuum. All our thoughts and actions are associative, yet we can never think or act clearly until we cease to identify with this tangle of relative associations.)
7. The Law of Paradoxical Immanence in All Things Relative. (This relativity is perceived by the dualistic mind as paradox. Every evaluation is found to have an opposite or complement that is possibly as valid. No one assessment should be considered absolute. Perhaps this should be better called Immanent Paradoxicalness).
8. The Law of Complexity. (Although this could also be called the Law of Life, as complexity seems to be required to produce life-forms, over-complexity also tends to result in instability and decay. Spiritual systems and groups must likewise follow the path of simplification rather than elaboration and dogmatism.)
9. The Law of Love. (Related to Laws #4 & 11. Love invites love and hate invites hate. Yet, this must be exercised judiciously, as it is qualified by other laws in the relative world, especially the Law of the Jungle. Love must take the form of unselfish friendship and compassion, not egotistical manipulation or consumption.)
10. The Law of Faith. (This also has limitations, by other Laws and by other people's counter-faith. This Law has to do with the changing of the apparent status of matter by means of human belief. Its efficacy is dependent upon the mind-quantum factor or faith-power of a person or group of persons.)
11. The Law of the Ladder. (One of the most important Laws. People exist on ascending rungs of the ladder of comprehension, capacity, and spiritual maturity. One must work with those on one's own level, while helping those one rung below and receiving help from persons or sources of influence one rung above. To rise, one must help another to reach one's own level. To reach down too low is vanity and futility, as the people cannot hear you and may tear your arm off. Likewise, one cannot expect to work with a teacher too high above one's own level as one would not be able to recognize the requirements of work on that level. One is being pulled up by the person above, while being pushed a bit by those below. This Law also involves the principle of the Pyramid—the rungs are of decreasing population the higher one goes.)
12. The Law of the Vector (Reversed). (The most important Law. One must become a vector of spiritual work, in order to achieve results. Yet, one cannot approach the Truth, so must back away from untruth. The vector must be reversed and one's discrimination guided by intuition. There are two further applications. One's life-vector, if it exists at all, is usually aimed "outward," at the material world. The meaning of real esoteric work is to invert this attention and pull it back into the source of the awareness of all such experience. Related to this is the reversing of the vital energy from its usual downward expenditure, transmuting it upward into mental and spiritual achievement.)
13. The Law of Progression. (Related to Laws #11 & 12. Any series of events or circumstances that indicates consistent direction also indicates a possible continuance of that direction beyond the series presently witnessable. If one step can be taken, there may exist another step after it. One

may have faith that the path progresses past what one now knows and experiences, and in fact, should humbly assume one's current status is not the final point of realization.) (Rose, 1975, p. 16; 1978, p. 196-205).

A few comments need to be added to the above for elaboration. The power of Faith as a factor in life is not in dispute, however it cannot be regarded as the ultimate factor in determining or finding Truth. "To move mountains, requires agreeable, believing mountains," notes Rose (1975, p. 6), and no greater counter-faith from those who prefer the mountain to remain right where it is. He adds that after-death states—whether heavens, hells, or in-between—are very possibly created by the faith-power of individuals or congregations over a period of years and generations, even if unconsciously maintained, although the objective reality of these "places" remains in question.

Some seekers entertain naive notions of the magical powers that those who have achieved God-Realization are presumed to possess and imagine with delight the manipulations of the physical world such beings could accomplish. Rose does not deny that such options do open up to those who have "attained," yet adds that assorted yogic or magical powers can also be acquired through knowing discipline and demonstrated while being far short of the goal, and are no proof of Realization. Whether one's motives are altruistic or self-serving, he points out there being a catch to this, however. The proper exercise of faith could very well move a mountain. But—in order to move the mountain, you would have to first be in that state-of-being in which you could move the mountain, and if you were, you would not move the mountain because you would know that the mountain is already exactly where it is supposed to be. And you would know this because you would also inherently realize that you were the One who put that mountain there in the first place.

Rose suggests that playing around with projections of mind-force is an egotistical waste of potential in a dimension that is not exactly real. While still embedded in duality, no ego-generated expression of "positive thinking" or acquisitiveness can escape engendering some measure of negativity to counter-balance it. This method cannot work in the long run to further the aim of true spirituality. Regardless, demonstrating such an identification with the picture-show is an indication of one's lack of true spiritual desire, not its presence. This is still ego-centered, rather than Truth centered. He explains:

> All things are possible, after the knowledge of all things. But when things are known, we do not have the same promptings as we did when we possessed vain wishes without maturity—without the knowledge of the mechanism of the Ultimate blueprints... Knowledge of the workings of the world lessens our desire to manipulate because our knowledge also lets us know that there are always superior factors not yet reached by the continuous process of evaluation...(but) which we know will continually change our values. ...As we progress in knowledge or understanding, how can such maturity lead to any vanity of action? (Rose, 1979c, p. 34-35).

The correct application of faith is in one's having faith that a path from illusion to reality exists, that one has the capacity to do the work involved, and that there may be some guidance and aid provided to those who are sincere and who act on that sincerity. This faith may well actually be the dim awareness of the inner Self that is what sets up the whole path to begin with. The Law of the Ladder is a critical principle in the Albigen System and has several implications:

1. It is most advantageous to work with others, not only for the tangible help received from group interaction, but because of the benefit to oneself from helping others. The effort of teaching (or facilitating) transforms what you know into what you are.

2. It is also important to know one's own level in order to be able to work most productively towards one's goals. This involves knowing oneself well enough to know the real nature of one's desire and the most expedient path to fulfilling it. This is contrasted with wasting one's efforts by pursuing lower level values that are at best only crude symbols for what one really desires, or one's practicing a form of seeking that does not fully utilize one's capacity, but settles for indirect or simplistic means of attainment, i.e. dwelling on systems of divination or fundamentalistic theologies.
3. In working thus with others along psychological or spiritual lines, it is important to work only with those who are within one's own range of understanding, otherwise one's efforts are wasted and one may even come to harm at the hands of the mob. This is a part of being the "sly man" and not indiscriminately casting pearls. As Rose warns, "Helping people is vanity. Teach without ego, to those who can hear you." Likewise, it is good to suspect that there may be levels of work and being above one's own current level, even if not yet known.

The Law of the Ladder ties in here with the Law of Progression. We can see the steps behind or below us and probably the one on which we are now standing, but we will not be able to recognize the steps ahead of or above us, as they will remain invisible until the feet are upon them. One can see progress in retrospect, if not always in the moment. Meanings and perspectives of a higher order cannot be appreciated until experienced.

The Albigen System acknowledges a paradox in regard to Advaita Vedanta's claim that there are no methods or steps of progressive spiritual development, but that it is a direct Realization. This is similar to the division in Zen Buddhism between the notion of Enlightenment as being a sudden, abrupt "happening" as versus a gradual process of refinement, focusing, clarification, transmutation, etc., culminating in the final experience. Rose teaches that both are true.

On one hand, he agrees that the finite, ego-mind is always trying to devise processes to attain something, but that the Mind or Self is wholly outside this mechanical gestalt, and there is nothing the former can do to escape itself and realize the latter. At the same time, such efforts at self-transcendence must be made through to exhaustion, all the while the Mind being aware of the intrinsic futility of all such efforts, as the small "s" self is not what does the transcending. What happens is the delusion that one is this self, ends.

Rose asserts that Realization <u>is</u> all at once, or not at all: "You don't go anywhere until you *arrive*." Yet, there is a qualifying aspect to this. One can "position" oneself for its happening. The task can be likened to a large balloon tied to the earth by a thousand cords. The balloon cannot fly away until every cord is cut. It either remains bound or it is free; there is nothing in-between. Yet, the work is in the form of severing each cord, one at a time; the cords being ignorance, identification, egotism, delusion, lust, and so on. Until the final cord is cut, it is true that the balloon remains fastened to the earth and it seems to the seeker that no progress has been made, despite all of one's efforts. Yet, progress can be considered to consist of the continual severance of the bonds, until the last one is finally cut—or the lift of the balloon's force impatiently tears it out of the ground, stake and all.

Another metaphor for this paradox is a ski-lift that would carry one up to the top of the mountain. In order for this to happen, one needs to be at the right spot at the right moment, so that one will be able to connect with the chair as it comes around and be carried away by it. Whether one is a step away or a hundred miles, one still misses that crucial connection and remains at the bottom of the mountain. However, progress can be regarded here in the form of every step one takes to move closer to that specific point of readiness, at which point one is taken. The actual work is not to get from here to there, but to realize more precisely where <u>here</u> is and *who* is here.

Other comparisons and differences between Rose's teaching and other similar philosophies will be discussed in later sections. Suffice it to say at this point that while the ego-mind cannot directly end itself, it must make efforts to bring itself more into alignment with the truth and lessen the density of its presence as an obstruction in the inquiry; all this being an aspect of "becoming." Rose points out a paradox that must be reconciled before the non-dualistic truth that Advaita expresses can be realized: "Before thou knowest nothing, thou must lie with the conceit of knowing... To avoid action, thou must first determine for great action" (Rose, 1975, p. 68).

All of the above described Laws as well as all the other principles of work discussed in this paper are generic in nature as presented. There is no standardized methodology to be followed by all. Each individual—as long as one believes oneself to be an individual—has different strengths to use, weaknesses to overcome, lessons to learn, and challenges to face. For this reason, Rose states that each seeker has to establish a personal "ways and means committee" to determine the specific tasks and practices one needs to undertake in order to apply these principles of the Way according to the needs of one's own unique nature. Some need to work on developing the reasoning ability more; others need to attend more to the feeling mode. Some need to do more work on the physical level; others need to turn away from the emphasis on the body and focus more on psychological or philosophical issues. Some need to develop power; others need to surrender to powerlessness. Some need to become somebody; others need to become nobody. Some need to feel greater hope; others are ready to realize there is no hope. One must devise one's own methodology to put these abstract principles into personal practice at the proper time.

A further comment should be made about intuition, especially in regards to the thorough implementation of Laws and principles of work. The term has different shades of meaning. In a practical sense, intuition here refers not so much to mystical vision or psychic insight as it does to mature common sense, tempered by refined emotional perception. Jean Klein refers to this simply as "Listening."

To conclude this section, here is Rose's curiously hypnotic explanation of this level of inquiry:

> This Path is not visible even by many who profess to be on a "Path." It is true that there are many paths, and it is also true that most people on those paths are quite convinced that theirs is the only real path. It is not until after they become broad enough to see that their path is at most only equal to many other paths that they take another step and look about for a path that will lead them still further. The graduation from the field of many paths to a more selective path among the decreasing choices of paths (as the searcher retreats from incomplete or lesser paths) is a phase of entering the final Path. (Rose, 1978, p. 194-5).

Chapter 9

Self-Definition, Point-of-Reference, and Retroversing the Projected Ray

All of this preparation brings us to the central issue in the Work: self-definition. What does it mean to define the self? What is truly meant when one says "I am"? Is it not enough to just "be"? How does one go about defining oneself; the one who is "being"? We are said to be created in God's image—but who precisely is the "we"? It obviously cannot be the body or human personality. Furthermore, as we are in fact more likely to create God in our own image, so long as we maintain a false imagining of ourselves, can we not help but concoct an equally fictitious God as well; one subject to the fallible human emotions and desires we project onto It? What of us is of God?

It is often said that it is important to "be true to yourself", yet there is a critical point being overlooked in this advice: it is necessary to know who "yourself" IS, or you might well end up being true to a false self; "actualizing" a self who is not really you. This would be like the joke about the psychologist telling the client: "I have some good news and bad news for you. The good news is that you have a strong, healthy, well-adjusted ego. The bad news is that it has no basis in reality." Or even worse: to be dying and watching someone else's life flashing before one's eyes!

Along these lines, someone once made the remark: "You are who you pretend to be...so be careful who you pretend to be." There is the common principle, encountered both in psychological theory and our personal experience, that there is an outer persona or social role based upon conditioning, and a real, inner self, underneath it all. This is true psychodynamically, but not existentially. We may be flattering ourselves by claiming more of an identity than we have really earned. In a pure sense, there may be no "real" human being apart from the "unreal" actor. (This could be qualified by saying the "real" human self is our naturally intended psychological programming and the "false" self is its unfortunate ego-projection, with all its attendant delusions. While it is certainly ideal to be congruent, for the outer personality to be true to the healthy promptings of this inner voice, from another perspective this entire experience of selfhood—right or wrong—is seen to be on the same plane of consciousness and not the true "I" for which we are searching.) It is all on the record. It is all equally "real" (or unreal). *All is seen.* You are what you do, as Rose has said. If we lie, we are the lie. This is also why the simplistic philosophy of "be who you are" is inadequate, or even dangerous. If we indiscriminatingly assume that we are whoever we experience ourself to be, we may be identifying with pathology as well as virtue. Without correct self-definition, our lives have no basis in fact.

As did Merrell-Wolff, Rose declares our perspective on reality is inverted: "Only the Essence is real, but to us it is nebulous. It is we who are nebulous, struggling from one shadowy dimension to another" (Rose, 1979c, p. 17).

In light of this, some obvious questions come up. Rose asks: "Is life really worth living? If (the individual) does not know who is living—who *or what* is taking the most profit from his pleasure-experiences? Is he really the thing that enjoys, or is he programmed into believing he enjoys?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 81). Not only do we wonder who is living, but we must ask: who is it who is faced with oblivion? For, after all, what is the value of life—even a healthy, successful, and "happy" one—when only death is certain? What is worthwhile? Is a person to be nothing more than "a moment of consciousness between two oblivions," as Rose taunts?

We are taught how to live, but not why. We are mechanically compelled to choose goals, values, and rewards, and to revel in their attainment, yet the nature of the self that has these things and experiences their fulfillment is never properly defined, nor its genuineness challenged. We trust in our ability to decide on a course of action or a bauble to pursue, but never stop to question why we are doing it. What are our premises? What generates our values and desires? Who is it who identifies with values and desires and is victimized by their compulsion?

In "new thought," metaphysical circles, we are encouraged to "create your own reality," and a partial understanding of qualified techniques or levers is offered to enable one to manipulate some of the factors and props in this dimension according to one's wishes. However, the thrill in this new-found power can cause one to overlook the issue of WHO it is who is creating things and what is determining one's motives behind one's efforts to determine conditions. Can a self who is undefined and thus possibly invalid create reality, or could any such skillful legerdemain be any more than projection of one's vanity and ignorance onto the walls of one's cave? Would not "reality" be what IS? Can anything the ego creates be considered real? Can a dimension that is so moldable by mind-power be considered entirely real? Would not the acknowledgement of its malleability dissuade one from taking much pride in its conquest? Should not the real priority then be to find the fact-status of one's essential identity and the underlying nature of the world we see?

As Gurdjieff explained, we are tricked into believing in a false sense of personal, unified, consistent identity, whereas we are really little more than an on-going association of impulses, conditioning, reactions, and identifications. We view mental patients afflicted with multiple personality disorder (what is often misunderstood by the general public to be schizophrenia) and feel sorry for their plight, while never suspecting that we are looking at only more extreme forms of ourselves.

Our current conviction of selfhood can be likened to a sports team. Someone says: "I've been a Yankees' fan all my life—they're the best," implying that this team has been one, constant entity all along. The reality is that the players on the team come and go over the years; after 20 years it is an entirely different "team." The only thing constant is the team name, the uniform, and the home-city. The personal, biological equivalent of this is that throughout life the cells in the body continually die and are replaced by new cells; the complete cycle taking seven years, after which time there is actually an entirely different body. Yet, we still identify with this body and its programmed personality as "me," because it has the same name and social security number. What selfhood is constant? Can a self that is not constant be considered genuine? What does an amnesic old person have in common with the infant the person once was? It is lazy, dishonest philosophy to nervously claim: "Well...it's all me." What is the self?

With all this in mind, the core question, "Who am I?" might be misleading. It does not imply the assumption that one really is the person one is experiencing oneself to be, but simply does not

know this person well enough yet, and so needs to become more familiar with one's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, joys and sorrows, etc. This is not the goal of self-definition—although, knowing the person whom one "is" is certainly an integral part of the whole process of discovery.

But there is more. One needs to seriously consider the possibility that the self (small "s") is not who one really is. The point here is not to just believe this alternative either as a concept, because it sounds "cosmic," but to inquire into this question further to determine the truth of the matter.

We generally assume ourselves to be a body with a name and history, with thoughts, feelings, convictions, and experiences associated with and derived from this body. Rose, as do all his traditional peers, states this is a false self-definition. He says we reflexively respond to our feeble questioning of our identity by trusting in what seems to be: "At first, the face in the mirror smiles back reassuringly." The seeming solidity and promise of this identity may seduce one into a false sense of security. We base not only our identity on this physical entity, but gauge the nature of reality by this body's sensual perception and experiencing of life.

Rose says we should not trust this: "Man is not going to find reality if he accepts that which his body tells him, or that the body is all of him". The body is certainly important as a foundation, a vehicle, and a tentative reference point for beginning one's investigations, but he is saying it is a mistake to worship the body as the end-all of the quest for selfhood or that its experiences and perceptions provide infallible data to determine what is true.

One of the most obvious reasons for this philosophical objection to our wholly identifying with the body is simply that the body will die. Meaning, or validity, inherently implies a state of permanence, of indestructibility, for it to be fully real. Whatever can die and *can be seen to die* cannot be the final answer abiding outside the stream of time. As all experience for the human being is imprinted in some synaptic or organic form, what form of immortality could we contemplate once the recording medium for these memories disintegrates? Even in cases of severe amnesia or degenerative nerve disease associated with senility, when experience-memory is lost, can that "person" be said to still exist? What is the reality of that person's previous life, joys, victories, loves, etc. when the memory of them is gone? Even if such data is also preserved in some spiritual form (the Akashic Record, some say), once the ego-self that identifies with the experiencing physical person is gone from the scene, who would remain to appreciate this completed lifetime? Objective meaning requires an objective Appreciator. The only hope for immortality would then be to adjust to an after-death state that was one of awareness only.

The significance of the apparent inevitability of death in regards to self-definition is that even the highest wisdom does no good if it rots along with the brain and nervous system, or DNA-bearing chromosomes that contains it. As such, those metaphysical systems that aim at personal development of the relative, mundane mind, or religious doctrines that promise salvation for the individual human being, can be of no ultimate value if the person who would be the recipient of these eternal benefits is made of transient stuff. Rose comments: "These eminent states that we reach, all the way up to Cosmic Consciousness, are still experienced by an animal. But are we really animals?" (lecture, 1976). Likewise, to speculate or even rely upon a perfected, spiritualized body resurrecting in heaven must be recognized as an evident bit of rationalization for holding onto one's Earthly self in some form. Why would one need a body in what could only be realistically regarded as a non-relative dimension? Does heaven have gravity, air, food, plumbing, etc.?

To find Reality, the seeker must find that part of the self that really IS; the part that remains when all else is gone. To merely believe that one has a divine, immortal soul is insufficient, if the one

who holds the belief will die, and this soul is not discovered in time. If this postulated soul does not know itself in life, by what justification can we confidently assume it would automatically know itself in death?

Rose provides some insight into the direction this inquiry must take:

> One of the first things you would find is that you don't exist, especially as you think you are. You go take a look in the mirror and you are very happy with what you see there: "Oh, look at what God piled on this earth to grace it and make other people jealous." But after awhile, you realize that you are a blob and you are waiting for them to dig a hole to put it in so it won't smell the place up, and that is all there is to you as far as your logical proof is concerned. Now: if there is something else—how do you find it, and if you find it, how do you define it? In terms of the body which doesn't exist? (Rose, 1985, p. 51).

He is once again confronting the seeker with the fact that, as we know ourselves now, we have no valid ground or essence to our being, but only live on presumption founded upon an insubstantial ego which was wholly created by programming and circumstances we did not choose (this receptive "we" itself being nothing more than the identification with what was chosen for "us"), despite whatever vain metaphysical notions we may entertain about having "created" our life-story in between incarnations. This latter conviction still begs the question as to who it is who is mapping out the human experience to come, on what is the value-system governing these decisions based, and is the self then this script-writing soul or the authority to which this soul answers? Can even this soul be watched—by what?? Nonetheless, the undefined person, "...struts across the stage of life and bravely postulates himself" (Rose, 1978, p. 39).

This is not to imply that the ego is wholly negative or useless. It has its place. As discussed in an earlier reference to Gurdjieff, he regarded the ego as something that could ideally be established as a willful, truth-seeking philosophical "I", in place of the collection of fragmented, false "I's" the person really is doomed to be otherwise. Rose also acknowledges the functional value of such a philosophical "I" while still on the path, but is very strict to warn that even this should never be mistakenly regarded as the real self, as all egos, finally—the seeker too—are seen to be false and to be eliminated or escaped.

The search for valid selfhood and the true perspective on life that is possible only from this vantage point should be the rightful domain of psychology, yet it has historically failed to address this matter in any depth. For the most part (excepting Frankl, Jung, Assagioli, Maslow, and a few other extremists), the field of psychology has ignored the issue of meaning and identity, or misdefined it, by reducing it to strictly utilitarian, socio-behavioral terms. However, Rose claims this is a serious dereliction of duty and the original objective of psychological investigations has been largely lost. He claims: "Psychological discovery is equal to spiritual discovery, but the present directions of psychological discovery will not bring us even a proper self-definition, much less any Self-Realization" (Rose, unpublished group papers).

The common testimony of mystics has always been that there is one true desire behind all desires and pursuits in every person: the Self-longing for the conscious experience of its own being, through "us", the human being. The real nature of the higher Intuition is the recognition of and response to this yearning.

Another common assertion made in all spiritual teachings is that the basic problem at the root of all our other problems is that of our having a case of mistaken identity. All suffering is due to our

experiencing life through an erroneous sense of self, from an incorrect vantage point, processed through a defective mind, and seen with clouded vision. Correlated with this is the promise that when one arrives at the realization of the true Self, all is seen to be perfect, and the suffering of the now non-existent "individual" to have been a state of delusion.

However, before being able to find this Self, which at this point must be admitted to be only an intuitive concept and not a reality, one must fully understand what the nature of one's current state is and how it came to be. We need to recognize all the ways in which our sense of self has been distorted and how our notion of valid identity has been a rash presumption.

One common example with which most people are familiar is the difficulty in maintaining and following through with a vow. Whether the vow is for an honorable marriage, celibacy, breaking a habit, starting a new discipline, or any other challenge, if one is not a single, unified self with an undivided will, the fulfillment of the vow will be fraught with conflict, as one "I" will be making the vow, and another, later "I" will be unable or unwilling to live up to it. The mental trick of procrastination is another common example. By saying: "I'll do it tomorrow" or "I'll be stronger, more capable, more responsible, etc. later," one is deliberately dividing oneself into two people: one who is now indulging is some weakness or compromise, and the idealized "other" to whom one is transferring one's work or burden for later; this dynamic, agreeable "someone else" not being regarded as oneself. What is most important is that we can watch ourselves playing this game, or negotiating such intra-psychic conflicts.

We are seduced from the moment of birth into a false sense of identification through language and social convention and may never in a lifetime become aware of how our pristine minds were sidetracked into false categories that simulate reality. Mommy asks: "Are you hungry (cold, tired, etc.)?," and right away the child is taught to identify the bodily sensation of hunger, temperature, fatigue, etc. as being of oneself, rather than its being only the experience of the body that one is somehow monitoring. Someone asks: "How old are you?"; the slyly imposed implication being: "When did your identification with this body begin?" We learn to distinguish mine from yours, winning from losing, us from them; each lie being unsuspectingly internalized, until one's entire life and identity become one big lie.

Another presumptuous question some ponder is: Does one's life begin at conception or birth? Yet, they fail to specify: Whose life? What is born? Where do we draw the line between the mother's life and the child's, and why? Is the self the body or is it something that identifies with the body? Is what is identified with the body only an ego-mind that derives from the body itself? Could it be there are no individual lives that begin and end, but there is only Life, whole and undivided, and the awareness of it, including the awareness of assorted pompous ghosts who believe they are someone, even possibly "divine"?

Ram Dass once made the following astute comment: "There really is no such thing as 'us' and 'them'—there is only 'us'. The only distinction that can be made between people is between those of us who know we are 'us' and those of us who don't!" (lecture, 1982). At least one sub-culture within the Rastafari sect in Jamaica goes a step further: they incorporate this understanding into their very language, thus reflecting a living perception and not merely an idealistic concept. The one speaking in conversation refers to oneself to as "I," but all other people—whether "you," "he/she," or "they/them"—are referred to as "the-I." Everyone is "I" in some form; there is no word for any "other." This indicates a quality of holistic consciousness different from our norm of fragmentation and alienation.

As admirable as this perspective is, the exact meaning of even such a humane "I" is still uncertain. The infant that soiled its diapers is usually not proudly owned years later as being "me", yet at

what age do we become "us"? Where do we draw the line between who we were and who we are? In taking careful inventory of oneself, one will find several different levels and categories of identification for this "I" occurring simultaneously:

A. The body as a whole entity.
B. Specific body parts or sensations (stomach, sex organs, toothache).
C. One's psychological makeup, or "the person" (personality, attitudes, desires, egos, feelings, reactions).
D. One's mental processes, or "the thinker" (values, judgments, beliefs, evaluations).
E. Assorted social and functional roles throughout the day (spouse, parent, child, employee, athlete).
F. More consistently maintained roles (black, Jew, American, man, woman).
G. Identification with possessions or projections (my car, my mate, my appearance, my guru).
H. Identification with one's circumstances, events, interpersonal relationships (the "story of life") and for some:
I. The mental ego of being a "seeker" or religious pilgrim
J. The mental experience of observation, discernment, and awareness
K. The dualistic spiritual experience of "communion with God," "finding one's soul", or "being in Heaven."

The final Self or Absolute that contains all of these fixations is not yet realized.

It is difficult to not identify with the body, yet one can look at the issue from unconventional angles to disrupt the usual equating of oneself with the body's experiences. The questions can be pondered: "If my brain was transplanted into someone else's body, who would 'I' then be? If my parents had instead married other spouses and each had children by these other unions, who would 'I' be? If my body (including my brain with its memories) was exactly cloned and there was then two of me, which one would 'I' be? If my neck was severed on a guillotine, would my head be chopped off—or would my body be chopped off?" Odd questions, admittedly, but contemplation of such koans may result in a different understanding of who one is and is not.

Most religious or metaphysically inclined people assume their real identity is that of a "soul" incarnating in a body for the purpose of experience, education, and evolution. Even if this is true, the question remains as to where this soul-identity leaves off and the identification with experience begins—where is the line drawn? Is there such a thing as an individual soul at all? What we generally call a soul may be the misidentification of the impersonal Self with a cluster of experience, which is personified as the ego and projected into the ether as a spiritualized human. Is the soul the face at the end of the ray of the Spiritual Sun, or Atman, and the ego is a mask on that face? To look at this from another angle: in cases of out-of-body or after-death experiences—<u>who</u> is being out of the body or experiencing this visit to death? (This is a good metaphor, though, for the real, final experience.) In what is this non-physical self floating, then? In what is this larger space? Does the one who is out-of-body think, feel, and perceive? If these contents of the experience can be seen, is the real self then the out-of-body experiencer—or the seer of this?

Related to all this, someone once made the remark that to die being no different than the last time one died is a great shame and waste. Should this be true, it requires us to focus in on the issue of what precisely it is that reincarnates and what exactly it is supposed to accomplish through successive lifetimes to show a profit. Is there a distinct and separate entity that ties together these hypothesized, different lifetimes, or is there only one final Viewer of all life? As the seeker does not know the truth of the matter at this point in the search, one can only recall Rose's stern question: "<u>What are you</u>

doing?" and hope to be doing something that holds some promise of one's finding the answer. His emphasis in the teaching on developing "being" is not to be mistaken for the perfecting of a reincarnating "soul" until it becomes Godlike, but rather the functional efforts of an admitted pseudo-entity within a dream that aims at cracking the cosmic egg and realizing the ever-existent aware Self it intuits is outside of it.

We are not certain who we really are, but we can begin to take inventory of everything we are not: all our egos, experiences, categories, and concepts. Death will strip all these from us anyway, revealing whatever is left that may survive death. As one witty fellow said: "Life is a process of losing our illusions, until finally, we lose the illusion that we're alive" (Brilliant, Potshots). It is more promising to deliberately begin this discrimination while we are still able to do something about it and expedite the discovery of what remains.

As always, Rose alerts us to a paradox within a paradox. Despite the harshness implied and skepticism encouraged in many of these pointed questions asking us to define our identity, he also asks: "Yet (are we not) different from other humans? Behind this apparent external difference, may there not (also) be an internal uniqueness; a part that is separate from all, yet which is not alone or lonely in the face of infinity?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 80).

At this point in the quest, the truest definition of one's identity can only be: amnesic consciousness. In one's most honest self-reflection, the seeker realizes that one's highest point of reference is the awareness of the sea of unknowing in which the troubled, doubting questioner exists and labors to answer itself (as a possibly fictional self). The final Witness of this melodramatic scene is still unknown.

This brings up a crucial point; one that is rarely if ever addressed, even in esoteric seeking. It is one of the key principles in the Albigen System and a valuable new contribution to this field: **the point-of-reference**. Its meaning is difficult to convey because to understand it requires that one recognize one's entire sense of self and experience of life as being somewhat erroneous and not absolutely valid "as is." We do not realize this now. All knowing, seeing, feeling, choosing, meditating, etc. presupposes a "self" who is the subject of these experiences and that this self as a baseline or arbiter is infallible, neutral, and fundamentally "true." This bottom line is almost never questioned nor examined by anyone, in any field of research. It is taken for granted, and all attention is focused instead upon defining the object of study or experiencing the experience. Yet, without a valid point-of-reference as a foundation, all perceptions, assessments, conclusions, etc. based on it become unreliable, if not worthless for serious research.

An example of this is the perspective on history as it is taught in different countries or subcultures. The white, European male view of world events will differ from the African or Chinese or feminist. Columbus is considered to have "discovered" North America—even though native peoples had lived there for thousands of years. Thus, a variation on the standard phenomenological question arises: Does life experience officially happen if there is no white man around to witness and acknowledge it? The Bible had exclusively designated the mid-East as the center of human religious history, yet was God any less real or sought for by the peoples of India at the time? As another example, the descriptive rationale for a war will vary according to each participant's motives, while each claims absolute righteousness, as if endorsed by God. The equivalent on the personal level is the reflexive, egocentric self-justification of our evaluation of reality. We assume we are the standard of mental clarity, measuring all others from our reference point as the baseline. We need to consider the possibility that we have an incomplete and erroneous perception of reality, and that compared to the state that could be called genuine sanity, we are insane.

This becomes especially important in esoteric research, as the focus of study is not only upon the objects of desired knowledge or attainment, but also the subject who is pursuing or inquiring after these things. We do not only study experience, but also the experiencer. We cannot presume to define God without first defining the God-seeker. To understand the meaning of point-of-reference involves being able to "see" one's view of existence—including one's "own" life within it—from a radically different vantage point.

Acknowledging this principle is particularly indispensable in meditation. Rose raises a critical question as a way of making this point. He comes in from an unexpected angle and may surprise those who assume they already know what meditation is: "We must define our basic point-of-reference. In meditation, we are advised to 'go within'. But these words are not sufficient. How do you go within if you do not know *where* 'within' is? How do you go within if you do not know who is going 'within'?" (Rose, 1985, p. 295). In other words, there is no inside/outside or me/not-me without a point-of-reference to use as the subjective basis for measurement and for thus delineating the boundary lines.

This is another reason why Rose stresses the primary issue in the spiritual search as being precise self-definition, rather than the search for God, bliss, power, knowledge, or peace, and in fact these other goals being meaningless, so long as the one searching for them remains unknown. He is claiming that all religious, philosophical, and psychological systems must be recognized as fundamentally inadequate when it is seen they lack a valid and provable point-of-reference. The search for Truth must also be a search for the real Self, which can be the only true point-of-reference.

This describes the course psychology must take in order for it to be a legitimate spiritual science. The Self as point-of-reference is what will lead to answers to the important psychological questions posed earlier: What is thought and what is the relation of thought to the body? (meaning: where does thought occur?); Where does experience occur? Where is it seen?; What is sanity?; Is consciousness the same as awareness?; and Is there an awareness that survives the death of the body? Rose differs from behavioral approaches to psychology, conceptual approaches to philosophy, and devotional approaches to religion by earnestly recommending: "We should start with consciousness or awareness as the points-of-reference" (Rose, 1985, p. 309).

The point-of-reference can be likened to the cursor on a computer video-screen. It is where the subject or experiencer actually is within that computer-dimension and is the focal or matrix point from where one works. The seeker is that cursor in one's mental dimension of experience, following out his/her program; encountering other distinct seekers, who are following out their respective programs. (The further metaphor of: "Who is watching the entire screen, directing all cursors and manipulating all variables?" is also to be kept in mind.)

We immediately run into a paradox once again. We are attempting to find the Self, which is the only valid point-of-reference, yet we are searching for that Self from an invalid or only relative point-of-reference that cannot serve as an adequate basis for such investigation. Rose describes how this is a problem in any attempt at serious philosophical or metaphysical inquiry:

> Most logic is vanity, however we must approach problems in a sensible manner. In spiritual or esoteric fields, logic finds loose footing, because logic requires a point-of-reference to make it valid, yet any relative or earthly foundation becomes unstable where we observe it in regard to its ultimate reality in relation to the subtle dimensions of the mind or spirit. (Rose, 1986, p. 42).

At this point, one is tempted to quit and pray for a Savior to show up. Yet, what this above admission really accomplishes is that it confronts all the false points-of-reference which one might be inclined to trust, and forces one to work on refining that quality of being-awareness that Rose says can be the only valid point-of-reference. Paradoxically, the very work at this difficult task does refine the definition of the self doing the inquiring. All this is not merely an abstract, theoretical concern. It directly relates to one's very understanding of what spirituality entails. For example, the principle of reincarnation is often taught as a central feature in many spiritual doctrines, and there are people who claim to recall their past lives in a hypnotic regression state or are told of their past lives by psychics. Rose does not emphasize this principle in his teaching partially because it leaves out the delicate matter of who it is who is reincarnating and benefiting from the succession of lives. To merely say it is the "soul," but without directly realizing this soul as one's point-of-reference, leaves it a useless topic, however fascinating the data received may be.

Advaita Vedanta teaches that reincarnation is only true for those who assume they are an individual entity—however rarified in substance—and insist on believing this "person" must continue throughout lifetimes. In actuality, however, reincarnation is said to not really exist simply because the one who is allegedly reincarnating does not really exist. No one is incarnating <u>now</u>. There is no discrete, individual experiencer at the core of life-experience who is separate from it. There is only experience—and the awareness of it. What could be said to "reincarnate," in a sense, is the continuation of effects from prior causes manifesting in new forms. Yet, even this understanding is dualistic and linear. In truth, the interconnected system of life is one seamless unit and in this timeless, dynamic flux, everything happens at once, not in sequence by isolated fragments in juxtaposition. *There are no lifetimes with people in them*—there is only undivided life experiencing its self-contained, balanced, wholeness. So, even though this homeostatic mechanism may be considered as karma, no one "has" it. Who is the "you" who would reap what has been sown? As was earlier speculated, there may be an individualized awareness in manifestation, but paradoxically, this awareness—much like the relation of a drop of water to the ocean or a ray of light to the sun—is of one essence.

Rose added another twist to this theme in response to a questioner who optimistically referred to the principle that people must go through the cycles of death and rebirth in order to continue learning and growing, etc. Yet, what he picked up behind the question was the veiled desire to maintain some subtle sense of personal continuity and postpone the total negation of selfhood:

You're hanging onto the fence. You have to let go of what you think things are. (Regarding) the idea that there's no birth unless there is dying—it's possible that "you" may not experience birth. That the only reason why people do experience birth is they never realized they could stay dead. They maybe feel compelled to play the game; to go back on the stage. (Rose, 1985, p. 88-89).

He does not deny it is possible to tap into the memory-experience of other lifetimes. He only questions if that lifetime "belongs" to the one (believed to be the person) doing the viewing. He suggests the metaphor of there being a central film library in another dimension outside our seeming sequence of time, which contains the lifetimes of everyone who has ever lived or will live, on reels of film. Our great, great, grandchildren's lives are already recorded on the reels as well. He says that what may be happening when "past lives" are witnessed is that one is genuinely seeing a lifetime that has occurred, but that one is rashly assuming this life was "mine", when in fact it was not, as neither the one watching it is a real, distinct, permanent entity, nor does that lifetime have a unique core or soul in it as its owner—unless one equates "soul" with a ray of impersonal awareness. The experience-stream of life is all a form of consciousness, yet consciousness is no more "ours" than is air, just because we breathe it in. There is only awareness of it.

This same issue arises in regards to the attempt to attain "liberation" by any number of methods of meditative practice: what are the precise boundaries of the entity who is being liberated and from what is it being liberated? Perhaps the lesson to be learned through many lifetimes is that no real self was ever living and evolving. Realizing that no one was ever imprisoned is liberation. As an additional note on this subject, another reason why Rose does not encourage speculation or dependence upon reincarnation is because it can too easily be used as a rationalization to avoid effort in the present. If there are hundreds of lifetimes available ahead of us, and possibly more advantageous ones at that, why not procrastinate and do the harder work later? One may feel buffered against the sting of death, not due to wisdom, but the pseudo-certainty of conceptualized continuity. This belief allows one to hold onto the security of the "me" indefinitely and never have to confront the beckoning oblivion. One can deny the discomfort of a meaningless existence in the now. Rose says that all we honestly know is today, not tomorrow. There might not be a later. Should one risk a bid for eternity on an idea picked up in a book? Besides, there is no justified reason to assume one will be any more capable or inclined to face the issues that must be faced in some hoped for future lifetime than now. We may reincarnate as a weakling or coward next time too.

There is a final, more subtle reason for this dismissal of one of the most cherished, standard principles in most esoteric teachings, and it relates to all that has been said so far about non-duality, becoming the truth, and direct realization. Although Rose does refer to progression, signposts, mental refinement, and such, he is not suggesting that Reality is the culmination of eons of personal development. As later material will explain, he sees all of relative existence as one, interconnected tableau—and Reality is at a right angle to it (so to speak), not the highest point on that plane. He is saying that one does not need to know about past lives or about a million other details of esoteric lore. God (or Truth) was no more real or near in the past than now, nor will it be in the future after massive efforts at self-betterment have been made. He states that to isolate the essence of oneself now is the crucial task, as it is the same beckoning Reality, always. Accomplishing this does take some time—until arriving at that "place" where there is no time or progress.

With this perspective in mind, spiritual maturity can be partially assessed by whether one regards the prospect of reincarnation as a joy, promising further delights—or a threat, signifying failure and further imprisonment. Clinging to the hope for reincarnation can be more an indication of unacknowledged materialism, egotism, and fear than spirituality.

These comments about the insubstantiality of the ego-self run counter to the common, human desire to be effective "doers" and masters in one's own life. There is, once again, a paradox in this. Rose does, of course, strongly urge the seeker to become a dynamic, unified vector of truth, fighting against adversity from within and without, and remaining determined until the end. Yet, he also says that as we are now, "Man does not move as much as he is moved" (Rose, 1982, p. 138). We like to believe that we make choices, satisfy desires, assert values, and such, but Rose sees people as simply being the end result of all they have been made to be.

There is another way of saying this. The humbling message is that most people have little power other than in their identification with the powerful forces that use them. The bit of psychological adroitness the seeker has to manage is to place oneself under the influence of forces that are aimed towards one's ultimate benefit. The robot cannot exactly stop being a robot, but it can become a robot that takes a bold step out of the mad parade and begins to search for its Programmer, following the guidance that is provided.

The point-of-reference as a pivotal issue in inner work needs to be further addressed. Its significance is that every philosophical question or spiritual concern is relative to the reference point

from where it is generated, as it is only the "self" at that point who can appreciate the answer and is upon whom validity is based.

Questions that are asked in daily life, whether in a court of law, political negotiations, the scientist's laboratory, or a marriage counseling session, about "What is the truth?" usually fail to take into account the reference point from which the question is asked and to which the issue applies. In carelessly overlooking this crucial factor, one mistakenly looks for an absolute answer within a relative realm, thereby cursing the inquiry into the impossibility of a real solution. In the realm of theology, God is said to have created the universe in six days—yet how long was a day to God? How could time be measured before there were objects and motion, or later, before the Earth and Sun were in the same spacial relationship as now?

Point-of-reference is a principle easier to illustrate than explain. For example, it is meaningless to ask: "What time is it?," without also stating where—in which time zone?; or "How far is New York?"—from where?; "How much is this worth?"—to whom? "How fast is the earth moving through space?"—in relation to what? "How much does this weigh?"—on which planet? *What time is it on the moon?* WHERE IS THE UNIVERSE LOCATED?

It is necessary to recognize the point-of-reference in assessing social paradigms. An A.M.A. journal article on health may state that the cause of a particular disease is unknown and only drugs can remedy it—but neglect to identify: unknown to whom? Its cause and cure may well be known to practitioners of Natural Hygiene, whose articles would not be accepted in the journal. Likewise, a mainstream psychology textbook may omnisciently state that teenage sexuality is "accepted as normal"—but leave out: accepted by whom? A text on yogic psychology would certainly not accept this standard.

There is also a philosophical point-of-reference in relation to defining one's motives and objectives: "What do you want? What is your goal? What 'God' do you seek and serve?" The desire for Truth is not equivalent to the desire for peace, joy, power, love, success, knowledge, or salvation. Different objectives will require different methodologies and criteria for searching. It is important to have as clear an understanding as possible of the underlying desire generating the reasons for one's actions. Without knowing this reference point, one may end up following one tangent after another and satisfying one desire after another, but without answering the real yearning behind it all. For example, one may pursue the tracks of U.F.O.'s for decades in hopes of finally obtaining some message of inspiration from a source of benign, otherworldly consciousness, without realizing that what one is actually looking for is a connection with one's own higher Intuition and assurance therefrom that a path to non-mundane Reality exists.

This work on refining one's point-of-reference is not merely a philosophical exercise or discipline in preparation for something else. It leads one directly to a greater experience of true being. For example, a traditional question used in courses on epistemology is: "Does a falling tree in a forest make any sound if there is no one around to hear it?" This is meant to be a trick question to trip up the student, with the intended "moral" that without a listener as the point-of-reference on this experience, to complete the circuit, as it were, with the sound waves generated, there can not be said to be any real sound occurring. The point this bit of scholastic cleverness overlooks—and which leads straight into the realm of esotericism—is that while there might not be a person in the forest who perceives the falling tree, this does not mean there is no perceiver at all. A passing animal could hear. An insect living in the tree could hear. The other plants around it could hear. The spirit of Nature or of the Earth could hear. *The Observer could "hear."* The testimony of mystics is that there is nothing lacking an observer; the entire universe is itself *alive* and exists within a sea of living awareness. This

illustrates how the very definition of self changes as one's point-of-reference changes. With a sly chuckle, Rose has threatened: "One day I'll close my eyes—and the universe will disappear!"

There is another pertinent example related to the earlier topic of "doing." The perennial philosophical/psychological debate about "free will vs. determinism" is never satisfactorily settled because the point-of-reference is, again, not specifically established, and an undefined, omnipresent God-like vantage-point on experience is pompously assumed by the questioner. Yet, the answer is entirely dependent upon whether the reference point on the issue is within or without the individual (assuming for a moment there is individuality). When viewed from the inside-out, the person may well experience his/her life-actions as being freely chosen, while, when viewed from the outside-in (or in retrospect), the person's "will" may be seen as having been the identification with the billion and one factors acting together from all angles to determine the whole reality of the situation and this "individual's" course through life.

This paradox is best illustrated in the metaphor of life's being like a card-game. A given game has specific rules, procedures, hierarchies of advantage, etc., through which one negotiates a route leading towards victory. The individuals holding their hand of cards will make the appropriate play at each turn based on the cards they have, the collective circumstances of the game at that moment, the strategy they need to employ to win in that particular sequence, and so on. If no errors in judgment are made, each player will take the action that is optimal in their respective situation. Subjectively, one's experience is indeed that of "choosing" to make a particular move, but in fact, the "truth" of the play (so to speak) was objectively determined by the myriad of factors comprising that particular instant in the game. Thus, essentially: the game plays itself, and the players are found to be only the instruments of play, however varied and unpredictable the game seems to be from their vantage point. The fact is that the entire game was already contained in the deck of cards as soon as it was shuffled and put on the table. Are our lives qualitatively any different? What is "free will"?

The earlier mentioned principle: "Meaning is a function of being" relates to this theme in that the truth of life can only derive from the central, or anterior, self who is aware of this life, and through whom it flows. Thus, the Work is for seekers to refine their point-of-reference of identity and perspective through all lesser identifications and states-of-mind, until the true state-of-being and comprehensive vantage point on existence is attained. In other words: the answer to all questions—including "What is reality?" and "What is the meaning of life?"—is: "**I am**," so that the real question becomes: "Who am I?" The central message in Rose's teaching is that the true self is the observer, not what is observed. *From where does the observer see?* A final implication of point-of-reference, to be further discussed in a later section, is in regards to the transmutation of energy; also referred to in teachings of kundalini yoga and thaumaturgy. One's vital energy is focused and utilized wherever one's priorities and objectives are, and this depends upon one's level of being. One's energy is transmuted through the Work involved in ascending the ladder. Each rung where one's energy is devoted is one's current point-of-reference.

To continue with this key element in the Albigen System, there are more personal, psychological implications to one's point-of-reference in the work towards self-definition. An example of how one's selfhood is violated and seduced early on into a false category is with the terms, "here" and "there." Someone asks us as a child: "Are you from around here?," and one is immediately forced to reduce oneself into terms of location and limitation. The answer to this question all depends upon what boundaries one is setting on what is "here" and what is "elsewhere," as well as the size of this "you." When one sets no boundaries, there is no "there"; there is only here. Everywhere is *here.* "There" is here too, when "I" is everywhere. There is no enemy; no "other" to threaten us. Yet, we are not encouraged to think this way, lest one be considered uncompetitive and fit only for an institu-

tion. So, one learns to construct rigid ego-parameters in both identity and mentation, which only become more hopelessly calcified with age, until death mercifully ends the farce.

The matter of point-of-reference also comes up in regards to the common claim by hypnotists that subjects could not be made to do something while hypnotized that they would not normally do. There are several fallacies implied throughout this statement:

A. We are always in one form of hypnosis or another our entire lives. Those rare few beings who are not are called "Enlightened." Our minds are not "normally" free and clear, except when we voluntarily submit to hypnosis. Actually, it takes tremendous spiritual maturity to recognize one's existent state of hypnosis and to awaken from it. Strictly speaking, <u>all</u> identification with the mind and the contents of consciousness can be considered a form of hypnosis.
B. There is no single "person" who chooses one distinct value system. We are a conglomerate of many "I's", often with conflicting values. Even a dynamic, focused person may well be nothing more than the product of intense conditioning (e.g., a patriotic soldier). People who are drunk might do things they would not do when sober. Those possessed by sexual passion likewise. Is this much different from hypnosis?
C. If a person does not act on a hypnotic suggestion, it is not because one's virtuous character resisted it, but because there was another hypnotic suggestion already in place (referred to as "my will") that superseded the impetus of the new one. The course the psychological experience of hypnosis takes is dependent upon the "self's" range of identifications with various egos, programmings, and states-of-mind and which level or category of priority (point-of-reference) is being tapped at that moment.

A related theme appears in the therapeutic work of dream interpretation; the principle that all the characters and events in a dream are "you." The error, once again, is that this "you" is not precisely defined, and is not necessarily one, whole person. A war veteran who had been severely wounded in combat and who later has recurrent nightmares about fighting on the battlefield is not necessarily projecting himself into every enemy soldier who is firing on him, due to his own repressed hostility, anti-social feelings, intra-psychic conflicts, unresolved Oedipal issues, etc. He is dreaming this because he lived it and cannot forget the living nightmare of it. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar (unless one wishes to metaphysically speculate upon having created one's entire life-experience as a collective manifestation of the soul's destiny). It would be more accurate to state that everything in a dream is <u>related</u> to the "you" who is observing/experiencing the entire story—including the little "you" in the dream. This definition of the self is much bigger, or of a higher dimension, than the finite character in the story being witnessed. What would still remain is the necessity to fully define this observing self as an existential experience.

The experience of dreaming provides another good example of the meaning of point-of-reference—and is possibly a sly hint provided us by a benevolent deity about the real nature of experience and a clue about the direction towards reality. One can be aware of the shift in consciousness from the dream-state to the waking-state, and thus aware of the shift in one's point-of-reference. First, one is immersed in the dream that is being experienced, and then an instant later, one finds oneself in a different state of consciousness, with only dim memories of the "reality" of moments before. One is now in a new reality; ostensibly the real one. It is most valuable *to get a glimpse of the observation of the shift in paradigms between the two states of identification.* One should not fail to take the hint and should begin doubting one's current paradigm of waking consciousness and experience of "me-ness" as being the final reality. Keeping in mind the Law of Progression, a further awakening may be possible.

The acknowledgement of this principle gives the Albigen System an important pedagogical advantage over many "New Age" philosophies and simplistic misinterpretations of Advaita Vedanta and Zen. Some people study teachings of esotericism and encounter the inspiring message: "You are already Enlightened; you just don't know it!" Such a reassuring conviction then alleviates any need to prove it. This is functionally meaningless, dishonest, and even dangerous. This is like saying we are all really millionaires but we just don't have the money or can't remember where we buried it; or dreaming, but thinking in the dream: "I am really awake," while still wholly identified with the dream.

After all these previous examples of illustration, this is really where the principle of point-of-reference relates to the work of self-definition. The final truth may well be, as the sages claim, that the real Self is God, or the Absolute. However, if this is not a realization, it remains as nothing more than a concept in the mind of the fictitious dream-character one now is, to be used for comfort and as a justification for non-effort. There is no value in merely believing that one is really the Enlightened Self, if the one holding the conviction is not really this Self. There is tremendous effort involved in undoing that "you just don't know it."

It must be clearly understood: **our point-of-reference is whatever and wherever our state-of-identification as "self" exists as our experience**, whether it be the body, one's emotional condition, one's state-of-mind, a specific ego, or whatever. This may be later recognized to be mistaken and one may take a step up the ladder to a more valid estimate of self. In the meantime, we must know and be honest about where our "I" really is in the vast range of possible spaces and states, as, conversely, we are (realistically speaking) wherever our point-of-reference is, and not much more. This is, again, why Rose stresses the necessity for becoming the truth, rather than only conceptualizing it, worshiping it (the conviction that "belief in God" is good enough), or assuming one is it. This is protection from the temptation to "...pretend starting out on the path 100 miles up in the air, when you aren't really there," as he puts it. Strictly speaking, our truest point-of-reference currently can only be the awareness of our unknowing, our invalidity. He recommends that we humbly acknowledge this as our starting point.

The principle of point-of-reference also has practical applications in a therapeutic context, for oneself or in working with others. The most serious example is in the urge for suicide. A person is suffering and feels hopeless, and so wants to die. The problem in this is that the person has a mistaken understanding of "who" it is who needs to die, in order to end the suffering. As the self is usually fully equated with the body, the person kills the body. This is an overreaction that may not permanently solve the problem, but can seriously hamper further efforts to work on it. Suicide may only be procrastination in dealing with the real issue and one may later regret the act ("one" meaning: the mental pseudo-entity that believes in itself). When the anatomy of the concept of "self" is analyzed, one may discover that the mistake was in the maintenance of some ego, vantage point, or attitude that was erroneous and caused the subjective experience of suffering, apart from whatever objective hardships were occurring as events. Actually, the impulse towards suicide may be regarded as a crude, though vaguely accurate, intuition about what needs to be done as philosophical work. The esoteric path is a form of deliberate "suicide"—although what dies is not really oneself (and certainly not the body) but rather the identification with a false definition of self and all the psychic projections that go along with it.

There are various other examples that come up. A person who loses a body part in an accident or from surgery may be inclined to suffer from the belief that one's self has correspondingly diminished. Cases of multiple personality disorder are a classic form of confused self-definition, in which one's identity shifts among different points-of-reference, with no objective self overseeing them all.

People crippled by addictive personalities attempt to escape their emptiness and pain and to lose themselves by merging their identities with the objects of their hoped for salvation: drugs, alcohol, food, sex, "love", causes, etc.

People who are victims of rape or some other form of abuse sometimes identify with the injustice and degradation done to them and feel somehow responsible for it, rather than regarding themselves as victims. They may feel shame and guilt in their belief of having done something wrong or were deserving to have attracted the harm. Logotherapy works with such cases of unavoidable suffering and helps people to "reframe" their experience by enduring it with a detached dignity, rather than resenting it or feeling disgraced by it. The sense of self is not enmeshed in the experience, but regarded as separate from it; undefiled. People learn to not identify with or interject others' projected sins—and eventually neither with their own.

Paradoxically, others may consider themselves too entirely separate from their experiences in the form of a crystallized ego, and when harm comes in any form they resist it, resulting in the "psychic whiplash" of neurosis or psychosis. In this sense, the proper adjustment in understanding would be to accept the reality of the violation to the self as a whole experience or life-gestalt and follow through with the momentum of it to resolution in organic equilibrium. One's point-of-reference thus becomes the totality of the stream of experience and not only the rigid ego who has been victimized/traumatized by it.

A complementary pattern occurs with the criminals who commit the wrong. Oftentimes, there is the pattern of feeling some shame and guilt for what they are doing, while at the same time denying their crime to themselves and others, as a defensive measure by the ego. This too could be reframed to where they come to see that they are not so much predators as they too are victims—of their own insanity, stupidity, bestiality, or rage. If this difference in perspective is understood, the resistance to acknowledging their condition will end, self-forgiveness occurs, and a humble returning to truth can begin. The first step of the A.A. Twelve Step program (admitting being helpless with one's problem and surrendering to the authority of a higher power) is one good example of this shift in point-of-reference.

There is a common denominator of relevance to therapy to all these and other examples of erroneous points-of-reference and self-definition; something that will be explained more thoroughly in the sections on meditation and Jacob's Ladder. The message is that **it is always the truth-oriented part of the self that is obscured or deluded by the false self**. Whether the person identifies with a state of sickness or victimization, the real self is kept hidden behind the pathology. We generally do not sufficiently doubt the validity of our own identities and perceptions, and thus the outgrowths from their contamination: our feelings, desires, attitudes, beliefs, etc.; in short: our paradigm of life. Rose wants us to realize: "It is apparent that at times the inner self, or anterior observer is incapable of infallible apprehension...and even more it is capable of distorted creations" (Rose, 1979c, p. 11).

For example, a person may be manifesting some form of sexual perversion and justifying it as "my desire" or "my preference." By thus identifying with and accepting a state of pathology, the person does not fight it, but regards the state of delusion as "who I am and entitled to be," either claiming helplessness or a divine right in having been created this way by God. The clinician of misguided compassion may then unwittingly "enable" the client by reinforcing this external, parasitical, imposter-ego that feeds off the real inner self and its host body, rather than confronting its falseness and defying it. One must doubt one's "own" experience enough to be able to discern such mental/egoistic contamination of what is true. One must also be wary of the false self-observation that occurs within a state of delusion, which then justifies the state, instead of exposes it in the light of objective awareness from outside the state. In brief: the person has to learn to identify with the truest

part of oneself and view all aberrations that are negative to this anterior self (whether subtle or gross) as a form of violation, not an experience of "free choice"—with no price.

The result of such inner work is a paradigm shift, and the objective of such meditation is to see existence as it is, without any paradigm or ego-filter projected onto it, even a "spiritual" one.

There is one final bit of relevance to this topic. It concerns the method or strategy of presenting an esoteric teaching that aims at Enlightenment. One's not understanding the principle of point-of-reference results in the seeming conflicts between different teachings that may otherwise be complementary. It is very important to be clear about WHO the teaching is addressing and the WAY or direction of the inquiry being advised.

In Rose's teaching (as in Gurdjieff's and most other forms of progressive mental/spiritual development), the listener or receiver of the teaching is considered to be the human being as the seeker of something transcending the personal, which is only later discovered to really be oneself. Advaita Vedanta, which could arguably be considered the highest teaching or most direct path, speaks its message to the listener as being the True Self who is hidden behind the confused "person" who is looking for the True Self. Rather than devising a methodology for this seeker to arrive at the recognition of his own falseness and thereby Self-Realization, Advaita attempts to make contact directly with the part of this person that is true: that single ray of *being* emanating from the Self that passes through this person's awareness. The seeker's psychology, life, and efforts along spiritual lines are all considered to be fictional. The emphasis is upon reminding the Self of its identity as pure awareness only, isolating it, and backing it away from its delusive identification with this person-as-seeker. Rose's teaching ultimately brings the seeker to this same realization, but considers the understanding taught in Advaita to be towards the end of the path or the top of the ladder; the seeker requiring more accessible guidance (or necessary fiction) in the earlier stages of work.

A related distinction is that the Albigen System (as well as Zen) recognizes the student's point-of-reference to be in a state of duality, and hence one's efforts to transcend this plane requires acknowledging and mastering the paradox through the experience and use of tension. This involves the concentration upon one's koan, resulting in triangulation, transmutation, and comprehension; in a word: becoming. Advaita intends a non-dualistic path (or non-path, for a path is by definition dualistic, as it presupposes an individual doing something to get somewhere else, whereas the final Realization is said to be one of absolute unity—no seeker, no path, and nowhere to go), in which the constant point-of-reference is the awareness of (or from) wholeness.

It is crucial to understand this dichotomy of "ways" in assessing the interrelationship between all forms of spiritual search. A suggested perspective for their reconciliation will be presented in a later section.

To sum up much of the foregoing material, it could be simply stated that the essence of the Albigen System is the maintenance and continual refinement of one's point-of-reference of self-definition—which is the "becoming"—until the Realization of Truth is attained. What thus occurs is that one's point-of-reference of identity shifts from the experience of one's body in the world and one's psychological reaction to this experience, to that of the observer of this entire scene. What gradually happens, then, is that neither one's skin nor psyche is considered the boundary line between inside and outside, as it is to us now: what is inside of one's skin (all physiological processes) as well inside one's psyche (all subjective, mental experience) is not "inside" anymore, but now also "outside"—of the observing self.

Beyond a point, the meanings of inside and outside blur together. The astronomer looking outward to discover the origin of the universe and the mystic looking inward for the same purpose end up seeming very much the same.

Just as our point-of-reference in a movie theater is usually the story being enacted in the film and not the awareness of the person in the audience who is watching it, applying the principle, "As above, so below," Rose refers to the obvious larger metaphor of life itself being a picture-show projected onto a screen, and that we have learned, from the moment of birth, to identify with the image on the screen rather than realizing that we are the One watching. He confronts each person with the central issue the Albigen System is meant to answer: "**Beneath the numerous faces of personality and pretense, who is the final observer that watches and plays your role in life?**" (Rose, lecture poster).

Our remaining transfixed by the performance is not only due to ignorance and habit. We have also learned to love the fiction we create—while not suspecting that we too are created. We have grown an ego of pride and self-satisfaction in our role, reaffirmed through projection from others' eyes, to whatever extent we are successful in the usual pursuits in life. Yet, this conditioned enjoyment is also confronted for the emptiness it really is: "You must become an observer, instead of remaining an actor, before an audience of fools" (Rose, lecture poster).

Once we are sufficiently disillusioned by the insubstantiality of life as we know it, the untrustworthiness of our religious imaginings, and the flimsiness of our evident selfhood, the attention begins to turn inward and we wonder about our origin, suspecting that the solution to all our problems lies in discovering our forgotten source. This beginning phase is quite simple, yet one must be careful not to cheat against oneself in this direction too by escaping into concepts:

> When we ask ourself: "Who am I?," we are taking an initial step. We do not begin by saying: "I am this or that." We may concede that we cannot identify ourself properly, and feel that we are basically an awareness, with a body and mind somehow functioning and in contact with that awareness. We are aware of our mind, in other words, as well as being aware of the body. (Rose, 1979c, p. 64).

Rose is saying we should not immediately rush to answer our own question, based upon what seems to be or what we figure should be the case. We must openly consider the question and all that it implies. We are aware of a person who is wondering who this person ultimately is.

Different general categories of self-definition are provided by psychology textbooks, based upon the different levels of experience and reference points in daily life. The self is commonly equated with any or all of the following: one's body and its sensual experience, one's sexual functioning, one's social roles, one's personality makeup, one's thoughts and values, and the emotional nature of the child. Working with the principle of the process of elimination in gradually zeroing in on what we are, we first determine what we are not. We know we are not exclusively any of these psychic components because we can see them and we cannot be what we see, as they are apart from the one who is seeing. We are aware of these aspects of experience, yet would be mistaken to automatically assume we are them. We must excavate ourselves from the projection, as depicted on the cover of Psychology of the Observer.

There is a paradox here, as there inevitably is in everything we stop to examine. We must not go to the other extreme and reject all of these elements out-of-hand as not being us and claim that we are strictly some spiritual essence untouched by any mundane considerations. This is another common trap into which naive (or potentially corrupt) metaphysicians can fall: that all of life is "just an experience" and it makes no difference what someone does, as it is all for education and/or entertainment, with no penalties for mistakes and so one should sample everything at least once. This attitude could result in the reckless abandonment of one's health, sexual restraints, social responsibilities,

psychological integrity, etc., with the rationalization that the spirit is forever free, life is for unlimited experience, and everything is perfect in its own way.

Rose is quite strict in insisting on the principle of one's becoming the truth, and doing this by becoming truthful in all ways; not by dismissing all human experience, even the most debilitating, as irrelevant to a postulated spiritual essence one has not verified. Although, according to one way of looking at it, this latter point may ultimately be true, Rose states that the proper ordering of experience in the relative dimension is essential in order for one to ever realize spirit, otherwise one may become "stuck" in some pathological dead-end within the illusion and never be able to get out.

To start with, however, he wants to counter the strongest programming we have working on us; the one from which all other delusions derive: our identification with the body and the workings of somatic consciousness. Rose offers a realistic explanation of how to assess ourselves, based on his own experience:

> It will do us no good to deny the body as being part of us, but it is good to deny that it is all of us. Only when we have learned to become aware when the body is unconscious, will we be able to look upon the body-type of consciousness as being inferior and illusory. (Rose, 1979c, p. 63).

This is another reason why he counters materialistic psychologies and claims the proper direction to take in pursuing self-definition is back towards the source of awareness, rather than our habitual tendency to go outward into cataloging the endless permutations of relative variables, or indulging in the delight of their continually changing configurations. The "television set" of life is always on and there is an endless variety of shows from which to choose. Only the viewer is constant—and real.

This is not to be accepted merely as an inspiring theory. The practice of self-study reveals to one's inner vision that our previous sense of solid selfhood is not as consistent or unified as we have always trusted it to be. Rose here refers to the two levels or aspects of self-definition, human and transpersonal, that could be regarded as two ends of a ray: "Man is not an individual as much as he is a changing mass. He is, on the other hand, an unchanging unit of life, or absolute light, that the changing, relative man is unaware of" (Rose, 1979c, p. 35). The work is thus dual in nature: to thoroughly know the structure and nature of human experience, while also deepening and clarifying the quality of awareness of experience.

Rose generally avoids any metaphysical, cosmological discourse, as such comments can be nothing more than conceptual speculation to the listener who has not yet realized the truth to which he can only allude, and as such, can only become one more distraction or trap. However, he does occasionally risk describing what awaits the seeker at the end of the road, for the sake of encouragement and quickening the intuition:

> I am quite convinced that each person is a finger of the sun. The celestial sun; an Absolute Reality. The Atman and the Brahman—each person. That's the reason you find God by looking inside. Really finding yourself is finding where that Being touches you. And then when you find it—you find that it IS you. I'm not saying that it is a part of you; I say that it IS you. (Rose, 1985, p. 234).

This provides a more complete understanding of what self-definition involves. First, we must accurately identify the Atman in its earthly manifestation—meaning one's human self. Simulta-

neously, we must trace the individual "I" passing through the human mind back to its source in the ocean of awareness. This leads to Essence Realization, or Brahman.

This brings into question one of our most cherished notions; one fought for and asserted most emphatically in western culture: individuality. What exactly is individuality? What are its ("my") boundaries? What exactly is the dividing line between inside and outside; between me and not-me? If a 300-pound person diets and loses 150 pounds, is this individual now only half a person? Who is this "I" and how is it measured? Our definition of individuality changes the better we come to know ourselves. The line dividing the person from the environment begins to blur. The line dividing the inner self from the person becomes more distinct. Whether or not there is a real "i" at the core of our experience or there is only the final, impersonal "I" witnessing all experience is unknown to us at the outset of the search. We have to begin by knowing the human being, the seeker, and be open to whatever surprising conclusion this investigation might later have.

At a certain point in the inquiry, when the insight is deep enough, one's self-definition is found to be the awareness of the experience of one's subjectivity. One is no longer strictly the actor. Individuality no longer means being a unique, willful, distinctive, and self-satisfied person. It now becomes an imprecise "I-ness," of unknown origin, that has little or nothing to do with the vain antics of the person this nameless "I" is now witnessing. In fact, taking this line of inquiry to its conclusion, Rose offers a sneak preview of the definition of the real Self: *the final observer that is aware of all other "selves"* (Rose, 1978, p. 175).

This is still only a concept for us at this point. For now, the person is in the awkward position of having to engage in the search for self-knowledge without having a distinct self as the point-of-reference from which to mastermind the searching.

There is some aid available to us, however, that makes this shift in attention and priorities easier. This brings up one of the more unique aspects of Rose's teaching. He explains that every animal, including the human animal, has implanted in it by Nature two forms of programming: **curiosity** and **desire**. These are intended as goads to keep the organism functioning, to counter the natural tendency towards laziness and stagnation, and to motivate the creature to hunt for food and a mating partner outside its immediate gene pool, as well as keep it oriented towards the attraction of manifest life.

Rose says we have a choice in this matter. He does not recommend that we negate this programming, as do those teachings that advocate a more strictly monastic, world-renouncing, or even self-mortifying response to life. He suggests it is more shrewd to use these goads, as long as they are in us, for our own purposes. Instead of our going along for the ride in the usual directions where curiosity and desire would take us—the indulgence in organic life in all its diversity, Rose says we can use the momentum of these forces for spiritual inquiry instead.

He strongly recommends that seekers redirect their attention from the dazzling delights and entrapments of the outer world instead towards the questions of inner relevance cited throughout this paper. We should turn our curiosity and desire back on themselves and let our wanting to know who is really living be the new, deliberately chosen, obsession. As John Davis, a man who had experienced Cosmic Consciousness, once advised a student of Rose's: "Follow your fascinations," meaning: first zero in on your truest yearning among all others and then trust that its self-revealing intuitive investigations will lead you wherever you need to go to find your heart's desire.

This also goes under the heading of "using mechanicalness to defeat mechanicalness"; another standard principle of the Albigen System. We use the forces that would use us. One becomes curious about the workings of one's own mind, the real meaning of life, the nature of unexplained

phenomena, the resolution of the many koans and paradoxes that comprise the philosophical path, and the reality of this "God" we keep hearing so much about. One turns away from the programmed desire for pleasure, affirmation, acquisition, security, power, etc., and gradually admits that there is only one true desire demanding to be fulfilled: the yearning to find one's essence and the greater Reality in which it is rooted. The impulse of common selfishness is redefined into one's identifying with Truth, so that serving it is to one's ultimate benefit. The programming towards common gregariousness is manifested instead as the appreciation of co-workers on the path. The natural ego of achievement is redirected from earthly to spiritual aims. The organic fear of death is used as added motive for continuing the search for what does not die.

After studying oneself for quite awhile and living out the commitment to the search, one finds oneself backing further and further away from the known, which is now recognized to be insubstantial, and backing into the unknown: some beingness of validity and comprehension the seeker does not yet realize. The profound insecurity of this position is undoubtedly one of the reasons for the—usually unconscious—resistance most people feel towards any kind of serious introspection. Rose, however, offers an apt, poetic description of who this seeker really is; a description that provides some slight comfort to those who are able to bear the responsibility this status requires. He says at this point, the seeker's self-understanding reveals that one has finally become only *a question asking a question.* One must learn the difficult trick of boldly acting without a worldly ego of self-importance, nor an inner, fictional "me" to support the psychic infra-structure. After some measure of duality has been transcended and the commitment internalized, one <u>becomes</u> the koan, the path, the knock on the door. One becomes the unknowing.

This is leading us now to one of the most important principles in the Albigen System; one that distinguishes the method of search Rose advocates from most other religious or even esoteric teachings. He calls it: **retroversing our projected ray**.

He explains how he came to realize that this was the necessary procedure to follow for attaining Self-Realization: "I started to analyze thought. I figured if I can find out what the essence of thought is, perhaps I'll know what the mind is. And if I know what the mind is—I may know what my essence is" (Rose, 1985, p. 62). In this one statement, he is largely summing up the rationale behind his entire system of meditation.

Why should this emphasis upon knowing the nature and workings of the mind be so important? Why does Rose regard such work as a short-cut to finding the Truth, compared to the paths of the fakir, the monk, and the yogi (the first three "ways" referred to by Gurdjieff)? He describes the reason for this manner of work with a simple image: "The mind is the edge of the body; the umbilical cord. If you wish to know your source, retraverse the umbilical cord." Then, he adds: "The only way you are going to realize God is through the mind itself; as Jung said: 'back through the center'" (Rose, 1985, p. 50-51). The stereotypical image of the yogi meditating on his navel is thus a serious metaphor for the real meaning and direction of meditation.

There are several aspects to this reversing or inverting of the mind's attention, which will be presented in detail in the sections on meditation, the psychology of observation, and Jacob's Ladder. The primary reason to mention at this point is again a simple one: "Return [to your Source] on the same road that got you where you are now." In this statement, Rose is describing the primordial problem as being that the original Self somehow got itself seduced and then lost in its own projected creation. What is now necessary is for this point-of-reference to pull back from its identification with the objects on the picture-screen and return to its state of ultimate subjectivity (which is thus also objectivity) along that same ray of awareness on which it was erroneously projected in the first place. We have each inherited our personal form of this collective curse and must individually do whatever

work is necessary in our own confused psychology to return back on that "same road" to our original sanity, until discovering there is no longer the illusion of individuality.

Another obvious implication of this in regards to introspection is that the practice of meditation should not consist of one's becoming further identified with some created state-of-mind or belief-concept of a religious nature, however sincere the motive or accurate the object of faith might be, but to focus instead on one's personal experience of consciousness and learn to progressively discern the false from the true within it, and simultaneously the view from the viewer of it. This also has a practical relevance in therapeutic introspection. We learn to recognize all the ways in which our original pristine consciousness was incrementally deceived and perverted by the forces of ignorance in life and, by seeing the truth, to affirm our real selves by becoming the truth in all ways: vision, mentation, and action.

Rose provides a useful analogy by which the course of the inner path can be better understood: "The human mind is the only tunnel or channel through which you're going to find your Self...and the mind goes as well" (Rose, lecture, 1986). Here, he is modifying the more traditional symbol of Brahman being the celestial sun and each manifesting Atman being a ray of light projecting outward from it onto the relative world; the end of each ray having a human face. He is adding that this ray can be likened to a channel passing through the mind dimension, and this channel is clogged—with ignorance and ego. This obstruction is what prevents human beings from realizing their true nature, and in most life histories even muffles the intuition that would alert one to the falseness of mundane existence and guide one's way home. He is also forewarning us of the eventuality that the human being, in all its determined mental experience and very sense of personal "me-ness," will be left behind as we are about to enter the Self (and there perhaps realize we never really left), after it has finished its job.

Much of the Albigen System of meditation can be described simply as being the work of clearing out this channel of mental delusions and identifications with the contents of different forms of perception (see Chapter 14), enabling this aware ray of vision to return to itself. Different spiritual teachings recommend respectively different ways of doing this. Rose does not claim to have the only method that works, but does believe the process he describes is the shortest route possible and is meant to appeal to those whose natures favor a psychological approach of inquiry into the basic philosophical issues.

It should be explained that these comments are referring to a broader definition of psychology than is its usual meaning as psychotherapy and social adjustment. The way Rose teaches it, the real meaning of "psychology" as a science and a methodology is not to be discretely divided into personal and transpersonal categories, as it generally is. The study of the personal ego-mind is incomplete if it does not also look into the origin of the one who is perceiving life through that mind and refine the philosophical convictions that largely determine that individual's experience of life. Transpersonal teachings that attempt to enable one to "find God" directly or "affirm" one's claim to divinity, without first knowing the human being thoroughly and bringing it fully into alignment with objective truthfulness, are likewise incomplete and lacking a foundation. Psychology means one thing: to know oneself. All of this self. As such, it is really one, holistic field of inquiry.

The Albigen System is a process of using the mind to transcend the mind, through the cultivation of awareness in the work of comprehending consciousness in duality. Rose explains the strategy for such meditation and gives a slight experiential sense of what this transition in perspective is like: "When you look at your thoughts, you're on what I consider a 'ray' of sorts, that goes back to your awareness. And when you're one with your awareness, then you're pretty much in tune with your soul; the soul of man" (Rose, lecture, 1981). This statement also explains the reason for the

sub-title of this paper ("The path to reality through the self"): (a) accurate self-knowledge must be achieved before Self-Realization can occur, and (b) the ray of awareness (the real "I"/spiritual "eye") passes through the human mind ("me") and can be retroversed back to its ultimate source; the real Self thus not entirely removed from the human being, but touching one in the form of individualized awareness of consciousness. This last term can be considered a meaningful operational definition of "soul." The exact "location" where this Spirit touches the human mind will be described in a later section.

Rose refers to a difficult aspect of this work; one that is more of an internal conflict than a paradox: "This whole process becomes, then, the method of using the mind—that's the only vehicle we have—to find that which we really are, in spite of the mind itself" (Rose, lecture, 1981). The human mind is both a tool and vehicle for overcoming an obstacle—as well as being the obstacle itself. This is thus also the difficulty in devising or implementing any kind of introspective system: how to not be forever bound up in some dualistic mental loop that can only perpetuate the ego-mind in some form, while still needing to use the ego-mind in some manner to transcend itself. This is why Rose considers the way of Zen to be the most effective "methodology" possible for arriving at a non-relative state. As he explained in a previous quote, the paradox is resolved at the culmination of the inquiry when the mind too is ended or relinquished, along with all other egos and willful processes, and only the Owner of that mind remains to know itself. In the process of Zen's "letting go," the shift in one's point-of-reference again becomes evident as one encounters the question: "Who are you? Are you the one letting go—or that to which this self has let go?"

This work at reversing one's vector is seen to include the redirecting of one's motives for life actions, as well as the mental inverting of one's attention. The experience of this reversal involves one's backing away from both the false sense of security that keeps one buffered from the existential awareness of ignorance and from the false sense of self that is projected outward as durable personality. Both are crutches. To do this, one must have tentative faith in one's own, as yet unknown, *being* behind the scenes. What actually happens is that this vector—and the curiosity, desire, and fear motivating it—becomes the final sense of security and identity on the path. Rose describes what Jim Burns calls "being one with the inner self" as meaning that condition in which one exists and functions without egos: no more internal duality, compensations, fragmentation, or contamination of selfhood, but acting wholly in accordance with dictates of one's intuition. Perhaps this is not much different, after all, from the devotional person's surrendering to the wisdom of a higher power.

Deliberate evolution requires great fortitude and perseverance in order to counter the "gravity" that pulls one back down into the domain of Nature. Rose describes our position:

> (The struggle to know oneself is so great because) the force that goes downwards is just as powerful if not more powerful than the one that goes up. You have to take care of the upward vector, which is what a man becomes; a direction of energy. The great vector in life is back toward the earth. Nearly everybody is fighting tooth and nail to go back into the earth, and at the same time trying to keep from going back into the earth. So between these two efforts, there's not much left for going up into the creative (or transcendental) realm. (Rose, 1985, p. 229).

He challenges the seeker and assaults one's pride by stating: "It takes a lot of effort for someone to transform themselves from an animal into someone who is only conscious on a spiritual level." Although it would make one feel more secure, this effort towards transformation cannot be quantified or neatly choreographed by the mundane mind. He explains the only possible manner of approach: "We are aiming in a direction of non-rational conviction, guided by intuition."

To simplify all this, the Maximum Reversal Technique has three aspects:

1. Employ curiosity and desire to search for our definition. This puts us on the Reversal Path, which is the surest path.
2. Develop the intuition.
3. A conscious effort to retroverse our projected ray.

Although there are many specifics yet to discuss regarding the Albigen System of meditation, all of the foregoing material should give the reader a good, general sense of Rose's direction and intention on the path recommended. He sums up the central theme in his teaching like this: "What I am really attempting to point out is a purification of the definition of the Ultimate Observer, as the real observer unfolds and is aware of itself" (Rose, 1979c, p. 58). All efforts and strategies aim towards this end.

He adds elsewhere that this purification of the watcher of the self is not an endless regression of watchers watching watchers, ad infinitum, like the mirrors facing each other in a barbershop (unless one were to regard the mirrors as mental processes of self-assessment in perpetual duality—and the whole scene being watched by the Final Observer, which eventually realizes itself). Rose does attest that this involuted obsession of self-observation does eventually come to a climactic end: the last ego-self of philosophical comprehension within the relative mind finally cracks, leaving only the real Self that was always waiting behind them all. The finite mind has become infinite.

Chapter 10

The Observer

As can be seen throughout this paper, starting with the very title, observation is the central theme and guiding track in the entire Albigen System. The essential question to ask oneself is: "Who sees through my eye ('I')?" Rose reworks this question to be: "Is man that which he sees, or just the 'Eye'?" (Rose, 1982, p. 37).

There are many practical implications to these questions. One interesting realization our meditation will reveal early on is that personality—what is considered the self by mainstream psychology—is actually a projected creation and not a fundamental state of being. We project qualities and attitudes into our social world that we want others to believe we have or are. Our personalities are in turn also projected onto us by genetics, family, peers, culture, and other environmental influences. Furthermore, we project personalities onto other people and conceive of these clusters of characteristics as constituting a distinct person with a recognizable "face", rather than seeing plainly what is in front of us without the overlay of singular identity. We tend to anthropomorphize people.

An exaggerated analogy is how ancient sky-gazers had gotten into the bizarre practice of arbitrarily designating amorphous groupings of stars as "constellations", when in fact there is no such thing, but only a sky full of randomly positioned, anonymous stars. Is a personality much more than this?

Nonetheless, what is most important to know in regards to one's own personality is that we can realize we are watching it act out its role in life and experience its joys, sorrows, and changes. The "self" we had assumed we were and were told we must be is now in front of our inner vision. *It cannot be us.*

In the earlier phases of this meditation, one need not always specifically focus on some philosophical question or religious symbol. One can just examine what is occurring in one's consciousness at the time and look more deeply into its nature. As long as we exercise enough gentle control to keep the central issue of self-definition as our intended priority and turn away from tangential daydreams, pertinent material will come before the inquiring mind by itself. Then, Rose advises: "We must likewise observe our thoughts and ask ourselves, 'Why did I think that?,' or 'Where did this thought originate?,' or 'What is thought?'" This is now starting to delve into the real topics of meditation, according to the Albigen System.

The experience of thinking (which includes thinking about feeling, sensation, and all subjective experience) is studied as an object in awareness apart from that awareness. We are looking for the origin of the human being. Rose claims the human being is really nothing but an elaborate, crystallized thought-form that identifies itself as a distinct being; this belief-conviction of selfhood at one's core also being a thought. We assume we are someone. This is a hard habit to break. The way to undo this narcissistic thought-entity and arrive at the source of true selfhood is to thoroughly understand the anatomy of the mental constructs and processes comprising this "person" and trace their origins back to where they began; all the while purifying and strengthening the observer-awareness monitoring this self-study. When the nature of the birth, continual rebirth and concurrent death of this human being is witnessed, one is in for a startling surprise.

One way to measure spiritual maturity is in one's definition of "freedom." These preliminary points already suggest an entirely different meaning of the term than is its usual connotation to those who aim for it as the highest goal in life. Freedom seems to imply one's having unlimited choice of conduct and the opportunity to acquire all the objects and experiences of one's desires, with no restrictions by capability or circumstances. Once the mechanical nature of the mind and life-experience itself is fully acknowledged, including the ephemeral status of the ego-self, it is seen that real "freedom" means to be free <u>from</u> delusion within the dream-projection of life, and free <u>from</u> identification <u>with</u> the dream-projection; not really the freedom <u>to do</u> the things one "wants" (meaning: is made) to do.

Rose makes an important claim, to be used for further reference: "You are aware prior to birth and aware after you die: so you begin with awareness, but you are not conscious of awareness" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). (It must be noted here that Rose is for some unknown reason mixing up the terms "conscious" and "awareness" from his usual deliberate meanings for them. He generally refers to consciousness as being either a function of the somatic mind or content from some other source within the relative mind-dimension. He refers to awareness as being separate from and anterior to consciousness; awareness being of the spiritual Self and not subject to influence from the relative or mundane mind. To be consistent with the meanings in the rest of his teaching, perhaps the end of this above quote should more precisely read: "but this awareness does not realize itself", or possibly the more cumbersome: "but the real 'you' becomes misidentified with the creature that was born and will die, and does not intuit really being the awareness of the consciousness of this creature.")

The significance of this difference can be readily experienced within daily life as well. There are frequent periods of time when we forget ourselves and are totally immersed in some activity, emotional state, a social role we play, and so on. During those moments, we do not see ourselves; we do not see our experience; we do not see our inner processing of and reacting to our experience. We only know what is actually in front of us at that moment, within the viewing range allowed by our mental "blinders". Yet, we can recall our psychological state later on and become aware of aspects of our experience that were occurring in consciousness at that time, but were not recognized or acknowledged by us then. The key question is: what is it that *sees* these periods of forgetfulness in retrospect? What is awake while we are functionally asleep? <u>*The awareness of consciousness*</u> is always present, even when it is not aware of itself at the time. In looking back, we can see that something was seeing us, even while we were identified with sleep. (Our after-death state of reviewing our life may well be similar.) Our task is to become aware of the awareness in which we live, in the now—and find out who this awareness belongs to.

A further significant implication of this difference between consciousness and awareness is that reality is in the direction of awareness, whereas the strict identification with the contents of consciousness—which is our usual state—is spiritual oblivion. This was the main point in Merrell-

Wolff's teaching. Existence cannot be said to have any objective validity unless it is reflected upon from outside of it—from Reality. Keeping Rose's previous quote in mind: as the cultivation of such awareness rarely occurs, it could be rudely said that a lot of people do not realize they are alive, as they have no impersonal awareness independent from their experience of life. These are the same people who, after they die, will not realize they are dead. When death negates the human being and its world, which is the only reality it knows, "who" will remain to appreciate its having lived or its distinct existence in death, if there is no aware mind waiting separate from this self?

Rose also offers a curious angle on the nature of time; one with serious implications in regards to the notions of karma, reincarnation, free will, destiny, and purpose: "Time is not the ribbon whose near end is constantly being created. It may be that the whole ribbon is already created, and the future is that which we have not yet experienced [meaning: witnessed]" (Rose, 1982, p. 142). He has added that in actuality time does not move, as is our common conception, but rather we (the observer) move over it (the "ribbon" or "film" of life). One inference from these statements is that one could only realize this from having fully stepped outside the stream of time and relative experience, and seen it for the whole that it is. Another consideration is that, just as the motion of objects below us appears lesser and lesser the higher up we go into the sky, so our entire world of motion, including the completed lives of all the people within it who have ever lived or will live, would appear as a mass "still life" from such a non-finite perspective. Another implication would be that, in an absolute sense, the universe is not evolving but is already complete and perfect. What changes is our vantage point on experience within relativity. What sees our changing vantage point does not change.

This brings up questions such as: Are we choosing or creating anything? What created us and so determines what we "decide" to "choose"? Is eternity the endless future—or the constant Now, at a right angle to time? Another intriguing implication would be that the entire story is already written, in all its inconceivable complexity, and as it is all there is, it is inherently correct. Reality is "the only game in town", and so is in itself the only standard of validity. What is wrong is our vantage point on it and perception of it.

Recalling the metaphysical maxim, "As above, so below; as within, so without", indications of this principle can be seen in some otherwise seemingly ordinary psychological phenomena. For example, one aspect of the experience of paranoia—the sense that *"Someone is watching me"*—has a valid intuitional clue in it. SOMEONE IS! There are no secrets. All is seen. However, the identity of this watcher is misdefined as being some other person or agency, and one's own sick projections of blame, persecution, or grandiosity are added to it. One is actually being watched by a higher part of one's own mind, with a view polluted by whatever conditioned pathology is coloring one's psychological perception. However, the person is disowning it, being unaware of the dynamic involved, and attributing this observation to a false "other," rather than to the truer part of oneself. One would be wiser to accept the hint and follow this watcher back to its source; an ever-seeing "eye" the non-paranoid may not even suspect.

A similar unconscious reflex can be seen to occur with children—and insecure adults—who project their own observers onto their parents, teachers, authority-figures, admired others, or an appreciative audience. People are generally so disassociated from their own awareness that they need to borrow someone else's, through whom the longed for benediction from one's inner self is processed. Their actions and experiences are felt to be invalid until they are witnessed and acknowledged by someone else ("Look Ma, no hands!"). Would we as adults be as concerned about many of our values (fashion, prestige, ownership, etc.) if there was no one else to impress and to affirm our worth? This observer can also be internalized as an artificial mental construct, still experienced as

someone apart from the "me" who is subordinate to it (e.g. superego or narcissistic self-love), although not necessarily as pathologically as in paranoia.

The common denominator in all these cases is the misidentification of the individual as the person being seen by an outside observer, which is imagined to be located in some other person or entity, and distorted by one's own projected self-judgments, rather than realizing that one is really the observer of this person whom one no longer exclusively is, along with all of its projections and pathologies.

Rose once made a curious comment regarding the meaning of truth as it relates to observation: "Truth is a qualification of everything." He is saying that validity is not so much a static condition apart from everything else or the optimal arrangement of factors on the manifest level, but rather that the realization of Truth allows one to see the nature of things in a different light, as they really are. The direct-mind view from Reality changes the meaning of what is seen.

This ties in with another comment Rose has made about the nature of knowing. It is the inverted correlate to his earlier mentioned statement, "You know nothing until you know everything": "Knowing the true meaning of anything is absolute realization. To know anything truly is to know everything." This recalls William Blake's claiming to have seen eternity in a grain of sand. Rose is saying that while the mind is still trapped in relativity, knowing can only be conditional and the view only partial. When the final observer has been attained and one sees from this vantage point in Reality, what is known is known absolutely. The true Knower is the Philosopher's Stone sought for by the alchemists. Furthermore, everything is interconnected. A grain of sand is realized to be as valid as a star. This is Cosmic Consciousness.

The reader may have picked up the disturbing hint by this point that the search for self-definition does not culminate in the glorious affirmation of the "me" with which one is currently identified as being revealed divinity. Actually, the processes of backing away from untruth, retroversing the projected ray, and discriminating between the view and the viewer results in the realization of the insubstantiality of the human being as an individual, solid entity, and the final discovery of the sole anterior Self that is the real "I".

This course of self-inquiry through to its surprising conclusion can be likened to one's unraveling a ball of string to see what is at its core, and then finding when the end of the string has been reached—there is no center to it. Another vivid image is that of the old fantasy films of the Invisible Man in which the character, at first totally covered with clothes and bandages, proceeds to disrobe one item at a time, until the final garment of form is removed—and there is seen to be nobody there underneath!

This recalls Ramesh Balsekar's statement that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an "Enlightened person," as Enlightenment includes the realization that there is no person experiencing a spiritual state; there is only the All. It could rather be said that the Atman passing through such a "person's" mind recognizes itself, and by doing so, traces its ray back to Brahman, where there is nobody.

As has been stated, awareness is the guiding track along which the course of self-inquiry proceeds. There is much more to be said about the specific workings of this procedure. However, to briefly conclude this topic of self-definition and observation, Rose describes the state-of-being to which his system of meditation leads when the refinement of one's identity is complete: "When we become aware, we have reached the core of the Self" (Rose, 1985, p. 307). He has said that the experience or recognition of awareness in meditation, as apart from all the varied contents of consciousness, is the first actual "touching" of the real Self. A shift in one's point-of-reference finally occurs from that

of one's being a meditating self partially glimpsing the awareness in which it is immersed (so to speak), to being that awareness itself of the meditator—and everything else. The above quote could then be modified to more precisely read: "When we *become awareness...*" or "*realize awareness...*".

For a moment, Rose risks relinquishing his usual reserve about conceptualizing conclusions and plainly states: "Man discovers he is God." His hesitance in this, of course, is because: a) The statement is practically meaningless and unappreciable by the ignorant human mind that truly knows nothing about "God", and b) The words as stated may seem to imply that Man is God, or that God is Man (the human self as we know it), thus causing confusion or encouraging grandiose self-glorification (i.e. "New Age" cosmic narcissism). One legitimate implication of his point, however, is that the final answer to be found is not dualistic in nature: there is no individual ego (even a "spiritual" one—a "soul") who encounters a distinct, personal God. The shock of awakening to absolute, anterior Selfhood would be devastating (of course...to whom?). This is also pointing to an incomprehensible aloneness. He has elaborated: "You are not a part of the Absolute who finds the Absolute—you ARE the Absolute." There is no returning, no arrival. When the final delusion ends, the immediate awareness of utter Beingness without a second blows one's mind, and there is only the All. Obviously, one can derive little satisfaction from this promise until the concept becomes a realization. In fact, this cannot even be a meaningful concept. We really do not know who we are.

Something should be addressed at this point that is not discussed at length in the written material on the Albigen System: the differences between the male and female natures, and consequentially, the characteristic natures of their paths. The essential principles of the Albigen System are gender-neutral and impersonal. While the masculine nature is seemingly more inclined to be attracted to philosophy and mental analysis than is the feminine, which leans more towards holistic feeling and devotion, the basic truths about human nature, the laws of life, the mind, and spirit are universal, as are the questions we all must answer. It should be first clarified that what is being referred to here is masculinity and femininity as psychological traits or gestalts, somewhat derived from the physical constitution, not maleness and femaleness strictly as gender, as these traits cross gender-lines. There can be quite a range of variation in the manifestation of behavior on the physical level, whereas psychological tendencies are consistent archetypes, however difficult it is to define their qualities precisely.

What follows are a few general principles, only loosely inferred from assorted comments made by Rose, combined with observations from Jim Burns, Roy Masters, and others, as interpreted by myself. Rose may not entirely agree with these points, but might approve of their heuristic function in provoking self-examination and in clarifying an existent polarity on the spiritual path that teachers often prefer to diplomatically avoid addressing.

The major distinction was most clearly summed up by Burns: "**The male finds his answer through comprehension; the female finds her answer through function**." By comprehension, he means the encompassing of the truth or the universe of experience through total mental understanding. Function means giving oneself in devotion to the holistic experience of living, as truthfulness requires one to be. The former refers to ultimate objectivity; the latter to ultimate subjectivity. Both are surrendering the ego: one to the Mind of Life, the other to the Heart. In the final realization, the beingness of Awareness and the beingness of Love are said to become the same. In the Albigen System, they are both indivisible aspects of "becoming the Truth."

In regards to the religious quest, a simplistic way to distinguish between them would be in their way of assessing the meaning of the metaphysical statement: "I am God." The pure masculine principle would tend to try to define "God" in some objective, impersonal, global sense and then

loyally align itself in relation to that. The feminine principle would focus more on the subjective experience of this "I's" submission and trust that this will lead to communion with God.

This example shows how there can be handicaps in the ways of both natures, complementing their advantages. The feminine has better sensitivity to and appreciation of personal experience, whereas the masculine is more rigorous in implementing the methodology of experience. However, philosophically speaking, the handicap in each extreme of identification is that the feminine does not ask: "What is the meaning of (my) life?," while the masculine does not ask: "Who is living (my) life?" In terms of their inner process, the male mind wishes to presumptuously think its way to God. The female mind has a weakness for wanting to imagine its way to God. Both are mental projections in the attempt to define or attain Reality. In this, at least, the genders are equal.

The feminine tendency for an imbalance towards exclusive subjectivity also involves a lack of doubt about the validity of personal experience, an insufficient objective overview of all the factors comprising experience, and inadequate consistency in the maintenance of a single state-of-mind, despite experience. The masculine tendency towards a worldly egotism also involves being out of touch with one's own inner condition and "heart," being moved more by pride and bestiality than innocence, projecting pain and failure outward in denial, rather than inwardly resolving it, and generally leaving oneself out of the philosophical formula as an essential factor.

It should also be clarified that in these above generalities, "mind" does not mean intellect, and "heart" does not mean emotions. They refer to different modes of being, experiencing, and knowing; mind relating to comprehension and heart to function. As mentioned previously, Ramana Maharshi does state, however, that Heart and Mind are finally realized to be the same thing, when one attains totality.

For some, the issue of equality may come up during this evaluation and the understandable humanistic desire for it may indiscriminately misinterpret this as sameness. The feminine and masculine natures are held to be equally legitimate in terms of their processing of experience and being mutually integral to the flow of life, as the Yin and Yang are interdependent dynamics within the whole Tao, but they are not the same. Not understanding this and forcing a pseudo-equality upon them that suits neither ends up violating the merits of both and hindering one's rightful course towards the highest goal. Paul Brunton provides a good explanation of the relationship between gender archetype and spiritual inclinations:

> There are three states of spiritual development: first, religious; second, mystical or metaphysical; third, philosophical. In the first stage, women are overwhelmingly ahead of men. In the second stage, women and men are roughly equal in the success of their attainment. In the third and final stage, it is mostly men who succeed (Brunton, 1986, p. 111).

It should be clarified that by "philosophical" he is referring to the "Fourth Way" or Raja yoga path of total introspective inquiry and essential transformation, not scholastic concept-juggling alone. By "mystical" he means the intuitive, emotional inversion towards communion with the Beloved. "Religious" means the dualistic worship of and submission to an external, humanized God. (It is not clear why he designates this as being more a feminine mode, when there are probably as many men as women invested in the religious mind-set. Perhaps he is implying that women are better able to truly benefit from this form of worship if they serve their God sincerely, while men have greater inner obstacles to such devotion, and thus tend to mimic or usurp more than live it.) He is saying the masculine nature at its best tends towards the most subtle form of seeking, yet acknowledges that truthful seeking can occur and progress be attained in whatever form that suits one's temperament.

He elaborates on this difference; an assessment with which Rose concurs:

Most women who aspire to the Divine look for, and find comfort with, the idea or the image of a Personal God. For them the path of devotional love is more attractive than any other path. The strength of their emotional nature accounts for this. But male aspirants are generally more willing to take to the various non-devotional approaches. Their intellectual nature and their power of will are often stronger than those of women. It is easier for them to comprehend, and also to accept, the idea of an Impersonal God. For these, and for other reasons, although there have been many successful female mystics in history, there have been few successful female philosophers (Brunton, 1986, p. 117).

Rose offers a simple, realistic summary of this entire topic:

If we are male, we should advance upon the battlements of ignorance with the tools of the male, with aggressiveness [assertive discrimination]. The female may find the mark better with passiveness [innocent receptivity]. Both parties should never lose sight of human exigencies, right up to the day of final victory [Realization]. Until that final day, our role can only be that of the fact-man that is knowable (Rose, 1978, p. 140).

Chapter 11

Sexuality and the Transmutation of Energy

The Psychology of Moral Sexuality

Rose strongly recommends celibacy as an essential aspect of the spiritual path, especially for younger men. There are a number of reasons for this: the conservation and transmutation of energy, the development of intuition, protection from psychic contamination, psychological honesty with oneself, lessening of projection onto life, less susceptibility to the hypnosis of Nature, the redirection of desire, the maintenance of one clear state-of-mind, freedom from the carnal ego, and to allow one to walk through the jungle of maya in a state of innocence and Grace. This message is a difficult one to accept and harder to heed. We have been so heavily programmed by a degenerate and spiritually impoverished civilization in regards to our fundamental assumptions about sexuality that it requires a radical shift in perspective to be able to confront one's massive, deep-rooted errors about sex and a courageous integrity to be willing to realign oneself with the truth.

The issue is not prudery vs. licentiousness. Sin and piety are on a lower level of spiritual maturity. On the Fourth Way, there is only foolishness and the rejection of foolishness. As Rose describes this posture of betweenness: "...greater still is he that is both pious and impious, and is neither" (Rose, 1975, p. 68). The question for the seeker of truth is simply: What is the truth about sex? What is sex for? What is life on Earth for? What is our role in the system of Nature? Is there an objective standard of correct sexuality according to the laws of Nature and Spirit, totally irrespective of social mores and personal desires (of suspect origin)? What actually occurs during sex? What are its consequences or price? How does sexuality relate to spirituality?

Obviously, sex is a major concern in most people's lives. It is frequently a source of problems, as any practicing psychotherapist can attest. That the very mention of sex, in all its variety, so readily prompts us to laugh, suggests the nervous discomfort underneath the "joy" that reveals our innate awareness of something about our sexual nature being frightfully, tragically wrong. Through rigorous analysis in looking for the common, underlying theme beneath all outer manifestations of suffering and its compensations, it is seen that most problems for the human being, both individually and collectively, can be directly or indirectly traced back to some violation of healthy, moral sexuality. Some examples:

A. The pervasive economic, ecological, and social problems caused by over-population.
B. Physical and neurological degeneration, as well as psychic damage, in self and offspring due to sexual excess.
C. Unwanted children born into unhealthy relationships due to irresponsible sex and who later become troubled adults.
D. Sexual abuse: child molestation, rape, pornography, other forms of criminal violence related to sex rage.
E. Emotional suffering and even insanity in pathological relationships held together by desperate sex.
F. War: due to all the reasons listed above plus general aggression stemming from perverted male ego of sexual domination and lust for power.

These questions about sex become an even more crucial concern for those consciously on a spiritual path. We find ourselves caught between two conflicting directions of exhortation. On one side is the nearly overwhelming indoctrination from all angles of convention urging one to engage in sex as much as possible, in as many ways as possible, as this is implied to be the foremost value in life. On the other is the stern warning in religious texts that the trap of uninhibited sex is a tantalizing lie leading only to death, while promising that the struggle to maintain chastity leads to Life. What does one do?

Rose advocates a serious, no-nonsense evaluation of sex, with all the glamour, passion, and identification removed from it. He wants us to take an honest look at what sex is and our real motives for engaging in it. He does not want people to <u>decide</u> what they want the truth to be about sex, based on their desires, conditioning, and sicknesses. He urges us to find out what the impartial truth about sexuality <u>actually is</u>, and to live it. This is a primary form of "becoming the truth."

The first step in objectively examining any experience is to be able to back away from it and see it impersonally without identification and the resultant blanket justification. This is particularly difficult with sex because we are programmed from birth to wholly identify with our bodies, and then later, with our role as proud, obedient breeders. We are further encouraged to develop tremendous egos of self-importance about our participation in this mechanical function. In addition, it is especially difficult to be detached about an experience of such intensity and self-consumption. Very few people ever stop in the midst of the frenzied mating ritual to ask themselves: *"Why am I doing this?"* Rose poses the question from a different, more ominous angle: "Do you enjoy—or are you enjoyed?" In other words: do we choose to have sex—or are we compelled? Does sex have <u>us</u>? Assuming, in our subjective experience, that we choose to have sex is like pretending we choose to breathe—try to stop.

We need to start our investigation with the basic fact: sex is for reproduction. It is Nature's method for the continuous creation of life-forms. On top of this given reality, the human being has added numerous other layers and categories of meaning; most of them false. All animals are programmed by Nature in their seasonal mating habits according to the requirements for the propagation of their species. They adhere to the standards set by Nature. People do not. We have casually decided or been diabolically seduced into remaking the rules of the game, before knowing what the Game here actually is. Rose has wondered at what point in history and why the human being began to violate its own intended programming and devised reasons and rates for sexual indulgence beyond what was necessary for replenishing the tribe.

Another major point that Rose wants to make is that it is as foolish to regard sex itself as evil, as that it is free candy from Heaven. Sex is not evil. Lust is evil, as are the projection and dishonest

motivations that generate it. He mocks the conventional religious notion that "everything from the belly-button on up is God, and everything below is Satan". Rather, he feels it is more accurate to translate "Satan", in this sense, as "Nature" (especially the exaggerated, cruder promptings of our lower nature), in that Nature is a regulating force that is concerned primarily with promoting the welfare of the planet, not with furthering the spiritual ambitions of certain humans—who are willing to pay the price. He suggests we take a sober look, undistorted by the intoxication of "love," at our role in this jungle-terrarium called Earth.

Young women are programmed to be dazzled by the illusion of romance and vanity. Young men are programmed to be dazzled by the illusion of lust and conquest. Both are consumed. We are seemingly being bred here by some unknown agency with an equally unknown motive. It is very difficult to escape the production line. But short of this, we at least owe it to ourselves as "profaned animals" to get wise to our predicament and not kid ourselves about our status, and certainly to not identify with our captors.

Rose accuses us of assuming for ourselves too high a position in the scheme of Creation and regarding pleasure as a reward from heaven to evidence our divinity. He says the real picture is less flattering to us. He describes a different view than what we have wanted to believe, and with a twist: "Men and women chase each other—until Nature catches them both." In other words: we are not doing anything here. We are done to. Most people are manifestly content to remain as fertilizer in the organic parade of life, whilst imagining personal or cosmic importance to their daily drama. We happily assume we are the crown of God's Creation, when in fact we may be little more than manure in His garden.

Yet, Rose takes care not to criticize Nature. Whatever the master plan is for Earth, Nature is the caretaker evidently authorized by Whomever or Whatever created this place to make the system work expediently. He advises us to regard Nature as our friend and live in accordance with natural law, but to realize that the course and intent of Nature does not necessarily lead to a spiritual answer beyond life, while the strict identification with its processes may actually undermine, dilute, or divert one's efforts to attain such an answer.

As strongly as we are programmed by Nature and media alike to be attracted to sexual enjoyment, Rose cautions that "Pleasure is bait." It is a lure to keep us bound to the soil and our attention captivated by the Garden of Earthly Delights. In regards to our topic of self-definition, if sex and all its related values is where our life-energy primarily goes, we really have to ask ourselves if we have any honest reason to believe we are anything more than proud life-support systems for penises and vaginas. Rose urges us to aspire to more.

One reason why Rose thinks this is wise is that he is convinced there is something he calls a "death gene." Rather than evaluating sex from the vantage point of our experiencing the compulsion and thrill of it, Rose asks us to hold in mind the larger perspective of organic life consisting of successive generations of life-forms giving birth to new life-forms, while themselves dying into the process. He believes that built into the human animal is some dormant bit of programming that is triggered when the organism reproduces. This "gene" initiates the dying process, both in terms of physical deterioration and the psychological acclimation to eventual death, once the peak of vitality has been manifested in achieving reproduction. He describes our status:

> We're like the grain in the field—you reach a certain age and the grain comes to a head, the leaves immediately get dry, and your purpose is arrived at. You realize what you are—you're a cornstalk that is produced and dies, that's all (Rose, 1985, p. 229).

He feels it is best for the young seeker to delay this transition to extinction as long as possible and instead use one's vitality for a non-somatic function.

Rose does not mean to challenge the wisdom of Nature nor deny the proper place of procreation in the scheme of things. He does lament, however, the seeming absurdity and wastefulness of this system, especially as perverted by humanity. He removes the filter of romance through which we feel obligated to view life and sees the world as a sad place, where all creatures struggle and compete to survive, for no apparent purpose:

> We look out the window at this point and observe the world as a sorrowful slaughterhouse; a place of blood and carnage, wherein the most noble efforts of Nature and the whole system of Tension leads and evolves only to semen, blood, and blockheads. (Rose, 1982, p. 138).

Rose asks us to wonder if it is worth our continued participation and sacrifice to perpetuate such a futile scenario:

> Nature consumes us. There is no escape; everybody is going to die from some sort of natural consumption. It is hard to submit to events that perpetuate a balanced natural aquarium, that seemingly has no meaning. If we knew that this ferment of life led to a smile on some god's face, we might languish into death with some masochistic complacency (Rose, 1985, p. 274).

Of course, the question that would remain irregardless is: Why create new life before knowing what life is, what it is for, and who the current, anonymous link in the organic chain is?

Arriving at an objective view of sex is most difficult, as our perception is so heavily colored by hormones and hypnosis. It is a pervasive influence. I once asked Rose if the sex-desire does eventually end and leave one alone. He replied: "Yes, it does—about 15 minutes before you die!" This, obviously, is not very helpful. The seeker of eternity cannot afford to wait that long before being able to see clearly and to start thinking seriously about something beyond one's organic fate.

This entire line of thinking being discussed here is plainly counter to the modern, Western philosophy of "go with the flow" in regards to sexual inclinations, in which resisting the pleasure impulse is considered anything from boring to pathological—as well as dangerously subversive. Rose acknowledges this powerful programming, which includes the subjective conviction that one is choosing to go with the flow and is enjoying it. However, he also asks us to note that the main flow goes down the drain and into the sewer. It is not good to become a part of that flow if one wishes to seek a destiny beyond the soil. Yet, there is hint of another flow...one that flows uphill. It is much harder to become a part of that flow—but that is our only hope.

In examining not only sex, but life itself, we see that it is essentially a game of energy, taking different forms for different purposes. There is not so much "sex energy" per se, as there is "vital energy" that can be manifested as sexuality, physical work, mental work, or spiritual work. While Rose says it is possible to tap into sources of energy beyond the individual once a level of superior virtue, maturity, and perspective has been attained (see section on betweenness), on the mundane level there is a finite amount of energy available for each person's use. And, like a bank account, it must be used judiciously, otherwise one's supply will run out. He says he does not want to beguile people with the term "divine energy", which might only reinforce the dishonest hope of being able to freely dissipate one's allotted amount and then regally petition the universe for more. The mechanism of betweenness runs parallel to this but contains the safeguard of egoless intention to make it operative. The attitude of willful consumption automatically stops it.

We get energy primarily from food, and some from the sun. The body converts this to somatic energy for physical work. With some effort, it can be transmuted to mental or neural energy. With a special kind of effort beyond that, it can become what Rose calls *quantum energy,* for use in spiritual work, healing, or transmission.

Sexual activity uses up a tremendous amount of energy. According to Nature's intent, life energy is projected into the male, who projects it into the female, who projects it into the children, who grow up to continue this cycle endlessly. This is appropriate, and flatters nor degrades no one. We are a part of a system that uses us. However, the common message in mystical and yogic teachings is that all energy used up in sex beyond what is required to fulfill Nature's purposes is wasted, and only strengthens the chains of maya that bind us to the Earth.

Due to some primal defect in the psyche that manically augments the already powerful Nature-programming towards reproduction, the young male especially is eager to pursue sex, further impelled by the ego of vanity, yet does not realize the price of over-indulgence until it is too late. This waste is not always obvious, as in youth the individual has large reserves of energy to utilize (or squander), and the price is at first paid on the subtler levels of potential before it becomes apparent on the gross level.

However, witnessing the escapades of those who live life in the fast lane, not heeding nor possibly even aware of the advice about conservation of energy, yet seemingly none the worse for wear, may perplex those who are making the deliberate effort to curb their libidinous excesses. I once asked Rose how some people who "play hard", e.g. a lot of sex, drugs, alcohol, dynamic foolishness, etc. can still seem so vital and alive. With a blend of foreboding and pity he replied: "A candle burns brightest before it goes out."

But, before one can aspire to a standard beyond the Nature-game, one must first manifest at least a level of morality that is equal to a barnyard animal. Rose disapprovingly notes that most humans do not. In terms of frequency and variation on natural function, people are generally stepping far outside the boundaries of their authorized programming. In addition to the mental work of objectively defining the true state of affairs in the relative world, another broad aspect of the search for truth is that of <u>living truthfully</u>. This means bringing one's actions into alignment with what one realizes to be right, according to an objective standard. Since there are so many factors involved in sexuality, including deeply personal psychological issues, the efforts to confront one's own sexual inclinations, and then to act with resolve on one's intuitive convictions about the matter is a major phase of the Work—and a significant measure of the sincerity of one's commitment to the path. Supposedly, the Buddha even claimed that the complex work of overcoming the carnal mind and attaining true virtue is 99% of the spiritual path.

One difficulty the seeker will encounter in thus determining the true nature of sexuality is that society's current standard-bearers of validity about subjective matters—the psychology profession—do not have a clue as to the reality of their subject, yet we have been conditioned to trustingly look to presumed authority to gauge what is right and wrong. This is a deadly mistake in regards to something as crucial to the spiritual life as sexuality. This is also a large part of what Rose has been referring to in his repeated tirades against the popular tendency of attempting to define truth by democratic vote, and then the institutionalizing of this belief-state into the officially sanctioned facade of professional authority.

Rose is quite adamant in his contempt for the sexual standard promoted by the mainstream mental health profession in the West and its reliance upon the bell-shaped curve of convention to determine what is correct behavior, regardless of its consequences. He counters this by stating: "It

does not matter if 90% of all dogs have fleas or ticks—this should not legislate for all dogs that fleas and ticks are either normal, natural, or divinely programmed for dogs to have" (Rose, 1981, p. 17). It does not matter what the majority of people are doing. The masses of humanity may well be hopeless in any given lifetime. The individual of intuition cannot afford to wait for 51% of the population to agree with him before affirming what is true.

Rose feels the current trend of libertarian values will not only not lead people to spiritual realization, but not even to organic health on a generic barnyard level. He derisively exclaims: "We have evolved a psychological/psychiatrical science developed by perverts and onanists who have discovered a system of studying the mind through the anus" (Rose, 1982, p. 131). He thoroughly condemns the "If it itches, scratch it" school of sexual response.

I have not encountered any authority figure in the mainstream psychology profession who understands the truth about sex and its real significance (as referenced in Chapter 2). They either ignore the subject or get it dead wrong. To reinforce the public's tendency towards dissipation as being healthy and natural is not therapeutic, but "enabling" (the term used in substance abuse counseling to refer to the misguided compassion of family members that excuses and compensates for the addict's pathology rather than confronts it and helps the person to overcome it.) It would be more compassionate to encourage people to fully feel the void they wish to fill with pleasure, and help them locate their misplaced souls that should fill it.

So, the picture we have of organic life is that we are placed within a system of Nature in which a certain amount of energy is provided to the individual during the course of a lifetime; a designated portion of which is to be used for reproduction and its familial consequences. This satisfies Nature. Although we do not know Nature's ultimate purposes in this scheme, nor what Master it serves, the system is well-balanced and it seems to work. There is some leeway allowed to us beyond this generic minimum, however; this unexplained license proving troublesome for many. We are left to wonder if there is anything more to be done, or discovered, beyond comfortably vegetating in our pre-destined groove.

There are three courses open to us. We can waste our vital energy by indulging in sex way beyond what is necessary to fulfill our natural function, for assorted confused reasons; gradually degenerating ourselves and our eventual offspring. We can come to understand what the natural function of sexuality in a healthy state actually is and adhere to it, trusting that the wisdom of the Earth is a sure and justified foundation. Or we can judiciously use some of this energy projected through us for our own purposes.

We have no choice but to be subject to this pressure and tension. In fact, this is the source of all desire and suffering in the relative world-scene. As Rose explains: "Nature implants in animals an irritation of magnitude so intense that release from it brings joy or ecstasy, depending upon the degree of suffering" (Rose, 1982, p. 145). This applies to everything from sexual climax to mystical bliss, which some have noted have a similar dynamic and are sometimes related. He has stated that this partially explains the mystical joy felt by ascetics who have deprived themselves of the physical and social enjoyments of life in exchange for a bid for some higher exaltation, which on some level they eventually grant themselves. Rose qualifies the seemingly ultimate spiritual value of such ecstasy by claiming: "The rewarder is man, in all cases. And man as a rewarder, can only give that which he already has" (Rose, 1978, p. 222). He is saying that this reactive bliss is still an emotional "pay-off" on the human level, and not the meaning of Realization. This is not meant to belittle the value of sexual restraint but only to note that its purpose should not be that of bargaining, nor should even the highest psycho-physiological joy, however well deserved, be mistaken for the bliss of non-relative spiritual Being.

Given all these factors, how can we strategically make the best of our circumstances? Rose describes the recommended philosophical posture:

> How can we act? We can try to live in moderation, by detaching ourselves from the destructive extremes, but at the same time indulging in sex to the point that nature is not denied, thus finding peace of mind and a period of grace in which to study. But remember that peace of mind is a gift of nature, not of the Absolute. You have peace of mind when you are causing no ripples in nature. Satori only comes with friction and irritation. So the other thing we can do is to take action which may lead us possibly, but not deliberately toward irritation, life, and discovery (Rose, 1981, p. 15).

Referring back to a related principle in the Albigen System, Rose advises: "We must use that which uses us. And when we employ Curiosity and Desire to search for our definition, we are on the path" (Rose, 1978, p. 215). These implants, and the force they contain, are usually aimed towards organic functioning, in all its diversity. We can acknowledge this urge towards fulfilling our natural destiny, but then, with some measure of internal control, turn this force around and use it to further our philosophical goals. This is not merely a change in attitude. It involves an actual change in the quality and level of one's energy. In yogic teachings this is referred to as raising the "kundalini."

Rose explains what this adroit maneuver involves: "In regards to kundalini: sex was designed for propagation, but applying the principle, 'Milk from thorns', it becomes quantum energy—for transmission or projection" (personal correspondence). By "Milk from thorns", Rose means that it is possible to squeeze some personal benefit out of an otherwise adverse situation. By "quantum energy," he is referring to a special quality of energy that is distilled from the coarser forms of somatic and mental energy, and is operational on a strictly spiritual level.

He wants the student to know that while Nature does not openly encourage spirituality, it does leave room for it, if the original plan is honored. He states:

> Don't think you are better than Nature. You have to be a part of the natural programming which I don't believe in violating. But I also think everybody has the right to solve the mystery of life too. The fact of who they are. I think that is your prerogative. Your sacred trust also. (In addition to the natural programming) there is another (voice) that says inside this other very complex web, there is a blueprint whereby each and every man has a chance for ultimate survival. Ultimate definition. And he doesn't have to violate Nature to do it (Rose, 1985, p. 181).

Here, Rose offers an exquisitely poetic passage that succinctly describes the intuitive seeker's perspective on sexuality as it relates to the path:

> The sex-instinct that has been implanted may be used to promote other than its manifest purpose. We can even speculate that the Intelligence that designed this scene of Creation planned it so that some shrewd and determined beings might find their Maker, if they discovered and followed some labyrinth leading from illusion into the sunlight, and thus the Truth, subtly woven into the fabric of the living-dying drama (Rose, 1978, p. 209).

This clue also touches upon one aspect of the magical balancing act called "betweenness."

We have generally been conditioned to look at sex from primarily one angle: that it is a desirable experience, a compensation for enduring an otherwise thankless, grubby life—possibly even

being the highlight of life, the closest to a taste of divinity one is likely to ever have, and one should make the best of it whenever it is available. Yet, Rose asks us to look at sex from an entirely different slant. He asks us not only to look at sex, but at ourselves in relation to it, as its being something apart from us. We automatically assume that sex is an intrinsically positive value, outweighing every competing consideration, and bringing one to an elusive—yet frustratingly temporary—state called "satisfaction."

Rose confronts this attitude, looking at this experience from a perspective most have not considered before, and instead poses a question that few have ever pondered: "What do you hope sex will accomplish for you?" This recalls Jean Klein's key point about one's needing to examine the real nature of desire and the current, baseline-state of malaise from which one is attempting to flee. Rose is asking us to look at our normal condition, as it is, and admit to our attempt to make up for our basic unhappiness by pursuing pleasure and ego-affirmation. We face the harsh realization that when we finally cease to automatically identify with our sexuality, sex activity is seen to be more often a gesture of desperation than celebration, as we like to pretend. We cannot hope to end our suffering, to truly love, and to become REAL, while lying to ourselves and each other, and feeding egos that are not us, but only use us.

This last point brings up one criticism that could justifiably be made about Rose's manner of teaching. Despite Rose's consistent disparagement of behavioral psychology as a shamefully shallow, irresponsible approach to human understanding, he tends to encourage sexual morality through a primarily behavioral approach, in the form of promoting the conservation of energy in mechanistic terms and denouncing sexual overindulgence as an indicator of weak character. The previous quote being an uncommon exception, he does not devote as much attention as he could to the psychology or subjective experience of sexuality—the real "why?" behind our desires, beyond repeatedly pointing out the ridiculousness of our escapades, the wastefulness of our indiscretion, and the needlessness of our victimization.

This tactic may be a sufficient prod to those who are already quite strong and sane inside, and who only need a slight push to move them in the right direction or reaffirm their almost sure conviction. However, if Jim Burns and Roy Masters are even slightly correct in their dismal assessment of the psyche of humanity, then most people are profoundly crippled and deluded in their inner natures, and sex is the primary syndrome in which our pathology manifests, as this is where the greatest energy and feeling are centered. It is therefore important to more precisely understand the deeper motives and processes animating our sexual inclinations, and to correct the misunderstandings at their source that later become expressed as sexual immorality. We want what is best for us. We do not want to knowingly violate ourselves, but will come to self-harm if we do not know our true needs and instead serve a false master, whom we believe is us.

The first difficulty one encounters in such introspection is that of contemplating sex without quickly becoming wholly identified with the subject-matter and absorbed into the hypnotic spell it casts. It is most difficult to study our sexuality objectively, without the coloration of reflexive self-justification that passion, desperation, and denial produce. As Rose puts it:

> Meditation upon sex is like lighting a match to see how much blasting powder is in the keg. You have to look into that keg without lighting a match. And when you do, you will see that you have been a robot, and that you have been doing things which were not your ultimate choice of behavior (Rose, 1981, p. 13).

Another difficulty we run into, alluded to in the above quote, is that we are deluded in our experiencing of sex. Rose states that "love" is largely a state of hypnosis meant to further an aim of

Nature by prompting us to reproduce and make binding commitments to insure the welfare of offspring: "...Love is but the masquerade that cloaks necessity" (Rose, 1982, p. 79). Spiritual emptiness and existential loneliness combine with social conditioning and unresolved parental issues to add further urgency to the obsession. Conversely, this biological necessity, oftentimes blending with ego and exaggerated by the giddy romanticism of youth, takes on a lyrical pose that flatters the lover: "...And romp with lust, thinking it the music of love" (Rose, 1982, p. 109). He adds the brutal admission: "Better say of this choice nebula of dust, Beautiful, is this fond mirror of my lust" (Rose, 1982, p. 48). Rose has been even more blunt in stating his point: "'Love' is selfish; 'love' is a weakness." He is saying that most of our protestations of love are rather pleas for love, and sex is the primary commodity of barter. In addition, the cost of indulgence in this dance of mutual neediness is a liability in our pursuit of wisdom, the attainment of which would include the realization of Love, of which the other can be no more than a sad imposter. He does temper this view with some compassion: "We believe that somebody loves us, and we live long enough to discover that the person really loves that which we can give. Everybody wants to believe in love, because we're lonely" (Rose, 1985, p. 71).

We need to understand the nature of our deepest inner desire motivating the attraction to sex. The most basic, global reason of which we can be aware is the desire to establish secure roots and feel the sense of belongingness in Mother Earth as a foundation and home. As alluded to in the above quote, another deeply felt reason is that we believe ourselves to be individual, separate beings—often alienated even from ourselves as well as from others—and so project love/sexual desire as a way of reconnecting with our own misplaced, dispersed beingness that is imagined to reside in the other person, and thereby reestablishing the sense of wholeness with life that we have been seduced into forfeiting. While still on this level, what we seek in mature, honest sexuality is *conscious communion* whereby we experience the fullness of our own presence in the reflected wholeness shared with one's "thou", and not frenzied passion, which is rather an attempt to escape in anonymous mindlessness the anxiety of one's intolerable isolation. Of course, even completely merging our identity with the group mind would not be the answer we seek either. We intuit that ultimately the answer is to somehow attain a paradoxical state of individual awareness within the All. But how?

It can be seen that as one matures spiritually, the level of the communion yearned for by this fragmented pseudo-"self", who feels isolated within the whole, becomes more sublime: 1) the joining of male and female bodies, 2) the merging of male and female psyches, 3) the blending of masculine and feminine principles within one's own psyche, and 4) the uniting of the individual soul (as experienced, whether it exists or not) with the Overself (as yet unknown, whether it exists or not). It is good to search for one's wholeness on the highest level on which one is able to work.

To further clarify the dynamics of sexual identity while on the path, Rose has distinguished three aspects or dimensions of point-of-reference in our experience that we must get right: first, to be either a man or a woman; second, to be both a man and a woman; and third, to be neither man nor woman. The first is organic identity, the second is psychic identity, and the third is spiritual identity. We have to be healthy, nature-bound animals, our psyche whole and its polarities in balance, and our self rooted in formless beingness. All three levels have to co-exist simultaneously, which is what makes this work on self-definition so difficult and confusing. But when they are manifesting properly, we are in alignment with our true nature, and the lie of the carnal self cannot long survive.

On the level of "hogpen" psychology, sex is considered the ideal method of tension reduction. Other than suicide, it probably is. Yet, Rose cautions that this philosophy is a serious mistake. Tension is energy, not a problem to be eliminated. To euphemistically "reduce" tension is actually to waste energy that could be better used elsewhere. In brief, to deal with the obstructions and inefficiencies in our energy system, two categories of correction need to be made: 1) all forms of "false"

tension, of erroneous contraction (neurotic anxieties, insecurities, inner conflicts, etc.) should be recognized for what they are and diligently resolved, rather than symptomatically discharged, and this self-corrosive force be returned to one's reservoir of vital energy, and 2) one's healthy, natural tension should be directed into the vector towards "becoming", rather than dissolution or further projection. This is real spiritual work.

In thus assessing the component layers comprising our bedazzled worship of sex, we find the individual to be bombarded with three major forms of programmed pollution urging one towards relentless dissipation: 1) cultural conditioning encouraging licentious, egotistical hedonism, 2) personal psychological neediness, blending misguided devotion with the thrill of seduction, and 3) seemingly some primordial biological capacity for error that exaggerates the legitimate mating impulse. One must undergo a thorough psychological inventory to root out all sources of such contamination and misrepresentation of one's true sexual nature, and act accordingly; this right action finally changing one's very being.

The material from Chapter 2 on Roy Masters will not be repeated here. His insights into human nature, the psychodynamics of male-female relationships, and the spiritual implications of sexuality are fully in line with Rose's own findings. Masters' specialized comments can be regarded as filling in the subjective details of this important aspect of the Albigen System beyond the general guidelines about morality that Rose provides. His basic point, very briefly, is that men and women are acting out some ancient "Adam and Eve Sindrome", in which the attempted compensation for the lie of false pride or ego that seduced us out of Paradise is the worship of the Serpent, instead of the true God. Sex is used as the main form of denial and escape, the ego being both the perpetrator and victim of this tragic farce, but is in actuality suicide on the altar of spiritual despair.

On the level of Fallen humanity (not in Truth), the cruel corollary to the previously stated principle that the only power most men have is in their identification with the powerful forces that use them, is: the only power most women have is in the power they derive from men through sex and its related projections. Such sexuality degrades the woman and degenerates the man, leaving both spiritually impoverished and only Satan, or the lower forces of Nature, the victor.

Rose and Masters also agree in their exposing of two common variations on sexuality as lies, however much modern psychology and sociology condone them: homosexuality and masturbation. The remarks cautioning against the lure of sex can be easily twisted around by the dishonest or perverse mind to mean the indictment strictly of male-female relations, exempting all other forms of sexuality as neutral, or even exalted. Yet, both teachers warn of the energy loss and psychic destruction both from solitary sex, as well as the tremendous spiritual harm that comes from homosexual activity.

The issue is not one of blame and guilt, of "sin against God" and grim atonement, but rather: what does the truth of our nature require, according to the laws of Nature? We can only sin against ourselves, finally; meaning the true part of ourselves. The etiology of our habits and our rationalizations for them can be looked at impersonally, from a holistic perspective, and from this we can see more clearly what it was we were really trying to find through false sex and how we were deceived into answering to this soul-desire in a self-destructive way. When the bigger picture is seen, the conviction of individual responsibility amongst all factors diminishes, and hence the resistance to admitting a wrong. This allows for self-forgiveness and a turning towards where our true desire has wanted us to go all along.

As one example, it could be argued that female homosexuality is primarily a pathological overreaction to male failure. Yet—to what is male failure an overreaction? We are caught in a com-

plex web of mutual reinforcement of our reactions to pain; the permutations of which spiral ever downward into hell. The real issue, once again, boils down to self-honesty and self-definition. Fantasies projected onto the void meant as escape from facing one's emptiness and aloneness must be bravely confronted and negated. Grave misunderstandings about one's true nature as a human being need to be corrected before subtler levels of being can be apprehended.

Conventional heterosexuality is a perversion of something that is natural. Homosexuality is a perversion of a perversion. It is just one more kink in an already tangled knot. Rose warns that both are traps. Neither one leads to freedom. Both are gods that ultimately fail—and with a great price.

As has been explained, 99% of sex has nothing to do with sex, but is the desperate, futile grasping at some compensation for spiritual poverty. In fact, keeping in mind Masters' teachings about the inner "Fall of Mankind" and its psychophysical reversal in the yogic teachings on kundalini, it could be said that sexuality is the inversion of spirituality, rather than its most joyous manifestation. Those who have experienced God-Realization testify that sex is at very best only the most intense, yet crude, reflection of sunlight on the wall of Plato's Cave. As such, "the joy of sex" is a thief, of something much finer. It is better to look for what it is reflecting. The misguided abuse of the sex-function is like killing the goose that laid the golden eggs. Rose submits to us this difficult precept: "Thou must lose to have, and forsake love to be Love" (Rose, 1975, p. 67).

He also refers to "The Five Minutes of Sanity" after sex is completed (Rose, 1981, p. 15). One experiences a brief respite from the relentless pressure of Nature goading one to breed, and one's mind temporarily clears from the delusory state of consciousness called sexual desire. One is in a free, neutral state. It is most advisable to attain and maintain this state as much as possible, although achieving it instead through discernment and spiritual maturation. Rose says: "The more a man knows, the less he lusts" (for gold or power too, as well as sex) (Rose, 1979c, p. 34). Awareness is the direct opposite of lust, like light negating darkness.

Looking at this entire issue psychodynamically as well as spiritually, it can be said that one's prevailing mode of sexual expression is a symbolic statement of self-definition regarding one's entire life and state-of-being. Indeed, you are what you do—and won't do. Masters' conviction is that the true measure of a man is revealed in his ideal of a woman (and vice versa). How a man sees Woman in his mind's eye is how he sees the nature of his life. Likewise, despite the current mores of "anything goes," until a person knows shame for him/herself, one cannot know the truth of one's sexual nature.

All these arguments and explanations reduce down to one fundamental point. The <u>real</u> reason why sexual immorality is wrong is because *it violates the First Commandment:* "**You shall have no other gods before me**" (Exodus, 20:3). We are not to be idolaters of meat in our desperate hunger for essence. All further teachings about ego-states and energy conservation are only supplementary commentary.

Something should also be briefly mentioned about Tantra as a spiritual path; an increasingly popular approach in this age of self-glorification masquerading as Self-Realization. (This is in reference to sexual, or "red" Tantra, as distinguished from the strictly psychic, non-sexual "white" Tantra, which blends and refines the masculine and feminine energies through meditative and yogic practices.) Rose does not especially address this discipline of "effortless Tantric salvation," other than to dismiss it as being invalid, dangerous, and/or superfluous as a reliable methodology. Based upon all available material on sexuality as it relates to the religious life, to use any form of sex as a means of attaining Liberation from the bonds of the Earth is clearly contradictory, like dousing a fire with gasoline, and suspect in motive.

One guess, based upon Rose's comments about the different categories of spiritual experiences, is that Tantra does result in an altered state of consciousness—some form of nature-ecstasy and partial merging of the ego-self into the organic flow of life, yet it is not the genuine joy and contentment of Cosmic Consciousness, but only mimics it—for a price. The religion of Tantra seems to be more the worship of one's own image reflected in the eye of the Serpent. The Tantric state lacks the insight and the permanent change in being involved in the authentic experience. Even beyond this, it has nothing to do with the crucial shift into actual spiritual awareness, where there is no longer the experience of relative ecstasy or suffering, nor an individual experiencer. He makes the clear distinction between any and all categories or levels of consciousness within the mind and the Final Observer that watches them from the entirely different dimension of Spirit. This gives greater meaning to his earlier remark that ecstasy is not wisdom and even wisdom is not direct Realization or *becoming*.

It is safe to say that sexual Tantra is not considered a legitimate means to arrive at the true Self, according to the Albigen System and those many other teachings referred to in Chapter 2. It is too crude a method, incomplete a path, and involves great risk of energy siphoning through psychic contamination. The aim of raising quantum energy for spiritual discovery can be better accomplished through less manipulative and more "essential," holistic means, leaving one open to genuine transformation. It has long been said that we should regard the body like a temple—not an amusement park (or bordello, tavern, or toxic waste dump). One obvious danger in Tantra is that one may be irresistibly seduced into worshiping the temple, instead of making the effort to look for the deity who would inhabit it, while also preparing the temple for the visitation.

Rose sternly notes the divergence between conventionally accepted moral standards and the higher road promoted by the world's religions:

> Each generation is encouraged into greater and greater dissipation, while pretending to search for a God that exhorted mankind to become again as little children. There must be some value to being a child. And most esoteric guidelines point us in the direction of childlike innocence...indicating that such innocence is germane to perfection of intuition and thinking processes. I believe that sexual morality is a common denominator in every esoteric path of any worth or permanence (Rose, 1982, p. 136).

He is indicating that morality is not only an arbitrary value of social propriety, but a living truth, with biological, psychological, and spiritual consequences.

The above quote contains an important clue which Rose stresses throughout his teaching: celibacy is essential for the development of a particular quality of intuition and for the maintenance of one state-of-mind, as well as some measure of protection against adversity.

Related to this point, he has also made the curious statement: "To enter the Kingdom, you have to become as an autistic little child" (Rose, 1985, p. 261). Being a "child" in this sense does not mean being the immature, narcissistic, greedy, petty, hedonistic, and egocentric creature that children—and childish adults—too often are. It means being pure in heart, whole in mind, and sensitive in spirit. By "autistic", Rose is referring to his conviction that some autistic children have chosen on some level to not be immersed and identified with this dimension of life or our paradigm of values. They are not "in the world", as the "normal" are, but rather standing apart from it, as neutral conscientious objectors, however handicapped. He thinks this specific aspect of their state is advantageous for the seeker, if it can also be combined with mature innocence.

This insistence upon virtue has been depicted in various religious and mythological images. The most emphatic statement as a foundation goes back to the Bible: "God did say: 'You must not eat

fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die'." After the Fall: "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked." (Genesis, 3:3-7) This instruction and the allegory of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil is at the core of all Western mystical traditions. The implication is that the immature soul was somehow seduced out of its pristine spiritual state through the abuse of the sex function, which promised a tantalizing taste of the divinity that was already its rightful state but not yet realized. This falling of the Spirit into misidentification with the ego-self in the world created from projected vital energy resulted in the trap of dualistic knowledge within relativity and the loss of the capacity for original direct-mind experience in unity.

As to the specific nature of this transgression, the above Biblical quote says nothing about the eating of a forbidden apple, as is the traditional artistic imagining. Rose says the actual meaning of that admonition is plain to see. He strongly urges people to take the hint. The death mentioned in the warning refers to the inescapable mortality of the body-self with which one now unknowingly identifies. The real observing Self that has temporarily been forgotten—its Eye fogged over by the carnal mind passing before it—does not die. (What identifies with delusion? Does the Self forget itself, or does the mind forget *it?*)

The account of Samson losing his strength and vision through falling victim to sexuality is another obvious allegory. A "haircut" probably had nothing to do with it. Yet, one positive clue in this allegory, one that offers hope to those who heed its warning after having succumbed, is that Samson's hair grew back. Rose has also referred to the myth of St. George subduing the Dragon as containing a significant clue. St. George did not kill the Dragon, as often mistakenly assumed, as this would amount to self-castration. He subdued this force that would consume him, and mastered it for his own use. Rose describes what happens when a certain threshold of sublimation is attained:

> In yoga, you get into certain blissful states by virtue of being liberated from physical habits. The kundalini experience—this is hatha yoga graduating into raja yoga. You sublimate the kundalini energy and you become really in love with yourself. Because you're free. Nobody can put their finger on you. Nobody can enchant you. Nothing can captivate you; you can't get hooked on anything. Because your intuition has reached its peak and you're a free man. That's a form of bliss (Rose, lecture, 1986).

In a phrase, the objective of the Albigen System, as that of all esoteric teachings, is to reverse "the Fall": retroversing the projected ray and redeeming the added dimension of carnal delusion contained within it. The foundation and fuel for this work is chastity.

This requirement can be frightening to those raised in a culture that promotes the worship of sex as the ultimate god and the image of the romantic lover as the ultimate form of self-validation. But this standard too goes in line with the dictum of "becoming the truth". One could liken this to the function of eating. During a period between meals when a person is not eating, should that person be said to be fasting—or just not eating because it is not required? Likewise, if the truth of sex is that sex does not need to be indulged in very often according to the laws of Nature and Spirit, is that person enduring masochistic, teeth-grinding celibacy in order to bribe a sadistic god with a display of mortification—or just not engaging in sex at the time because it is not truthful? "Everything in its season; a time to embrace, a time to refrain from embracing...", as taught in Ecclesiastes. As in recovering from any form of addiction, much of the personal inner work during this phase consists of dealing with the psychological "withdrawal symptoms" revealed as the bonds tying one to the dependency are being severed.

Rose is, as usual, much more blunt about the matter than this. He confronts the individual who is considering adopting the noble status of "truth-seeker" with the statement: "Sex is the plaything of (unhappy) animals (who are too tired to fight, or think). Chastity is the right of kings."

There is an apparent paradox in Rose's teaching regarding sexuality. On one hand, he does extol the strict sexual inhibition of the Albigensians who considered the physical dimension to be an unauthorized nightmare, best left as quickly as possible, and that bringing more souls into this world through sex was a grievous crime. On the other hand, he has said that Nature is our friend, that everything here is as it should be according to some master blueprint, and we should vow to fulfill our natural destiny once our spiritual objective has been attained.

The answer to this dilemma is neither to fully immerse oneself in Nature (sexuality, etc.) as is the case in some forms of religion, nor to fight Nature head-on (repressing sex as being evil) as in some other forms of religion. Rose recommends instead that the seeker "take a vacation from Nature." This means acknowledging the programming pervading all organic life and respecting its power, but temporarily sidestepping it through a sly form of mental adroitness into a neutral space. As Rose puts it: "Celibacy involves a particular art of betweenness. It is not both-ness, or neither-ness, but the point of being a man while still conserving your energy" (Rose, 1985, p. 294).

The adjustment must be made on the mental level; physical inhibition through sheer determination alone is not enough, nor is body-despising mortification recommended. Rose says: "Don't beat the brute, just guide it" (Rose, 1985, p. 306). Mental celibacy means to turn one's head away from all aspects of sex and then to transmute the unfulfilled desire that remains. This, of course, involves tremendous self-knowledge and commitment to a non-mundane, unknown objective. It means to no longer project symbols of soul-satisfaction out into the world (especially sexuality) to then embrace, but instead to pull back all such ultimately frustrated desires and use the resultant tension to find that place inside where the Beloved dwells, and prepare oneself to enter. Real fasting has nothing to do with food.

The sexual ideal on the most concentrated, kamikaze phase of the path is chastity and an androgynous mind. Rose states the aim should be *temporary, total abstinence from the conscious sex act*; "temporary" meaning the number of years it takes to achieve one's spiritual goal, and the rest of this key phrase simply meaning taking a deliberate vacation from the Nature-game to reside in a special grace period reserved for those who need the free space to seek Nature's Master, and entrusting to the body that its own internal mechanism will regulate itself while in this neutral state, with no willful, ego intervention born of desire.

He has on occasion tempered this ideal by saying that a moderate compromise with Nature is grudgingly allowable after some point of spiritual maturity and intuition has been reached. He agrees with traditional yogic teachings in recommending moral sexual relations once a month within a committed relationship, if unavoidable or seemingly planned by fate, so long as it occurs without identification or psychological need. There is said to be some benefit to the woman in such an arrangement in supplementing her own vital energy, the energy dynamic involved in such natural sex being analogous to using a car battery with the engine running, which recharges it. Besides, in such a compromise a monk may find marriage to be a valuable learning experience. If he thinks he knows all about poverty, chastity, and obedience now, he should wait until about six months into the marriage! Rose would certainly add mischievously that it would also give him a working knowledge of hell, to add authority to his metaphysical discourses.

It should be mentioned that this aspect of the teaching is largely aimed at men up to the age of 40, as are most mystical and yogic books written about the monastic life and kundalini energy. Rose

notes that most cases of spiritual realization occur before the age of 40 anyway (as documented by Bucke), and that it is more risky physiologically to extend this discipline as one advances in age, especially if the mind has not been kept under strict control. This special exercise in betweenness is most optimally undertaken in a man's earlier years, although the broader principles of moral living and the inner path can be worked with to both gender's benefit at any age. Nonetheless, this sexual commitment should not be made with any implied time limit, as this opens the door to ever-present rationalization and will dilute the magic. Rose says the basic commitment on the path must be unconditional in order to insure success: to be willing to see this entire experiment through to the end, even if it threatens to result in madness or death.

The woman's path regarding sexuality is less explicitly spelled out in his teaching. The general principles of moral living and energy transmutation are essentially the same, although the mode of inner work by which this kundalini is raised will differ, according to the feminine nature. The main difference, however, is that Rose believes the woman's path is more tied-in with the fulfillment of her natural programming in nurturing offspring, rather than postponing it, as does a man, and the woman's spiritual realization is more likely to occur in later years after the function of motherhood has been completed. (However, keeping in mind the principle of non-duality, if a man is true to the guidance of his highest intuition and trusts the wisdom of his life as it unfolds, his path may include being a householder, if this is what is ordained for him; this role then not being a cowardly or undisciplined tangent from it.) Women can find the ego of vanity dissolved or worn away by parenting. Men accomplish this necessary humbling more through other, equally arduous means. The parallel dynamic either way is the loss of the conviction of self-importance and the devotion to a larger commitment in life.

This entire subject of sexuality is by necessity highly individualistic, as each person's nature, genetics, psychic inheritance, and circumstances are different. These are only general guidelines which one should be aware of in charting one's course to freedom and integrity. It is best to have access to a personal teacher who is competent in this area and whom one can trust to provide more specific guidance in each case.

It is very difficult to adequately discuss this topic in such a short space. It would require a separate dissertation to properly delineate all the relevant issues involved. The points mentioned thus far are meant largely to challenge one's convictions and alert one's intuition. It is best to summarize this section with a passage in which Rose gives a sense of the meaning of betweenness in regards to sexuality on the spiritual path:

> By observing the existence and habits of non-sexual monastic population-segments down through the centuries, we find that Nature has left a door open for their existence. But this door must be a neutral door...homosexuality will destroy the monastic sect, but to be sexless (celibate), *there will be no blame.* The door is the door of innocence, and is a door of escape. This is a paradox of Nature, although there are certain penalties for those who resist reproduction, even in a neutral manner, such as celibacy. Yet, if you continue to live as a child, there is found a combination to the door. Nature definitely leaves a door open for spiritual direction. The spiritual quest, however, passes through the door not smoothly, but with great risk. The escapee must be well disciplined, alert, and fearless. And he must possess an intuition equal to his courage (Rose, 1986a, p. 35).

All the information presented about the teaching thus far creates an image of the Fourth Way seeker as a mythical, valiant Zen warrior; a man with an innocent heart, a whole mind, and a certain

vector; one who walks the razor's edge, guided by intuition, fueled by transmuted energy, and carries no excess baggage.

The term "intuition" is frequently encountered in esoteric writings (and sometimes seems to suggest more of an indiscriminate, naive inkling than a sensitivity born of mature innocence), but the way to develop it is not often well described. Rose offers a rare and invaluable explanation of what the workings of this faculty really involve:

> Intuition is a computer with the taps closed. No (irrelevant) impressions coming in. No irritation, no confusion coming in; no energy going out (as sex-action). So that the problem stays in the computer until it's solved. And the energy stays in there to keep the computer going until it's solved, so to speak. This (sexual restraint) is the whole secret behind developing intuition (Rose, lecture, 1981).

There are some important clues in this statement. Rose has referred to recent research in biochemistry that corroborates the ancient teachings on kundalini. There is now evidence (Bernard, 1957; Jaqua, 1986; Rose, 1975, p. 58-9) that the physical substance of sublimated sex energy—which creates LIFE, so it must be important stuff—is reabsorbed into the nervous system and used to nourish the brain by being converted into neurotransmitters. These chemicals result from transmutation. He is also pointing out that in order to be able to do the subtle inner work of mental refinement, it is important to maintain a single, relatively sane state-of-mind and be free from outside influences and contamination from other's possibly polluted psyches that would disrupt such delicate research. Sex being the activity with the greatest power to influence the mind and the body's energy-system needs to be correspondingly inhibited and this force rechanneled. Intuition in the Albigen System can thus be simply described as the product of chastity plus transmutation. T.A.T. could therefore also stand for: Transmutation and Transmission.

Rose has stated that celibacy is essential for the attainment of Enlightenment (at least during a crucial period of the path), but it is no guarantee by itself. This transmutation and final realization is not automatic. Years of mere repression does not bring this about. He has likened celibacy to coal, in that it represents latent energy. In order for it to become living energy, it has to be ignited, or used. It can then become quantum energy, which is the highest distillation of energy and is used to power the leap from relative consciousness to absolute awareness.

The curious question comes up as to what refined physiological energy has to do with bringing about an ultimately non-physical experience, considering Rose has attested that Enlightenment might also occur at the time of actual physical death, when all of one's energy ceases, (if one has lived a prior life of dedicated spiritual search). A partial, symbolic answer could be that, in the seeker, the tension of this transmuted energy is what finally cracks the "cosmic egg" of the ego-self, leaving one exposed to reality or even propelling one into death, once sufficient contact has been made (so to speak) during life with the true, aware Self, which is all that would remain to realize itself after all else is negated. The same relinquishment of the ego-mind can occur at one's natural death, if one's spiritual vector has sufficiently prepared one for the experience (without which it might not completely end at death, but continue in some rarified form in another dimension). The bottom line in both cases is death—one's being reduced to zero, and the isolation of that ever-present spiritual "I."

The absoluteness of this conclusive state-of-being also helps explain the qualitative difference between those tantric or otherwise manipulative practices that transmute energy for the purpose of achieving some reactive bliss-state in consciousness, and the Fourth Way/Raja Yoga efforts recommended by Rose that lead to complete transcendence of the entire relative scene. The former condi-

tion is temporary, manifesting, and experienced by a subtly separate, finite self who remains largely intact afterwards. The latter is permanent, non-dualistic, and can never be experienced by an experiencer but only realized *by no one*, by becoming one with it.

As metaphysical doctrines all state, this quantum energy is transmuted by intense mental concentration in a specified direction; the refinement of consciousness at its summit transforming into aware beingness, which is what ultimately realizes itself. Energy follows thought. What we attend to is what we become. The mind becomes that upon which it constantly dwells. This concentration can take several forms, according to the seeker's nature and level of capacity. Some of the ways that have been used are:

1. Focusing on various nerve centers or chakras.
2. Repeating a mantra or prayer.
3. Regulation of the breath.
4. Various mental exercises.
5. The establishment of a system of shocks.
6. Monitoring the alternation between agony and ecstasy.
7. Philosophical contemplation.
8. The practice of remembering the self and self-confrontation.
9. Residing in the observing self that watches the contents of consciousness with detachment.
10. The practice of thinking about one thing, then about everything, and then about nothing (Rose, 1982, p. 111).

Rose claims the common denominator of functional value in all spiritual disciplines is concentration, not the specific means or technique practiced by any one sect that embodies this function. The Albigen System offers an advantageous strategy for transmuting the kundalini, compared to the prevalent, indirect approach of one's doing something else as a mechanical exercise to raise this energy to the head, with the assumption that this raw potential will then enable one to achieve Self-Realization with further insight, discipline, or divine intervention. This approach is like a mountain climber lifting weights in order to be strong enough to climb more vigorously later. If getting to the top of the mountain is really one's goal, it would be more expedient to use this same time and energy to just start climbing up steadily from the lower slopes, and gradually become more capable at doing exactly what one intends to do.

Likewise, what Rose suggests—if one is able to do so—is that the inner work consists of the actual psychological and philosophical inquiry that promotes mental refinement, self-understanding, and sane comprehension. This kind of concentration then not only transmutes the energy, but is also a holistic effort that directly furthers one's progress in "becoming the truth." This is more truly spiritual than artificially manipulating energy in isolation from the rest of one's total system as only a preparation for this transformation, yet without having submitted oneself to the larger requisites of the Truth. The disturbing occurrence of moral degeneracy or madness in ambitious, though insincere, seekers on the path is one reason why texts on kundalini and alchemy warn against the danger of stimulating sex energy through such mechanistic means or laboriously mutating consciousness into exotic patterns, while ones's psychology and character are still immature or even corrupt.

A chart depicting the transmutation of energy is presented in [Rose's book, *The Direct-Mind Experience*] and is worth serious study. It shows the possible courses of energy-flow from its organic source, through the human being, and on towards several possible levels of goals. The energy from food is first transmuted by physical exercise into body energy. Some of this then goes into the glands

and is used primarily in sexual functioning. Neural quantum can be developed from glandular energy by mental effort and manifested as thought, introspection, or creative expression. Only from this neural quantum can spiritual quantum be developed by intense concentration in the specific direction of self-awareness. Rose says: "Civilization rests on the ability to transmute the energy someplace above the glands" (Rose, 1985, p. 192).

As can be seen, most human energy ends up doing nothing more than nourishing the soil, with little profit to the individual in the form of some superior attainment or realization. To reach the highest levels requires deliberate effort and discipline. This objective of developing quantum energy for use in spiritual work is the meaning of the Philosopher's Stone referred to in medieval teachings of alchemy.

Rose adds a note of warning regarding the waste of energy on even the higher levels from one's being drained by others. He discourages the use of one's personal energy for healing troubled people, whether deliberately or inadvertently: "Do not project energy/sympathy towards people (in need). The sick must heal the sick." He adds: "It is foolish to bail out a leaking boat without also plugging up the hole; to patch up flat tires without taking the nails out of the road." He is saying the healing must take place from within the individual by their correcting the personal fault causing the distress or resolving the original violation done to them which created the psychic wound that absorbs their vitality, and that either getting into emotional rapport with the person (as versus detached compassion) or directly projecting energy into them siphons off one's own energy reserves. Also, unless the reason for the person's sickness or dissipation is remedied at its source, the healing will be useless for the afflicted and wasteful for the healer. Real aid should be in the form of teaching those who can hear you how to heal themselves.

The Forces of Adversity

A troubling and serious addendum to this subject needs to be briefly discussed; something that was referred to in Chapter 2: the deliberate opposition to our efforts on the spiritual path by seemingly conscious entities or influences. "The forces of adversity" were mentioned previously as a general principle. Although the precise nature and dynamics of these forces in their own domain are not readily known, Rose does offer more specific insight into their workings and motives in regards to our's.

This line of inquiry—into what is now admittedly only a disturbing possibility for the seeker—begins with the simple questions: Are we the highest link in the food chain? Do we have any justification to assume we are? Might something in the interrelated scheme of Nature be eating us? As we are evidently not being bodily consumed prior to death (excepting when ravaged by illness), what more subtle essence within us might be the nourishment for some unknown recipient? Rose recounts a humorous poem as a clue to describe our predicament; one with grave implications: "Larger bugs have smaller bugs upon their backs to bite 'em; smaller bugs have smaller bugs and so on infinitum."

It has been presented as a consistent theme throughout the Albigen System that the spiritual path, as is organic life, is largely a process of the refinement of energy and consciousness to increasingly higher levels. It is Rose's contention, in line with the Law of Progression, that there exist in another dimension, interpenetrating our own visible one, something he will only call "entities": beings of some intelligence and willfulness that are a part of Nature and who feed on the vital energy of humans, the same as all other life-forms feed on complementary life-forms for their sustenance. He says they are not exactly "evil", in our usual sense of the term; they are merely hungry and will move

to consume the nourishment that is available to them with no thought of the harm done to the one being "eaten", as we care not for the animals and plants we kill for our own use.

He has never fully explained "why" these entities exist; in other words, what legitimate function they serve in the overall scheme of Nature to justify their license to feed on us. Their role in prompting people to reproduce does not seem like a complete explanation, as the breeding impulse is already sufficiently programmed into the human animal as in all others, and the sexual excesses—and gratuitous bloodshed—which Rose claims they are largely responsible for instigating seem contrary to the aim of Nature in devitalizing or eliminating some of its highest members. Furthermore, why would Nature—presumably designed by a Higher Intelligence—contain within it adverse forces that would thwart humanity from reconnecting with that Higher Intelligence? Evidently, we must add these questions also to our growing pile of discomforting mysteries. The full truth of the matter to which the circumstantial evidence points will only become known when all is known. In the meantime, the haunting unknowing motivates us onward.

Rose does point out that these beings are not superior to us in any objective or hierarchical sense; they are only strategically superior by being operative in a dimension most of us cannot see or influence. He emphasizes that these beings—as well as the disincarnate, psychic remains of wayward humans and the more deliberately malevolent forces classified as demons—are not to be mistaken as "spiritual" just because we cannot readily see them (although some can), but are also physical and relative, as we are. He explains that the other dimensions touching our own are still physical, but their substance vibrates at a difference frequency, allowing entities within them to interpenetrate this one and manipulate it, while remaining largely elusive to our attempts to counter them.

Rose claims they function primarily on the psychic level in us and their objective is to consume our energy through various means, mainly through urging the person to sexual indulgence (along with implanting the conviction that one is the enjoyer), thereby gaining some nourishment from the expenditure, as their "commission." He is fully aware that to the strict materialist or Pollyannic spiritualist this seems like an absurd ghost story or ignorant superstition meant to frighten people into moral living, or to explain intrapsychic processes in a paranoid fashion. Nonetheless, based on his own ability of direct-mind perception from a vantage point outside all relative dimensions, Rose insists: "I know that there are entities and that they are as real as this physical dimension, and possibly equally as illusory in the final analysis" (Rose, 1981, p. 5). He does not attempt to "prove" their existence, but suggests we can infer their likely presence through the study of the interrelationships between life-forms, the dynamics of energy, and the suspicious fluctuations in our mental states, especially those relating to sexuality.

He teaches that they influence the human mind through hypnotic suggestions of thoughts, moods, and compulsions, as well as distinct, subjectively audible voices that are not merely a disowned part of the psyche, but from a source external to it. We are susceptible to such influence because our minds are not whole, clear, and invulnerable in our normal state, and can be deceived. This is a frightening trap in that the psychic contamination or damage resulting from such devious seductions into self-violation causes one to be subsequently even more susceptible to suggestions urging one towards progressively more serious crimes against truth, as one's capacity for common sense and self-awareness is correspondingly diminished. This is much like an infection exploiting a wound and feeding on the organism's vitality thus exposed, further debilitating it.

This is one reason why Rose stresses the importance of knowing oneself thoroughly with the aid of the higher intuition in objective awareness, in order to be able to discriminate between a valid thought, feeling, or conviction and some form of projected delusion, our acting upon which is not to our ultimate benefit. He declares: "We are tempted, but we don't tempt ourselves, and we are out-

witted, but a man doesn't deliberately outwit himself; he gets outwitted before he can even catch up with it" (Rose, 1982, p. 146). This sabotage refers to the entire, impersonal conspiracy of Nature, as well as the lower forces in our own nature that would thwart us in order to perpetuate their own parasitic existence.

This is also another reason why doubt is so necessary. We are generally encouraged by life, as well as the psychology profession, to never doubt ourselves and to assume that our experiences, desires, states-of-mind, etc. are all perfectly valid and justified, as is. Accepting the possibility that there may be adverse forces wishing to divert our higher intentions through deception or intimidation, thereby benefiting from our failure, one is forced to develop some detached assessment capability of one's own subjective states, and to discern the true from the false and the mine from the not-mine. We certainly recognize in our lives there being plenty of human sources of such opposition and parasitism. Why assume "homocentrically" that there is no one here but us and there cannot be non-human inhabitants of this dimension as well? (This would be much like different frequencies all operating on the same radio band, yet our only being able to hear one station and so not suspecting that others simultaneously exist too.) In fact, they may also be responsible for the human expressions of such adversity, by their acting through them.

No one in mainstream psychology acknowledges the reality of possession and psychic influences upon the mind, or at least does not dare to do so openly. Nevertheless, Rose insists that entities do play a large role in determining our sexual habits, and related incidents of madness or bloodlust. The tremendous rush of exhilaration we feel during sex is the sensation of our energy leaving us, especially on the psychic level, as evidenced by the great fatigue immediately thereafter. As energy never ceases to exist but only changes form or location, he asks us to wonder where this energy goes, and what worthwhile profit there was to us in the expenditure. He also mentions, ominously, that there is a different entity for every kind of sex-act, thus impelling us to examine our motives and urges even more carefully.

As taught in the Gurdjieffian system, fear, anger, despair, lust, and identification are the main forms of energy drainage and negativity that plague us. In fact, it seems that sex, war, vanity, acquisition, and assorted ego-obsessions are where most of humanity devotes most of its life energy most of the time. Entities live on this energy, and the true part of us thereby lives correspondingly less. Challenging one's negative mental patterns as being invaders, rather than claiming them as oneself, weakens their spell and allows one to disassociate from them. This is similar to the principle in exorcism that correctly calling out the demon's name and demanding it to leave compels it to depart from the victim of the possession. The paradoxical attitude needed in this adroit maneuver of disengagement is to indeed accept one's experience as happening and thus be responsible for having to deal with it, but to not identify with it *as being oneself,* and so inherently valid.

Especially in regards to the compulsion to sexual excess of any kind, Rose urges us to adopt a perspective on our experience different from the customary belief in the sanctity of pleasure: "Realize that you are being used and fight it. Don't identify with the process of being ridden." In the event of <u>any</u> kind of ego-obsession harmful to the true part of oneself, he states that one must not be intimidated by it, but can insist on asserting one's freedom from the imposition: "Say 'NO!' and put your foot down—the possession/nightmare will stop." In this battle, the firm ground of awareness is equivalent to the authority of the name of Christ invoked in exorcisms. He adds that there is another, more subtle, zen-like weapon against such psychic adversity; one which he frequently uses as a teacher: laughter. Recognizing and challenging absurdity in oneself by being able to laugh at the part of oneself that is being ridiculous weakens its hold on us. Insight into the dynamics of one's susceptibility to such influences reveals the reactive egos being thus dismantled to have been some form of

crystallized defensiveness against the feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which are being exploited. Seeing the whole truth of one's condition from a vantage point of compassion allows forgiveness to take place, which then allows one's inner division to be healed and the deadly lures of compensation to be resisted. When frankly examined, most of life is seen to be little more than a masturbation fantasy, meant to cover one's spiritual void. Reality can be regained when we either faithfully or bravely submit to it.

Chapter 12

Betweenness, Direct-Mind, and the Psychology of Miracles

It is time to more expressly discuss some interrelated topics that have been mentioned in passing several times thus far: betweenness, direct-mind, tension, and miracles.

A student of Rose's, Keith M., once picked up from his assorted comments a certain inkling of an unspecifiable attitude that enables one's spiritual quest to enter the realm of magic. He wondered aloud: "Is it true that everything is already perfect, including the course of our paths—only our understanding or perspective of it is wrong?" Rose patiently replied: "Now you're starting to get the idea." He broadens this perspective when he goes ahead to describe the next-to-last stop on the spiritual path: There is an exaltation that comes out of the experience called Cosmic Consciousness in which a person becomes one with the evenness and the constancy of the creation as he sees it. Everything becomes beautiful, and he realizes that *whatever it is out there,* it's in Good Hands. (Rose, lecture, 1986). This aforementioned attitude has some personal applications while on one's way to this larger realization. It is difficult to define betweenness precisely, but describing the various avenues leading to its manifestation can give a sense of what the term means.

After discussing this subject in several writings and lectures, Rose later made the comment to a student privately that he wished he had never mentioned betweenness in the first place: "People are trying to do this." This does not work; it defeats the possibility of magic. The secret lies somewhere between doing and not-doing. He has said: "Do not try to learn betweenness. It will happen to you. Work like hell, but don't get an ego about what you are doing." There is a key formula for success, mundane or spiritual, in this statement.

The ego-as-obstacle is a common theme running through many of his comments that infer the nature of betweenness. He has said: "You quit and things happen; you let the door open, you stop the obstruction, you eliminate the ego. The ego is one of the biggest obstructions to the achievement of anything" (Rose, 1982, p. 147). By ego, he means the vain belief in oneself as an independent, self-determined "doer" who stands apart from the interconnected flow of life-events and feels as the proud recipient of some exclusive benefit resulting from one's victories. This is contrasted with the selfless giving of oneself to the process of inquiry and fellowship as it manifests; recognizing oneself to be only a point-of-view within the mass-gestalt of factors in collective experience—yet, paradoxically developing a greater appreciation of oneself as the whole. He adds: "You learn sooner or later that you are not running the show and that if you relax, the show runs better. Things will happen

better if you just relax; many things are under control in many respects" (Rose, 1982, p. 147). This is a broader form of the more specialized principle that the entire path may well be set up for us by our anterior Self, implying that the truer we are to our inner self and live from it, the more sure and graceful our paths become.

I was once talking with Rose about my conviction of wanting to make efforts on the path, figure things out, solve my problems, not rely on the benevolence of fate, and so on. He related having had a similar attitude during his earlier years of search, but that he finally learned an important lesson. He used the familiar metaphor of life's being a river and our needing to give in to its flow; to not hold on to our ego-generated efforts at trying to make things happen: "You fear that if you let go, you will crash on the sides of the bank or everything will fall apart, but you find that everything keeps moving as it should, even better than you expected, or than it would if you were still trying to control it." This also brings to mind the Zen aphorism: Don't push the river (yet, in all this, keeping in mind that he also says we must make determined efforts in order to succeed—thus: to do without being the doer). It should go without saying, of course, that the flow he was referring to was not just the indiscriminate acceptance of mundane, organic functioning, but the special quality of guidance offered by life to one who has made a commitment towards a spiritual objective.

Ramana Maharshi used another metaphor to make a similar point. He said that once one is riding on the train, there is no need to carry one's suitcase on top of one's head, but may as well place the baggage on the floor and let the train carry that as well. From the Advaitic perspective, all of life is recognized to be one interconnected whole that happens at once, and the so-called "person" is carried along with it as an integral part, not something separate that makes choices and efforts, and is responsible for itself (the baggage). The train moves everything along equally as one unit, and we are along for the ride (Rose, 1988, p. 1-93). Appreciating this fact (and making certain one is on the right train!) is a key to betweenness.

I had also asked Rose about why the path takes so long; why, once we turn to "God" and ask for the answer, the answer is not immediately forthcoming, despite all our best efforts to do the right thing. He replied that the vast majority of the myriad of factors comprising our paths are beyond our understanding or control, that we are only "doing" a small part of the total process for ourselves (if at all), and the rest occurs behind the scenes, so to speak, orchestrated by intelligences and according to a schedule we know nothing about. He said that so many things are involved that have to come into proper alignment and readiness, including the status of our chakras, that the culmination of the quest cannot occur quickly, however much we may feel we deserve it. The incomprehensibly complex interrelation of factors determining our spiritual fate has to reach its moment of ripeness in its own good time.

Rose offers assorted tips on how to walk the path most effectively, with a minimum of wasted energy. The key is to remove the sense of "self" from the activity. In fact, he had once defined sanity as "egoless action." In line with the Fourth Way principle of one's having to work on several levels simultaneously, he has said: "You can't do one thing; you must do all things at once. Do everything, but don't insert yourself into what you are doing" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). This is a lesson many people eventually learn on the way to success in any endeavor: we have to get out of our own road.

Another aspect of this egolessness in betweenness is the deference to proper timing. Although Rose urges the seeker to take determined action, one has to also acknowledge the reality of circumstances and intuit when they arrange themselves to invite an expedient move: "Don't knock your head against the wall, but when you see an opening, work like hell." His emphasis upon proper tension is qualified by the need for poise and flexibility: "Relax—then work when the light is green."

There is a corollary to Rose's instruction about not postulating in advance the desired goal-state of one's efforts: it is necessary to work to be a vector in one's chosen direction, but to not have concern for the results. To want something without wanting it. To desire with indifference. The seeker must *do,* directly, without care, fear, or vanity—there is magic in this. As Rose promises: "Work for nothing, and you get surprises." There is then a final necessary step in this procedure to enable the magic of serendipity to work; one that many also stumble upon accidentally: giving up. One must first apply oneself to the work 100%—then give up, turn away, and rest the ego-mind. The door swings open when the mind stops trying. The results come about, if they are supposed to, when one's attention is no longer staring at the issue at hand but has relegated it to fate, or to some nameless process in a deeper part of oneself. To want, to do, to let go, and to forget: this is the formula.

Yet, one cannot cheat. The "contraction" of egoity only ends when one has reached the point of realizing the futility of all effort. It does no good to "give up," due to laziness, resentment, frustration, or seduction by lesser motives, before one has genuinely exhausted all of one's efforts. This surrender to egolessness is not exactly even voluntary, as such a choice to quit would be made by the still existent ego, who would then remain to be identified with the relief of non-action. This collapse into transparent unicity is an innately spontaneous happening when one is finished.

With these varied aspects in mind, it is now possible to appreciate an indirect definition of betweenness: it is a methodicity of holding the head in balance; "...the ability to hold the mind on a dead standstill, in order to effect certain changes" (Rose, 1985, p. 205). It means finding the neutral point between extremes of polarity and eliminating all ego interference in the mental processing of life experience, thereby enabling one to place one's will under the influence of a higher power.

This frictionless state of unicity, which is neither here nor there, cannot be comprehended nor implemented—but can be experienced. Rose cautions:

> The exertion of the ego negates the magic of betweenness. When a person tolerates surges of pride or ego, he is no longer in the "Swing Point," but has named the mechanics of manipulation incorrectly. There can be no definition of [the] source [of influences] unless that definition remains forever mysterious and unknowable. For once a man proclaims his power, he invites powerlessness which surely must follow. So that magic shall always be in the realm of magic. We must not be willful. But we must know that it will happen (Rose, 1985, p. 272).

This warning relates to the attractive metaphysical notions of positive thinking, visualization, and creating one's own reality. Rose is saying that these practices can have only a limited effectiveness, and even then only on a certain level. Each desire born of ego sets the opposite force into motion, stopping the individual. Some have stumbled upon the discovery that the physical dimension is not entirely fixed and is influenceable by projections of the mind. Yet, to create something, as versus *seeing and merging into what is,* inevitably creates its opposite too in compensation in the realm of polarity, as does moving any component of a well-balanced, complex mobile. This methodology is not a complete formula nor philosophy of life that would lead to freedom from identification with relative existence. In true spirituality, one should not "create reality"—but uncreate fiction, and be the pure watching of what is.

This intention of changing the status of things according to one's wishes is not only futile in the long run, due to our ignorance of all the factors involved in the whole picture of life, it is also meaningless in regards to what is truly important, spiritually. Rose offers this testimony:

> In the face of Reality, or from the viewpoint of Absolute Reality, our efforts to affect the nightmare are comic and pathetic, except for one effort—a better understanding of the possibility of betweenness. This effort sees for man the possibility of surmounting the world of illusion, consciously (Rose, 1985, p. 261).

Rose is attempting to describe a procedure of search that is strategically deliberate, yet not aggressively willful. The "action" which he so often stresses throughout his teaching actually means this subtle, sly form of maneuvering that lies between doing and not-doing. He explains why this is necessary:

> Perhaps the only solution to a paradox is another paradox. The human spiritual quest must become a vector, with all of that human's energy behind that vector. And the shortest distance between aim and objective is supposed to be a straight line. But success in a spiritual venture requires the ability to run between the raindrops, which may appear to be a zig-zag course—which may include dynamic feints and matched states of high indifference (Rose, 1986a, p. 36).

This *running between the raindrops* is similar to what Christ may have been attempting to illustrate by walking on water. The Fourth Way seeker does not arrogantly try to break down the gates of Heaven, but rather artfully passes through the keyhole.

This notion of betweenness also applies to one's getting by the adversity inherent on the path, whether it be the forces of Nature that would counter one's spiritual aspirations, parasitical entities that would usurp one's energy for their own purposes, or the impersonal law of reaction elicited when attempting to bring about some advantageous change while identifying with any one aspect within a dualistic system. Rose explains: "Psychological or mental betweenness is a form of navigation in the slip-streams of the mind between the gravitational fields of massive gestalts" (Rose, 1985, p. 285). He adds a specific note of caution:

> Keep to the business of observing. When observation turns into a course of action in regard to adversity, then a religion emerges. And when a religion is formed, dichotomy of the mind follows. Do not ignore the forces of adversity. This could be as damaging as increasing their substance by giving them a distinct relative form. Be concerned chiefly with identifying their effects and in circumventing such effects. The solution shall always remain paradoxical. We should ignore the elements of adversity, yet we should never ignore them (Rose, 1979c, p. 85-6).

Rose once composed an invigorating proclamation that confronted the defects in human character in which these above influences manifest and how they were to be outwitted, using their own means:

> Re: the forces of adversity—lust, laziness, pride, weakness, procrastination (and the rationalizations for their maintenance): Let it be known that force and non-force shall be used against them, that they shall be neutralized by recognition and non-recognition. Know that it is important to recognize a negative quality, but it is likewise being negative to recognize them as being important. Let it be known that to overcome these criminals of our fifty states of mind, that incessant action shall be used forthwith, but that he who acts, *shall not be an actor of action-processes.* Let it be known that our strategy will be to use the powers of these criminals against themselves. We shall procrastinate lust, and

> employ procrastination to the urges of voices, and we shall use pride to temporarily fuel the fires of determination, by rejoicing in our successes against our wasters (Rose, unpublished group papers).

This is an added strategic twist on the principle of using mechanicalness to defeat mechanicalness, in which a particular positive state-of-mind or conviction is summoned to counter an existent aversive one. In this astute form of mental "aikido," the enemies' forces are skillfully made to check and negate each other.

One should be alerted that betweenness does not mean the path of least resistance, in the usual sense of this term. Sometimes one can take this route in working through various obstructive factors; life's circumstances showing us the most expedient way to proceed. But at other times, this course would be to compromise with mediocrity and in order to do the right thing, one would have to do what is more difficult.

A pertinent example would be the already discussed need to curb one's sexual expression, to give the kundalini energy a chance to rise. This is not an easy task; certainly not as easy as giving in to its every prompting, as being the path of least resistance. Yet, grimly enforced repression only invites further resistance and a never-ending battle that consumes one's energy and poise. Another approach would be to learn to reside in that part of oneself that is true: the calmness of aware being and, assuming one's commitment to the spiritual path is genuine, to allow the human being before one's view to come into alignment with what is felt to be truthful; in this case, honest sexuality. Ideally, when the hindrance of the ego is removed, the cybernetic process of self-correction operates to alter the factors in one's psychology from within itself, along with its pattern of false needs meant to compensate for a mistaken sense of lack, rather than our engaging in the dualistic tangle of having one source of will struggling to overcome another.

The sexuality issue is just one clear illustration of what it means to become the truth. Betweenness in this application can thus be seen to be a form of non-dualistic mentation and non-volitional action in the commitment to truth. Jean Klein's teaching is essentially that of pure betweenness, although perhaps handicapped by his not fully acknowledging the reality of the paradox. Because of this, he does not sufficiently stress the practical details of the necessary efforts people must make in order to work out their inquiry on a personal level (until the very end of the path, we have no choice but to experience our point-of-reference as being "people," whether we really are or not, and act accordingly), thereby running the risk of a misunderstood imbalance towards the pole of strict non-action. One can pretend to identify with the stillness of the Real Self (as a concept) and become a mental ego that is disassociated from the human self with its numerous errors and defects, while still really being a troubled, ignorant person beneath this attempted fraud. When Klein's teaching of betweenness is implemented by a mature, honest seeker, it describes the complete process of transformation which Rose refers to as "becoming."

The mystical act of surrender to the guidance of a higher power or the wisdom of the path to which one is committed is also related to this theme of betweenness and becoming the truth. The conviction of there being a "me" as a discrete causative agent is relinquished and one throws in one's lot with a larger, holistic process; the workings of which are in accordance with what is objectively valid. The gap between "God's will" and "my will" narrows, until there is only "that which is." One surrenders to this becoming of truth. It is in this innocent wishing where betweenness is found. Rose encourages the seeker with the claim: "With each exercise of betweenness, we feel the power within us grow; goaded on by the magical magnetism, and by the certainty that All is for man to know" (Rose, 1985, p. 286).

This reference to power brings up a further consideration: betweenness implies a state that is in between two opposing or complementary poles. This opposition in forces results in tension between them, like that of two magnets of the same charge placed facing each other. It is the energy from this tension that Zen wishes to exploit in the work on the koan, which, when reaching its culmination of intensity, explodes, leaving behind a stillness that is the doorway to a higher level of being.

Rose has said that life itself is tension at work; life being a force resulting from less sophisticated elements in interaction. Our very existence issues from this magic of betweenness. He adds that with each new form of life generated from the energy of this interaction, *a more subtle life-form is developed* (Rose, 1975, p. 30). Much of spiritual work is the deliberate intensification of this process of transmutation.

He claims that to achieve anything significant in life, especially spiritual attainment, this tension is essential. Despite our perpetual, nostalgic longing for a world of harmony and beauty, he says that discord and frustration can be more propitious for promoting inner work. He states: "Brotherhood and peace on Earth are not good (for attainment). Strife and conflict are." Not only does he say: "Nothing of importance happens without tension," he adds: "There is no tension without polarity, and there is no real understanding or wisdom without tension" (Rose, 1985, p. 265). In fact, one revealing definition of spiritual capacity Rose has given is: <u>how much tension one can maintain</u> (without dissipating it in some form). He has described spiritual work as being, in part: "Continuing to bang your head against the wall. This prepares you to bang your head against bigger and bigger walls."

This attitude requires a particular quality of self-sufficiency and containment, freedom from projection, and singleness of purpose. Rose has bluntly stated: "If you need entertainment or escape, you are asleep." He repeatedly points out that we must *learn to live without the dream:* about ourselves, about life, and about spiritual imaginings. He has defined "stature" to mean being able to stand alone without pride or egos, and being one with proper action. Peace of mind means: "Refuse to be troubled by what happens to you—don't identify with it." He again conjures up the image of the Zen warrior when he states: "To be free of the need for security <u>is</u> security."

What is the composition of this special quality of tension which Rose is encouraging? Quite simply: it is the gap between knowing and unknowing. Between longing and emptiness. Being and non-being. Life and death. Hope and despair. He explains its significance:

> The uncompromisable point in the center between opposites leads to a dead stop; this tension creating the third force. To generate this vector of power, we need to insure that this catalytic midpoint is unvarying. Like the two lovers, never let them touch, yet allow them to be close enough to insure that both are equally aware of the other. The apex of the triangle will be limited to the power of the two opposite directions of force, meaning the importance or anxiety that these directions make in the mind of the seeker (Rose, 1985, p. 265).

He has said that one of the keys to continued movement along the path is to always be dissatisfied with what one is doing and experiencing. However, as always, he has indicated the opposite attitude as well: that one should "Love being—rejoice in the work and signs of progress." This latter paradox in attitude results in a highly focused individual; one who is solid as a rock yet light and transparent as air, and whose identity is finally that of an unanswered question, living without relative, psychological need.

The way of betweenness on the path can be succinctly defined by an elaboration on the famous old soliloquy: "To be or not to be—that is the question." In response: "**To be and not to be—that is the answer**".

The kind of tension to which Rose is referring is not to be confused with nervous anxiety, irritability, or emotional turmoil. This is refined, focused, directed energy, much like that of a superb athlete who is strong without being rigid, and graceful without being weak. It is movement without friction, inner or outer. It is in between polarities, where the greatest energy lies. He has said that this tension of unfulfilled desire and the drawing towards its resolution may be accumulated and even unconsciously maintained by the individual for a prolonged period of time. It is not unendurable. Yet, keeping in mind Ecclesiastes' observation that there is a time for every season, Rose qualifies this by adding: "You need tension—but continued tension without rest might be negative."

These comments on energy and tension can be summarized like this:

1. Energy has quantum, and possibly also a quality and difference in types; some energy being usable only in certain limited directions or applications.
2. When we adopt a way of thinking, our whole being changes, and this includes the body, even though the process is slow.
3. All upward growth is the result of crises.
4. The accumulation of an increase in Mental or Neural Energy beyond that which is needed for ordinary cerebration is brought about by various disciplines and exercises.
5. To act properly, the act should be of the duration of a lifetime.

Betweenness has several major extensions that are significant. Two of the primary aspects which Rose addresses in the Albigen System are: direct-mind ability and the psychology of miracles.

In introduction, Rose ties together much of his teaching with this statement:

> The system has to do with preparing someone for the experience (of Realization). Two things are practiced: one is the arrival at a knowledge of the mundane self, or personality—the elimination of the discrepancies in the personality, false beliefs, etc. The second aims at direct-mind communication. (Rose, 1985, p. 106).

He adds: "Years of accurate intuitional observation leads to direct-mind apprehension and communication. This is the end product of the mystical life (lecture, 1986)."

The first category of work has been partially described so far and will be gone into further in the section on meditation. By "direct-mind," Rose means a quality of mentation that derives from one's being in the state of betweenness in which one can intuit, perceive, and transmit meanings directly, without their being processed through (or distorted by) the rational, linear, dualistic ego-mind. Especially in regards to intuition, this goes beyond its definition presented in earlier contexts. Intuition as a function of the higher mind is where the complex raw data of experience is fed into the computer, but all the mechanistic, high-speed calculations and correlations are not consciously monitored—only the end result is read out. Direct-mind means apperception that side-steps or passes through all relative mental functioning. It is of the spiritual Mind dimension and not only the refinement of the individual mundane mind.

Rose has said that we are born in this state, but then quickly lose it, or have it taken away: "Every child is seduced into taking part in our game of life. He loses direct-mind ability when he identifies with and participates in this dimension, and tries to manipulate it for his own petulant form of counter-seduction" (Rose, 1982, p. 141). As will be explained in detail in a later section, Rose regards the somatic, human mind as an inferior, entangled dimension, acting like a stultifying, kaleidoscopic fog through which the spiritual Mind can only opaquely perceive reality. He laments: "We

have traded direct-mind ability for relative thought," adding: "Conceptual thought is the enemy of wisdom."

The principle of direct-mind has three main implications: A) the faculty of intuition, clear discernment, truthful perception, etc., B) rapport or direct communion with other people or sources of knowledge, and C) direct realization or becoming.

Intuition is developed by obeying it. In regards to this, Rose has described spiritual potential as being the ability to have one's head in the right place, and the main obstacle to achieving this is: "Getting hit on the head with a hammer too many times," hence the emphasis in his teaching on healing the nervous system and perfecting the mind's functioning.

Rose makes an important distinction between E.S.P. and this direct-mind intuition. He claims that E.S.P. abilities function from within the somatic mind, whereas genuine or spiritual intuition comes from beyond this mind. He adds: "E.S.P. comes from an empty head; intuition comes directly from an awake self or Mind."

This relates to direct-mind communication in one's ability to know directly the nature of one's subjective experience without processing it through thought, as well as to instantaneously convey a holistic understanding to another without translating it into language. This is a higher psychological version of the old Indian adage: "Walk in another man's moccasins and you will never have an argument with him." This is similar to Ouspensky's claim that if two people truly, fully understand each other, filtering out all egoistic distortions, they CANNOT disagree, as they would both be plugged into the same reality.

This faculty, in its most refined form, is the happening of transmission, in which one who has *attained* is able to convey the Realization without words to a student whose capability for such reception has been sufficiently readied. He states: "You may be able to transmit that state of awareness or being by the singular process of direct-mind contact, and a skillful control of your own mind, so that nothing else but nothing will permeate your mind...and his" (Rose, 1979c, p. 91). When this occurs, "The student is able to go inside the head of the teacher, and witness, and experience by this catalytic process, the state of Enlightenment that is always with the teacher" (Rose, 1975, p. 55).

To help this kind of transpersonal sensitivity to develop, Rose has encouraged what he calls "rapport sessions" among seekers who are living moral lives. In this, people sit together quietly and remain open to impressions from each other or the group mind. The phenomenon of rapport is not self-directed meditation, devotional prayer, or philosophical contemplation, but rather a one-pointed attention in a still awareness, combined with the automatic habit of sharing energy in social gatherings. Tying in the earlier comments about celibacy, he has made the claim: "The formula for magic is to stay 10 feet away from people—love your friends, but don't touch them." What this function causes in a rapport session is that the tension of this natural desire to be in communion with others having been denied any physical expression, the only possible form of contact remaining is psychic or direct mental rapport (Rose, 1975, p. 57-8). In its deeper aspect, the intention is to be in tune on a level which is no longer exclusively personal; to share in a quality of consciousness where there is not a "you" or "me."

He explains further what the direct-mind experience involves in working with others:

> My psychological system is scientific. Its basic message is that, in a certain state of mind, the healer (not just the mimic of trade terms) can diagnose and alter environmental influences that afflict a subject. In this state of mind, he can also see distant sights or people, predict the future, transcend his present mind-state—and assist another person

> to transcend his mind-state or environmental dimension, or quickly, without material means, bring a person to painlessness, to sleep, or to exceptional mental faculty. The tools are predominately the ability for rapport and induction of a rapport in another...and betweenness, a state of mindlessness that proves to be creative. Many lives have been changed by the insights pointed out in this manner (personal correspondence, 1989).

The relevance of direct-mind ability towards spiritual realization is most important of all. Many of the principles already discussed—commitment, tension, reversing the vector, point-of-reference, non-duality, transmutation, betweenness, and becoming—are drawn together in this comment by Rose about the process of self-transformation:

> You find your Source with perfected intuition and perfected reason. By this, I mean the intuition has to be tempered with the reason (and vice-versa). This causes, through wisdom—*a change of being*. What changes you is this word: betweenness.... By the use of triangulation, you will discover things (Rose, 1985, p. 257).

Triangulation refers to the mental procedure of reconciling polarities in relative experience, in this way ascending to a higher vantage point of comprehension or holistic perception. This is an exceedingly important principle and will be discussed further in the section on Jacob's Ladder.

Rose goes on to explain why this mental ability results in such a change in perspective: "The direct-mind experience leads to a change of being because you develop a direct-mind contact with—more than yourself" (Rose, lecture, 1986). This "more" can be regarded as Brunton's Overself, a higher power, a deeper part of oneself, or the anterior Mind. However it is conceived, one is no longer strictly an ego living in a body functioning in a dualistic world, forever looking for some elusive satisfaction. One has tapped into the realm of magic; a dimension that is *alive and aware.*

Again, anticipating the material on Jacob's Ladder, Rose elaborates on how the process of inquiry he recommends brings about this change in being: "In betweenness, we have the utilization of mental concern and mental stress to propel the mind into a solid, non-relative Reality, if we use opposite factors which deal with our questions on Being" (Rose, 1985, p. 265-6). Our energetically attending to the personal and philosophical koans which urgently confront us is what develops our essential "being," which, through the direct-mind experience—and catalyzed by some fortuitous shock—is finally realized to be one with Reality.

He points out that the path cannot possibly be envisioned in linear, quantifiable, mechanistic terms. The paradox is evident at every step. One sees the limitation of all self-generated, rational effort, yet must exhaust all efforts nevertheless. All knowledge and points-of-view are seen to be relative and conditional, but one can only intuit that a more complete, direct view is somewhere above or behind us. Rose describes the exaltation achieved in Zen this way: "Satori is the betweenness that results from the intense contemplation of sense as being equal to nonsense and nonsense as being equal to sense" (Rose, 1985, p. 294).

He explains that the exercise of the mind in this qualified state of Intuition provides access to the magical state of betweenness, which is an accidental discovery of a method to bring out a computation from the mind for which the mind had no symbols in the memory bank. It not only produces a new wisdom, but also phenomena, or miracles (Rose, 1985, p. 304). The study of this following material helps the seeker to better understand some of the factors comprising inner work and the different rungs of the ladder of spiritual potential. The objective of such study is not for one to work miracles, but to attain that state of being where one could.

Rose discusses three classes of magic: 1) the magician who uses illusion (legerdemain), 2) those who dispel illusion (taking the path of wisdom), and 3) the Magus (the one who can create things). These start with the physical level and go upward to mental forms of magic. These mental forms include: hypnosis, direct-mind influence, creation, belief, and telepathy. One also shifts from operating from a lower to a higher ego: that of wanting wisdom instead of selfish power.

He also lists several categories of systems that approach power for use either in healing or magic:

A. Belief: although there are various qualifications of this lever, belief can make things happen, especially if the intent is honest and unselfish. However, belief by itself does not make something objectively true unless God believes it too! (Brilliant, Potshots).
B. Moral purification: this is a primary aspect of transmuting energy.
C. Surrender of egos: one can attain tremendous awareness and ability from surrendering egos (in the proper order).
D. Invocation: this involves temporary help from entities in exchange for one's vital energy (definitely not recommended).
E. Mechanical formulae: spells, curses, witchcraft.
F. Kundalini: this is the outstanding one.
G. Prayer: whether it be to "God" or to a deeper part of oneself.
H. Betweenness.

In regards to healing, Rose makes an important distinction between two types of healing: 1) Healings can occur through the use of one's own stored energy or from the collective energy of a concerned group who believe in the healer who serves as this "funnel" or "magnifying glass" for the group's projected light. This is done with personal energy, by a selfless ego. However, the healer or other human source will eventually burn out from the expenditure. 2) Healings can also occur through betweenness, or a stance of "non-ego," with no loss of physical energy. In this, the healer is a neutral agent; a pivoting point between dimensions by which an influence can pass—if it is supposed to happen. This form might be what, in some spiritualist and mind-science teachings, is poetically called "divine energy."

He elaborates further on the different levels and categories of energy involved in magic:

A. The use of physical energy (chi) to accomplish superhuman feats. He considers it wasteful to downgrade a very sacred energy for mundane, egotistical purposes. Taking this one step upward, it becomes neural energy for intelligence. Another step up from that is the use of neural energy for healings.
B. The miracle of faith (witchcraft is also related to this). This has little to do with quantum energy. Most of the mechanics of faith are unknown.
C. Mental forms: hypnosis, zapping (a form of hypnosis in which a trained yogi can "zap" someone with energy, called "shakti"), psychokinesis, etc.: Rose claims this is a specialized skill that is not spiritual and has nothing to do with finding God.
D. The magic of entities: unholy, symbiotic alliances with lower forces in Nature, utilizing misused sex energy.
E. Supramental forms of magic: spiritual quantum energy or creation.

His main purpose in outlining this material is to arouse the seeker's curiosity about the possibly of there being a common denominator somewhere underneath all these factors. He claims this common root is the transmutation of vital energy and the refinement of direct-mind ability to where

the position of betweenness is attained. This betweenness is what brings about one's "becoming the truth," if this goal is indeed the seeker's highest commitment.

Rose dismisses all the lower forms of phenomenal manipulation and feels one's energy should only be used for one ultimate purpose: attaining Self-Realization. Since we do not know what this really means or the certain method of achieving it, we have to do everything we can, in every aspect of our lives, to serve the call of this truth. Knowledge of these various mechanisms and their relationships can help one to use one's energy for the optimum benefit. To this end, he expands the salesman's proverb like this: "If you throw enough mud at the ceiling, some of it will stick. If you throw it with the right attitude of conviction, it will stick more properly. If you throw it with betweenness, it might ALL stick."

Although the inner nature of the magic can never be fully explained, we can understand something about what conditions bring it about. The significance of the Albigen System's emphasis on this is that the entire teaching aims at placing the seeker into the state of betweenness, in order to make possible a radical shift in being and consequently the awareness of (or from) Reality. Rose's discussion of the lower forms of magic are meant to illustrate this underlying "X-factor" at the core of such phenomena, as well as to stimulate one's intuition about the real nature of the apparent world in relation to the observing self.

The suggestion picked up from these comments is that our world is a dream-projection or reflection of essences from a superior or more "real" dimension; the actuality of this "dream nature" being the basis of betweenness. One may gain access to this source of creation and produce an alteration on our level of existence. It is as if the script is changed in the dream-realm, and something new manifests on this plane.

Rose's stress upon doubt and the constant examination of all relative factors from multiple perspectives is directly tied in to this process. If one's being wholly identified with the paradigm of "normality" restricts the mind's paranormal abilities, anything that weakens or makes less exclusive this paradigm may facilitate these abilities' expression, thereby allowing a new paradigm—or the realization of the true one (which would be a non-paradigm)—to be born. In fact, the purpose of much of his teaching, as well as his manner of teaching, is to stretch people's "finite" minds and poke holes through their paradigms.

However, there must be no conscious attempt to produce a new paradigm of one's choosing, hence Rose's repeated warnings against any kind of belief-projection, visualization, conceptualization, etc. in searching for the truth. Objective reality begins to be revealed as an automatic consequence of one's escaping or denying the strict validity of normal reality. This requires an attitude between acceptance and disbelief. Whether one's goal is spiritual discovery or some miraculous happening on the mundane level, there is a proper way to "hold the head" in betweenness. One must be mentally relaxed and interested, but not too interested; serious, but not too serious. There must be an alert ambiguousness, effortless intention, passive volition. This is a mind-set characterized by one's "allowing it to happen." Conscious striving will produce no results, as ego-caused inhibition in reaction will interfere with the magic. It is a state between trying and not trying.

This may be the actual net value of all religious disciplines consisting of rituals, mantras, chanting, devotion, exercises, etc., in that they occupy the conscious mind with a certain controlled meaninglessness, meanwhile allowing a deeper non-ego function to manifest. This leaves us open for something-we-do-not-yet-know to come about. We are caught between normal reality ("Earth") on one hand and the yearning for an undefined "something else" ("Heaven") on the other. We are positioned in a crucial state of balanced tension between the gravity of the known and the consideration of the "impossible" or miraculous.

This balance is a unique posture: it is not achieved by synthesis or compromise, nor is it a static condition achieved by resolving opposition. Rather, it is the state of the acute tension which exists when two unqualified forces confront each other and cannot be reconciled, but are held teetering on the verge of chaos; not in theory, but in experience. (Much of this section from Jaqua, 1985).

While I hesitate to rely too heavily in this paper on repeated quotations from Rose's work, some of his instructions are so eloquently stated that they approach poetry, and could not be said any better by anyone else. The subject of betweenness being so central to his entire teaching, it is worth devoting extra attention here to his description of the requisite mental attitude of the mature seeker.

> To crack the cosmic egg, to transcend relative thinking, to achieve this greatest reward which is the finding of the Self, and simultaneously finding the expansiveness of that Self—and finding the *Reality of the Self in relation to Time and Cosmos*—you have to hitch up your harness for a long pull. Yet, it will only take you as long as it takes to master betweenness (Rose, 1985, p. 305).

> We learn to fear sleep. We know that sleep is an ever-present reminder that we may be asleep while we think we are awake. We fear we will not detect and thwart the change in states-of-mind, and we carry on internal meditation and endless monitoring of the mental clockwork to be on the alert for new enslavements that we have not yet dreamed of, and new forms of bait that nature dangles before us.

> By the time we are no longer afraid of fear, we will have built into our robot-nature the programming to perpetually search for a solution, and to employ the capacity for fear, and fear itself to drive us along the path. We have to be afraid that we will not get this "automatic pilot" working in time—before death or lethargy, or rationalization sets in. Then, once the automatic pilot becomes a guarantee of being a vector for us, we must once more employ betweenness. This is a way in which the head is held with the conviction that it will never wish to stray from dynamic action, while at the same time knowing that you are beyond all fear. You know that a process has been well established that is one in which for you there is no wobble. You will be a vector. You will know it, but will pay no attention to the accomplishment (Rose, 1985, p. 275-6).

> The Universal nature is one with our motion, and things happen according to our will, which is just a whim caring little for fruition, which is just an idle thought, which we no longer own because it has happened and will happen. It is born between the thighs of dynamic mobility and inertia (Rose, 1985, p. 286-7).

> Once you have found your peace of mind, and have found you can synthetically upset or destroy your peace of mind, you will have reached a point where neither peace of mind, nor the catalytic upsetting of that state are necessary. At that time, you will be beyond states of mind...both the most pleasant and the most objectionable ones. And at these moments, you will have power (Rose, 1985, p. 288-9).

> To exercise power, we must use betweenness. We succeed when we have risen above the desire for success and the fear of failure. You cannot just make up your mind to do these things. You have to grow into a creature that can move without desire and make

> decisions without fear...while caring little about the whole operation. And while caring little, you continue the task, *knowing* that everything will go the right way. You relax and watch, as the forces of nature and the forces behind nature diligently solve the problem, by combinations of otherwise unpredictable factors (Rose, 1985, p. 289).

> You must will to find the Truth, or die trying. Then when your will is set in the matter, forget about the Will and allow anything to happen that does not jeopardize your Search. And you thus become a Will-less Will-ful vector (Rose, 1985, p. 305-6).

The Taoist saying: "The Great Way is not difficult for those who have no preferences" alludes to this recognition and acceptance of the wholeness and rightness of the life that is dedicated to Truth. Once one's path is certain, the ego becomes servant to the wisdom of events as they unfold, with no reactive interpretations of positive and negative.

Following is Rose's dramatic declaration of the actuality of this betweenness on the path. It is chilling in its depiction of the intensity this work demands:

> How do we do it? We do it by carrying water on both shoulders, but by not allowing it to touch either shoulder. We stagger soberly between the blades of the gauntlet with recklessness and conviction, but we pick our way through the tulips with fear and trepidation, because the trap of the latter is sweet. We charge the gates of Heaven by urinating our way through Hell, all the while sitting for forty years on the banks of the Ganges, doing nothing. We sit on the banks of the Ganges, not from laziness, but from an anger at angriness, a fury against our inner fury for wasted activity. And we pull back a terrible arrow...but never let it go. And by so holding, with the universe as our target, the universe is filled with terror at our threat (Rose, 1985, p. 286).

Chapter 13

Meditation

With the seeker's foundation now in place and the necessary preparations made, we come to the central theme in any esoteric teaching: meditation. In the Albigen System, genuine meditation—or going within—is defined as: **"Finding reality by finding the real part of oneself"** (Rose, 1981, p. 19). The final objective of the practice is to arrive at the true state-of-mind, or ultimate sanity, which is considered to be synonymous with Self-Realization.

This subject seems familiar enough to students of esoteric philosophy and spiritual psychology, yet becomes confusing when one recognizes that "meditation" does not have one, obvious, unanimously agreed upon meaning, but is rather a generic term that refers to several different forms of "going within." It cannot be automatically assumed out of generosity or enthusiasm that all methods and philosophies lead to the same place or at the same rate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the mystics and sages throughout the ages have always testified that the Truth, or God, is inside of us, but reliable recommendations on how exactly to go about finding this have been hard to come by. The student finds the different meditational techniques taught in various spiritual traditions are often conflicting in principles (e.g. should we use the mind or try to escape it?, should we worship God or contemplate the self?), seemingly incomplete in scope when compared with one another, and do not always answer to common sense and intuition. For example, some offer exercises and disciplines that are so arcane and contrived (breathing patterns, physical postures, visualizations, studies of metaphysical symbology) that a sincere student of truth could never discover and implement these principles from personal, direct inquiry, but only acquire them if they were deliberately taught by someone else. Can Truth that is immanent and universal be inaccessible through holistic intuition and found only by the elect through some secretive, idiosyncratic technology?

One wonders if God spitefully wishes to remain so hidden that only a lucky few who have been given the magical combination of factors can ever unlock the door to find Him. (Note: The occasional reference to God as "Him" is strictly a cultural colloquialism and not meant to suggest a Deity that is personified as a large, muscular male with a white beard, wearing a toga, who speaks King James era English, and who angrily hurls lightning bolts to incinerate those poor wretches who have the misfortune of chanting the wrong mantra.) How does one sort through all of these diverse paths, without being able to devote a lifetime to test each one? The seeker may be left perplexed,

wondering if there is a reliable, honest approach to Truth that the individual can discern and validate personally.

The process of meditation Rose advises requires no faith or dogma to practice, and verifies its legitimacy and relevance in the student's own experience as he goes along, step by step. It is not solely an investment or preparation for an all-or-nothing "pay-off" later. Whereas those spiritually intended disciplines that contain a strong element of fantasy or premeditated manipulation leave the seeker more or less in the same condition after the flight of fancy is over, the course of inquiry described here goes in only one direction. If the work is done correctly, one does not come back. One becomes...different. In addition, while each individual's "going within" is unique to that person, there are a number of general principles and themes involved in this search into the self that are impersonal and apply to everyone.

A few distinctive points about Rose's approach differentiate it from some other forms of meditation. As mentioned earlier, one of the most important ground rules is that the person is not to start out with a preconception of what is to be found at the end of the search, or during the process of inquiry. One is not to concoct an image of what spirituality or some attractive, higher state is supposed to be, based on descriptions picked up in books or one's own desires. The person cannot honestly know in advance what the goal-state is, and so any conception about it can only be an imagining.

In this state of imagining, one may well *create* the experience one expects or demands to find, even though it is not genuine. The maintenance of this belief-structure and gradual immersion into its resultant projection unawares then leaves no room for the recognition of the TRUE nature of things, and the realization of Truth in the non-finite dimension beyond the mind. What instead happens is that one *simulates* a condition or state-of-mind of what spirituality is assumed to be, and this simulation, of what may be an erroneous postulation to begin with, is substituted for true understanding and discovery. Rose states: "It is necessary to drop all of the egos in order to have a realization that isn't colored by relative idealistic thinking" (Rose, 1985, p. 184). By "egos", he is partially referring to convictions and identifications which are maintained as distinct psychological entities obstructing the process of objective inquiry. Also implied is that Reality is not to be regarded as merely an extension of the best qualities of human nature, within the range of our finite comprehension.

Rose recommends an alternative to creating a chosen mood of peacefulness through the induction of a self-hypnotic trance, or mimicking "no-mind" by suppressing thoughts through some mechanical technique of distraction, or indulging in gratifying fantasies of visualization as if they were genuine experiences. He advises a process of open-ended **inquiry** and **search**, rather than belief and simulation of symptomatology. He urges us to start from zero, and go on from there; in other words, to start from a point of acknowledged ignorance, and then look honestly for understanding about the reality of things (including oneself), by seeing *what is*. This is genuine faith. Genuine innocence.

Thus, one does not start out meditating by looking for joy, peace, thoughtlessness, Heaven, or "God." One starts out by soberly assessing one's current condition and status, and asking oneself some important questions: Who or what am I? How does my mind work? Where do my thoughts and feelings come from? What do I not understand about myself? Are my values working? How has my conditioning created my life-view and sense of self? What is life on Earth for? What are my assumptions about life? What are my projections onto life, myself, and others? What are my rationalizations about religion? What does the reality of inevitable death say about the meaning of my life?

After I die, who will "I" be? What do I know for sure? What is worthwhile? What is the real desire underlying all my other desires? **Who is asking these questions?** *Who is aware of this asking?*

Rose insists that one cannot look for Heaven, God, etc., because one does not know what these terms really mean, where the reality to which they refer are located, or if they even exist. Artificially induced, temporary peace-of-mind is no substitute for the genuine contentment of residing in the Truth. Meditation techniques that offer a mantra or chant only lull the mind to quiescence, but may not result in the insight that would liberate one from the source of the turmoil—or from the lull of quiescence. Visualizing spiritual imagery or characteristics can serve as a reminder of a desired goal, at best, but provides little means of attaining it. After some metaphysical study, to boldly proclaim: "I am divine. I am perfect. I am immortal," but without proving it—without first even accurately defining this "I" who alleges having these glorious attributes—is just a pretentious bluff. One will only remain in one's own narcissistic fantasy, and never arrive at objective knowing, or realization.

Many meditation practices, rituals, etc. create a "spiritual" state-of-mind, yet this is not equal to freedom from all states-of-mind, which can be the only real meaning of sanity. While they can be partially conducive towards bringing about such an aware self by negating the obstacles in the mind to such awareness, the created state would also have to be eliminated at some point, as it is itself an obstacle. Yet, this can be difficult to accomplish if the habitual, substitute state is comforting and mistaken for reality. Hypnosis is not freedom from hypnosis, no matter how idealistic its intent, although temporary, deliberate hypnosis into such a "spiritual" attitude or conviction can be helpful in rousing one from one's current, mundane or even pathological state of hypnosis. Even so, some aware presence of mind would need to remain outside this state; one that monitors the process of reindoctrination and could wake the individual up once the person is free enough of the previous state of obsession to begin to think clearly. Either that or the seeker would have to trust that God, the Guru, or one's higher Self will intervene at the proper moment to end the therapeutic interlude and show one the next step towards an objective quality of mind.

Rose has conceded that in the beginning of the introspective discipline, some preliminary techniques to quiet and center the mind—mantra meditation or concentration on the breath, for example—can indeed be useful or even necessary, if one is too turbulent or mentally scattered to engage in any sensitive inner research. However, after one is sufficiently calm and "present," in true awareness, one should begin to work on resolving the issues that have generated one's turmoil or exteriorized one's confused sense of self, rather than going to sleep, dreaming of Godhood or bliss, and mistaking that for samadhi.

As the emphasis in this meditation is always on self-definition and increasing mindfulness, rather than the creation of any state that would divert our attention away from our awareness, the most pertinent mantra one could use would be "I am" (not any combination of Sanskrit syllables of supposed mystical import), as the literal meaning of these sounds would be a constant alerting to wakefulness and pointer to selfhood. Knowing Rose's personality as well as his teaching, I suspect that another mantra he would heartily endorse is: "bull-shit." Its continued repetition will make one wise.

Using any of these methods goes under the heading of "using mechanicalness to defeat mechanicalness." This means that while we realize we are not fully capable in our present condition to think, perceive, and intuit clearly, nor to work without error, due to the defects in our mechanical nature, we do not have to be stopped in our efforts by this admission. Rather, we can utilize strategic means to outwit our programming and counter our defects. The inverting of curiosity and desire has already been discussed. Another example would be that our natural urge for gregariousness can be guided towards appreciating the association with people of a philosophical nature with whom the

serious questions can be kept before one's attention. Another would be to take the primal programming for survival and extend that to the desire for essential survival beyond the physical, and have the innate abhorrence of death add further compulsion to the search for what does not die. These examples are one implication of "Running between the raindrops."

It is in this beginning phase of meditation that Rose's comments about curiosity and desire, as well as intuition, come into play. One notices feeling homesick—even when one is at home. It is at this moment that one becomes a mystic. The attention turns inward, and one follows the homing signal through an invisible labyrinth. Rose refers to the *becoming* when he says: "The yearning brings you."

He states: "The aim of all meditation should be control (of the mind) for the purpose of discovery; not a search for peace only, nor for mental pleasure" (Rose, 1979c, p. 88). The discovery to which he is referring is the direct realization of one's source and essence behind the mind, not any creation within the mind that simulates the humanized, presumed symptoms of spiritual attainment. He insists that we need to achieve an objective understanding of ourselves and of life, and not settle only for subjective, emotional assessments of things (e.g. the old Hindu parable about mistaking the coiled rope in the grass for a snake) or for comfort within one's own, unquestioned paradigm (any subdivision in Plato's Cave). We have to accurately see what is visible before we can see what is invisible. One has to become tired of sleeping. It is tragic to not only not be Awake, but to fall asleep within the dream.

This reversing of our vector is clearly a radically different direction of work than what is promoted by most psychological and even spiritual teachings. Few modern psychologists (Jung, Frankl, Assagioli, and the existentialists being some of the rare exceptions) appreciate self-knowledge as a goal in itself, leading to self-transcendence, but value only outer accomplishments and adjustments as objectives. Their purpose generally is manipulative therapy, rather than self-definition; the process toward which would inherently involve therapeutic change. Likewise, fundamentalistic religious doctrines place most of their stress upon correct behavior and social responsibility (the Golden Rule), and much less on pin-pointing that part of the self where God touches us; the experience of which could only result in truthful living. As Rose makes a clear and crucial distinction between the view and the viewer, he tends to lump most modern systems of psychology (exoteric religion could be included as well) under the heading of "behaviorism" in the sense that as long as the focus of the work is primarily the rearrangement of relative factors before the observer's vision for the benefit of the actor on the stage—whether the variables be feelings, thoughts, relationships, values, or actions, this is really a kind of behaviorism in relation to the inner self.

Rose's verdict is blunt: "Behaviorism is a disease" (Rose, 1979c, p. 3). This philosophy of psychology not only denies any hope or means of realizing this Self that is apart from the projection of life, it denies there might even be anything other than the actor; anything more real than the picture-show. Actually, to even regard such an approach as valid for personal therapy but not for transpersonal search is still somewhat generous. Rose claims that materialistic psychologists will always be inadequate in shaping and remaking people's psyches because they can never account for all the relevant factors that go into determining the human experience. The real source of our troubles lies far deeper than they know. Rose's accusation is that "Modern psychology removes symptoms only, as does a tourniquet around the neck or a sledgehammer" (Rose, 1982, p. 142).

He likewise makes a parallel assessment of what he calls "utilitarian spirituality," meaning those practices and social involvements that primarily aim at providing temporal comfort on a human, emotional level, rather than working to achieve the permanent end of the ignorance that creates our suffering in the first place.

A common theme is apparent in Rose's assorted comments about our subjective condition: our minds are not true, and since our experience of ourselves and our lives is processed through the mind, our current self-definition is thus also invariably mistaken, which in turn only further distorts our experience. We must question what we see, how we see—and who is doing the seeing.

He brings up a curious point; one that Gurdjieff also recognized and which had prompted him to teach the principle of self-remembering. Rose says: "One faculty of the mind not considered by psychologists is the ability to forget. It's a curse" (lecture, 1985). At first glance, this may seem like an oddly trivial matter to bring up, yet it is significant in two ways: 1) one is able to periodically forget the commitment to the search for truth, as it becomes overwhelmed or sidetracked by the desires and concerns of the other "I's" within our psyches, and 2) the true, anterior "I" can forget itself, as its attention is seduced away by its amnesic identification with the other selves and voices playing out their drama before its vision.

Although Absolute Reality is not immediately attainable, the seeker can gradually isolate one state-of-mind that is relatively true, clear, and consistent; an aware self that monitors all life experience from a neutral vantage point and keeps in mind the desire to find its origin, instead of being forever lost in its manifestations. The establishment of this psychic center of provisional sanity can be considered one of the beneficial, intermediate products of meditation.

Whatever distortions, traps, and changes to which one is subject in daily life, it is good to maintain some measure of mindfulness within these fluctuating states; one "eyeball" that remains open, however much the rest of the person is caught up in its succession of paradigms. Rose suggests: "The ideal balance is to be able to bring yourself back each day to a valid state-of-mind" (lecture, 1985). It is at this time that one can sort through all the deviations from this state that occurred throughout the day (and night), and get wise to how this core "I" continues to become deluded by life. Until greater cohesiveness and objectivity of mind is achieved through consistent work on the self, this regular meditation becomes our saving grace; our lifeline to something more real. He adds: "You can't engage in spiritual contemplation 24-hours a day. You have to bring yourself back to the valid state-of-mind each day."

These above comments contain a serious warning: we must become aware of the humbling fact that we do not have one valid and consistent state-of-mind, as we commonly take for granted. It is a trick of consciousness that every state justifies itself as being intrinsically correct and singular, while no notice is made of the fluctuation between diverse states by an impartial observer apart from those states; each state taking itself seriously in turn, thus allowing the illusion to continue that there is only one "I."

This is one reason why Rose places such a special emphasis on sexual restraint, as the state-of-mind associated with sexual activity is so powerful and results in such a major distortion in consciousness. It is dangerous to lose oneself in any state so long as no relatively stable and mature "I" that is not victim to the delusion has been isolated from all lesser "I's." He warns: "The man who places the cup to his lips is not the man who places the cup down" (Rose, 1981, p. 18). We too often fool ourselves into believing there is one objective, sensible self who remains real throughout any experience and is unaffected by it, while the truth may be that some change occurs in one's sense of self along the way, and one becomes less able to judge the validity of the experience afterwards. This caution applies equally to obvious dangers like drug and alcohol abuse as it does to less obvious traps, such as placing oneself subject to the psychological influence of some aberrant group of people or engaging in some supposedly spiritual practices that only result in a distorted state of hypnosis which may consume valuable years of a seeker's life before wearing off.

One needs to be rigorous with oneself in distinguishing what is valid in one's experience from what is not. The truth is not that complicated. The rationalizations we come up with to avoid facing the truth are complicated. Rose encourages the iconoclastic attitude in the seeker of one's assertively rejecting any proffered value or subjective condition that one's intuition deems insensible. He states: "There is no rebellion against absurdity without discernment" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). Contrary to our currently popular repudiation of the term, our problem on every level of personal and social life is not "discrimination," but the lack of proper discrimination between what is more or less true. Our failure to recognize this is itself an example of it.

The exercise of this faculty is especially important in the process of reversing one's vector because it is critical not only to know what is false from what is less false, but also to discriminate between what is "me" from what is "not-me." Rose explains how this kind of meditation is different from the kind of "self-development" with which most of us have been indoctrinated in Western culture—that of needing to make oneself into a solid, impressive person, "to become somebody": "One arrives at the knowledge of his ultimate state-of-being, not by a process of education, but dis-education—plus *becoming"* (Rose, 1985). He is fully in agreement with Nisargadatta Maharaj's contention that the process towards self-knowledge largely consists of knowing what one is not; thereby finally realizing what one actually IS. Rose states this succinctly: "Knowing unreality leads to reality."

He does not regard meditation as being entirely a lofty, sublime interlude of serenity or rapture. Rather, he refers to much of the earlier phase of meditation in undainty terms as being "garbage sorting." This means examining and assessing the merit of every significant component of one's personal experience, and refining one's store of valid knowledge from out of this pile of raw data. This inner realignment and purification of mind is one aspect of "becoming the truth."

There is an excellent metaphor for the nature and course of inner work the Albigen System advocates. Rose has described the human, relative mental dimension as an erroneous field that must be traversed in order for one to arrive at the true Mind or aware Self that lies beyond it. Right now, our point-of-reference of identification is that of the oblivious little person roaming the stage of life, who has only some vague sense of restlessness and dim remembrance about our "home," elsewhere. At this point, we are becoming aware of one thin ray of the light of observation passing through the "Cloud of Unknowing" above us that separates us (the "us" we now experience ourselves to be) from the Reality that is as yet unknown to the little person.

The mind can be likened to a channel or pipe that passes from the human, particularized end of experience to that of the non-finite, non-localized "end" of absolute awareness. The channel is clogged with garbage: ignorance, egos, identifications, forgetfulness, emotion, lust, and all the rest. At best, some faint voice of intuition can weave its way through the obstructions in the channel to alert the robot that it is being watched, and that the robot would be wise to trace back the gaze of the watcher—leading to a big surprise. Religion, philosophy, and psychology have been perennial attempts to clear out the channel in different ways, although the garbage in our minds has too often tended to reduce these occasionally noble attempts to only more garbage to block us. True meditation can be considered the work of clearing a passage through the channel to the top end. Much of "the path" itself is essentially psychic detoxification, from within (right mindfulness) and without (right action).

At the risk of overburdening a metaphor, there is a further, important aspect of this process to consider. The work can proceed from either end of the channel. There is work to be done on the lower or personal, psychological end: the complex process of self-correction, of the elimination of errors in cognition, perception, feeling, and behavior, and the refinement of the intuition. This is all to

dispel the cloudy state-of-mind in which we exist and to bring the finite human being closer within hearing range of the Truth. The clearing through from the top or transpersonal end of the channel is less willful and involved. This is generally the practice of mindfulness, of residing more and more in the still, pure observing awareness of all relative experience, until one is established in this as **beingness**. This is the reversing of the vector in its highest form: the continued refinement of the definition of the observer and pulling one's point-of-reference of attention back along the ray of awareness through oneself into its ultimate source.

This dual-sided approach to the work should optimally be done concurrently, as this would double the speed in which the channel will finally be cleared through, although some teachings tend to stress one aspect more than the other. This strategy is also seen to be necessary when the reality of duality is recognized and one realizes the ever-present paradox requiring another paradox to resolve it. When we examine the question: "Who am I?," we discover there is really not only one, distinct reference point of selfhood as the answer. When we become sufficiently familiar with the subjective pole of our mentation (the "I"), we can see that we identify our self simultaneously with both the human experience of life as well as with the *awareness of* this person's life. Jim Burn's teaching emphasizes the bottom end of this channel, Jean Klein's the top end, and Rose's addresses the entire range of work. The promise is that when the channel is cleared through from both ends, there is the realization that there was really only one change ever occurring—the shift in point-of-reference from the multiple lesser to the anterior-most "I", and only one, all-encompassing Self remaining.

Sincere, single-minded devotional meditation upon the longing for one's God (a good, elementary definition of prayer) may also be considered a form of attending to the top end of the channel, so long as one is not too exclusively identified with oneself as a devotee (i.e. exoteric religiosity). Likewise, the practice of passive observation of the mind without stressing the personal effort of self-correction, proper action, philosophical discernment, psychological insight, etc. (Vipassana, for example) is working mostly on the top end of the channel. The assumption in both approaches is that by surrendering one's individuality to a higher state-of-being ("God") or residing more in choiceless awareness (Krishnamurti's term), the truth of life-as-guru will bring about the required changes in character and understanding by itself, without one's willful effort.

There is merit in this notion. However, the Albigen System teaches that while being short of complete self-definition, it is more honest and reliable to take the in-between path of committed action, being guided by one's higher intuition, while taking care to not regard oneself as the "doer." This is because the issue of will vs. no-will is all dependent upon the question of identity or point-of-reference: is one the person meditating—or the awareness/grace being cultivated? Are the changes due to the "person's" will or does one just see changes happening as they need to?

Keeping all this in mind, strict devotional or mindfulness meditation could be likened to riding an escalator up to "Heaven." Self-inquiry meditation is then like climbing the escalator too while it is going up. Pure devotion or mindfulness does enable betweenness to work behind the scenes to change inner factors and make things happen. Self-inquiry experiences this same process of transformation, but more consciously and deliberately.

This theme relates to the principle of kundalini, or transmutation of energy. As earlier explained, many methods have been put forth in diverse spiritual teachings to raise this energy to the apex point in the head. Rose had studied and practiced many of these himself and concluded that the real key or common denominator in all of them was **concentration**. It is concentration that redirects this vital energy back into the self, from its usual waste and dissipation in futile, external obsessions, and then raises this energy through the different centers of consciousness (he seldom uses the term "chakras") up to its rightful seat in the mind.

As referred to previously in another context, Rose (and Ramana Maharshi, Gurdjieff, and others) adds a significant development to this work beyond this initial premise. He teaches that one need not settle for only an impersonal, somewhat passive method of transmuting this generic energy, while waiting to be transformed by it. Rather than only doing mechanical or symbolic techniques to bring about the pre-requisite raising of the energy to the head, he is urging the seeker to go beyond this—to USE one's "head" (meaning mind, not only intellect) directly for doing the inner work one really needs to be doing that would lead to Realization. Concentration on the massive task of self-knowledge raises this energy and furthers the essential work at the same time. This is another instance of non-duality: not to meditate as a discipline, to "do it" as an exercise apart from oneself, in order to pay one's dues for getting something else later, but to engage in self-inquiry directly for oneself, in order to become progressively more real in the now. The seeker is one with the path. This is real faith: to act boldly on the truth as a whole person, rather than attempting to effect progress by manipulating one's reflection in the mirror.

Both Gopi Krishna, in his books on kundalini, and Richard Bucke, in his Cosmic Consciousness, stated their belief that spiritual realization was an inevitable product of slow, natural evolution. This may be true, but Rose would certainly suggest that one not complacently count on it and risk waiting entire lifetimes (should any others prove to exist) for this to occur, but to do everything one can to speed up the process and bolster the odds. He shares Gurdjieff's stress on the importance of the esoteric school, due to his belief that proper partnering with like-minded co-workers further augments one's solitary efforts, in addition to the prompting of any possible higher aspiration of Nature. On the other hand, to the honest seeker, procrastination masquerading as humble faith is invalid. Cosmic Consciousness is unknown to us. Ignorance and suffering are not. This is the reference point from which we must work.

A seeming contradiction has been presented in regards to the necessity for effort. On one hand, it has been stated that results are directly proportional to energy applied. On the other, Rose admits most people cannot be involved in "spiritual" activities 24 hours a day. The explanation is that it is the quality of the energy generated, not its quantity, that determines the amount of effort applied. This is a special type of energy generated. It is an energy, and utilization of this energy, that transforms one's very "being" and raises one's level of comprehension to a higher rung of the ladder. It is not merely the development of knowledge, faculties, or increasingly joyful experiences while remaining at the same reference point of mundane identity.

Various comments have been made thus far about the notion that the individual human being is a fictitious character that believes in itself; that there really is no such thing as a "person," as we imagine ourselves to be. The claim is that all there is is an identification in the mind (whose mind?) with a composite, mechanical entity that is not separate from the rest of the complex, relative stage-play in which it is embedded; all of which exists in a larger Mind that is what is truly alive and real. One may then justifiably wonder why the work towards the correct self-definition of a non-existent self would be important. This would be like saying: "Before burning these papers, let me make sure they're in alphabetical order" (Brilliant, Potshots).

A point mentioned earlier bears reiterating in this context. I had once asked Rose about why it should be necessary to deal with the personal, human component in the inquiry, as a part of the larger search for something infinitely beyond the Earthly scene. Why can we not simply work to attain direct access to some higher, transpersonal dimension (in other words, the top end of the channel), and exit the mind forthwith, leaving our little self behind? He summed up much of the Albigen System by replying: "In order to find the truth, you have to become the truth, and to become it you must first manifest the truth about yourself as a relative human being." He explained that this was

not because the individual person is especially important—or even real, but because, whether one's path is primarily one of devotion or mindfulness, the human ego-mind is the major obstacle to the finding of truth, and so having oneself change in accordance with the requirements of truthfulness is the prerequisite or doorway to making possible the realization of the Self behind the person. Yet, a part of the grand paradox is that we must first fully inquire into the "me" who is making the efforts towards transcendence and would attain the Self, in order to end this "me." Our current point-of-reference is in the illusion, not Reality. He states:

> Many people on the spiritual path overlook the need for physical (and psychological) adjustment. They want to jump into what they think is the heavy stuff—this pipe dream of Enlightenment, and by studying the symptoms of Enlightenment as described by charismatic teachers, say, "Pop—there I am," or just act like they have no mind (Rose, 1979c, p. 68).

Rose offered a rare comment on cosmology when he said that although the world may well be found to be an illusion in the final analysis, it is still a well-organized creation and that there is an "authorized" or fundamental, intended nature to the cosmos that is supposed to seemingly exist, totally apart from all human projections superimposed onto it (Rose, 1981, p. 29). By extension, it could be reasonably surmised that as an aspect of this "official" illusion of the universe (despite its being maya), there may also be a "real" human being or sane pattern of programming that one is meant to naturally be behind all of one's personal delusions, even though this self or functional point-of-reference may also be ultimately found to be fictional, so far as being its owner. The path to Reality must pass <u>through</u> this self. One cannot just chop this self's head off and immediately find oneself in the Absolute.

As noted in the above quote, Rose stresses this personal "house-cleaning" because he is aware that it is possible to cheat oneself on the path through pretense by identifying with the conceptualized True Self and believing that whatever the human being now does or experiences is irrelevant and does not affect this Self. Or, one may engage in the trick of pseudo-self-observation: of watching one's state of pathology or delusion as it is happening and accepting it as being innately valid "as is," as if only observation matters, the human being is only doing what it is meant to do and cannot help being that way anyhow, and this person is not "me" regardless. There is an important catch to this attempted rationalization, however, which Rose's numerous examples of confrontation attempt to redress.

The human being's nature, when it acts and perceives in accordance with the truth, with no subjective reactions within duality nor ego-contaminated mentation, does function properly without friction, imbalance, or error. All forms of immorality, mental disorder, disease, and foolishness are due to the ignorant ego-self still obstructing the human being's functioning in some way, and so belie the bluff that one has indeed transcended the mundane plane and is wholly residing in spiritual consciousness, etc. This untruthful behavior (thought is behavior too) would in fact prevent the realization of this higher Self from being possible, as the indulgence in this false ego would be blocking the way out of the mind of one's point-of-reference of "I am" that is still mistakenly trapped in it.

We must see the whole picture clearly so that we are not fooled. All mental delusion is rooted solely in the ego, having no life apart from it, and this ego is itself kept alive only by the energy projected into it through one's identification with it, as one's attention forgetfully merges with and thus nourishes this ghost. (Although, as pondered earlier, there may be nothing existent that becomes identified with the false self that is not itself only a subtler aspect of that very self, it can be said that experientially, if not in actuality, the "one" referred to as being deceived is the anterior Self.) True

detachment would not merely allow the ego to go its merry way, under the pretext that it is irrelevant to the Self who is regally disinterested in its unruly antics, but would in effect sever its lifeline by no longer feeding it. To pretend to turn away from the ego-self, while de facto still being at best only the thought of transcendence maintained by this same ego, is to be once again out-witted by the mind. This must be seen.

On the other side of the paradox, however, this human self is not to be derisively regarded as garbage to be thrown out or a sinner to be deprecated, as this would still be another subtle form of identification within duality, implied by one's desire to disassociate from it or repudiate it. This common religious attitude is dangerously misleading. Personal delusion is better likened to a cancer of a body system, in which the objective is to locate the cause of the disease and remedy it, returning the organism to wholeness and vitality; not to cut out the offending body parts as if excommunicated. The human being is not the Self, but it is evidently an intended part of its total manifestation. Non-duality in regards to the Self is to incorporate the "self" (purified of the ego that would inhabit it) as a part of the whole picture of reality too, and not something contrary to it. What is required is to allow it to be, truthfully, as a relative, human self within its own domain—which is within the Self's larger domain, yet to realize that one is not it.

This discernment requires precise inner vision. Genuine self-observation involves seeing into the mechanics of the mind and dynamics of the psyche, including seeing the reasons animating one's false patterns and resolving them. To just look at the surface of behavior and personality and justify all pathology by saying: "I am watching it and what I see must be the way it is supposed to be" is a sneaky rationalization, and not the practice of true self-observation. It is a contamination of such vision by something subject to one's view which does not wish to be exposed. One must look underneath the "skin" of the mind to see this evasion tactic too.

The process of honest, objective self-inquiry along with surrender to the inner changes brought about through correlated right action exposes and eliminates all ego-interference in psychological experience, leaving behind a mind that is true and clear. The mind is freed of psychological memories: the identifications with and reactions to experience. Based on this simple explanation, the metaphor could be used that "becoming the truth" (that aspect of it relating to personal psychology or the bottom end of the channel) means the small "s" self becomes a properly chiseled key that can be pulled out of manifested life and dissolved, by the observing, anterior Self, leaving behind the whole *IS*. As long as we take ourselves as crystallized egos seriously, the door remains locked.

There is much work involved in freeing one's (whose?) self-definition from the ego's projection onto it and the entanglement with the distorted picture-show character that it witnesses. This work is much of what meditation really is. It is the discrimination of the false from the true, and even the true self from the "I." Without this mature inquiry, one can only imagine starting out on the path "100 miles up in the air," as Rose puts it, but in reality being nowhere. We must first wake up in the dream (which involves correcting our errors within the dream) before we can wake up from the dream.

Admittedly, there is a messy paradox in all this. Even these false egos and one's dishonest attempt to justify their meddling in daily affairs might be a part of the overall "program" too, and not "one's own doing," as there is no real "person" to do anything, but only the awareness of all this conflict and confusion at once. Nonetheless, the falseness must still be purged somehow, regardless of who is "doing" it, and whose "fault" the error is.

Rose does not specifically resolve this paradox for us. On one hand, he states we are only the observer of a robot that has been programmed in its functioning as a part of the whole system of life.

On the other, he lambastes us for botching up our lives due to stupidity, conceit, weakness, etc. (while in our robot role), and for violating our rightfully intended nature. The obvious questions that come up are: Is this ego-contamination also intended by the Master Programmer or are "we" willfully responsible for it? Even if we are, what caused us to do this, and is there even an individual "we" apart from the robot in the first place who is responsible for the robot's choices and conduct? If we are ignorant victims of faulty programming, can we be held responsible for being ignorant and hurting ourselves? Is there "sin against God", or only delusion within a bad dream, dreamt by no one?

This is one more koan to add to our list. Yet, whatever caused "the Fall"—and to whomever it occurred—the direction home remains the same.

The first step on the spiritual path is honest self-awareness. And so are all the others. The Albigen System of meditation confronts this self by mental observations and analysis of personal behavior and experiences. Neither self-confrontation nor confrontation from co-workers is meditation in itself, but is a technique used to provoke meditation; to get the mind off dead-center. As long as one remains in any state-of-mind that is complacent and unquestioned, however "spiritual" or peaceful it may seem, there can be no real meditation occurring. Any of the many questions posed thus far provide plenty of material for serious self-examination. Rose states: "People who complain about not having material for meditation are those who have the most" (Rose, 1981, p. 16). He recommends that one meditate on oneself rather than on some symbolic or devotional object external to the self, as this way the problem is always urgently before one's view.

There are many things of a personal nature one can meditate upon as a start. Any source of strong emotional involvement and turmoil, such as issues regarding one's childhood, interpersonal conflicts, and sexual experiences are important to study and resolve. Actually, our path has a most obvious beginning. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that generally we search, initially, not for "spirituality," but to get away from discontent or pain. Our truthful priority should not be to look for something better "over there," but to see what it is we are attempting to flee. To fully understand the origin and nature of our suffering and to take the necessary, courageous steps to undoing it is spiritual work in that one is both delving with urgency into the exploration of one's direct experience of life and, by correcting or healing what is found to be wrong, also bringing oneself closer to the core truth one is searching for in the more idealistic sense.

It is difficult to work through those issues with a strong affective component to them while one is still too identified with the feelings aroused to assess the matter objectively and is making decisions based on self-justifying or self-defending emotions. One has to be able to view even the feeling level of one's nature as an object of study, rather than assuming it is one's inherently valid baseline of experience, or further, that one is this human being, however healthy and sensitive.

Rose has advised: "Develop away from the emotional stage. This is done by mechanical effort." Again, this is not because emotions are considered negative, but because they can be a serious coloration of inner perception and philosophical evaluation. His intention is not to place an emphasis on avoiding negative emotions, as Gurdjieff did (anger, fear, grief, etc.), nor to promote only positive emotions, as the "New Agers" do (love, joy, serenity, etc.), as being indications of spirituality. Rose is not encouraging the pursuit of one pole of duality over the other, but the transcending of all relative colorations of experience to a vantage point of sanity, which would include correct and appropriate feeling, but without the identification. He does add a functional consideration to this: "There are no negative emotions...except that they do harm to the possessor by holding up his progress" (personal correspondence, 1978). The mechanical effort in part refers to the practice of impartially monitoring one's emotional state, developing discernment as to the relative merits of the emotions experienced, and through incremental adjustments in perspective and intention, to reside in and act from a higher,

more inclusive center of being. While it is of course better to be emotionally healthy than not, the symptoms alone are not the goal of the spiritual quest. However, this removal of the emotional distortions of genuine feeling allows intuition to unfold.

Another fascinating, and disturbing, subject in meditation is the watching of the interplay of voices, urges, emotions, values, and tendencies in oneself, noting how they battle for rule of the whole person, how the decision is finally made, "who" the arbiter is that makes the decision—and *who* it is who is aware of all this elaborate melodrama.

Another rich source of insight into one's psychological nature is the examination of forms of mechanicalness in behavior, relating, feeling, thinking, and evaluating. Rose goes so far as to state that most, if not all, of our inner functioning is mechanical. He says that when the anatomy of our mental processes is studied diligently and honestly, without our prideful identification with them, we come to some unexpected, humbling conclusions. For example, he claims that what we call Will is actually found to be directed, urgent reaction, Reason is a series of reactions to a previous pattern of reactions, and Imagination is a reaction of memories upon memories (Rose, 1981, p. 25-27).

All of these reactions are automatic. However, a part of this meditation's value is that the recognition of this mechanicalness weakens its power, begins to free one from its coercion, and enables one to alter most instances of pathology or damage in the patterns, to a large extent. It would be more precise to state that the cybernetic principle allows the robot to automatically clear its circuits once the trouble is located and admitted. In more human terms, Rose has said: "The biggest part of your troubles are solved when you confess [acknowledge] them." This application of energy inward in self-observation is what brings about the return to a truer manner of functioning as our residing more in our own inner observer loosens us from the strict identification with the problem-gestalt bound into the person. More importantly, as this insight forces us to relinquish our claim to ownership of the mental faculties described above, we thus find ourselves liberated from the burden of responsibility for them and their resultant compulsions, and left to wonder who we really are, if we are not exclusively this automaton we see before our inner vision.

Another obvious, rich source of insight into our selves is the examination of past traumas and afflictions to the individuality-sense. This includes three general categories of disturbance. The first involves the ways in which our original, innocent sense of self was violated by the abuse and misled by the deception seemingly unavoidable as we enter into life, which result in our distorted self-estimate and associated states-of-mind. A subsequent category as we "mature" (meaning: become corrupted) involves the appropriate affronts elicited from life by the false ego-poses we present to others, who rebuff us (when we threaten their ego-pose), in this way confronting our vanity or veiled aggression. We must learn from these traumas, as they expose our impurities, thereby revealing the true. Finally, we learn the wisdom of humility after submitting to repeated demonstrations of our helplessness and limitation in the midst of the complex drama of life swirling about us, as we are forced to admit we are not the masters of the world after all, and never were.

We start out this confusing journey as a child feeling an undivided connection with the flow of life-events as they occur, with no sense of separation or reaction within experience, taking no offense at pain and feeling no glory in joy. By puberty, we begin to believe we are actually doing something as individuals and can control circumstances to our advantage, at this point developing a distinct ego-center removed from our holistic experience. We believe in our own sovereignty, until continued suffering and disappointment finally lets us know we are only a part of a larger story and are not the one writing the master script, possibly not even our own role in it. These afflictions are not so much to the falseness in our ego-state or the sad inheritance to every innocent soul of some collective

curse on mankind, but to the inherent falseness of our very notion of selfhood; not as individualized awareness within the all, but as discrete identity apart from it.

From all this inner evaluation we can see how certain values and attitudes, reaction-patterns, personality-aspects, states-of-perception, and so on developed in us. Then, as we purge our minds of their distortive influence and heal our hearts from the damage done to us by harsh lessons and repercussions of foolishness both, we can begin to appreciate a clearer perspective on things and mode of being for us.

This is not to say that every aspect of one's personal psychology must be perfect before one can achieve transcendence. Certain folds and wrinkles (as it were) in the psyche may never be fully removable and one may not be able to return to pristine innocence again. However, one can get them "straightened out" enough to allow one to be functional in an honorable way and to see the truth of one's totality in clear awareness. In other words, the channel may not need to be purged entirely of debris and damage, but just enough space must be cleared to allow one ray of light to pass through it, from seeker to sought. This conditional sanity is what matters. A broken leg may never fully heal, but one can limp along the path like a man. Furthermore, it is the increasingly recurrent remembrance of the being-awareness of "*I AM*" that serves as a psychic dilator (so to speak) to open up that alive space through this inert, insentient contraction of egoity and delusion with which one has identified, and enables one to pull back along this ray of awareness to the original observer at the top of the channel.

It is important, though, in studying one's prior experiences of conflict and suffering, to watch them without ego-identification and renewed emotional involvement. To impersonally see the complex interaction of factors in life events and how one did not really <u>do</u> anything, but rather identified with a larger process within which *something happened to* "*me*," frees one from the fixation and resultant reactions. Doing this cleanly, however, is difficult. Rose explains that this is one reason why Realization takes years to achieve, as it takes a long time to cool off and separate from one's experience-memory (Rose, 1981, p. 7).

Rose devotes more of his attention in the teaching to transpersonal rather than personal psychology. This may possibly be due to his having had relatively little psychological defectiveness to deal with in his own life and so being able to put more stress on impersonal philosophical and phenomenological concerns in his meditations, than therapeutic issues. Yet, there is some benefit in this disproportionate emphasis, as well. His blunt, gutsy, common-sense approach to understanding and confronting crippling psychological syndromes cuts through a lot of the neurosis and nonsense through which we process life, and enables the individual to come to a position of self-respect and self-mastery more directly. His irreverent approach draws out the latent assertiveness of one's truer self and encourages righteous rebellion against the forms of negativity that are detrimental or parasitical to that self, rather than reinforcing them by taking them too seriously. He believes that people and their problems are not all that complicated, and their solutions are likewise fairly straight-forward when the basic facts of life are understood.

His manner is similar to the principle in Logotherapy that much of the nature of intra-psychic troubles is that of a self-feeding mental loop that is best escaped by stepping outside of oneself through a commitment to an objective sense of meaning or responsibility, rather than remaining intimidated and overwhelmed by one's paradigm of self-recrimination. Rose urges people to boldly challenge their weaknesses and develop their "being" through proper, selfless action, in this way calling the bluff of the pathology and breaking its hypnotic spell.

While there is much therapeutic value to this first phase of meditation, the objective of the practice is not healing or well-being alone. That is only a welcome side-effect. The purpose is to

know the self better. The psychological analysis clarifies and purifies the mental processes, which in turn allows one to see their workings more clearly. This is some of the necessary preliminary work to finding the source of one's awareness, which is the final goal.

Rose says the natural predilection to direct one's inquiring mind outward into a study of the universe in the quest for knowledge about essentials is futile, so long as the one on the subjective end of the studying is not fully known. Instead, he advises:

> The (seeker) should first use this system (of subjective observation) upon himself. In the process, he may discover and correct his voltage [vital energy], and his filtering and recording mechanisms [mental apparatus]. If he is lucky, he may take another step, with improved sensors [intuition], and come to know about himself and his essence.(Rose, 1981, p. 3).

A central principle in the Albigen System of meditation (as well as in Advaita Vedanta, Vipassana, and some of Zen) is the study of thought as a phenomenal object, meaning: all mental experience. As has been critiqued, the objective of many forms of meditation is the attempt to escape from the tyranny of thought directly by distracting the mind through some form of ritual or repetition, or stifling thoughts through repression, with the intention of leaving behind a still mind. Others instead use the mind to focus in devotional contemplation upon some aspect of conceptualized divinity in oneself, in principle, or in one's Guru, thereby hoping in time to blend in with this higher reality. While Rose is hesitant to claim that all these methods are wholly invalid, he does believe that at best, they are so slow that results would not be forthcoming in one lifetime, or at worst, one could fall into the subtle trap of substituting one category of thought for another and not know it, rather than escaping from the mind altogether. Even a mind without thoughts is not no-mind, as the "person" who is enjoying this tranquility is itself really only a thought-form in the mind, although admittedly this position can help get one closer to taking the last step over the threshold—<u>if</u> one does not get stuck in this state-of-mind.

Rose says it is most important to fully understand the nature of thought before pretending to do anything with it or about it. By this, he does not mean that one should fall into the opposite trap either of developing a tremendous intellectual ego by becoming a great thinker of complex thoughts and identifying with the obsession. He is instead referring to one's needing to understand what thought actually <u>is</u> and its relation to the observer of it. He starts out by stating: "Thought is a term more accepted than defined" (Rose, 1978, p. 38). He asks us to inquire into the issues of: who is thinking, what is the essence or nature of the product thought, and is it a product (of ours) or is it caused (received by us)? A further question to ponder is: what is awareness without thought?

Before exploring these questions, it needs to be made clear once again that thought, in regards to meditation, does not refer only to its conventional meaning as verbal, sequential, logical conceptualization. This would lead meditators of the other, general methods mentioned previously to assume that what they are indulging in is not some form of thought activity as well, but that they have gone beyond it. Thought, in a pure, phenomenological sense, also refers to the subjective experience of feeling, sensing, and remembering, as well as the content of spiritual practices like repeating mantras, concentration on the breath, seeing visualizations, contemplating a chakra, listening for celestial sounds, proclaiming affirmations, petitioning a deity in prayer, and all other activities of the mind. Thought could be better described as any relative experience occurring in consciousness that is witnessable, whether it be calculating algebraic equations or encountering beings of light.

Without analyzing the mechanics of mental functioning in detail at this point, the central message Rose wishes the seeker to realize in this discussion of meditation is the distinction and true relation between thought as a process in all its variety and *the anterior awareness that sees it.*

He starts out with the seemingly nonsensical question: "Do you think or do you only think you think?" (Rose, 1981, p. 11). His point is that we tend to reflexively assume we are whatever we experience, including our mental functioning, and that we are more or less choosing what we experience. Rose casts doubt on this entire supposition:

> It is possible that there is such a thing as a will, and we have no choice [!] but to act as though we have one. However, it seems highly foolish for this milling mass called humanity to pretend to have a *free will* of unlimited range. Can we choose the thought that inspires us to think that we are choosing? Does the hog choose the butcher? (Rose, 1978, p. 37).

We read in metaphysical tracts that all we are is the result of what we have thought. This is pragmatically meaningful but esoterically meaningless when we realize that we do not know what is determining our thoughts nor who is thinking them. Some lazy mystics smugly infer that "life is but a dream" and languish into this concept—but in Whose mind is this dream occurring? It surely cannot be that of the finite human being that too is incorporated within this life. Whose dream-character are we? We have to know. We have not thoroughly examined our point-of-reference as a creator or experiencer of thoughts, nor ascertained our root source.

In the realm of philosophy, we find Descartes' noble declaration: "I think, therefore I am," with its implication that this is supposed to infer something profound about identity and validity. In actuality it proves neither, as this syllogism floats in thin air and has no foundation in anything real. This statement is defining the self as the thinker; the existence of thoughts allegedly substantiating the thinker's identity. Yet, can one even choose to stop or start thinking? If not, can we claim any pride in being a thinker? Or if so, who exists behind the stream of thoughts, remaining after the thinking has been stopped, and can then choose to resume thinking? Is there a thinker of thoughts apart from them, or is there only thinking—and the awareness of thinking? Is the "I"-self the thinker who is identical to the thoughts—or only this awareness? Is the human being the identification with the experience of thought (which is synonymous with mind)? Who is thinking this thought that may be all we are? In fact, the one who would remain behind and determine thought is too but a subtler thought, still within the mind and not outside it; this mind itself being one big thought. Rose counters the above dictum by saying it should be better stated as: "Thought will not leave my field of awareness; I suffer, therefore I am aware" (Rose, 1985, p. 307).

Briefly stated, he teaches that thoughts are reactions to input imposed upon our minds from sources external to us (including the thoughts of free will, self-determination, individuality, etc.), much like a radio broadcasts the program it receives through its antenna. ("External" here means in relation to the ego-mind as the self's experiential point-of-reference, not the larger mind dimension in which all this interaction can be seen to be contained). If meticulous introspection finds this to be true, then can we claim to actually think at all—**or is it only the echo of a knock on the door reverberating through an empty house?** Who is thinking one's thoughts? To even suspect that we are really behind our thoughts does not inevitably imply that we are the thinker of the thoughts. The thinker is of the thoughts. The real "I" is behind the whole sequence.

Rose states quite emphatically (while ever mindful of the paradox, yet hinting at the perspective of non-duality): "We have no control over the experience of life that is projected onto us from

outside us". Elsewhere, he adds: "No human being is responsible for his acts." Does a rooster's crowing make the sun rise in the morning? If we cannot even get a melody, obsession, or mood out of our minds, can we honestly refer to thoughts as "our thoughts"? (To further complicate the issue, he has mentioned at other times that one can gradually learn to deliberately think along self-defining or philosophical lines, breaking away from one's pre-destined groove of mundane obsession. This involves some measure of betweenness, however, more than willfulness overcoming mechanicalness, as the paradox still rules in this domain of polarity. In this regard, Rose has said he believes he had been programmed to be a free-spirited seeker; that he could not have been any other way and his rebellious path could not have happened if it had not been meant to happen. This perspective also helps to reconcile the metaphysical principle that our thoughts create our reality according to our will, with the mystical intention of giving up our lives to God, who then leads us. The former is the egoistic, dualistic realm of good and evil, while the latter is the path of oneness without blame. Yet, are we ever really free? Even when we intend to create our own reality—are we not still robots of "God"?) His above statements are of course not intended to indirectly condone the various forms of game playing, hedonism, etc. which he consistently criticizes throughout his teaching, as some may eagerly wish to interpret it.

The confusion is that the "us" and "human being" referred to in these quotes is not an entity separate from life experience who can choose actions, thoughts, and attitudes, but is an integral part of that entire life-stream itself. We do not choose our experience because: a) the "we" is of the experience, more specifically as the subjective pole of experience and mental identification with it, and b) the real "I" is the impartial observer of this mind that is passively receiving these impressions of life which it—as the human being—experiences. No one can be responsible for anything because the "person" is only a firmly embedded factor in a mass gestaltic pattern that already is, and is a mental projection from a dimension more real than this one. The frustration at one's helplessness is also the doorway to freedom from the person, where one can then wonder: "Who am I?"

This new perspective on thought also casts a serious doubt on the merit of the popular notion of "positive thinking." Certainly, positive thinking is preferable to negative thinking, but truthful thinking is better yet and not necessarily synonymous with what may seem to be positive, in humanistic, ego-centered terms, which may prove to be rationalizations or merely vanity. This would then also bring one closer to direct-mind knowing, as versus forever taking sides between poles in dualistic evaluations. (This state of "not thinking," within an aware, intuitive mind, is not to be mistaken for the popular, appealing sojourn into thoughtlessness within a state-of-mind of egoistic trance.) This qualitative shift becomes possible when it is no longer deemed necessary to maintain the mental construct of a distinct "thinker" apart from the simple recognition of the reality of things as it presents itself, in order to interpret experience, "own" it, or hold it together as a paradigm, and the plain awareness of what IS opens its eye. This is when one finally graduates to the Buddha's recommended third step in meditation: to think of nothing (i.e. chopping one's head off) — and find what is behind thought. Along these lines, Rose once defined the "Kingdom of Heaven" as meaning clear thinking, with a true mind.

The analysis of thought (or mental functioning) is directly tied in with the theme of self-observation, as ultimately the self is but made of thought. Rose offers a key explanation of how this works: "Thinking is a process which can be visualized as a series of pictures of thoughts. You do not think about thinking, but see the thoughts." He elaborates on this definition:

> Thinking is a process. Thought is a vision. We do not think about "nailing," but instead see two pieces of wood nailed together. Thinking is a process by which a series of

> projections are received by our awareness. We are behind thought. We cannot think about a thought, but we can think about thinking. (Lecture, 1978).

He is providing some important clues in these brief statements about the direction towards ultimate self-definition. Recognizing both this reflexivity and objectification of thought also adds another dimension of meaning to the earlier comments about our robot-like nature. It should be understood, however, that to say our inner workings are automatic only implies they are mechanical and relative, not invalid. It means we should recognize these processes as occurring on their own, and that **we are not them**. The objective is not to thwart the "knee-jerk" reaction when the hammer strikes, but to not be it.

A central principle in the Advaita Vedanta teaching, as well as in Rose's, is that as thought ends, so does the thinker. What is revealed behind this stream of mind-stuff is the Self.

Some discrimination needs to be made here about one point. Thought is not considered to be negative or false in itself, as many of these comments may seem to imply and happy New Agers and emotional religionists would hope to ordain. It has its functional purpose in relative life. What is negative is the substituting of linear, dualistic thought for direct-mind knowing. Our conventional form of thinking can be regarded as a perverse excretion of crippled consciousness. Our sense of experiential identity becomes located in a psyche that is a fragmented, distorted, projected creation before the inner observer's view. We become amnesically split off from ourselves and engage in complex compensations within that relative, kaleidoscopic mind-matrix to define and express our reality. A mind that is whole, clear, and true would not need to obsessively process and react to life experience through any form of thought, beyond using it as a mechanical device for computation and such. One would abide in awake stillness. Psychological thought is the corrupting of direct-mind knowing to a lower dimension. A part of meditation is to heal and purify the mind, while retreating back from it.

Related to this, a further level of discrimination needs to be made between valid and false thinking. This is the "garbage sorting" phase of the work that Rose describes. To the extent we still identify with our experience as human beings, defined by our thoughts, it is important to confront ourselves in every category of our experience and to back away from what is untrue or less essential, thereby becoming less of a fixated ego-self and more of a pure witness.

This process of self-inquiry is done from outside the mind, not from within it. A knot cannot completely untangle itself, but only create new knots in the effort of untying the lesser knots. However, when it is truly seen that relative thought, no matter what its form or how sincere its intent, cannot end itself, what results is that the mind's output of thinking slows down and returns to its original, natural function; one thereby being freed from compulsive identification as the thinker. One must stop feeding the thinking machine with undue attention, personal investment, and projected importance, and it will run down of its own fading momentum. Consistent, dispassionate observation is what brings this about. One stares it into submission. Yet, again paradoxically, one must use thought to its limit, to reach beyond it. One must learn to think truthfully before being able to relinquish thought and to know and experience directly.

Much of what Rose has presented thus far in regards to psychological self-evaluation may seem common-sensical and similar to principles already encountered in other teachings, both spiritual and mundane. However, he brings up some other aspects of mental experience that have seldom, if ever, been acknowledged by teachers of introspection. Overlooking them allows a serious obstacle to mental clarity to exist, and renders pure apprehension impossible.

The standard message we pick up in esoteric texts is that if we do not see the truth, it is because we are seeing through a glass darkly. There is nothing hidden. Everything is known. We just fail to see the obvious. Our capacity to acquire direct-knowledge is entirely dependent upon the degree to which we remove obstacles to knowing. We cannot hope to perceive either life, ourselves, or God clearly while our perception is colored or distorted. We cannot isolate the true "I" that sees our experience so long as it identifies with any of the many sheaths and filters that cover its eye. Many specific issues regarding values, egos, attitudes, etc. have been discussed thus far that obstruct our clear vision and must be worked through in meditation. In addition, there are even larger mental gestalts prior to these variables that affect not only what we see, but how we see. Fortunately, these obstacles to seeing *can themselves be seen.*

There are three main categories of factors affecting subjective perception that Rose asks us to examine in our self-study: states-of-mind, moods, and subliminal states-of-consciousness. Each acts like colored eyeglasses through which we perceive our lives. When they are worn long enough, the mind adjusts for their distortion and we see the view on the other side of them as if it was reality "as-is." It is only when we take the glasses off and see the radical shift in our quality of perception that we suddenly realize how much our view was colored all along. The common significance among these three categories of states is that we see and experience life through them, not with them.

States-of-mind are various massive concept-structures or gestalts which usually come about over a period of years of evaluation and increasing conviction. It is a composite thinking pattern that has as its chief characteristic one of the basic desires or fears of the individual in question and its resultant self-justifications, rationalizations, and attitude compulsions.

Another way of describing a state-of-mind is that it is an identification with the view of life from a point-of-reference that is incorrectly located, a range of perspective that is incomplete, and through a filter that distorts whatever much is seen, from that vantage point. It is an assumption about the nature of things, with conviction, based upon one's experience and conditioning.

However, they can also be brought about very quickly as a result of an extreme physical or mental experience. Likewise, a traumatic experience or incident of intense suffering is about the only thing that will actually bring about a change in the state-of-mind.

Rose warns: "We must first be aware that we are the victims of our states-of-mind, not proud possessors of them. And we can be aware of them by self-observation" (Rose, 1978, p. 167). He adds: "As long as you are in a state-of-mind, you will not have direct-mind communication" (Rose, 1985, p. 105). He also advises us to remember back to our earlier years when we were able to think more clearly and to recall the factors which made us think clearly then—and eliminate those that later damaged or corrupted our innocent minds, if we wish to think clearly today. He explains: "In this fashion we must become as a little child" (Rose, 1978, p. 168).

Rose poses this question to the seeker: "One wonders if the human mind will ever be able to discern, among these [our] many states, that singular state that might be called sanity" (Rose, 1978, p. 160).

He relates the principles of reversing one's vector and backing away from untruth to the process of self-inquiry:

> The pursuit of Truth necessarily involves the understanding of present states-of-mind, first. Then there follows the automatic shedding of nonsense-components of these states-of-mind, from which comes an evolution of mental purity, approaching, all the while, the state (of spiritual realization, which) we can be sure is the only true state-of-mind. (Rose, 1978, p. 167).

More specifically, he is saying that the final objective of the meditative path is to transcend all states-of-mind, to NO state-of-mind, which is the only true "state-of-mind."

In case the need for this mental purification and concurrent change in state-of-being is not obvious enough, Rose offers a more ominous reason to be motivated for such work...while there is still time for it:

> In the Tibetan Book of the Dead is the hint that all that exist are states-of-mind. And unless the individual finds some stable manner to keep track of the true self in the many turbulent and often terrifying nightmares of life, what will happen to us hence, when we can no longer flee back into the living body by simply awakening? (Rose, 1978, p. 169-70).

An obvious experiential corollary is that if we can so readily forget ourselves when dreaming, how can we confidently assume we will remember ourselves when dead?

Moods are States-of-Perception which are qualified means of seeing or perceiving and are generally of a short duration, being more factors of coloration than lasting states of conviction. Moods affect states-of-mind by triggering or reawakening them. One develops a conviction based upon continued moods.

Rose has evaluated the psychology of human nature and found that fear, seduction/acquisition, and nostalgia are the three primary moods from which all emotions derive. If one analyzes one's own subjective leanings (including their more pure expression in dreams), it is seen that every emotional impulse can be traced back to one or some combination of these as its root. For example, he has stated that all appetites are from the acquisition mood, whereas guilt is a combination of memory/nostalgia and fear. By some extension, I have found that the awareness of love and death brings about or enters into the mood of nostalgia.

Rose has added a new insight to higher psychology by pointing out the special significance of nostalgia. This mood is usually regarded as being either pleasantly idealized reverie of happier days or futile, wistful longing for something lost. Yet, he advises us to look more closely into our moods of nostalgia for a serious clue. He claims: "Nostalgia is a window to the soul. It is the soul's memory or view of prior experience" (lecture, 1978). We might gently ask ourselves: where is that innocence and quality of being now?

Rose asks us:

> What is this thing in us that causes us to turn to fables; to dream of eternality? Even if we know that we cannot escape our lechery and hypocrisy. Down deep inside ourselves we yearn for permanent peace, inviolable virginity, and love without lust or penalty (Rose, 1985, p. 35).

He elaborates on this greater meaning of nostalgia as spiritual yearning:

> Nostalgia is or can be a hang-up. But it is also the homing instinct of the mundane mind...that draws it back to the Father. I maintain that nostalgia has something to tell us. We are programmed to indulge in life, but the haunting nostalgia is the subliminal message from another plane (personal correspondence, 1978).

In these comments, he is pointing to a feeling, almost a state-of-being, we all have touched during our truest moments; a remembrance that leads us back home: "When the person consciously

leans too far [from himself], something in the soul brings it back, and the only language that the soul can do it through is through a mood" (ibid, p. 49); "Through touching these moods, you touch an eternal something; this is the only door" (ibid, p. 50); "With the nostalgic mood, especially in dreams, comes the feeling that—this is it, this is mankind's voice of rectitude, this is the evenness, this is the even voice of man" (ibid, p. 52).

It can be better understood now how the development of direct-mind ability facilitates the reception and projection of such moods:

> There is a factor which makes it possible for a two-way communication, or at least a better way of getting answers from intelligences so far unanswered across the thoughtless dimensions reached only by the accidental seeping of moods into our dreams or visions of mystics. This factor or implement is rapport (ibid, p. 43)

Keeping all this in mind, Rose brings up a dangerous aspect of our robotlike nature by pointing out that our states-of-mind vary during the course of sexual activity; the urge towards which is in turn largely prompted by moods. He has added a further disturbing note by claiming that many moods, especially those of a negative nature (lust, fear, hate, depression), are entity projections onto our minds. The meditator must not only know his own psychology well enough to discern the real meaning of the moods experienced and their resultant states-of-mind and actions, but also be wary enough of one's own subjective conditions to be able to determine when their source is really some external, adverse agency that is exploiting a vulnerability in one's psychological mechanism, and not a legitimate consequence of some life experience, however distorted it may be by ego.

Subliminal states-of-consciousness are perception-constructs of longer duration and greater intensity, and have the ability to dominate one's entire perspective or perception field. They are ubiquitous states of consciousness that are very strong and yet very elusive as regards to scrutiny or analysis. They are not states-of-mind, which are identified with ready self-observation and conviction. They are not consciously acquired nor willfully maintained. An individual will have several major, alternating states-of-mind, while having one primary subliminal state-of-consciousness as the larger, uniform context or container for all one's states-of-mind and moods. Much like a fish not being able to see water, it is almost impossible to study the subliminal states in which we exist and through which we view experience, except subjectively through intuitive awareness, once they are suspected to exist. This difficulty is due to their being so close to our mind's eye, consistent, and deeply melded into our presumed identity as a valid perceiver.

Nonetheless, it is important that they be objectively recognized and accounted for because they invariably have the ability to affect states-of-mind in a drastic manner. They are more dangerous in being blocks to finding our true self than the latter because of the subliminal states' being more difficult to apprehend and examine. In this regard, subliminal states-of-consciousness can be likened to the Gurdjieffian principle of Chief Feature in that they personify one's primary mode of being. This pervasive distortion serves to prevent one from seeing the truth about oneself or the larger truth about life that the individual does not want to admit, and for which the subliminal state-of-consciousness is some reflexive, defensive compensation.

Rose has referred to three major examples of such subliminal belief-states: love, rationality, and religiosity. Each of these is a "god," which all convictions serve and through which all experience is processed. All are essentially false and ego-based, even though originating from a genuine intuition. They can color one's entire life and define one's very identity, yet be a massive state of delusion and rationalization which may not be exposed until the moments preceding one's death—if

even then. To these three might also be added, to varying degrees: atheism/cynicism, vanity/pride, "Pollyanna"/hedonism, and grief/mourning. Along these lines, one's more deliberate philosophical assumptions and projections onto life also need to be acknowledged and then questioned for their accuracy, as such major gestalts not only affect the course of one's life but may determine whatever spiritual destiny one may have beyond this life. It could be said that our very identity as a person is ultimately found to be a subliminal state-of-consciousness as well. The final overlay on our vision to be removed is us!

These various forms and instances of coloration can be considered as egos, or are derived from egos. One of the purposes of meditation is to recognize all egos for what they are and free oneself from those not helpful to the search, while deliberately using, yet remaining disassociated from, the ones that still are. St. Paul's famous declaration: "I die daily," can be understood in this context to refer to the progressive relinquishment of the egos of self-importance and willful individuality, and the gradual giving up of oneself to the holistic becoming of Truth.

Rose echoed this sentiment when he referred to the necessary transition from dualistic, externalized mentation to the direct, intuitive insight that makes realization possible: "Somewhere in the being of man, there is an eye that must open. We open it by closing all other eyes, or egos" (Rose, 1978, p. 225). Every desire, every assumption, every identification, every hypnotic obsession is an ego that must die; an investment in the illusion that must end. As long as any other strident or beguiling voice takes precedence in our lives over the sole, quiet voice of Intuition, demanding our allegiance, we are not only trapped in Maya—we <u>are</u> Maya, as we are what we do and we do what we believe.

Rose has defined no-mind as that state (or more precisely: that non-state) which remains when all egos and their related mental patterns end. However, it is a troublesome fact of the path that the pseudo-self that we are is reluctant to die; thus all the varied techniques, strategies, and disciplines taught over the centuries to aid in bringing about the death of this congregation of false masks and filters with which we have otherwise helplessly identified.

The psychology of this letting go and *becoming* is complex and individual. No standardized formula can be provided. As Rose has mentioned, generally some severe shock or emotional crisis is necessary to change major states-of-mind. However, in the same way, sometimes a trauma can make one hold on even tighter. This "grasping" onto our concept of selfhood or ego is not always due to self-love or complacency, which is the most common cause cited in puzzlingly uncompassionate spiritual critiques of human nature. It can also be fear and the feeling of isolation in an increasingly empty and hostile world.

A more mature cause of the ego-self's reinforcement can be the growing awareness of and concern about the difference between how things appear to be and how one suspects they really ought to be. In other words, the development of a dense and tenacious ego can be due to a spiritually immature individual mind becoming aware of the evident absurdity, injustice, and pointlessness of life, as seen from the human level, and finding no trace of a wise and benevolent "God" to make everything all right. Such an ego then becomes a substitute for this God, who seems to be absent in the midst of the on-going trauma, needing to be the only resource of sense and meaning in a world apparently without either, and being the vector towards the possibility of attaining that comprehensive vantage point where all could be known. This insistent desire *to know* is one aspect of the larger philosophical koan itself—the "doubt sensation"—and can be the origin of possibly the only legitimate ego there is.

A further, significant, yet little recognized point should be made about the psychodynamics of reaction to trauma. When a person experiences severe life trauma and collapses into despair or

pathological ennui, this may be regarded as having had one's "spirit broken", which would indeed be something most difficult to mend. However, this is a misunderstanding which may take years to realize and correct. The lesson in trauma is to break the ego, not the spirit. Suffering is the truth calling us home the hard way. What actually happens is that one's self (which on some level, even if sub-consciously, is regarded as a spirit) has throughout one's life generally been entirely identified with the ego, and when this is crushed by circumstances and one feels personally destroyed, this is erroneously interpreted as one's having a broken spirit (meaning: self), thus leaving one in oblivion. Yet, the spirit cannot be broken. Sages promise that it is what waits beyond the death of that ego (if one's philosophical ego was sufficiently fattened up beforehand!). In the despair of personal loss, one is nonetheless identifying with a residual ego of egolessness that still exists (the one identifying also being an ego). When the reality of one's condition is recognized, one is freed from the illusion of ever having been a doer, one who is subject to loss or gain, and can then become one with the more expansive truth of life circumstances as they unfold. Those who commit suicide sadly do not realize this in time.

Regardless of these egos' specific nature or cause, Advaita attempts to disassociate the real Self from one's ego-self by backing away from it in mental observation and rejecting all that is seen as "not me." Zen attempts to accomplish the same by blasting away, outwitting, or exhausting all egos to where only the aware Self remains. The Albigen System blends together both approaches, applying them as is appropriate in "running between the raindrops" of paradox. It could be said that Advaita is Zen taken to its extreme in betweenness.

There is a partial parallel here with the old fable about the battle between the cold, fierce wind and the warm, gentle sun to see which could succeed in getting the coat (ego-self) off the traveler (seeker) on the road first. The sun won because the wind made the man cling to his coat more tightly, whereas the sun warmed him up so that he took his coat off. A hurricane may have also torn his coat off, but killed the man in the process (too severe a psychological trauma can cripple a seeker in making further progress, e.g. destroying the ego-mind through drug use, ritual magic, or masochistic cultism). Too much adversity can also counterproductively thicken one's ego armor or cause one to sink into inertia, still as an ego, but one that is overwhelmed. Of course, too much "sun" alone—meaning: teachings and practices that excessively soothe, placate, or flatter the seeker—can likewise reinforce one's ego-state, as one would wish to continue luxuriating in this influence of nurturance, joy, affirmation, etc., instead of feeling safe enough to stand naked before the unknown. To risk overburdening a metaphor once again, Rose might add the suggestion that the traveler exercise some betweenness in finding that part of the self that stands apart from storm (whether harsh confrontation or willful negation) and sun (innocent devotion or passive mindfulness) both, and watches all of one's changing dynamics impartially.

Although this principle of needing to divest oneself of egos is encountered in most esoteric teachings, Rose adds to this an important qualification that has seldom if ever been addressed elsewhere. He states that it is foolish, and even dangerous, to read in a book about the falseness of egos and then proceed to abandon all of one's egos at once (even if it was possible to do so), with the assumption that instant salvation awaits for the now psychically naked seeker. He advises instead the progressive relinquishment of egos; the more obviously absurd or harmful egos first, then gradually the more subtle and non-essential, until finally, the one letting go of the egos is seen to be an ego too, and it dissolves into the nothingness in which it floats, as this nameless seer of it is now more real. We would start by recognizing and eliminating egos of laziness, weakness, lust, gullibility, corruption, resistance, conceit, etc., but retain the ego of believing oneself to be a viable doer who will continue to fight to become whole and insist on maintaining some measure of relative sanity—until

discovering otherwise. This ego of "I am a seeker" is the only vehicle back to our source that we have. To abandon it prematurely, in the imagination that one's "being" has already arrived or that any exercise of "will" is a sin, would be a dangerous mistake.

For example, it would be detrimental to immediately give up the egos of pride and health as their being excess baggage or superfluous to the "Self," as one may then allow one's self-respect to be degraded by various compromises and one's well-being to be jeopardized by a lack of discipline and propriety. This would then not be conducive to further spiritual development, but rather would be suicidal.

This is one of the differences between the appreciation of Zen in Rose's teaching and what could be a shallow understanding of Advaita. He says we cannot give up all egos at once and immediately realize we are the Absolute, however desirable this may sound from one's reading the esoteric books. Even the desire to be egoless and desireless is an ego of desire, which cannot finally answer itself. Yet, recognizing this impossibility should not be used as justification for not doing everything possible to reduce ourselves enough to fit through the eye of the needle. The shift in point-of-reference from the human being to Spiritual Awareness is gradual (in one sense: Rose says we return back into the Absolute, but at the same time find we were back there all along), and it is futile to pretend in imagination what one is not in realization. He recommends the more realistic and safer path of ridding oneself of all extraneous encumbrances and refining the sense of self down to the point where finally one is nothing more than a pure, conscious question mark, inquiring into one's source—and being aware of this process occurring. He claims we cannot give up that last remaining ego of being a seeker who follows the dotted line and wants to find some spiritual answer. He promises, however, that at the end of one's path: **"The final ego will be taken from you"** (Rose, 1981, p. 16) (re: Christ's saying on the Cross: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.") We are not alone or autonomous in the search. Reality knows and reclaims us, when it is time.

In keeping with the procedure of backing away from untruth, it cannot be overstressed that one must recognize and reject all false, or lesser, forms of mental seeking; to resist feeding the spiritual hunger with junk food. Seeing the various ways in which we may be inclined to fool ourselves, be diverted, or take the easy way out, helps us to back into a truer quality of mind.

As has been discussed, in aiming for the desired state of conscious freedom from all forms of projected thought, which is intuited to be the doorway to Awakening, Rose does not advise the methods often recommended in other teachings that suppress thoughts through will-power, substitute for them with some thought of spiritual inspiration or symbology, erase thoughts through use of prolonged, repetitive chanting or mantras, artificially create a state-of-mind which contains one pervasive thought of no-thought, or slip one into a fetal, hypnotic stupor that simulates no-mind with semi-conscious thoughtlessness, yet no anterior awareness (Rose, l978, p. 215-7).

Techniques in other teachings that aim at soothing body turbulence, quieting the mind, controlling errant thoughts, developing one's power of concentration, and surrendering oneself in devotional contemplation are all useful and not being discounted—so long as they are done sincerely, and not merely as excuses for avoiding the work of self-confrontation. However, Rose, and the other teachers of his kind, consider these to be preliminary techniques or supportive aspects of meditation that, at best, prepare one for what is regarded as the real work toward attaining self-knowledge and direct realization of Essence. Observation is the key tool throughout this work.

It is worth describing these distinctions more specifically to prevent misunderstandings; ones with serious consequences. Rose delineates critical differences between the goal of no-mind and other meditative states that may be mistaken for it from a lower vantage point in consciousness. He notes a difference between: 1) a thought within the mundane mind of nothing or no-thought, 2) the

awake mundane mind that is empty of thoughts (attained through zazen and Vipassana meditation), and 3) genuine no-mind, in which the individual, relative mind itself ceases, and only the Unmanifested Mind as an impersonal dimension behind all projected experience and perception remains. Using Rose's analogy of the human mind's actually functioning like a radio, Number Two can be likened to a radio that is turned on, but neither receiving nor broadcasting any signals. Number One is a radio that is broadcasting the sound of silence. Number Three is a radio that is turned off. The Buddha's instruction "to think of nothing" does not mean its literal interpretation as Number One, but rather the state of Number Two, which then makes Number Three possible. To indulge in some pretentious concept-juggling for a moment for the purpose of better understanding Rose's metaphysical schema, the experience called Cosmic Consciousness might occur somewhere in-between categories Two and Three: it is a state outside the personal ego-mind (although with its reference point remaining an individual experiencer), but still within the Universal mind. The final witness of even Cosmic Consciousness is from Number Three.

The metaphor of the thinking mind as the text in a word processor can help to illustrate these distinctions more clearly. It must be understood that there is a critical difference between an empty space and a space with nothing in it. Pressing the cursor key moves the cursor over by one unit, but this unit does not have a content. It is an empty space (analogous to Number Three above). Pressing the space bar also moves the cursor over by one unit, but this space contains something: nothing (Number Two). Typing in the word "zero" would be equivalent to Number One. (And let us not forget to wonder: who is watching the screen all the while?)

Some measure of concentration and thought-control is indeed necessary to guide one's inquiry through the mental maze, and to avoid distraction, possession, or forgetting. While deliberately preoccupying the ego-mind with some form of ritualized meaninglessness can be a good strategy for freeing a deeper part of one's being to come into play, there can be the danger of one's continuing to identify with the theatrics of this regimented mind and not awakening to that which is watching this game; the realization of which is its intent. The more extreme tactic of willfully suppressing thought to achieve thoughtlessness does not ultimately work either (although the conditional quiet temporarily won can be of some value in enabling further introspection with mental clarity) because the one who is suppressing all thoughts is itself only a thought-gestalt, and not a real spiritual being. It too must end, but cannot directly end itself. It is ended when it exhausts itself and is seen for what it really is, *by something else*. Rose's Psychology of the Observer is the blending together of Zen's mental work on the koan within duality and Advaita's retreating into the formless awareness of this mind.

All these points are meant to stress one key principle about meditation that must be understood in order for one to ever attain the true goal: there is a major, qualitative difference between the somatic, individual, mundane mind (which is consciousness), and the spiritual Mind-dimension (awareness). The two terms are often used interchangeably in psychology textbooks (those that are at all aware of awareness as a subjective experience, regardless of how its nature is conceived), and even in many metaphysical texts. Rose has stated that the pursuit of "higher consciousness" is a common misunderstanding of what spirituality actually involves, although acknowledges that to a large extent such work is a requisite aspect of attaining that transcendental awareness of consciousness. This is because although awareness is equally apart from the true in consciousness as well as the false (as all of consciousness is in a sense one dimension or plane), and in principle one can become aware from any point along the spectrum of consciousness, realistically the shift in point-of-reference is harder to make the more one is immersed in a corrupted mental state. The seeker must give the witch's broomstick to the Wizard before being allowed to go home.

As the references to Advaita Vedanta have also stated, the real work is not strictly that of progressing through higher and higher realms of consciousness (as Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, and other occult/metaphysical teachings imply) to some ultimate Enlightenment as the final stage of one's glory. Rose's teaching is that **Truth is at a right angle to all states and levels of consciousness**. It is equidistant from them all, as it is forever apart from all consciousness. Reality is a different dimension altogether. It has no qualities, measure, or location. He explains why this common misconception about the desirability of attaining higher knowledge is incomplete: "First, there is no knowledge. Second, when you are everything, there is nowhere to go; there is no expansion. This is a misnomer. The theory of mind-expansion is valid up to this point—of final death or realization" (Rose, 1985, p. 57-58).

Yet, the paradox in this, as has been described in a previous section, is that one must become the truth first before being able to finally realize oneself as that Mind or Self beyond all categories of minds and selves, and this involves purifying one's "personal" quality of consciousness of all egos, false beliefs, identifications, projections, compensations, etc., etc. This cannot be bypassed. One must clarify and correct one's state of false consciousness—which <u>is</u> one's self until found to be otherwise—and sever one's deluded entanglements within it. This frees one from the barriers to hearing the higher Intuition and developing direct-mind ability, thereby enabling the seeker to retreat back from one's absorption into the picture-show and finally re-enter its—and the seeker's—source.

Again, there is another paradox within this paradox: Who is doing the clarifying? Whose consciousness is being clarified? The answer is that when the small "s" self stops believing in itself and relinquishes its authority, in awareness, the inquiry/purification "does" itself.

The "common denominator" throughout this entire system of introspection, in all its aspects, is **observation**. <u>One observes the observer</u>; this then providing further material for meditation. Establishing this form and direction of inquiry is crucial and is too often overlooked in meditational practices that aim directly at achieving Godhood; hence the reason for its belabored emphasis throughout this report. We cannot hope to reliably define life, the universe, or "God," before first even knowing how and from where we see, how we judge—and <u>who</u> is doing this seeing and judging.

We do not normally stop to note that our perceptions, sensations, thoughts, states-of-consciousness, etc. are being experienced by some self or mind anterior to the experience. We can more readily note the distinction between the seen and the seer when some change occurs on the plane of what is seen. We then become aware of the change as being something apart from the seeing "I," rather than our being identified with the experience throughout its course of change. For example, we can learn to watch our quality of mind alter when intoxicated, ill, hypnotized, in some powerful mood, etc., and see its fluctuations and distortions from a more valid state-of-mind at a vantage point separate from it. Some claim to be able to see the inner components of their own eyes. Yet—with what are they seeing? If we are quick and alert, we can see the change in vision-content during the moment while our eyes shift their focus from distant to nearby. *What sees our seeing?* We can also become aware of the transition from a dream to waking consciousness as a succession of states-of-consciousness before the view of a neutral mental viewer. This higher aspect of the Albigen System of meditation recommends the detached, impersonal observation of all mental processes without resisting nor rearranging them. The more one identifies with the mundane ego-mind, the more it needs to out-wrestle itself to become "right." The more one resides in a compassionate awareness, the more readily the innate truth of the psyche will manifest itself without fear or effort. Self-observation consists not only of watching specific acts, thoughts, emotional responses, memories, etc., but also general states-of-mind, associative patterns, motives, convictions, projections, and colorations of mood. One must become aware of all voices, egos, and false selves, as well as the conflic-

tive dichotomies between these centers of identity in the mind. Then, beyond these specifics in content, one studies the pure mechanics of the mind and the nature of consciousness itself. One becomes aware of watching one's mind, which reflects one's world while continually recreating it.

This complexity of material is gradually seen to be a stream of interconnected thoughts passing before the mind's eye. Thinking is discovered to be reflexively associative, like elephants in a parade holding each other's tails in their trunks. It is separate from the observer of this material; this observer gradually being found to be a more real self than was the bundle of tangled, projected experience with which the self had chronically identified. As Jean Klein puts it, the aware "I" is the hinge on which the door of experience swings.

It is taught that the consistent, impartial seeing of all this mental activity, without one's meddling in it, eventually leads to the slowing down of this manufacture of excessive thoughts and diminution of obsessive emotionality, and one's mental functioning returns to its natural, non-ego-regulated condition. However, it must be understood that this clear, non-judgmental seeing of one's psychological experience does not automatically condone every mental pattern or physical activity witnessed as being intrinsically correct merely because it exists, as a shallow, dishonest interpretation of such mindfulness meditation might try to rationalize. The flaw in one's psyche that reinforces the pathology or delusion in question is a parasitical ego that needs to be revealed and then purged from the system, like a cancer. Actually, such naked seeing allows one to better recognize the errors in one's thinking, perceiving, desiring, evaluating, and responding to life, without the defensive, ego-motivated self-justification that usually sets in reflexively and thwarts any effort at honest self-correction. Even this sly tendency towards corruption or resistance can be seen. Such self-reflection brings one into closer alignment with the truth of one's natural, intended condition.

Self-observation has some important implications for therapeutic work, whether on oneself or with others. Erroneous self-definition, with its concomitant peculiarities and pathologies, is the primary nature of all mental troubles. We identify with the experience of a false, ignorant, divided self. Objective observation is what severs that ego-identification and allows a person to become truthful, without bias. Recognizing a state-of-mind breaks its exclusive hold over the self and enables one to become free of it.

This is one of the big keys in transformation: when you see it, you change. The nature of psychological work is not that of adjusting or improving certain qualities in one's personality according to what one imagines to be better or more expedient in getting what one wants. As in philosophical work, the process is that of retreating from error and becoming what is more essential or real. As Rose explains: "You do not change—you drop", adding: "The ability or method of exposing, and changing by exposing, is the means of genuine, true psychological teaching" (Rose, 1979c, p. 38).

This practice of watching the mind has a good, illustrative parallel in the process of fasting from food when the body is sick. When one stops feeding the body (projecting thought) and does not give it any extraneous medications (false beliefs), but provides it only clean water (observation), the body purges itself of all toxicity (maya) and gradually returns to its natural, healthy, unpolluted state. The mind functions likewise. Awareness is to the mind what water is to the body.

Again, regarding therapy, Rose has offered some helpful advice about how to deal with suffering, whether its cause be mundane or spiritual. When a person experiences some hardship, injustice, offense, or violation, one must strive to see the whole situation with all its interrelated factors as one picture, and not identify with the individual self's pain or disadvantage (which is what is interpreted by the ego as suffering) within it. This is how the child experiences experience, before a distinct ego-self develops that reacts to life and attempts to influence life, as if it was separate from it.

For example, if one has been abused by one's parents, it helps one's healing to not divide the experience strictly into "them" against "me," but to also see how the parents' nature was the consequence of the numerous factors in life and family that largely created them, and they may not have been able to manifest the truth any better than they did. This does not lessen their crime nor end one's pain. However, ending the projection of a discrete, willful "doer" and unfairly injured "recipient" onto certain clusters of factors within the experience, identified as people, does lessen the imagined gap between victim and perpetrator—when all actors are seen as interconnected pawns of ignorance and mechanicalness on one shared stage. As one fellow queried: "Is life better understood by looking at it more closely, or stepping back further from it?" (Brilliant, Potshots). He later noted: "Distance doesn't make you any smaller, but it does make you part of a larger picture."

This is all another way of defining the inner workings of "forgiveness." Forgiveness means more than its simplistic connotation of: "That's alright—you are pardoned". It means that when the larger truth of a living drama in which human beings are acting out their respective roles is seen and the real nature and dynamics of the complex issues involved is understood, the conviction of individual responsibility and thus blame is ended, the reaction of personal violation is dispelled, and the whole pattern is free to work itself out according to its inner needs in homeostatic self-correction. "That's alright" actually means accepting the situation. "You are pardoned" means not taking it personally. Seeing the truth—whether about other's sins or one's own—and surrendering to its demands is the forgiveness. Honest meditation brings about this perspective.

In cases of less serious trauma, and especially when one's troubles are due to one's own foolishness or immaturity, Rose encourages Zen's emphasis upon humor as a way of distancing oneself from one's condition and seeing the values in collision causing the problem more objectively without the identification, thus undermining its formidability. He has said that self-observation leads to freedom from suffering when one can laugh at the self's predicament.

He has also provided some more pointed insights about that bleak stretch of the path called "The Dark Night of the Soul." In the Albigen System and related teachings, there is no concept of a loving, parental Deity to soothe one's troubled soul, or to help compensate for mundane hardship with some positive spiritual advantage. "The Void loves you" is not a comforting nor realistic image to contemplate. Rose sums up much of the teaching about meditation and change-of-being in this key statement: "Regarding despair: you do not look for comfort, but for the reason for being uncomfortable (and resolve it there). Face despair...it is the next lesson" (personal correspondence, 1977). This recalls a revealing line from his poem, The Way: "Only those with faith will find despair; and those who despair may come closer to Truth" (Rose, 1975, p. 67). It is the ego-self that experiences faith and despair, and longs for comfort. The purpose of spiritual work is not to comfort the ego, but to expose its very nature, which is suffering, and negate it. What we really long for can only be found on the other side of that negation, not in further affirming the validity of the source of the problem. Rose's is a hard teaching.

He has elaborated further on this whole theme of observation. I had asked him what one should do when reaching a state of no convictions, of conscious ignorance, of being "poor in spirit," and feeling that the experience of being blessed by a loving God, as many religious people believe they are, is out of the question. I wondered if this was a valid state. Rose replied: "All states-of-mind will go...even the empty one...*by continued looking behind*...by constantly watching and observing" (personal correspondence, 1977). This is critical advice. He is saying that even the state of no-conviction is a conviction-state too, maintained in the mind of a person who is himself nothing more than a conviction-state. No state-of-mind— whether despairing or joyous—is ultimately real, and whatever

psychological condition in which one finds oneself, the key thing to remember is to keep watching it and backing away from it. No state is valid—only the seer of all states is.

Several comments about dualistic mentation versus direct-mind perception have already been made. Rose gives another important instance of this distinction. In the Albigen meditation, one must take care not to dichotomize oneself by picturing one's body in action, but rather should study the reasons for the actions, the thoughts and feelings that generated the actions, and the anatomy and source of these thoughts. In a broader sense, to dichotomize means to mistakenly submerge oneself as the observer into one finite, relative vantage point within the scene being examined, in opposition to other aspects of the scene, as the subject facing an object, rather than to be the observer of one's whole subjective scene at once, paradoxically from all angles within the experience, yet from outside of it.

This issue ties in with an important principle discussed several times previously. The reason why we should not conjure up a vision of ourselves in this self-study and watch that image is because this would then only be another form of visualization, and not the direct viewing of our inner experience. We must be careful not to fall into this trap of watching a visualization of ourselves and then believing we are watching the whole process—that of watching ourselves watching ourselves, ad infinitum. We must see this dichotomization itself occurring and see that this process is not real, but is a mental fabrication.

Here we reach a significant point: "Once we have run the gamut of this multiple splitting...we will become aware of awareness. We will then have placed our finger on consciousness [in this usage meaning: awareness, not changeable mind-stuff], and distinguished it from sensation and perception" (Rose, 1981, p. 20). A further consideration is that in looking into the motivations animating our actions and reactions, we must also be careful not to re-identify with the emotions involved, but to view the emotions themselves with dispassion, as a thing apart. He adds: "This dichotomy (of watching oneself clinically, not with personal involvement) is only to the re-run and is not really a dichotomy, but the looking at memories while unaffected by egos or emotions" (ibid, p. 21).

Likewise, one should not intellectualize one's thinking processes or wonder about the fruits of one's complex, pattern thinking, but rather view this phenomena directly, and think directly (Rose, l981, p. 6-11). This observation must take place in the ever-present moment and not become crystallized into a trance-state. The viewing should be like that of a motion picture of a still scene, as versus a photograph of it. This quality of pure, detached observation, without one's getting caught up in what is observed, takes great discipline, mindfulness, and discernment.

One's desire to be whole is the railroad track leading through this convoluted process of inversion back into the Self, and the commitment to serve the truth is what protects one from the forces of adversity that would hinder one's journey.

Rose explains the intended focus of this phase of meditation:

> The most important thing to ask oneself about thought is the source and direction of thought. Thought is not something that is born, and which later terminates within the individual mind alone. There are two directions of thought, and both are projections. Thoughts are projected into our minds by others, or other entities, and we are capable of projecting thoughts into the minds of others. Every thought is a projection (Rose, 1979c, p. 64-65).

One implication of this statement is that what is even more important than using thought in philosophical contemplation or meditative disciplines (and all mental practices, however ethereal or

mystical their nature, are forms of thought), is to recognize all patterns in consciousness as being a stream of activity separate from the viewer, and to attempt to discover their origin and relationship to oneself as this viewer.

This study of personal psychology thus consists of fixing the attention upon thoughts, reactions to thoughts, and reactions to experience. As the basic elements of thinking—a percept and then the reaction—are found to be mechanical, Rose recommends a second level of meditation concurrently with this self-study: the direct observation of the interplay of these pure thought-forms and their sources, and noting the arbiter of them. In other words: who is the experiencer of one's experience? Who is the "I" that one refers to when saying, "I am"? One cannot be this lifeless, mental machine being seen. This level of work will be described more in the next section.

The principle of duality has been discussed several times thus far in a large, philosophical sense. The form of self-study described here also allows one to recognize the experience of dualism in one's own psychological processing of life—as versus direct experience without the reactive interpretation and projection—and to reconcile it. A good metaphor for the start of duality or mental division in our early life experience is that of a cassette tape that jams as the flow of tape gets stuck at some point on the rolling wheel, and then doubles up from that point on. One must follow the tape back to its initial point of stuckness and free it. Once the flow continues, there is only oneness of experience and no trace of there ever having been anything else (i.e. sin, suffering, separation, knowledge of good and evil). This reconciliation of one's psychic splitting off, whether it resulted from a specific trauma which could not be fully processed and assimilated at the time it occurred or simply due to the birth of the ego (within the individual mind, which is itself a more diffuse form of ego) in childhood, as previously explained, will be seen to directly relate to the ascendance of the observer up Jacob's Ladder.

Meditation can then be described as having two simultaneous phases or dimensions to it: first, to define oneself properly as an individual human being by correcting the errors contaminating the ego-mind, and second, to back away from that self—and into the Observer. He explains this another way: "This is a system of meditation that is like holding a mirror up to the mind, which leads to a state of being in which there seems to be no mind or mirror, no separateness and no comparison" (Rose, 1979c, p. 61).

It is also claimed, by those who have followed this practice out to the end, that as one's attention becomes drawn back into its root of inception, outside of or behind the human, relative mind that has been witnessed, this relentless self-observation results in the mind's actually stopping at some critical point of climax, and one experiences no-mind—the experience of nothingness.

Rose notes that one phenomena discovered during the course of this meditation is that self-consciousness occurs from the perception of one's individualized memory. One actually becomes *aware of awareness*, alongside or outside of all the thoughts, memories, visualizations, etc. that are witnessed in this process observation. It takes an abundance of somatic thinking and an accumulation of an abundance of energy to propel us back over the reverse vector. The more intense this application of energy is to the observation of thinking processes, and to this study of percepts and the reactions to them (meaning: thoughts), the more one will come back to the true relation (or apparent non-relation) of the whole thought processes to the central awareness, or the original, pure unmanifested Mind behind all of this mental activity (Rose, l981, p. 19-27). This awareness <u>is</u> ultimate attention, and is the real state that most other meditation techniques can, at best, only simulate.

The subject of meditation is quite complex; the Albigen approach recommended by Rose especially so, with its encompassing of psychology, philosophy, phenomenology, the transmutation of

energy, and the transcendence of the mind through observation all in one system. A report of this size can only offer a general overview of the main principles involved. For the purpose of comprehension, following is a summary of this system's major aspects, as discussed thus far.

First, the basic steps in preparation for meditation:

(1) Find a place that will allow you to be quiet (in a larger sense: getting your house in order).
(2) Reduce body-turbulence (including: proper diet, exercise, sobriety, etc. for a body that is free of disease; curb appetites; and do preliminary meditation techniques—watching the breath, using a mantra perhaps, or whatever helps—to get calm and centered).
(3) Do not fight Nature, but take a holiday from the whole Nature-game (artfully deferring sex and its consequences).
(4) Provide synthetic irritation to keep the mind working (meaning, everything that has been discussed about self-confrontation regarding personal and philosophical issues).
(5) Be aware of all obstacles and Laws (avoiding adversity and implementing principles of expediency).

Once the body has been brought under control and its influences upon mental functioning been taken into account, the actual work of studying the mind can begin. There are several phases to this level of meditation:

(1) The first step in controlling the thoughts is to realize that our thoughts happen of their own causation; one thought paving the way for the next, and that causing the next.
(2) The second step is to establish an objective which we wish to insert into this seemingly unbreakable chain of thought-caused thoughts; in this case: the scrutiny of the self.
(3) The third step is to avoid trying to view the self directly and objectively until the mind is placed under some control.
(4) The fourth step begins the work of controlling the thoughts—although indirectly, not directly, by blocking out unwanted thoughts and turning the mind towards one's desired concerns.

Some points of elaboration are required. For one, we should use this blocking-out technique *only after we have vocally or manifestly made our commitment, which was the second step,* otherwise we could be left stranded and rudderless on a dark sea.

Something happens after this routine of artfully deflecting tangential thoughts is practiced for some time. We begin to notice a motion within the head of a "mental head" that literally turns away from a view. When you are able to turn this internal head, whenever you wish, without any inability to continue thinking, you are halfway home.

However, a peculiar thing can occur after awhile. The mind will seemingly lose interest in looking for the source of thoughts, despite the initial conviction of urgency one may feel about the quest. We may witness for the first time the phenomenon of a mental weariness which is not an emanation or reflection of physical weariness. Why does this happen? Rose can only guess that the computer is not programmed to take abstractions seriously. Especially at the stage of reversing one's vector from projected thought ("going within"), the inverting of consciousness devoid of content can result in a form of mental oblivion if the aware being that would contain this emptiness has not been readied beforehand to sufficient presence, and this vacuum in consciousness implodes into itself, taking the unstable viewer along with it. Regardless, we cannot force ourself to think about thinking or not-thinking, if the mind momentarily wishes to think of weariness. We will believe that it is

weary and may never know *the real nature of that mental weariness*. One must then either somehow wake up outside one's state of pseudo-sleep and dispel it or mechanically convince the mind to again become interested in some form of introspective research that will lead back to the study of the self.

Other than these four steps, there are no further steps, beyond reminding the self of the urgency of the study, setting up of ways and means to renew the interest of the mind, and exercising the imagination to find new avenues to approach the study. (The simplicity of this list of steps should not mislead the seeker: the fourth step contains a vast territory yet to be covered.) From the fourth step, all depends upon the increase of inspiration by the fruits of our labor into introspection. (preceding outline and comments condensed from: Rose, 1979c, p. 87-90).

Meditation can thus be described simply as watching oneself perceiving, interpreting, and experiencing life, as well as defining the source, direction, and nature of thought, and its relation to awareness—until realization occurs through one's entering the source of this awareness.

A few additional comments should be made to clarify how the Albigen system of meditation relates to other forms of meditation. A crucial distinction has been made between consciousness and awareness; consciousness being relative, changeable, illusory mind-stuff and awareness being forever pristine, contentless, and prior to this projected mind-dimension. Some forms of meditation attempt to modify or alter consciousness through the use of various techniques and practices, with the intention of eventually purifying and perfecting the mind's processes to where it attains the highest state of consciousness in manifestation (Cosmic Consciousness). Others aspire to one non-relative step beyond this to where one becomes or makes some final transition over to the aware, unmanifesting Self (Enlightenment). Such methods of facilitating this shift can run into a problem if instead of purifying consciousness, one is actually creating a subjective condition that consists of a pleasant trance-state or some appealing paradigm within consciousness, and then identifying with it, thereby making one reluctant to leave this psychic pacifier behind in exchange for the naked Reality one does not yet know.

A difficulty born of paradox is encountered during the process of introspection advised by Advaita, Vipassana, and Roy Masters. The transition intended in this discipline is for one to shift from being the watcher of a busy, troubled, and deluded mind to that of a gradually quieting, saner mind, as the clear, impersonal watching of this mind purges it of ego-generated distortions. All the while, no deliberate efforts are being made to change any aspect of one's mental functioning. The hindrance to this practice is that the ability to attain this lofty position of detached self-observation is limited by the extent to which one is tied to a mind that works improperly. Some method of managing the mind needs to be employed while being engaged in the work of escaping it.

The Albigen System attempts to work both ends of this "channel" at once by <u>using</u> the mind to resolve its own imperfections, thus allowing one's inner vision to become clearer, while concurrently, the highest part of the mind dispassionately observes this complex process occurring before its vision. At the same time, this awareness is what helps this correction and purification to take place, as one becomes free of the mind's self-perpetuating state of confusion. The energy involved in this dual process of work on the self and the refinement of observation <u>is</u> one's "vector"; the objective of which is to generate enough momentum to escape the cohesive gravity of the mundane mind. This observer is itself still a part of the mind (the highest part)—however, it is the doorway to the spiritual Self waiting beyond this mind.

This understanding of meditation also answers the objection of the overly strict interpretation of Advaita that accuses all mental/psychological systems of work of fostering the illusion that there is a "progressive" way possible of attaining a non-relative state, whereas Advaita is put forth as a direct, non-dualistic route to such Absolute realization. Rose teaches that while in one sense this is

true, this latter approach is also progressive in the experiential sense in that the aware Self cannot be fully realized the first moment one grasps its significance conceptually, as the identification with the small "s" self does not disintegrate instantly on command. The quality of this observation must also be refined progressively, as does the verity of the human mind it is witnessing, even though the final "leap" from here to Here is instantaneous and outside all relativity. This massive effort at self-definition is what enables the shift to be made and prepares one to "appreciate" Reality, This understanding also offers a simple explanation of the relationship between the more feminine path of surrender and devotion (self-definition through function) and the more masculine path of observation and discernment (self-definition through comprehension). Both recognize the ego-self as being the obstacle to be eliminated. Pedagogically, the former could be said to be dissolving it from *inside* experience, while the latter dissolves it from *outside* experience. In Rose's teaching, "becoming the truth" is the joining together of both means in non-duality. This is the working through of the channel from both ends at once.

Although he does not specifically address this issue, one may well reasonably surmise that there is also a "heart ray" that can be retroversed, the same as the "mind ray," which is the work emphasized in this system. Yet, the real Self may touch us there just as well. The Heart and Mind are divided and in frequent opposition only on our human level. In Reality, and its reflection in the whole person, there is no division.

In summation, Rose describes the Albigen System of meditation as consisting of five basic levels; the discussion in this report only briefly describing some aspects of each:

(1) Remembering incidents of traumatic or reactive nature.
(2) Finding the final self among the many selves of voices.
(3) Analyzation of thought-processes.
(4) Going within. Employ whatever means necessary.
(5) Transmission. (Rose, 1981, p. 30).

Throughout the teaching, Rose stresses the paradox that one must make tremendous efforts to rouse oneself from sleep in order to attain the state beyond care, where the futility of all effort is realized. He offers a vivid metaphor to describe this course of meditation:

> This equation of applied energy producing an understanding of a state of no-energy is similar to a fish swimming upstream. We must gather up such a ball of energy that it matches the force of the production of illusory projection. We swim upstream through the swift places [betweenness] until we find an immense pool that is tranquil. And when we reach that, all of our balled up energy breaks forth and even the somatic emotions release their energy when it is apparent that all effort and energy are no longer needed. Such is Satori (Rose, 1981, p. 29).

Chapter 14

The Psychology of Observation and Perception

It is time to narrow our focus and look more closely into the meaning of observation. Rose states: "(We must) properly analyze this thing called seeing. Who is seeing? And what is the quality of this seeing? What sees?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 5). This theme is continually repeated throughout the teaching because it is something even many people who consider themselves to be seekers on any number of paths do not examine seriously enough as a foundation to their chosen method of search. Observation or awareness is taken for granted as a natural function; neither its accuracy nor deeper significance being questioned. If someone asks us: "Who is seeing through your eyes?," we promptly reply: "I am." Few stop to ask themselves further: "Who is seeing through ME?"

Rose supplies the answer to this in his assessment of the psychology of perception. He claims we do not perceive with our senses, but rather: "The mind can see." He states this more precisely: "We don't see with our eyes, we only see with our mind" (lecture, 1986). This adds another level of complexity to our quest for the true understanding of life: not only are our senses and nervous systems imperfect instruments for receiving and processing information about our experiences in the world, but the mind that is the real recipient of this input is also unreliable in its interpretation of this data, due to all the ego-based conditioning, beliefs, states-of-mind, etc. already discussed. We do not live in the world—we live in our world. Furthermore, the Perennial Philosophy states the world itself is mind; they are inseparable.

We do not see the whole picture of existence as it is, from all vantage points. Like the blind men encountering the elephant, we see only our little part of it, from within the relative scene, from a poor angle, through a filter or cracked lens, with two eyes, and by a mind that does not know itself. We must see the elephant from all angles *at once*. William Blake's famous line promised: "If the doors of perception were cleansed, all would appear as it is—infinite." (Huxley, p. 189)

Rose points out a major danger inherent in our mental functioning; one that is as much a handicap in spiritual inquiry as in daily life: "The mind has the ability to create, better than to accurately witness. With the ability to create comes the ability to delude the self" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). This poses a problem not only in mundane experience, but in the implementation of any psychological or spiritual discipline in which one is inclined to project some desired state and then embrace it, rather than work to improve the ability to perceive reality objectively. He states that in truth, man cannot create anything real, but only discover that which is.

Here, there is a seeming contradiction. What he is saying is that the mind can create through projection, but that what is then perceived in experience is not reality, but only a narcissistic illusion. This is much like a mirage or hologram: it exists, yet it is not real.

Rose refers to this process with a term that usually has a positive connotation in metaphysical teachings, yet in the Albigen System is quite negative: visualization. Often, teachings of meditation urge the seeker to visualize something or other: a chakra, a ball of energy, an aura, an ascended master, an idyllic scene, white light, a thousand-petaled lotus, or some other symbol of spirituality or comfort. While this may have some functional value as therapy or inspiration, Rose considers this to not only not be truly spiritual, but that it is even potentially dangerous in regards to the serious business of searching for reality.

Visualization is that ability of the mind to create, leading to projection, and then the experiencer's identification with that projection—which includes that insubstantial, self-perpetuating mental entity called "me." This is not only an abstract principle of phenomenology, however, meant only to be relegated to impersonal study in research papers. It has a detrimental influence on our actual psychological functioning as well, as Rose explains: "Rationalization, like temptation, comes to the human mind in everchanging form because all facts are immediately qualified with colors not intrinsic to the fact-state itself" (Rose, 1982, p. 145).

This is therefore one of the reasons for the kind of self-study Rose recommends. Unless we understand how our minds work and how its propensity towards delusion influences the life we experience, as well as defines the human self that is experiencing it, we cannot come to see the distortions in our seeing and thereby become free of its power to keep us asleep (maya). He offers his interpretation of the allegory in Genesis: Paradise represents direct-mind communication, perhaps among all creatures of all dimensions. Visualization was the apple which the pristine man should have avoided. He opened a new eye, one of his own doing [the paradox again: is anything of our "own" doing?], and closed forever the direct mind's eye. Not even God could find him, and God had to shout to find him. (Rose, 1979c, p. 12)

An implication of this principle is that once the power to create through projected thought is discovered, one must resist the ego-based temptation to "make one's dreams come true," which is one of the more popular tenets of much New Age or mind-science philosophy. It is more important to realize—or at least to recognize the clue betrayed by this ability and surmise—that one is dreaming and so make jarring movements to wake up. This is wiser than working to concoct more enjoyable or self-flattering dreams that only seduce one into remaining in bondage. The message is that we must learn to purely perceive, instead of project—and to eventually attain the state where we do not perceive either, but rather invert our attention and realize the anterior Self from where the entire universe is born.

This kind of teaching is obviously quite subversive to the powers-that-be maintaining the "normal" world, hence the Gurdjieffian advice about one's needing to be a "sly man," and Rose's warning that one must make tremendous efforts to wake up, but take care to not disturb the sleepers. By "normal" is meant those people who believe the world to be objectively real; those who believe themselves to be who they think they are; those for whom the meaning of life is pleasure, power, acquisition, vanity, or indulgence in any number of fantasies; those who believe in a dualistic, anthropomorphic deity who condones all of their desires (while their never questioning the source or nature of those desires); those who barter with this god for personal salvation in an earthly paradise; those who fully identify with the projection of life that passes through them; in short: those who do not suspect a thing.

As usual, Rose has a more succinct, dramatic way of defining our dismal status: "And the robot forgot his curiosity about his Designer, and projected phantoms of false hope and monsters of desire. And darkness was projected as light" (Rose, 1979c, prologue).

Before elaborating further upon the process of observation in regards to perception, following is a summary of some of the main themes involved in meditation that Rose advises us to keep in mind:

(A) Keep to the business of observing. [Do not get side-tracked with irrelevant pursuits or getting caught up in the psychic material witnessed.]
(B) Circumvent adversity (go around it). [Overcoming adversity is better than being overwhelmed by it, but out-witting it is better still.]
(C) We should note at this time that it is always the truth-oriented part of the self that has the erroneous judgment. [Like the moon eclipsing the sun, the real "I" is deceived and seduced by "external" conditions or states-of-mind.]
(D) It is apparent that at times the inner self, or anterior observer, is incapable of infallible apprehension...and even more, it is capable of distorted creations. [We are not only fooled by our inability to see the world as it truly is, due to some primordial defect of mind, we also help strengthen our chains in Plato's Cave by projecting our own shadowy beliefs and desires outward as reality.]
(E) Visualization occurs with every perception, at the time of perception. [We do not see or know directly—we interpret, and in our interpretation is the world in which we live.]

One of the most valuable and original aspects of Rose's teaching is his precise analysis and categorization of the mental processes of perception and thought. According to him, these two processes are related: "I class our thinking processes as visions, because we do not think—we conjure" (Rose, lecture, 1986). He is saying that we perceive, retain, adjust, and project with the mind. We live in a visualized world. We do not see directly what is. "We" <u>are</u> this mind, not the Self in which the world is contained.

Rose considers most of our mental functioning to be entirely mechanical and non-volitional, contrary to our subjective experience that we are freely choosing to think or decide about something. A further complication is that while our thoughts are based on our perceptions from life experience, our perceptions themselves are not pristine, but are also forms of thought, in that our mental state determines how we see and so what we see. He wants us to recognize that our experience of life is actually a convoluted mental translation of experience.

Following is a brief outline of the faculties of the mind. The sequence of key principles to keep in mind is:

(a) all life experience is relative and mechanical;
(b) this experience is essentially a mental experience;
(c) all mental phenomena or processes are forms of thought;
(d) all thoughts are *visions*.

Their significance in regards to the goal of the quest is contained in Rose's repeated insistence that "The view is not the viewer," unless we wish to speculate on the two merging somewhere in an absolute state of Being. [The following section is condensed from Rose, 1979c, p. 20-24; 1981, p. 24-7.]

Rose considers the human mind to have three principle faculties: it **receives** (sense impressions), **records**, and **reacts**. We can call the first Reception or <u>Perception</u>, the second, Retention or

Memory, and the third would be Reaction, stimulus response, reason, or visualization (which is the mental projection of what we believe we see when a percept is received). He claims: "Visualization is the projection literally beamed out of us into our world-view and only then witnessed vainly as reality."

Perception is of two types: the percept or sensory type, and mental perception. Memory is also of two types: the material record of the senses, and the phenomena categorized as DNA, archetypal, or prenatal. Reaction involves the reflexive physical response to stimuli and attitudinal responses to the environment, but also represents a function called projection, which is essentially visualization. Projection is the result of a translation which occurs upon the receipt of a simple sensory percept.

So, with each faculty being more specifically defined, we now have:

(1a) Sensory Perception	(1b) Mental Perception
(2a) Sensory Memory	(2b) Ultra-Sensory Memory
(3a) Reflexive Reaction	(3b) Projection

Rose has defined thought as a personal reaction resulting from a percept affecting one or more memories. The genesis of thought thus begins with a percept. As perception is largely sensory, this distinct category of mental process should be called: *Somatically Induced Thought*. Memory is the automatic accumulation of percept-data. Memories are in turn perceived, thus furnishing material for more percepts. Visualization is a form of perception, using memories in new combinations. Imagination is the reaction of memories, stimulating visualization and an orderly creation of new memory patterns. Reaction occurs when subsequent percepts strike the impression made by previous percepts (meaning: memory). All the while, some faculty is aware of both perception and memory, and the inevitable reaction.

The next thing we notice is that we react to our own reactions. Yet, no matter how complex this process becomes, it is never more than reaction. He states: "It is not a divine candle in the head which we might label either discrimination or intelligence. And when we notice that we are reacting upon evaluation, we identify that process with ourself and call it Will." However, he maintains that Will is actually nothing more than a reaction to react in a fixed, planned reaction. He adds that although we cannot directly perceive our reacting except in some intellectual deduction, we can be aware of this process by observing the results of reaction.

Reaction is also of two other kinds. There is the automatic or programmed type of reaction which is somatic and largely reflexive. Then there is the mental reaction, which is unconscious. It is an Umpire function, which is the projection or perception to suit the universal-mind-paradigm. This is an Umpire-adjustment. [The Umpire will be further discussed in the section on Jacob's Ladder.]

The first two categories of mind faculties, Sensory Perception and Mental Perception, can be further divided into specialized functions. Following is an overview that explains the nature of each kind of experience.

[The first two categories are Sensory Perceptions]:

(1) **Normal Sensory Perception**. (This refers to ordinary seeing, in which a sensory stimulus causes the mind to react, based upon previous experience, with a visualization-projection onto the environment; this projection being the only thing seen by the individual's awareness. The thoughts which result are seemingly self-generated but are merely reactions.)

(2) **Abnormal Sensory Perception**. (This refers to visions that are found to be illusory or non-validated phenomena. This includes hallucinations, holograms, mirages, ghosts that cannot be verified, and illusions imposed upon the mind through hypnosis.) [The next four categories deal with Mental Perceptions, or Visualization-projections not warranted by percepts, in which the mind "sees" independently of the senses]:

(3) **Mental Visions**. (In this, the mind watches synthetic projections from its memory bank, sometimes with the components being rearranged. This is commonly called imagination or reverie. This category also includes dreams of a non-revelatory nature.)

(4) **Visions Without Projection by the Perceiver**. (These are non-physical visions that can be validated according to some law of reference. These include prophetic dreams or visitations, revelations or audible voices from some non-visible source, direct-mind or extra-sensory communications, and "magical" or supernatural visions. This faculty is the passive or receiving side of the projection-ability listed in category #6. *It may be that some of these visions are contacts with the Manifested Mind, or with emanations from the Manifested Mind.* This last term will be further explained shortly.)

(5) **Visions of Mental Processes** without sensory percepts. (This is what Rose refers to as the Process Observer [see Jacob's Ladder]. This is the part of us that sees. It sees the somatic mind in all its workings from an anterior vantage point, although is unable to watch itself. *This is a genuine mental awareness by the Real Self, or Ultimate Self.* Much more will be said about this particular mental function in regards to higher meditation.)

(6) **Deliberate Mental Projections**. (This refers to instances where visions are either projected by someone's mind upon the world scene or upon one's consciousness from another person or intelligence. These include psychokinesis, healings at a distance, possession, and materialization of objects. These are unreal manipulations or illusions projected into our mind, which we then visualize in the world. There is a creative dynamism in this; something miraculous. This category also includes the special phenomenon known as transmission...the direct conveyance of a deep spiritual realization.)

Understanding these categories of mental functioning and perception is vital to the work of self-knowledge and to find an escape from automatic, mechanical functioning, should this be possible (or rather from our identification with such functioning, which may in itself be as it is supposed to be). Rose is describing here the fundamental qualities of the entire range of subjective human experience. By studying the possible forms of error in our perception and thinking processes, we can take steps to eliminate them and return to a truer state-of-mind and thus more realistic relationship with the world...until the world and the self are seen to be inseparate by something, or from somewhere, else.

All this also relates significantly to the business of self-definition in that it is this anterior observing self that watches the vision of life we experience and is usually captivated by it, as well as fooled by the flaws seemingly built-in to the human being's mental functioning. Looking further ahead, Rose provides a glimpse of how our world of manifestation appears to those who have refined this quality of perception to its limit and whose reference point has thereby shifted to where they now see from the position of Reality: "The universe is an illusion only for certain people [so to speak] with special abilities of observation" (Rose, 1979c, p. 56).

Rose often refers to the familiar metaphor used by Ramana Maharshi to illustrate how erroneous is our point-of-reference as experiential beings. It also explains how this personal study of the mind leads to finding the Real Self. He likens our condition in life to a person who is watching a film in a theater. We become wholly identified with the characters and scenes on the screen as if they were

reality, while forgetting ourselves. The intent of the Albigen System is first to alert the individual to the actuality of the situation, and then to the need to pull one's attention back from the film being watched and to remember the self who is sitting in the audience. By doing so (i.e. living with or in awareness), the story being enacted before our view may also work out more harmoniously in the bigger picture than it otherwise might, although this would only be a side-benefit (to the actor we are). The next step is for one to peer back into the projector itself from where the movie emanates, to understand its mechanism, and then to become one with the light which is projected onto the screen through the film of mind-stuff.

Even this is not the final answer, however. Rose states that there is something behind even the projector and the light. He ties this in with Ramana Maharshi's earlier described distinction between the states referred to as Cosmic Consciousness (Kevala Samadhi) and Enlightenment (Sahaja Samadhi); terms admittedly meaningless and pretentious to those who have not experienced them. He refers to this distinction in connection with his reiterated theme that the view is not the viewer. This is true on even the highest level: "Whenever you see something or experience something—and this goes clear through to the experience of Cosmic Consciousness, the experience of ecstasy—this is not you. This is a visit. You're visiting a dimension, like Heaven" (Rose, lecture, 1979). The final answer would be that Reality that witnesses or gives birth to even Cosmic Consciousness.

Most of the information in the Albigen System is aimed at the individual seeker as its reference point, for the purpose of providing practical, experiential guidance along the path to Self-Realization. Rose does also offer an overview of the "cosmological" map (so to speak) of transpersonal psychology, in order to give the seeker a larger context for the search. He wants to make clear the qualities and significance of the different dimensions of what is loosely called "the mind." This outline puts much of the rest of his teaching into a more understandable perspective and indicates the course and purpose of meditation. [The following is condensed from Rose, 1979c, p. 19-20; 1981, p. 21-24, 29; 1985, p. 99.]

In this business of self-definition, when we speak of "us" (small u), or the self, we really mean the association of imperfect sensory perceptions and recordings, as well as the voices, egos, or appetites, all of which color the picture (physical world) that is witnessed by the mind. This "us" or self is what is called personality. However, the <u>real</u> "Us" (capital U), is the final observer, essence, or final awareness.

Rose claims that the master-plan from which we and the physical universe are created is contained in the mind dimension. This source is like a universal agreement of pre-incarnate man. It is the Universal Mind of Christian Science and the Oversoul discussed by Paul Brunton. Rose calls it the Manifesting or Manifested Mind.

He states that this mind which projects the relative world is universal and not solely the function of the individual person's head, which is in fact also its product. To isolate this projection-process for the purposes of self-study and to distinguish it from the percepts of self-observation, which may be incidents of process-observation, he calls it: <u>A</u>djustment of <u>M</u>ind-<u>P</u>rojected <u>P</u>erceptions. All physical (sensory) experience is AMPP, as is all visualization. Direct Experience leads to true experience, or to Mind (capital M).

So, in defining the mind, Rose is making a crucial distinction between the mind of adjustment (consciousness) and the Mind of awareness. He refers to the former as Manifesting or Manifested (since the projection is previously adjusted even before the person is born) mind, and the latter as Unmanifested, unparticularized, mind-stuff.

As meditation reveals, the mind (small m) performs two functions: one is AMPP and the other is the intellectual reaction to AMPP. We are always projecting, which is automatic, and always reacting to our projection, making endless, feverish analyses without really being aware of our own qualifying, catalytic influence upon the environmental picture. AMPP is automatic and unconscious, whereas the reaction can be generally considered to be semi-conscious and semi-automatic. It is only semi-conscious when it reacts in self-observation, or in the analysis of the thought processes.

Mind (capital M) is aware of the whole above tail-chasing.

Rose further explains how he distinguishes this Mind of impersonal awareness from the only mind that we generally know: the mind of consciousness, experience, phenomena, and identity—and points in the direction of the final Reality that encompasses both. He states that in objectively defining the nature of thought or thought-processes, one must also automatically conceive of a state of no-thought. A state-of-mind, if definable, must automatically involve a state of no-mind. The reality of "no-mind" does not mean non-existence, which is what the term seems to suggest to our mundane understanding, which cannot help but be fully identified with the projection-as-existence. Rather, it refers to the undefined mind, the undefinable mind, the unparticularized mind, the mind which does not think.

Rose testifies that "no-mind" is the "very aware platform" from which the mindstuff (Manifested Mind) that creates the world is generated, and is in turn witnessed by that which it creates. Also, it is from this position that we may become one with the Unmanifested Mind.

He explains that the Manifested Mind is like the cradle of the creation; this cradle being a transformer of an awareness even more powerful, but an undifferentiated and more universal type of awareness. It is this latter parent vehicle of awareness that he calls the Unmanifested Mind. "Unmanifested" here means not witnessable except in the experiencing of the phenomena which emanate from it, which is the Manifested Mind. This is a living place; a concourse of all souls because all of us can witness it. Mystics claim to know of it by entering it.

The Manifested Mind is the prop-room of the creation, where the idea or conception of the non-manifesting mind is made flesh. Our bodies and minds are Projections from this Manifested Mind. This dimension is a creation which, in relation to the Unmanifested Mind, is less than real, and is frequently described as being illusory.

This information is intended to give one a conceptual inference of what lies beyond our mundane minds. However, he cautions that the Unmanifested Mind cannot be perceived, even intellectually. Only the Ultimate awareness can touch it. He claims that when we are ultimately aware, we can enter the Ultimate Mind, or Unmanifested Mind. We cannot learn about it; we can only become it, or merge our awareness with it.

While he describes the specialized or Manifested Mind as emanating from the universal or Unmanifested Mind, he claims there is a source even ulterior to the Unmanifested Mind. It is from this source that Life or Light is born. Our stream of life finds its fountainhead long before our birth. Our very essence is projected from this Absolute. The Manifested and Unmanifested Minds are incidental to that Projection.

Rose has explained there being something beyond the traditional image of "God" as a perfect, Divine mind. Here, he also sums up the objective of his system of meditation and clarifies the significance of this report's sub-title:

> There is an intermediary state that you enter after death, and this is the mind dimension. The basic concept of the Atman and the Brahman would be closest, in regards the God

> concept; the Atman being the individual ray that emanates from the central light that is the Brahman. The ray of light, that plays upon the void, seems to be an individual and identifies itself with a certain name, but it is really attached at the other end to the Brahman, the Absolute. So this is an entirely different concept of God than the guy with the big whiskers who sits up there and says, "Hey, you're getting out of line down there. You broke a rule". I don't say that God is even Universal Mind. The Absolute is a stage beyond mind. The mind is a dimension, and you discover that the mind is a dimension by losing the mundane mind. The individual mind gives way and you realize you don't have an individual mind—that it's mostly just contact with mind-stuff, so to speak. (Rose, 1985, p. 99).

The section on Jacob's Ladder will describe more clearly the method of realizing these ascending levels or dimensions of mind in one's own inner experience.

One thing we discover in honest meditation, according to Rose, is that within the microcosm of the individual mind, we have copied our divine parent and likewise made projections even more illusory and nightmarish than our inherited, or projected, existence.

The knowledge that our imperfect somatic mind is giving us an incorrect world-view helps us to realize that all our experiences are mental, not physical. It also helps us to realize that if there is an incorrect projection, then it is very possible that there is a correct projection. This would still be a projection and not Reality, although it would be a projection of a Real Manifesting Mind.

Rose provides a glimpse of the realization experienced at the end of this journey directly inward. He explains that as we project ourselves back through the mind-ray, we come to this universal, or Unmanifested Mind-Matrix. And here, we experience the truth of our own insignificance or nothingness in relation to the values once assumed by the Individual Mind. Thus, we are still observing with traces of the Individual Mind. He offers some important, though little-known, information in this testimony. He states that this viewing with the Unmanifested Mind is often mistaken for Enlightenment. But, he claims it is actually "'the mountain experience', which can be quite depressing, depending upon how much we remember of our relative selves" (Rose, 1978, p. 217). Rose adds:

> It is only when we completely forget our relative selves that we transcend the Unmanifested Mind and enter the Absolute. And when we do, it shall only be a glimpse. However, the glimpse will be enough to carry the Individual Mind in unshakable conviction for the rest of its relative sojourn. (Rose, 1978, p. 217).

He admits the difficulty in attempting to teach this kind of material to people ("Talking about Enlightenment is like barking in a barrel"), but by doing so, presents a challenge to the seeker that offers hope:

> When we are fully aware of the processes of the Manifested Mind, it becomes apparent that even concepts, or explanations, such as this entire work, are conditional and relative. So that in looking at it from the viewpoint of the Unmanifested Mind, it does not matter if you believe all this or not. It only matters that you look inside. Find out for yourself who your Ultimate Observer is. (Rose, 1981, p. 23).

This brings us to the primary message in Rose's teaching; the theme that is referred to in the title of this report. It is as if all the material preceding this point has been an elaborate, although necessary, introduction to the core of the Albigen System. Rose has flatly stated that his book, PSYCHOLOGY OF THE OBSERVER, contains the complete formula or road map to lead one to Enlight-

enment, if acted upon diligently. He does not make this claim to flatter himself, to sell books, or to trivialize something profound. Rather, he is testifying that the system or mental procedure which he describes is what brought him to that final answer, in actual experience. It is a short-cut; the most direct route. He is saying that all mature spiritual teachings have a common, inner framework of essential principles which can be implemented by the seeker, and that these can be described plainly. He sums up the higher aspect of the system in this key passage:

> The true Self is the anterior [or Process] Observer, and the observation [awareness] of the anterior observer brings us to the ultimate or Absolute Observer. This sounds at first like a simple verbal manipulation or optimistic formula, but it is in reality, the true method of reaching the realization of the Absolute state of mind, pointed to by writers on Enlightenment. (Rose, 1979c, p. 13-4).

The previous section discussed the relationship between the Manifested and Unmanifested Mind-dimensions in conceptual terms. In the following passage, Rose brings these terms to life, as direct insights which can be experienced by shifting one's point-of-reference along the line of inquiry he describes:

> The mind is a relative dimension. This stage-play that we are in here is a projection from another dimension. And there is a mind behind it that isn't manifested. Only some of it is manifested in this one. In order for the unmanifested mind to project this stuff to us, that dimension it is in must be a living thing; more alive than this one. This existence is more of the movie projection on the wall. And if you are persistent, you can enter it [the projector]. This is one of the steps that happens when you go through the formula of the observer. You realize that everything except your individual awareness is a subjective dimension. This ocean [from which each "water-drop"—or individual ray of awareness—derives] is a living dimension; much more so than this world. (Rose, 1985, p. 181-2).

This process of refining observation into pure awareness is what is meant by retroversing our projected ray and arriving at the ultimate pole of subjectivity (which is paradoxically found to be objectivity as well), from where it is now seen that everything that had previously been considered objectively real is actually a derivation or extrusion from this anterior Mind. Rose gives a feel for this experience: "This awareness might be called attention in the ultimate degree. And with this attention, we may discover that the whole world is projected through our mind, with endless energy that lays even behind that mind" (Rose, 1981, p. 29).

This is the "cosmological" application of the earlier discussed principle of personal psychology that in order to know oneself, one must be able to see oneself from outside the confines and biases of the human mind, from an impartial eye of observation. Likewise, to know the truth about our world, we must view it objectively from the impersonal vantage point in Spirit, and not from within it, through and by a defective, particularized mind. Rose conveys the image of a critical paradigm-shift in saying: "***To go outside the mind is to go inside the Self***" (lecture, 1979). This statement is worth serious contemplation.

He is indicating that our traditional understanding of the nature of reality is inverted. He has said that once the position of the Final Observer has been irrevocably attained, "You experience that the whole universe is inside of you" (lecture, 1986). It must be made clear that he is referring here to the capital "Y" You, not the ego-mind self, which a shallow or cynical understanding of the metaphysics of a humanized solipsism may seem to imply—that the world is inside our skulls. This

Universal Mind to which he is pointing contains the world, including all our human minds and egos along with it.

The human mind does superimpose its own layer of "maya" upon the "official" projection of the Creation, which is also maya. But, to step outside the confines of the personal, mundane mind, which is the only self we know, does not mean to affirm the vain "me" as being the center of the universe, as this "me" is also finally witnessed to be an illusion, along with the rest of humanity; a projection of the interior or anterior Self. Our point-of-reference of identity shifts when we watch ourselves die, and know this is occurring. The Self is not outside "us"—"we" are inside IT. Finally, there is the realization that one is the Self, and no longer the little "person" of which it is now aware. Keeping this context in mind, it should be further distinguished that "going out of one's mind" (e.g. through drugs, insanity, or surrendering one's ego-mind to another's authority) is not the same as leaving the mind entirely, as a dimension. Even if the personal human mind is somehow exited (which is itself not a discrete, sovereign domain, but a conditional "psychic sphere", with a very permeable membrane), one's point-of-reference would still be within the larger mind dimension that contains it. This even holds true in the most extreme form of ego-mind negation: death. The belief in selfhood as a conceptual entity with which the soul identifies may remain. Upon one's death, the soul, or individual ray of awareness, does not instantly stand alone in Reality, but may still get side-tracked into some other category of consciousness, or bardo, if it has not been sufficiently isolated beforehand; all of life and death happening in the mind. Most "life after life" accounts recorded in the literature are still relative experiences occurring in space-time, experienced by a finite self as its reference point, however indistinct or translucent it may be. To truly step outside the mind and enter the Self requires this ray to be fully retroversed, to where the mind in totality, in all its forms, can be seen clearly as a thing apart—from *Being*.

One of the many difficulties in making this transition, however, is our chronic identification with the picture-show. This results in our reluctance to pull our attention away from "The song of life that goes on forever...", as Rose refers to the projected story playing itself out before God's eye, and inquiring into the origin of the seeing of this vision.

Rose once provided me with a sobering glimpse of what the spiritually mature perspective is on the experience of mundane life after Realization has occurred, and one re-enters the world of illusion. I had asked him one of my typically naive questions: whether he considered life to be meaningful, if he felt any motivation to participate in worldly activities again, if he could appreciate the cosmic drama better now as the actor, the audience, the writer, etc. all at once. He replied: "You forget that I do nothing and yet everything. Upon returning, i (small I) may be aware of projecting, feeling beauty, etc., but it always knows that it is nothing" (personal correspondence, 1978). Note his referring to Richard Rose as "it," not "me." He never forgets the Reality that is forever the backdrop or foundation of all that appears to be.

Humanity has always longed for freedom from death, for communion with God, for Heaven, for some vague, elusive condition of eternal perfection and belonging. The road maps for reaching these transcendental states have been many, yet often describe such roundabout routes that many seekers become lost or tired long before they attain the goal. One of the most appealing qualities about Rose's manner of teaching is his ability to forthrightly convey some of the most vital principles of esotericism; ones that are often garbled behind excessive symbolism and dogma in traditional teachings, yet doing so without trivializing his subject. Rose defines the essence of the spiritual path in one statement: "**Observation is the secret of immortality**" (lecture, 1986). Observation is what draws one back along the projected ray, into the anterior awareness that is of the Self.

One should learn to watch all that is before one's mental view with complete detachment and resist the urge to interfere with the life-experience one is witnessing, and even to note that the desire to intervene derives also from this person that is seen and is not of oneself (meaning the inner or anterior self). This passive backing away from oneself occurs while respecting the paradox that one must also make determined efforts to become truthful in all ways—even though one is doing nothing. Detachment is not of the person. Detachment is <u>from</u> the person. To be a renunciate does not mean to give up possessions—but to give up the possessor and reactive ascetic both. He has plainly stated the primary instruction to keep in mind throughout the entire course of inquiry: "OBSERVATION IS JUST LOOKING UNTIL REALIZATION IS ACHIEVED" (Rose, 1979c, p. 85). To get caught up in any other pursuit or process is to become immersed in duality once more and be diverted away from one's true Self.

Although self-observation seems like a simple, obvious form of meditational practice, one encounters a major problem in working to perfect this quality of mindfulness. The question is: while being short of the infallible, Absolute state-of-being, how can one be certain that what one is experiencing is genuine, objective observation by the real observer outside of the mind, and not some thought or ego-function of observation by a part of the mind within the mind masquerading as this real observer? (There is one subtle distinction to keep in mind here, to avoid confusion. Rose acknowledges that the observer too is ultimately found to be a part of the mind, but the awareness that passes through it, or of which it is made, is from beyond the mind—from the Self.) The latter can still be some form of delusion or colored perception and one may not realize it until afterwards, when one's point-of-reference has changed (e.g. Rose's comments about the person beginning the alcohol/drug/sex experience not being the one who finishes).

For example, one may wonder, while dreaming, whether what one is currently experiencing is a dream or is "reality" (as it were). After subjectively examining one's state-of-consciousness, one may come to the conclusion: "Yes—this is indeed definitely happening and not just another dream." Or, one may have the experience while dreaming of realizing that one is "in" a dream, and then proceed to observe oneself, with the conviction: "I am watching myself experiencing this dream, and thus am behaving and thinking sensibly right now due to my state of awareness of it." Then, the alarm goes off, one wakes up, and realizes that one's immediately preceding conviction-state about the reality of one's experience, the genuineness of one's awareness, or the rationality of one's conduct was entirely false, since the experience and all estimates of sanity were merely ephemeral components of a dream, as was the belief that one was watching oneself dream from a vantage point of objective awareness.

In other words, pinching oneself to test if one is dreaming is meaningless, since the pinch-experience can itself be a part of the dream. Then, how is one to establish a valid reference point with certainty? **The arrival at true awareness can be the only valid point-of-reference.**

There is an implication to our acknowledging the difference between the genuine awareness of a dream and just its conditional pseudo-observation from within the dream-state, as a part of it. If we cannot be certain of our actual, epistemological status while dreaming, how can we be so confident of our awakeness while we are in this "real" dimension?

All this relates to Rose's claim: "You don't know anything (for sure) until you know everything." One can know that awareness is genuine only when one is truly aware from outside consciousness and *has realized,* and hence know the full truth about what is seen, but not necessarily know that the experience of observation may not be real, so long as one is still only viewing the scene as a mental locus from within consciousness.

This predicament emphasizes the need to somehow make this transition from watching the mind with another part of the mind (the mental "observer" that is itself a highly refined thought and subject to error), to watching it with an undefinable awareness from outside the mind. Without this truly objective, impersonal quality of vision, one may be vainly indulging in an erroneous self-observation in which one's seeing is polluted by various desires, egos, and rationalizations, while merely assuming that one is seeing oneself accurately. This is why we must be able to see our filters to seeing. Watching a demonstration of hypnosis in which the subject fully experiences the mock-reality the hypnotist is suggesting—and then humbly recalling our own previous states of certainty while hypnotized or deluded—forces us to take this matter more seriously.

Even after one has evolved to a certain level of spiritual maturity and one's inner vision is fairly reliable, there is still room for yet another devious error to take place; one more way in which the ego-mind can outwit the seeker's attempt to find the true Self.

A good metaphor for illustrating this is, again, the mechanism of a word processor, in which a sequence of text is recorded and stored after it has been written. Then, if one wants to work on this material further, the original document is not recalled from the storage area, but the machine instead automatically replicates the original text, and one works on this copy. This same mental "sleight-of-hand" can occur with self-observation.

Rather than pure, direct "seeing" of the mind by a spiritual witness, what may happen is a subtle process of the mind's content being instantly copied, as it were, by another part of the mind. The act of observation is also cloned as an ego, rather than being a living, existential function; all this as one operation or mass-concept. Then, one engages in a mental study of this content from that ego of observation, assuming that it is genuine awareness of the mind from outside the mind-dimension, when it is all still actually one complex, high level thought or visualization within the mind. This is a more refined form of the dichotomy that Rose warned about earlier of not splitting oneself up in meditation, with one part watching another, but <u>to view oneself directly as a whole</u>.

The challenge is to be alert enough to be able to adroitly separate the seer from this syndrome in which the self is trapped and OBSERVE even this trick of the mind occurring, and not be seduced by the mind's simulation of spiritual awareness. One must take care not to turn observation into a concept of observation, but to actually <u>observe</u> even these unwitting concepts of observation; observation as a living verb, not a static noun. Furthermore, as Jean Klein teaches, there is no "observer" as an ego or specific entity—there is only observation.

Since the ego-mind does not wish to be ended, this deceptive maneuver can be one of the final attempts by the lower forces to keep one in maya. It will act to perpetuate its existence, even by insidiously misusing spiritually oriented teachings meant to end or transcend the mind. Much like external sensory input perceived while we are sleeping (noises, hunger, temperature) being worked into the dream as a part of the story already taking place, our terrestrial dream-mind has the tendency to incorporate even a valid philosophical principle from outside itself back into the dream-state as only one more concept to reinforce the dream-state, rather than be awakened by it. (The seemingly inevitable degradation of the original teachings of the founders of the major world religions by their subsequent followers is sad evidence of this.) Likewise, the mind will desperately try to divert the thrust of any effort that aims at Self-Realization, and turn it into but another form of fantasy, egotism, or procrastination. One may entertain the illusion of waking up, while remaining fast asleep. This is why the path is said to be like a razor's edge, requiring constant vigilance and intuition to diagnose one's real status. Perhaps this is what Zen Masters are for, and the "inner Guru."

I had asked Rose about this trap in meditation; one that can be likened to a dog chasing its own tail. His reply was most astute and summed up some of the main themes in his teaching:

> Regarding the psychology of observing: the process of self-observation that you describe as possibly being a mental structure—is the exact route. As long as you see that the mind may be deluding itself—you are on the right track. The mind does invent processes and does build concept-structures. But the MIND does not (capital M-Mind). You cannot reason-out an answer to a non-relative problem. You can only become the TRUTH. Reason is an endless piddling with the infinite variables of the binary system. When you break through, the binary mentality is paralyzed. You have to become. From the non-somatic AWARENESS you will know (personal correspondence, 1988).

Recognizing this distinction between the contents and functions of consciousness within the mundane mind and the transpersonal awareness of this mind is not only a consideration in working through one's own meditation. In evaluating other teachings and procedures which one might wish to implement, it is also necessary to understand the goal to which they can be expected to lead. It is an admittedly simplistic—although accurate—generalization to state that the final objective of many forms of therapeutic psychology, New Age metaphysical doctrines, and even the Gurdjieffian teaching is to bring one to a state of pure, undivided, conscious experience. This is a fine ideal, certainly. Yet, this is still not equivalent to the transcendence of this experience, however perfect, joyous, and harmonious it may be, into *Being*. As mentioned in another context, Rose has amended the traditional image in Zen of "When hoeing corn, hoe corn" to correctly be: When hoeing corn, watch this person hoe corn—do not identify with it.

One way to get a feel for this qualitative distinction in dimensions is by seeing the change in the view before the mind's eye when waking up from a dream and re-entering the waking dimension. One must be careful to discern the underlying common denominator or pivoting point (the screen of mind) revealed during the instant of transition between the two states, as well as recognize that both states actually exist on the same level of mental experience. This is much like switching television channels: what remains constant are consciousness (the variety of broadcasted programs) as a continuous flow of perceived experience, and the still witness of this consciousness. The "string" that runs through and connects this necklace of different forms of consciousness is the "I am" awareness. It is an advanced state of mindfulness to isolate this quality of awareness and reside in it. This is also the central message in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*: the pointing to the only thing that is real.

The difficulty in our achieving this is that we are programmed to be continually drawn into the picture-show of experience and identify with it, all the while reacting to it and adjusting our perception of it. We can get a brief taste of what it means to not project familiarity onto the world when awakening in the morning with a rare case of momentary amnesia, in which one knows nothing: the date, the location, one's name, one's personality, one's values, etc. One is looking out at the room with a blank, anonymous mind—like a stranger in a strange land—and imagining nothing. This is similar to turning on the radio and hearing some music that is at first unfamiliar and perceived as just vague, foreign sounds, but then after a few seconds, one sequence of notes triggers an association of memory patterns and the sounds become mentally organized into a familiar tune.

These occasional clues given to us by life indicate that at first, sense impressions are an indistinct mass of forms, seemingly out of a void, and only become meaningful after we process and translate them. It is quite a task to interrupt this automatic, personalized adjustment and learn to see the undifferentiated flux of percepts directly, without the interpretation—and then to intuit the Reality behind them.

Following is Rose's metaphorical description of our status as ignorant beings lost in the dazzling delusion of life—and a hint of the direction towards Reality:

..and so, the robot saw motion in that which did not move, and began to love things which had no substance, *and to develop reactions which it called thoughts.* ...and being so immersed in his thoughts, the robot did not realize that (his thoughts) apply only to relative experience, and that relative experience admits opposites in matters of reaction or direction. So that in choosing the realm of thought, and overlooking the possibility of No-thought, the robot passed by the door of the Absolute, wherein thought is only a distraction (Rose, 1982, p. 147).

Chapter 15

Jacob's Ladder

It is time to present what is Rose's most valuable contribution to the field of transpersonal psychology. **Jacob's Ladder** is the term he uses for the inner "map" he has devised as the central framework for his system of Psychology of the Observer. The term refers to the Biblical "ladder" by which Jacob ascended to Heaven. Rose claims the guidelines he provides will lead the seeker to God Consciousness, if one is determined enough to follow them out to the end. He is thus boldly testifying, from his own experience, that this ladder is not only a poetic metaphor in an old book, but an actual *inner way* that exists and can be traversed.

The diagram of Jacob's Ladder is shown in Rose's book, *Psychology of the Observer* (Rose, 1979c, p. 31, 42). Whereas much of the earlier discussion about meditation dealt with the inner search in an open-ended, exploratory sense from the individual seeker's point of view, this map provides the transpersonal overview of the entire path and describes the specific structures of the mind corresponding to the different phases and levels of this work one will find as one personally goes through the process of inquiry.

The diagram is not offered, however, as proof in advance of discovery. It is not suggested that one deliberately look for the points designated, as that would again be falling into the trap of creating an image of what one expects to find—however well-intended the effort—and then embracing the conceptualized simulation as being the reality it represents. Rather, one should follow the recommended course of meditation as has been described, and then these reference points of significance will be realized in experience as one ascends to them. As teachers of transpersonal maps always warn their students: their maps are never the territory to be covered, and there is no substitute for one's making the journey for oneself, to personal discovery. To be an armchair pilgrim is futile.

Rose, himself, did not have any such map to guide him during his years of search, and he only devised this map subsequent to his maximum experience of Realization when, in retrospect, he recognized the phases of progression through which he had passed. He offers the map at this point simply to indicate the integral significance of what is happening within the overall structure of relative mental perspectives as the inquiry continues towards some final—unknown—state-of-being that is Absolute. This multi-dimensional assessment merely serves as corroboration for the seeker's own experience; as road signs along the way. It also provides the individual with the encouraging (and humbling) implication that further progress may be possible beyond one's current status, that one's

present conviction about things is not final and comprehensive, and that one may yet reach another, higher rung of the ladder.

This map is also not intended to suggest that there is a rigorous, standardized set of procedures to which every seeker must adhere or predictable experiences to expect. While the mental states and their relationships which Rose describes are considered to be transpersonal and universal, the specific manner of discovering this for oneself must be personal and individual. As Rose acknowledges: "Each person blossoms from a different catalyst. The only thing that Enlightened people have in common is that which they find. So, it is better to encourage the inward search, without demanding to find for the student an exact formula or discipline" (Rose, 1984, p. 28).

The various points described in the diagram refer to particular aspects of the mind dimension. There is an ascension of mental vantage point—and thus self-identification—possible on these "rungs" of the ladder. It should be noted once again that "mind" does not refer here exclusively to "intellect," as is the usual association with the term, nor is it strictly limited to the somatic mind, which is mainstream psychology's sole domain of study.

Jacob's Ladder refers to the mind as a dimension, of which the individual human body-mind-ego is a part, and in which, in turn, the intellect, emotions, sensations, perceptions, memories, various states-of-consciousness, and sense of self all reside. This mind dimension is not restricted to, nor located in, one's head. The personal, human "i" is located within IT, as are all other "i's"—and the entire universe. The one in whose Mind this is, is *the Self.*

Rose explains his intent in presenting this information and how he wishes the student to work with it:

> My purpose is to outline a system which will prove itself as it goes along, and which will reward us at any point along the line by finding for us a more disciplined and skillful mind, and a mind that is more aware of itself. So, the different levels of the mind, or anterior observers, should be discovered for oneself, and not accepted on faith [or merely maintained as concepts] (Rose, 1979c, p. 62).

The meaning of a key principle in this teaching, briefly referred to in other contexts, can be better understood now. The purpose of one's climbing up Jacob's Ladder is contained in Rose's personally validated rebuttal to the previously quoted theological aphorism: "The finite mind can never perceive the infinite." He refutes the implication in this of the hopelessness of one's attaining knowledge of God, and thus the indirect advocacy of faith as the only option (and thereby the continued employment of the bureaucrats of the faith business) by countering with: "...but the finite mind can become less finite—it can become infinite" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). This work of self-inquiry is what refines the definition of the self-as-observer and develops the essential being that would be able to apprehend or appreciate a spiritual realization if it was forthcoming. As Rose puts it, with a touch of portent: "We must desire the truth and have a capacity for it, or else we could not receive it even if it came to us by accident" (Rose, 1984, p. 19).

In the Albigen System, the person is defined as being three-fold: essence, mind, and body (with body-mind). The structure of Jacob's Ladder reflects this. It is comprised of three ascending triangles, each corresponding to one of these three levels of self-definition, or points-of-reference of experience. From the lowest to the highest, they can be categorized simply this way: (1) The identification with the contents of consciousness, i.e. relative, somatic, worldly life; (2) The observation of the subjective experience of this consciousness and the reactions to it, and (3) The spiritual awareness of this entire dimension of consciousness from outside of it.

In his book, *Carillon*, Rose divided up the body of material into three categories; each describing the level on which its meaning is experienced. He referred to them as: The Dream, The Dreamer In The Dream, and The Dreamer Of The Dream. The three ascending triangles can be considered somewhat analogous to these levels of reality, and likewise a gauge for measuring our own existential status.

The ladder more precisely refers to levels or qualities of observation. The apex of each triangle is the vantage point from which the domain below is witnessed. Point "C" (the Umpire) watches the body's experiences, point "E" (the Process Observer) watches the mind dimension, and point "G" (the Absolute) "watches" awareness or essence—as well as contains the entire ladder. Understanding this progression of levels of comprehension clarifies the reason for this report's sub-title: The Path To Reality Through The Self. "God" is not conceived of as being some distinct, capricious "other", residing elusively somewhere over the rainbow, and who is hopefully amenable to flattery or bribery. Rather, the path is intuited to go directly inward, following the ray of the "I am" back through oneself to its ultimate source, the ground of Being; to the only definition of God or Reality possible in words: "I Am That I Am." This is the single eye at the top of the pyramid on the back of the dollar bill.

This diagram is just a pile of concepts; of value only as guidance towards action. The top point on the ladder cannot even be conceptualized, as it is beyond anything the human mind can imagine. Rose offers an intriguing formula, though, to define the term: "'Absolute' has about as much meaning as the mathematical term, infinity: *one divided by zero*" (Rose, 1978, p. 202). This profound spiritual equation is a purer form of his dictum that one must fatten up one's head before chopping it off.

Continuing with this theme, the following familiar philosophical metaphor vaguely elucidates the workings of the entire path. One starts out as an undefined self that is being continually divided in half (meaning: backing away from untruth and discerning the observer from the observed), thereby gradually approaching the final value, or infinity. The last "half step" to the Absolute can never be taken by any relative effort. The "leap" of becoming occurs at the critical moment when the fully readied vector is catalyzed by a shock—resulting in death. According to Rose's experience, when the nothingness of death confronts the everythingness of unity in truth, the result is an absolute realization. What is discovered is the Self that one really is behind all forms of existence. The casually propitious timing of the catalyst for this final awakening is best illustrated by the simple Vedantic allegory of the bird landing on a branch, causing the ripened coconut to fall (on a meditating seeker's head, probably rousing him from sexual reverie, Rose would mischievously add...).

Another major point referred to in previous sections begins to take on more meaning now in relation to the different levels of validity or beingness symbolized by the rungs of the ladder. One important lesson we repeatedly learn in steady meditation is that the false self fools the anterior Self. In any form of error, whether in behavior, understanding, or perspective, it is always this more essential Self blinded behind the cloud of mind that is deceived, because of our misidentification with some lesser self, or ego (or—does this "our" actually refer to the ego which identifies with itself, as this is all it really is and can never become the Self, and the Self does always see even this blindness? What is deluded? What becomes Enlightened?).

Appreciating the significance of Jacob's Ladder also shows us how the personal phase of work (therapy, self-correction) relates to the transpersonal work (self-inquiry, purification of the observer). The common theme in both phases is the movement of *backing away* from what one is not. Stated simply, the personal aspect of meditation is the backing away from what is seen to be false in oneself and one's view of the world. This includes refining one's philosophical values, one's quality of mind, and the morality of one's actions. The transpersonal aspect is the backing away from even this rela-

tively true, human self and its accurate perception of the world, as this "me" is still not really oneself, nor is the world that is seen as real as the Self that projects it.

As complex and arduous as this work of self-definition is, Rose assures the seeker of a successful outcome if the key tool of the inquiry is diligently employed throughout: **observation**. He states this simply: "The (observing) mind kills the false self if it stares at it long enough."

Before describing the structure of Jacob's Ladder in detail, it would be helpful to summarize the different levels of activity of what is generically called meditation. This not only provides an overview of the various forms of introspection, but also indicates the differing levels of work in Rose's own teaching and how one progresses through them. The common practices of ego-centered "positive affirmations," self-hypnotic amniotic "bliss", and transient tantric exaltations are being bypassed here. For the purpose of this discussion, four basic categories of legitimate meditation can be delineated:

(1) Techniques to calm, still, and negate the ego-mind; essentially offering oneself up to Heaven and letting God "find" us (some variation of this is what is usually meant by meditation; this can also be referred to as devotional prayer).
(2) The work of attaining self-knowledge, philosophical contemplation, and refinement of discrimination and intuition (this includes Jnana Yoga, Gurdjieffian psychology, and some of the Albigen System).
(3) Impersonal examination of the thinking and perceiving processes directly from a vantage point of awareness-observation (Vipassana emphasizes this, as well as the more advanced stage of the Albigen System).
(4) Going within: turning away from the mind in all its forms of consciousness and pulling back into the core of one's being, or anterior Self (this includes the final stage of the Albigen System, Advaita Vedanta, Zen, and some of Raja Yoga).

In regards to the work of self-therapy or correction of one's psychology, it should be mentioned that Rose does not give substantial attention in his teaching to the emotional component of the psyche, nor to the role of emotion on the path in regards to life experience. This may be a serious deficiency in his approach to teaching for many students and is why material from Roy Masters and Jim Burns is being included in this report. He generally considers emotion to be a lower level of experiencing and identification than that of conscious thought, a coloration of judgment, and an inferior mode for spiritual searching (i.e. Gurdjieff's level Number Two of humanity). Most of Rose's references to emotion are in the form of advising people to analyze the foolishness of their personal troubles due to garbled emotionalism and to study their emotional reactions to the assaults by life on their individuality-sense.

On the positive side, he does state that both feeling and thinking have to be blended together in order to arrive at a more balanced, reliable sense of guiding discernment in regards to subjective evaluations. Cold cerebration alone, without thorough self-understanding and emotional integrity, leaves one open to shameless rationalization and shortsightedness in determining the worth or authenticity of one's convictions. More specifically, he has defined intuition, in part, as being: "refined emotional thinking." In fact, the development of intuition—or rather the elimination of the factors that hinder our sensitivity to its call—is much of the purpose for the therapeutic phase of the path. Likewise, the work of healing the heart-center to allow it to open up to holistic attunement with life experience, as well as correcting one's manner of sexuality, frees up one's tangled up and misused energy to be used in fortifying the spiritual vector. Honoring the mood of nostalgia and being true to the yearning it contains for some unimaginable soul-satisfaction is a still deeper prompting of the

heart. Even human love, as fallible and frail as it usually turns out to be, is at its basis a well-intentioned pointer to a higher Love.

Jacob's Ladder consists of three intersecting, ascending triangles. A key principle involved in their structure and ascension is called the reconciliatory principle (Rose, 1979, p. 29; adapted from Benoit, 1959, p. 6). Each triangle has, as its base, a spectrum of polarity. The human mind is cursed by duality, and Rose repeatedly warns that the paradox permeates all relative inquiry. He adds: "We have not yet merged with unity and lost our identity" (Rose, 1978, p. 143). However, there is hope for the seeker, as one's perspective expands; as one's mind becomes "less finite."

In each triangle, one starts at the point on the bottom left (A, C, E), which is seemingly stronger in influence or obviousness than the point corresponding to it. There is, concurrently, a seemingly built-in tendency to pull towards the point on the right side. A tension exists as one is shuttled back and forth and stretched along the baseline between the two poles. As one continues the practice of self-observation meditation, at some critical point of tension, or perhaps precipitated by accident, one comes to recognize at once the influence upon oneself by both sources of input, and thus becomes aware of the whole spectrum of relative possibilities along that line of polarity. At that moment, one's point-of-reference ascends to the apex of that triangle, to the reconciliatory point of that domain of duality.

Ours is a constant struggle in the attempt to define the truth of things while still being fixated at any one position on the relative plane. No evaluation can be conclusive while seen with only "one eye" from within the paradigm being considered. It requires some spiritual maturity to rise to the level of objective comprehension where one has learned to not be strictly identified with either pole of opposites, nor any point along the line of experience between them. As Rose puts it: "The conciliatory principle is the ability to judge from a detached state of being" (lecture, 1979). It means seeing not through one eye or the other, but seeing with or from the one mind that sees through both. This vantage point can be likened to a marriage counselor who is able to see the whole situation in a relationship of conflict at once, with all the interrelated factors involved, and assess the view impartially. Proper meditation brings one to such objective observation of one's own life condition also.

It should be understood that this reconciliatory point does not mean the synthesizing of opposites, taking the average of two values, or compensating for one extreme by going to the other, as these are all still on the same relative line of polarity. Rather, it can be likened to the sky that incorporates the alternation of day and night; the Tao that incorporates the Yin and the Yang. This is a single "Eye" that sees duality from above it, not as any predominant ego from within it. It sees that a zebra is neither white with black stripes nor black with white stripes: it is transparent—with black and white stripes. The proverbial glass is not half-full (positive thinking) nor half-empty (negative thinking): it is a glass that is half-full and half-empty at once (truthful, holistic thinking, or direct perception).

Looking at this matter from another angle, Rose has posed the question: "When we look into the mirror and see our eyes looking—is the observer facing the mirror or facing eyes which are looking?" (Rose, 1982, p. 137). The real question is: *what is aware of both perspectives?* This same line of thinking can be extended to address a paradox in principles commonly found in metaphysical and psychological teachings. On one hand, our world is said to be a projection of ourselves, and concurrently, that we are largely the result of the myriad life-factors comprising our nature. What is the solution? It is that we and our mirror-image move at the same time—and "I" (the Eye of observation) watch them both.

This reconciliatory principle has another, theological implication. As a generality, the conception of "God" in the understanding of conventionally religious people is actually that of the "good"

side of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; not the Tree of Life, or the Absolute. Likewise, on the human level, the notion of the archetypal "shadow" is sometimes regarded in New Age metaphysical teachings as the polar opposite of the true self, which is deemed to be totally "good." This is an incomplete understanding, motivated more by humanistic desire than philosophical integrity.

According to Rose, what is eventually realized is that the true Self or "God" is what contains and is aware of both these identifications with good and evil. In this regard, one could well wonder: is Satan God's adversary—or employee? With this understanding, a general distinction can thus be made between exoteric religion and esoteric spirituality. The aim of the former is to lead people to good, from evil. The objective of the latter is to lead these people to Life, from the ego of good.

The metaphor of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil undoubtedly refers to the relative ego-self's cursed side-trip through duality and delusion, and the Tree of Life refers to the true, eternal, observing Self above all of this, that is One.

All this is not merely theoretical discussion for the purpose of exercising the faculty of conceptualization. It has direct relevance to the experience of meditation. Frequently, people practice forms of meditation that bring about feelings of joy, warmth, comfort, tranquility, and so on. These results are obviously appealing. However, Rose alerts the seeker of Truth to not be seduced by these feelings (even generously assuming they are genuine), as they are still states of reaction within the realm of Nature, and not necessarily symptoms of the process that leads to actual transcendence, other than to the extent this joy is a reflection of one's living in harmony with Nature; this then allowing one to go further, if wishing to.

Rose has taken this point a step further, in response to a question of mine as to why spiritual work so often seems to lead to greater turmoil, rather than the resolution one would naturally like to find. He answered: "There is no joy and no agony. All you have to do is realize it" (personal correspondence, 1977). Another time, he made a similar remark: "There is no such thing as happiness—or unhappiness. When you realize that, you are nearing awakening." This recalls his comment that the seeker has to learn to live without the dream: either of hardship or its compensations. Suffer if need be, but do not be the sufferer.

Actually, one may be forced to arrive at this point whether one wants to or not. If one is really serious about the relentless self-analysis and merciless negation of illusions Rose advocates, there may come a time when even one's joy becomes but another form of pain. One will become troubled when noticing that. There will be no alternative at that point but to go through the one remaining door that only then becomes visible.

Rose offers one more explanation for the meaning of the joy sometimes encountered on the spiritual path, juxtaposed to the nature of true freedom. This also implies the answer to my question to him mentioned above:

> A plateau on the path, where the warrior rests between two upward battles or periods of growth, can be recognized by its accompanying bliss. There is no bliss in the final realization. There is no pain or bliss there, because there is no polarity (Rose, 1986, p. 40).

The task of firmly facing oneself, confronting one's ignorance, wrestling with one's weaknesses, purging oneself of egos, coming to terms with one's emptiness, and generating the courage—or faith—to stand naked in the void is the hard work his teaching emphasizes. The occasional respite from this unreconciled tension is the tranquility.

To clear up some possible confusion on this topic, it is important to discriminate between three levels or phases of what is generically called "joy" or "bliss" and are usually referred to interchangeably by the same term. (The joy of hedonism, vanity, fantasy, etc. does not count). The casual use of these terms in spiritual literature can mislead the seeker of eternity who reads them with human eyes and inadequate self-knowledge into some time-consuming side-trips. Joy can mean: (1) being in tune with Nature, one with the flow of life, and appreciating the beauty of creation; (2) the reaction-state of relief from conflict or self-responsibility, or the plateau of emotion-based salvation; and (3) the bliss of Cosmic Consciousness, of Union, as described by mystics. The first two are ego-states; the third is not, although still experienced by an individual experiencer. Each is valid on its own level. Rose's intent is only to point to the impersonal state that contains them all.

The acknowledgment of the relationships between these different phases of reactive emotions is one of the ways progress up this ladder can be recognized, as one no longer takes any one state-of-consciousness too seriously, as being exclusively valid. Another indication is the increasing recognition of the endless paradoxes encountered at every turn, as one continues to monitor and evaluate the interrelated factors of life experience from multiple perspectives; whereas before, everything seemed simple and certain to the uncritical, egocentric mind.

This awareness of greater complexity and troubling inconclusiveness is of primary significance in this ascendance up the ladder; one which can have the distressingly ironic consequence of making one feel like one is actually regressing rather than progressing. The real situation about this must be understood. In order to have a conviction about anything, especially about oneself, it is necessary for the conviction to have as its basis, one, stable, irrefutable point-of-reference. This presumptuous status is generally referred to as "me". However, what one finds during the course of diligent, assiduous self-inquiry is that this real "me" becomes gradually less exclusive and fixed. As one sees more and more of oneself and the numerous possible vantage points on experience, the ego of distinct, absolute selfhood dissolves, and the "me" becomes more the observer of the various points-of-reference existent in any given situation.

Here is there, left is right, and right is wrong. This is the "Immanent Paradoxicalness In All Things Relative" discussed in an earlier section. Rose is quick to point out, however, that this does not mean there is no relative right and wrong, and this acknowledgement of multiple perspectives should not be rationalized by the dishonest mind to excuse any form of personal error as being one's private "right." While each point-of-reference will have its own inherently valid paradigm to it within its particular domain (or is derived from one), this validity still has to answer to objective facts of life that have no concern for our human preferences and justifications. For example, the alcoholic may have perfectly understandable reasons to drink, but the body will rot just the same.

Nonetheless, this heightened awareness and expanding comprehension takes one through an insecure phase of having no certain answers without nor a firm resting place within. To <u>be</u> the quest (or vector) and maintain the desire for Truth as one's sole remaining reason for doing anything—this becomes one's identity; one's reality. To provide adequate momentum and proper trajectory to carry one through this difficult phase is why the original fundamental commitment is so important.

This exercise in tension between polarities is also what brings about the magic of betweenness, which is given birth by the isolation of this reconciliatory principle from its subordinates. Jumping ahead for a moment to the highest rung of the ladder, this betweenness is what makes possible the non-finite shift from the relative to the Absolute that contains the awareness of all the lower levels of existence.

Rose gives a hint of what is found through this kind of meditation: "The consideration of any two opposites creates a third, middle force, which may have nothing to do in relation to either. Likewise, the contemplation of life and death may bring us quite a surprise" (Rose, 1985, p. 266).

One comes to know gray by the consideration of black and white. One arrives at equanimity by sufficiently knowing agony and ecstasy. Rose has described Enlightenment as "the experience of nothingness and everythingness simultaneously" (Rose, 1978, p. 217). He has also provided several examples of the most significant forms of triangulation (Rose, 1985, p. 249).

Rose presents some other "spiritual equations" that are even less understandable conceptually, and can be regarded as authentic koans: "The tension between being and non-being is Enlightenment" and "A thought and Enlightenment occur halfway between nothing and everything" (Rose, 1975, p. 65-66). The awareness of the span of being from zero to totality is the Absolute.

Rose has described another form of this magical transformation; one that is more readily experienceable: "Blending intuition with logic can lead one to wisdom. And the entire pattern is one of being, for the first time" (Rose, 1985, p. 213). This shift to a higher level of comprehension and *being* is difficult to even simulate in strictly conceptual understanding, as the nature of the realization can only be known by experiencing it, and this necessary transformation can only result from fully working through one's koan. Still, this experience of mental ascension to the reconciliatory principle—and possibly the actual dynamics of the entire path—can be more easily conveyed, as follows.

There is a "gag" card on which is written the question: "How do you keep a fool busy?" At the bottom of the card it says: "(See other side)." The other side of the card has exactly the same messages written on it. After spending several hours frantically flipping the card over and over, with increasing desperation, wondering: "Okay, so what's the answer already?" the astute seeker is suddenly hit with the realization: "Hey!—I've been a fool!" Such is a koan.

The base triangle of Jacob's Ladder is that of the physical, somatic realm. It is where most of us live and identify, most of the time. We spend our lives trying to move away from the negative pole of experience (pain, loss, death) and move towards the positive (pleasure, success, life). This activity and range of values is of the world of Nature and is designed and operated by Nature, for its own ends. We are a part of this pattern, on this level. Humanity is line A - B.

There is a regulating faculty programmed into the human organism to promote its well-being in this domain. Rose calls this the **Umpire** (Rose, 1979c, p. 15-20). It is a somatic awareness that operates largely on reason, and has as its priority the health and continued functioning of this unit of Nature called a person. Its own functioning is automatic, however much we subjectively experience our values and reasons as self-chosen. Rose challenges this pride of doership by stating: "There is one aspect of Man—the body combined with the somatic mind of Man—that is nothing but programming waiting upon environmental circumstances to bring out predictable reactions" (Rose, 1979c, p. 25). We are organic robots placed in a terrarium by its Creator, for some unknown purpose, and this faculty is planned to keep the robot from destroying itself before harvest time.

Much of what has been traditionally referred to as conscience, in religious terms, is actually the Umpire. This voice of guidance is of Nature, not of Spirit, although the two are linked, as what furthers the vitality and mental clarity of the person will also work towards any spiritual aim one might have, whereas it is much more difficult to meditate or do spiritual work when one is ill or dead.

The Umpire functions as a decision-maker in regards to thousands of choice-points a day. Its authority ranges from decisions regarding physical health (diet, habits, sexual expression, etc.), social interactions, usage of one's time and energy, and generally the arranging of one's life in accordance with the pursuit of enjoyment, accomplishment, and survival, and the avoidance of suffering, de-

spair, and self-negation. The Umpire takes care to steer between unhealthy extremes in conduct and to reconcile conflicting values in the person's nature. The function of the Umpire can be more clearly understood if likened to the practice of responsibly managing one's finances, although in the larger sense one's money would instead be regarded as vitality and attention.

The Umpire has several general categories of operation:

(1) The adjustment of data received by the somatic mind: there is an endless process of mental interpretation of percepts received through limited or inadequate senses.
(2) Physical survival adjustment: balancing the output of energy for the sake of health (sexual morality), inhibition of personality factors that may lead to social rejection ("The mouth must be careful not to get the whole organism into trouble" is one way Rose puts it), and the drive for tribal, or family, survival (reproduction).
(3) Mind-plane functioning: it weighs rational evidence to make conscious determinations. It also hesitantly accepts intuitional revelations into its decision-making, so long as the intuition is concerned strictly with processing mundane concerns and not inquiring into spiritual directions. It is also influenced by evidence from the anterior or Process Observer mind. However, the Umpire is not in contact with any part of the Self above or beyond the Manifesting Mind. (Rose, 1979c, p. 26-27).

Many people have a crippled Umpire; or rather, have obstructions or distortions in their psychological make-up that prevent the Umpire from functioning in them properly. Likewise, many people are forever racing back and forth between the twin poles of pleasure and pain, success and failure, and are not aware that there is a self-regulating mechanism at work in them doing its best to insure the individual's welfare throughout their daily drama. One's maturing to the discovery of the Umpire can be a major step up the ladder and may be interpreted by some as "salvation." Such people become true to Nature's way, are undivided in themselves, are somewhat free of their old tug-of-war between fear and desire, and have found some measure of peace. They have become the Umpire.

The individual comes to recognize the Umpire's existence after prolonged examination of one's fluctuating status along the relative spectrum of organic existence, and finally realizes that there is a fixed vantage point monitoring this panorama of life. This becomes one's new point-of-reference; one's new identity.

Rose provides an intriguing perspective on the role of the Umpire in the scheme of life. While at first this assessment may seem threatening or demeaning to one's claim to noble autonomy, appreciating our experience from this viewpoint allows us to relax our superfluous hold over the mechanics of our lives and feel more at ease as we are knowingly taken through the course our story must take. He suggests we contemplate our drives and their consequences in this way:

> [A man] is aware that he desires. But does he desire, or is he caused to desire? Does he select things as objects of his desire, such as picking a type of person for a wife, or is all that selection determined by computerizations more intricate than his conscious mind is capable of having, in that they take in thousands of factors which go to make up his compatibility; factors which he consciously knows little or nothing about?
>
> Something within him urges and inhibits. Something within him encourages bravery and fear. Something in him causes him to enter joyously into the game of life, and something in him, at times, makes him long for death. And yet, all of these things seem

> to form a pattern which makes for some sort of destiny. Something within him, if he allows it to, will make decisions for him, take care of his children, and condition him for dying when the time comes (Rose, 1979c, p. 81-82).

We do not live. We are lived. Once we become aware through objective self-analysis of processes within our decision-making that are not our own, we are forced to admit that perhaps we do not make many decisions after all, but that many of our decisions may have been programmed into our genes before we were born. Acknowledging all this humbles us and frees us. But then—who are we? And why are we?

The Umpire is dutifully mundane, however, and relates only to the outer person, or to humanity as a whole, and its job is strictly to serve the Earth. It is not concerned with issues of ultimate, or essence, survival, nor does it stop to question the fundamental reason or justification for this flurry of complex activity it monitors called "life." Rose goes on, offering a troubling insight into the limitations imposed upon us by this insidiously pragmatic programming:

And yet this destiny is such that it makes all things secondary to it. It is the plan of Nature, and the blueprint for the balanced aquarium of life. It has no consideration for the spiritual hopes of man. It is the plan of life which encourages all religions which encourage Nature, and it draws the blinds of drowsiness over the minds that speculate too long on immortality and the disciplines for guaranteeing spiritual survival. The Umpire shows little sympathy for the individual in the long run. (ibid, p. 82).

Moreover, it fails to account for impressions picked up by the individual that do not seem to come from the tangible world, nor phenomena of an occult nature that are not explainable by its laws of terrestrial reason. It does not question the source of this non-somatic awareness or experience, nor the implications of its presence.

Yet, one's suspicions are aroused when, despite one's best efforts, failure and suffering are encountered in pursuing one's desired goals. This is because, alone, the Umpire does not observe itself and so cannot know the limits of its jurisdiction. People who are unaware of the Umpire operating in them believe the umpirical decisions are theirs and do not stop to consider higher factors and sources of influence upon the mind. Those who are convinced they are responsible for everything that happens to them will then either get angrier with their situation or slump into defeat. One must first become aware of the Umpire and then note the possibility that *one may be influenced by factors not immediately apparent nor taken into account by the Umpire, and that one is not wise enough to be almighty.* It is then that one realizes there must be factors determining the experience of life beyond the control of the Umpire (ibid, p. 32).

By itself, the Umpire is an objective voice. As explained above, one may mature—or be forced to by crisis—to the recognition of a subjective voice as well; one the Umpire had not previously taken fully into consideration in its deliberations. The voice may simply ask: "Why?—I am living a healthy, productive life, but I don't know why I am living, nor who is living. What is the meaning of this experience of existence; especially in light of my eventual death?" This is an issue the Umpire cannot answer, nor does it care to. This is not its business. The question comes from another, truer part of oneself. It is the voice of the **Higher Intuition** (Rose, 1979c, p. 30-32).

Rose describes the seeker's predicament at this point of spiritual evolvement and defines the only course of work that warrants any hope:

> It is good to hear that man has some automatic faculties that work for the survival of his race, and for the survival of his body. But what is working for his immortality? It

> seems the only time the Umpire works for some guarantee of life after death is when it and the individual have been conditioned by directed training toward the idea of a precise means to immortality (ibid, p. 83).

Tying together some previously discussed themes, one relevance to this statement is that although adherence to the path of Nature by itself cannot be assumed to inevitably lead to spiritual realization, Nature does leave some room to maneuver for further exploration beyond the bounds of the organic parade if one respectfully honors Nature, all the while seeking to find that sacred part of oneself that is not fertilizer alone. This is done by learning to use the tools provided by Nature as the means to escape exclusive servitude to Nature.

One graduates from the strict identification with worldly life when this voice of intuition first whispers: "So what?" Rose says that on this level, we are at war between Saturday and Sunday: "The Umpire is good enough until Saturday, but Sunday the higher intuition—the Sunday of the mind so to speak—takes over..." (Rose, 1985, p. 218). The voice continues to speak and to question, and one begins to realize that organic functioning, no matter how sophisticated its form or self-flattering its expression, is not all there is, as there has now come into the picture a quality of awareness that is not of the external world-scene—and is recognized to be a deeper part of oneself. One is now more than an actor, and begins to wonder who is acting.

This intuition comes from the higher mind, not the somatic mind, through which it may be processed. It is not so much the interpersonal sensitivity or situational compass that is what is usually meant by intuition. It is more an expression of spiritual maturity that is able to assess the merit of life values and directions with some discernment. The distinction between their directions of operation could be described as horizontal or terrestrial (small "i") versus vertical or transcendental (capital "I") intuition. Also, the latter is not to be confused with simple emotion or any of the many desires that would slyly attempt to masquerade under the respectable guise of intuition. Yet, the refinement of feeling is partially what makes one sensitive enough to hear the genuine voice. Like two knives that sharpen against each other, by tempering thinking with feeling, and checking feeling with thinking, the quality of intuition is improved.

Rose has also described it as a mass computerization of all data at once, into a direct, holistic understanding, rather than one's arriving at conclusions through step-by-step, logical analysis (Rose, 1978, p. 51, 216). This, in fact, would sometimes be impossible in regards to factors and sources of input that are of an origin unknown to the person. This Intuition <u>can</u> be likened to the term, conscience; the guidance of which may then be translated into tangible instructions the Umpire can carry out.

Through meditation upon the self, one now becomes aware of a larger range of possibilities, with the discovery of this new mental presence. This Intuition is not concerned with the organic issues of daily life, but is an inner sense that wonders about one's subjective experience of this life.

At this point, an almost accidental realization occurs in which we discover that something within us is watching this whole process of struggle and evaluation. *Something is aware, and one is aware that something is aware.* We find that this awareness is now focused in, or is expressive of, a definite locus of experience which is one's body, and that it recognizes the new polarity and opposition of influences. With the Umpire on the left side and the Intuition on the right, the baseline is formed (C - D) of a second triangle—that which constitutes the Mind Realm. The vantage point of reconciliation that sees both sides is called the **Process Observer** (Rose, 1979c, p. 33, 81).

The Process Observer is the mind watching the mind from behind the clouds of delusion in consciousness. Everything within its view is of the mind, as by this point, it is realized that one's

entire experience of life—sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, memories, egos, etc.—is a mental experience, and not external (unless one considers everything outside of the anterior witnessing Self to be external to—yet, paradoxically contained within—that Self), and one that is *seen*. The readings of the Intuition are more fully taken into account, thus balancing out the entire mental realm of impressions. According to Rose, this range of study, of observing the observation of one's life, is much of what true, higher meditation consists of, as elucidated in previous chapters. Real meditation is the watching of gestalt, or pattern thinking, in addition to studying the mind's individual reactions, colorations, and such. In this regard, Rose considers most conventional psychologists to be crippled Process Observers, at best.

A part of this inner work is thus to examine all the myriad factors of experience that together comprise "the self." The observer will also gradually come to recognize the psychic tension or contraction holding together this collection of anonymous components and which transforms it by a kind of inadvertent "crystallization" into this composite conceptual entity called the ego, that feigns unity and sentient identity. Then, a further step after this phase of psychological self-analysis (actually all phases are done concurrently) is to directly study the mental processes themselves in terms of the actual mechanics of thought, perception, projection, etc., as previously outlined. This is a totally impersonal evaluation of the "bare bones" of inner experience, apart from any interpretation of the human meaning of the gestalts witnessed. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT REALIZATION IN ALL THIS SELF-STUDY IS THAT ONE HAS BECOME A DETACHED AWARENESS OF THESE PROCESSES.

Rose makes a couple of statements regarding a key point about psychological introspection; an angle that is not considered in most materialistic schools of psychology. He claims: "You will not know what mental troubles are (all about) until you have risen above the mind dimension. The mind cannot analyze the mind with the mind" (Rose, 1982, p. 146). He adds: "True observation must be carried on from a superior dimension. The mind cannot be studied with the mind. It must be observed from some point, outside of, and yet superior to the mind" (Rose, 1982, p. 138-9).

These quotes may be confusing in that he has also been previously quoted as saying that meditation consists of the mind observing and studying the mind. The seeming contradiction is explained in that he is using the word "mind" to refer to two different levels or vantage points of mental experience. The mundane, thoroughly programmed, and extremely fallible somatic mind is the level which the Umpire monitors, and is the domain of mind that is unable to objectively assess itself from its own level. The Process Observer is likewise a function or point-of-reference in the mind, but it is on the highest plane within that mind dimension and is able to see the panorama below it from a viewpoint above and apart from that relative scene, without being invested in it. It could be said that the Process Observer is beyond the mind while one is "in" the mind, but it is of the mind when one is beyond the mind.

Our attention is generally wholly focused on the experience of life in which we find ourselves immersed. The practice of meditation involves the deliberate turning of this attention away from this stream of consciousness that usually has us helplessly and unknowingly mesmerized, and reversing this attention back upon itself. The importance of making this subjective switch in direction is not to be underestimated. Rose has said that when one is able to turn one's mental head at will, one is halfway home. He has also stated that this shift in reference point to the Process Observer from the total identification with the workings of the Umpire is what is referred to in Zen as "killing the mundane mind."

This is a shift in the actual level of the origin of one's seeing and not merely a different direction of seeing from the same level. One does not get a glimpse of the Observer, but now *from* it.

It is the Reconciliatory Principle that once more results in one's ascending to this higher point-of-reference. One is no longer wholly identified with any or all of the incredibly complex contents of one's consciousness, as the viewer cannot be the view that is seen, and this mental tableau is observable. One becomes the Process Observer.

Upon reaching the Process Observer, the aware self has attained the beginning of unity in itself, and is no longer subject to the domain of duality, as it was at all points below this level. One can never be completely lost in forgetfulness again. This Process Observer (point E) is the mind at its highest capacity for relative comprehension, and is the intersection point with the lowest part of the true Self (Rose, 1979c, p. 42-43).

This observer simply observes. It is aware of all physical functions, as well as all of the intricate psychological reactions and processes that go on simultaneously with the individual's somatic functioning, different states of perception, and mental apprehensiveness or intuitive input. It is able to discern the incorrect visualization projections based upon faulty perception that are otherwise misinterpreted by the inner or experiencing self as being reality. It is above and behind all these varying states of consciousness, and sees them as things apart from itself. It is pure in its vision and takes no sides. This observer is now the master of a whole new scene. One has taken the first major step inside of oneself—toward the final Self.

This process of observation has two beneficial consequences. First, the witnessing of one's subjective workings allows one to fully understand one's nature, and to recognize where the errors are in thinking, perceiving, responding, etc. that developed in oneself due to trauma, conditioning, incomplete information or perspective, and so on. This clear seeing of oneself—without identification and thus reflexive self-justification or self-recrimination—thereby brings about correction, as the false is recognized, the egos that would hold one's pathology in place are exposed, and intuition reveals what is a truer, or more complete state-of-being. This is a therapeutic function, and a welcome side-effect.

The second, and more important, result is that one realizes what one is not. Through relentless observation of the infinitely involved assortment of experiences, impressions, and reactions that collectively call themselves "me," and with which the anterior observing Self has mistakenly identified until now, one comes to realize that **one cannot be what one is observing**, and so everything in this subjective realm being witnessed is ontologically subordinate to oneself. The self at this point is *the Observer*.

After the practice of meditation on the self has gone on for some time, one discovers a subtle clue in retrospect from this study of the massive accumulation of mental "snapshots" of one's experiences. One realizes that *one has been a constant eye-witness (or I-witness) to one's entire life,* even if one was fully identified with any given thought, role, mood, obsession, etc. at the time it was happening, and fully asleep to one's aware self. This course of meditation reveals our successive states of identification with every reference point in experience that occurs. As we back away from this inner picture screen, we see that our entire life has actually been one, indivisible unit. The self is not any one part of it. One is really the ever-present observer of the whole process, which is seen to be an unbroken stream of consciousness. Here we are facing a very important question: "Who is it that observes the glassy fragments of thought and self, which, if sorted and properly arranged, will form some magic crystal ball that shall for all time answer our questions about our future (and destiny)?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 84).

Rose takes this evaluation of experience a step further by stating: "We may postulate that the universe is defined only in relation to the observer, or that meaning is an individual and varied

reaction, or result of observation" (Rose, 1979c, p. 63). He is saying that the universe is real only in relation to the final Self that is aware of it, and who is ultimately found to be the projector of it.

One discovers this by climbing to the top of Jacob's Ladder and seeing for oneself. This Ladder goes clear through and exits each person's mind, but its ultimate apex is found to be a single point (yet whose dimensions are infinite), where there are no longer any individual minds. As complex and unique as each person's inquiry must be, Rose offers a simple instruction that remains consistent: "There is a method of digging, and that is in observing everything; keeping your mind open to everything. You take the conciliatory position in which you use two eyes and see both things at once" (Rose, 1985, p. 256). With this, one rises.

Rose sums up the definition of the Process Observer like this: "(It) is the mind in its maximum ability to observe the individual and its complexities. It constitutes the all of the mind, with all of the abilities of that mind in all dimensions" (Rose, 1979c, p. 33). It can be visualized as a single, unblinking eye overseeing every category of consciousness. Nothing is hidden. We are all naked before what sees.

One's ascending to this level in the Psychology of the Observer meditation indicates a major signpost of spiritual development. Although Rose is always hesitant to suggest the path can be quantified or systematized in any dogmatic way, he has claimed that when one has become <u>distinctly aware of consciousness</u>, one is 3/4th the way up the ladder.

He goes on to define this more emphatically, and in doing so, clarifies a critical distinction that many teachings of meditation concerned with "expanding" or "raising" consciousness overlook: "Your own observer-position is reality. This awareness is closer [to Truth] than consciousness. Consciousness can be changed. Awareness won't. Awareness is real" (Rose, lecture, 1986). In the long quest of sorting through the many realms and levels of illusion, one finally breaks through to the beginning of what is real.

As a glance at the top of Jacob's Ladder indicates, Rose is claiming that this mental observer is still not the final answer to the grand search. He is referring to the triangle whose baseline is E - F when he states:

> Man sees the body as well as the physical world with his mind. However, the mind is still not the Essence. The mind is a cloudy dimension that serves as a bridge between physical projections of the mind and the Essence itself (Rose, 1979c, p. 16-17).

He is saying that not only are we not the body-in-the-world, but we are not the mind either; even that highest part of the mind that watches every aspect of mental (which includes the physical) experience.

What is beyond this? Rose has said: "Awareness [or observation] of consciousness is the basis of experience." Although it may seem like a contrived play with words, what happens is that there is also awareness of this observation of experience. The Process Observer gradually notices it is not alone—or rather, *something else* becomes aware of <u>it</u> (Rose, 1979c, p. 33). There is the realization that this all-seeing "eye" is floating in a sea of undifferentiated awareness, so to speak. We become aware of the mind as being external to our awareness. Just as the Intuition whispered to the Umpire: "What you see is not all there is", thereby raising one's viewpoint to the Process Observer, now this awareness is silently confronting it with the query: "You see all of life—<u>but what Master do you serve?</u>" In other words, the great philosophical question again arises: "So what?" **Experience is a worthless and transient existence unless the *experiencer* is known.**

Rose has explained that the Process Observer is of the Manifested Mind, whereas its complementary pole, which he calls **Individualized Consciousness of Awareness**, is of the Unmanifested Mind; the full entrance into which is "the Mountain Experience." (For the sake of consistency of terminology and avoiding confusion—if not brevity, perhaps this should have been more precisely called: Individualized Awareness of the Observation of Consciousness.) The former is contained in, or projected by the latter. The significance of the distinction between the two can be approximately illustrated by likening the Process Observer to an eyeball and the non-localized Awareness to the sunlight surrounding its vision. One sees; the other is the larger "context" in which it sees, or enables it to see. It is what sees the seeing.

By this point, one realizes that the Process Observer—that which is called the "witness-consciousness" in Advaita—cannot be the all of the Self, but it does serve as a keyhole between the domain of relative consciousness and the dimension of spiritual awareness or Reality prior to it. Individualized Awareness of Consciousness is like the ray of light that passes through this keyhole, illuminating our vision of life. This focus on cultivating the awareness of consciousness is much of what Klein, Maharaj, and Maharshi's teachings of Advaita emphasize. Their domain of discourse is almost exclusively the top triangle of Jacob's Ladder.

This polarity of awarenesses—one focused on the relative world, both inner and outer, and the other unfocused, without seeming form or function, and its source unknown—forms the baseline (E - F) of the final triangle; that of Essence. Point F is the last outpost of individual awareness. What finally contains both poles of the observation of consciousness and the awareness of this observation is the **Absolute**—non-individualized, maximum awareness.

Rose makes a statement that is of profound significance to the seeker who has long been on the quest: "Behind the Process Observer is the self that only watches the Process Observer without qualification. This is awareness—**this is getting close to the Absolute**" (lecture, 1979). While conceptualizing any of the points on the Ladder is not recommended, to attempt to simulate awareness or reduce it to a concept is especially futile. It is the ultimate pole of individual subjectivity, and as such, cannot be regarded as any object of study. Rose also warns of the trap of feeling spiritual assurance by pretending to oneself that one really <u>is</u> this "aware self," after reading some guru's glorious account of it (one's not actually realizing this is deemed irrelevant), while in existential fact one is only maintaining this as a make-believe concept within the mind, and the self's point-of-reference is still fully identified with the fictional ego who can only dream of transcendence. One cannot imagine, evaluate, or acquire awareness. One can only *become aware.*

One of the hallmarks of attaining this baseline running between the Process Observer and Awareness is the magical state of betweenness. Once one no longer identifies with any one aspect of the dualistic world-scene and resides dispassionately in the Witness, the complex display of life is seen in balance, without egoistic contamination. Such a perspective allows things to "happen" as they need to, to their optimal end. One lives in a state of grace. One does not wobble.

Rose has likened our involvement with the world to the statue, Galatea, which has life breathed into it by the love of the sculptor. By itself, it is nothing, and what it imagines itself to be is nothing. But he points out that the person who loves the Galatea is really no better than the statue. Not only is Galatea—our game of life—just ego-born fiction, but the corporeal self-belief of its creator is finally seen to be fiction as well. Despite the seeker's ambition to attain immortality as an individual or to experience communion with a personal God, Rose refines the definition of the Self to its final status: "The observer [or seeker] is also a statue, except that part of him that is Absolute. For the Absolute is forever impersonal" (Rose, 1978, p. 171).

The meditative path up to the point of the Process Observer can be described with some measure of clarity and organization. Yet, Rose states that once one has evolved to the Process Observer as one's highest point-of-reference, little can be specifically "done" to move beyond this baseline (E - F) and further one's vector into Essence. The seeker has now reached the part of the path where there are no more railroad tracks to take one to the final destination. No generic map can be provided for every seeker, nor can the individual map out his own remaining steps with any certainty.

It is even possible that Rose does not know all the factors that had contributed to the breakthrough to his own Realization, but could only construct his system of inquiry based on what he deliberately did, manifestly learned, and was aware was happening to him. He has admitted there were undoubtedly other forces and mechanisms at work throughout his process of search and transformation about which he could know and do nothing. Taking this into consideration, it could not have been feasible for him to outline a complete methodology which would account for every variable in every seeker's inner and outer circumstances. So, not only must each person's path be unique, but even to the extent one general formula does apply to everyone, the necessary mystery to much of the path means it could never be fully defined even by one who has attained its goal. This is another reason why Rose must leave the precise working through of one's path as a personal matter.

Still, he reminds us again of the paradox that while Enlightenment is an accident, one must work to become accident-prone. Advaita Vedanta emphasizes "half" of this paradox in teaching that the evolution towards Enlightenment happens naturally by itself and there is nothing one can do to bring it about ("one" meaning the hypothetical person, not the aware Self in which it exists), as the very notion that there could be an individual who has the volition to do anything that exists apart from the holistic flow of life, especially to bring about the Realization of what already is, is false all the way down the line.

However, the other side of this paradox that Rose's teaching attempts to fill out is that the mind can (and must) prepare itself so that Realization can occur, even though in retrospect one may realize this work was an integral part of a bigger plan not determined or understood in advance by the seeker. The *becoming* is the shift in the point-of-reference of selfhood from the ego-mind to the Absolute, and the increase in mental capacity that this involves, until it becomes infinite. There is a spiritual evolution leading up to this awakening, which finally does "just happen." As to Advaita's contention that the path appears to be progressive only on this side of the line of relativity, while on the other side one finds that the Absolute already and always <u>is</u>, we must refer again to the metaphor of a bird landing on a branch causing the ripened fruit to fall. It could be said that the process of ripening is gradual, but the falling is instantaneous. Advaita stresses the importance of self-inquiry as the personal implementation of this evolution, but whether one identifies with the <u>process</u> as one's "doing" or the <u>watching</u> of it as it "happens" is irrelevant, so long as it occurs. "Inquiry" could be considered the identification with the self-correcting function of the mind when it is freed of resistance and being openly watched by the Mind. (In the field of law, the term: "Acts of God" is used to distinguish certain ordained happenings from "ours"—*but what isn't?* Where do we draw the line, and by what justification?)

What moves one beyond the Process Observer is the momentum of years of desire, investigation, battling against illusions, transmutation of energy, reconciliation of paradoxes, and perhaps more than a bit of righteous anger; all this being simultaneously observed by the anterior Mind. This incessant exercise of inner work and self-observation, this mass-effort, is one's vector aimed at *becoming,* and is what may carry one over the threshold of the finite mind. This determined vector is what finally cracks the cosmic egg. After prolonged, vigilant watching of one's gestaltic mind-games, the

Process Observer, in some unspecifiable way, becomes aware of itself above and beyond the relative, dualistic ego-mind.

Rose describes the ascendance from the baseline, E - F, to the top of the triangle of Essence like this:

> From this point, as we look to the right, we notice that we can also look at awareness, and we can be aware of consciousness, and of looking at ourself looking indefinitely. We do not take a step forward, but are taken forward from here, by that which seems to be an accident—an accident which does not come unless we have struggled relentlessly to find that which was unknown to us, by a method which could not be charted because the end or goal was unknown. We must have first become a vector. We must first have spent a good period of time studying our own awareness and consciousness with our own consciousness until we accidentally or by some unknown purpose—enter the source of our awareness. Directions beyond the Process Observer depend upon a determination that sustains the seeker in the face of no methods and no blueprints (Rose, 1979c, p. 92)

As stated in the earlier section on meditation, Rose has designated the final step in the process of introspection to be: "Go within—employ whatever means necessary." He clearly has a distinctive meaning for this term, "going within," as he is distinguishing it from all the other steps, which are usually also collectively referred to as going within by most teachings of meditation. The main point to be deduced from this is that he is differentiating between the mind and the Self. He is not saying to enter the mind; he is saying to enter the Self.

To enter oneself means **"to look simply, with direct-mind, at awareness itself"** (Rose, 1985, p. 219), directing this intense attention into the origin of that awareness. Beyond a point, it is realized that frontally entering deeper into this empty, open stillness, and backing into it, away from relative experience, are the same thing. The tension of the koan of identity is taken to its extreme.

What happens next? Rose here points to what awaits those who are committed to seeing this quest through to the end: "The Process Observer is the mind in its deepest potentials. This becomes, with relentless meditation upon pattern possibilities and observing the observer processes, a dynamic study of the mind with the mind, and the results are an explosive quandary—disaster" (lecture, 1979). This forecast is not intended to imply there is any predictable methodology to precipitating something that can only be regarded as incomprehensible. Rose states this key point more directly: "The Process Observer accidentally finds a means to explore the mind on all levels. It can be said another way: by accident, *our awareness transcends the mind*" (Rose, 1979c, p. 61).

His most concise instruction to bring one to this end is simply: "**Keep to the course of self-observation until Realization is achieved**." The obsession he wishes to induce in his teaching is for one to realize the need to look, and to continue to look, until there is no longer a looker. The mind is seen as a bridge to cross; an erroneous dimension to transcend. The purpose of meditation, which <u>is</u> Jacob's Ladder, is to pass through this mental self, tracing back along one's projected ray of "I am," and to purify the definition of the ultimate observer, which is found to be Reality.

As should be apparent from the account of his teaching thus far, the path Rose describes is not one that encourages peacefulness and joy, and thus may repel many prospective seekers who insist upon a path that promises serenity or delight as its primary characteristic and sole criteria for determining the truth. Rose instead promises years of effort and aloneness, the hardship of confronting the many facets of one's ignorance, and restless wariness in the uncertain race between *becoming* and

death. Rose regards the Albigen System as one of artful sobriety, rather than presumptuous celebration.

Progress on the path is evidenced by one's becoming healthier in body, clearer in mind, and stronger in character, as many sources of conflict and suffering are resolved inside. This does result in some poise, in greater balance, and personal freedom. At the same time, however, the path becomes still steeper and more ethereal. One approaches relative sanity, yet finds oneself still stuck in a dreamlike dimension of no certain validity, and the sand in the hourglass running out.

At this point, the seeker of conventional expectations may reflexively assume there is to be a happy turn of events for the better, as a reward from the Divine for one's dedication and perseverance. But, to the contrary, Rose assures us that things will get seemingly even worse!

As a serious aside, it should be noted that it is difficult if not impossible to discern between what in Rose's teaching is objective, universal fact, and what is the testimonial of his own unique experience, translated into philosophical principles intended to be pertinent to everyone else. He admits there are other routes one may take that might also get to the goal; some less strenuous and definitely less direct. However, the biographies of the great sages throughout history indicate the gap between the relative and the Absolute is not easily bridged. The gate to the Kingdom only stubbornly opens. Their accounts are unanimous in agreeing that the price of Self-Realization is the death of what one previously assumed to be the self, along with all its beliefs about reality. What may vary is the amount of force it takes to effect this death, and this may largely depend upon *how much of the seeker there is left to die by the end of the path.*

The more one dies before one dies, the less there will be left to die at the end. Likewise, the transition into death becomes easier if at least a partial shift in one's reference point of identity has occurred to the aware Self before death. Just as abandoning a bad habit or forsaking a prized possession is painful in its anticipation and during its loss, but is then recognized to have been a barnacle of which one is glad to be free after one's identification with it has been severed, so is one's ego-self regarded after death as having been a nagging barnacle also, from which the "I" is now relieved. Zen explodes this ego-self. Advaita dissolves it. The Albigen System does both.

When old identities and realities are lost or given up, one must resist the temptation to replace them with what is desired, based upon human values and levels of understanding. Rose states: "Don't try to create a different paradigm. Don't try to put something down there at the other end of the line [the opposite pole from the known in the triangulation]. Put nothing down there. Don't try to replace it. Contemplate possible nothingness" (Rose, 1985, p. 248). Confronting the void within us as well as on the other side of death requires great courage, as well as honesty.

Ironically, although this teaching seems to be the direct opposite of the path of innocent devotion, this manner of search is actually manifesting <u>true</u> faith, and the maximum surrender. We do not really have faith if we substitute our own ego-generated values for that of the unknown God's. Spirituality means to die to the Truth, not to create what we want. Simply put: so long as we believe ourselves to be separated from Reality, faith means to trust that Reality is right. Moreover, the attitude recommended is not even a matter of faith, strictly speaking, as that is still dualistic and usually includes the assumption of divine benevolence in human terms, which the honest seeker has no right to assume. What is required is a mature posture of non-dualism beyond faith and non-faith both, which is the open <u>acknowledgement</u> of WHAT IS. This means to not stand separate from one's life and either feel confident that things will work out a certain way or fear they will not, with some celestial monitor of unknown motives tipping the scale. There is no separation. One is one's life and the totality of one's life is one's path. In such a state of betweenness, to the sincere all roads lead to home.

The unknowing that is being referred to here is not a simple matter of one's not knowing a finite piece of information. The unknowing becomes much more complicated; much more expansive. At some point, our very sense of living in a real world as a valid self and being able to understand anything for sure becomes jeopardized. This entire dimension and all its rules are found to be no longer entirely and dependably real. One finds oneself in the Twilight Zone. This increasingly desperate obsession with watching the world of experience, as well as studying the processes of observation, mental reactions, and personal convictions, leads to the point of uncertainty, confusion, and disorientation concerning the true nature of things, inner and outer. This is as it should be. "The world melts," or rather our ego's interpretation of experience that holds the world together—which is our world, and one accepts the possibility of there being alternate natures for things apparent.

It is important to understand a troubling aspect of the kind of path Rose and his peers are describing; something that differentiates this level of teaching from others that do not lead towards an actual change in being.

It is understandable to expect that the further along the spiritual path one goes, the more sensible and clearly defined things should become. We naturally want to become more certain about the truth of the values and meanings we see around us as we progress in our search. Towards the end of this particular kind of inquiry, however, one may find oneself becoming *less* certain about the definitions of specific issues, rather than more. This may cause the seeker to question the worth of the spiritual search itself or simply if one is dismally failing at it. What is the meaning of this development, and why do most teachings fail to account for it?

The reason is that most paths do not see the need to first accurately define the self who is looking for the Truth before proceeding with the investigation, but merely presume the seeker to be perfectly genuine and complete, as is, and the issue is simply a question of finding the right discipline or dogma that will reveal the answer to this individual. The error in this approach, as has been incessantly explained, is that the self is not inherently valid nor precise as found, and no final answer can be appreciated so long as the "I" who would be its happy recipient is still identified with any number of false or lesser selves. Strictly speaking, the final answer could not be experienceable by any quality of individual, as any form of individuality within diversity still implies relativity, whereas Truth can only be non-finite and irreducible. As Rose keeps reminding us, one can only **become** it.

What happens is that as the inquiry into self-definition continues, life-values are found to be in a state of flux because one's point-of-reference on the questioning and answering is no longer in one certain spot. This foundational, judicious self that one had confidently accepted previously as being "me" is realized to be in fact several selves and in many different places at once, or in alternation, having no single, objective overview. Since multiple possible vantage points within relative experience are seen to exist, all equally justifiable, every issue can be perceived and evaluated from more than one perspective. Therefore, one cannot claim to have the final, definitive assessment about the true state of things from any single position. The Mind that comprehends all conditional viewpoints in Reality is still "behind" us.

In this state, one can flounder in great insecurity. One is now doubting not only everything that is seen, *but even the very authenticity of the seer.* One existentially confronts the fact that the real "I" is unknown, and is left with only the nameless awareness of the assorted "I's" that all clamorously claim to exclusive selfhood. As distressing as this phase can be, especially when encountering others who seem to be quite certain and comfortable with their own settled convictions, this is actually a highly mature form of security in that one no longer has anything to hold onto—not even oneself as a concept of belief (which is all one ever was anyway, whether knowing it or not). All that remains at this point is the pure awareness of inquiry.

This can be a rough period in the search and will test the seeker's commitment to the truth to the fullest, as well as the resolve to resist grasping at straws of attractive make-believe...including the futile attempt to reaffirm one's own fading pseudo-reality as the ground-of-being. However, this open and humble state of uncertainty is still closer to honest knowing than is the certainty rooted in one's being fully identified with any one point-of-reference that is only an ego-centered and possibly even deluded "self" in the relative world, rather than that state of being that contains all selves and points-of-reference. Again: the unknowing is an essential part of the becoming. The proverbial Dark Night of the Soul is better regarded as the Dark Night of the Ego. Referring to this final transition, Jim Burns has added the peculiar comment: "If it wasn't impossible, it wouldn't be possible," meaning the real answer can only be wholly *other* and out of the human realm, across an infinite chasm of magic. We cannot ultimately answer ourselves. We can only be answered from beyond, where Truth resides. This is our prayer.

With this perspective in mind, Self-Realization could be described as the realization that there is no self to realize—and only then discovering the real Self that has been watching this entire, noble, pathetic process of futility and tail-chasing all along. This is what Rose means by looking until there is no longer a looker. Not only must all false selves and presumptions of knowing be abandoned, but all one's gods must also die—before God is finally revealed. This is the Crucifixion.

Chapter 16

Death and Passing Through Zero

Rose has made some disturbing comments, based on his own experience, about the final phase of the path. After years of dedicated and honest search, and an ascetic lifestyle, he had expected the heavens to open up one day and strike him with a lightning bolt of exaltation, carrying him up into celestial glory. This is undoubtedly how most seekers anticipate their spiritual quest to culminate. It did not quite happen this way for Rose. Instead, what he found was death—absolute negation of all that he had known and all that he was. He claims that a mood of despair and oblivion precedes the death experience, as all of one's efforts and hopes seem to lead to nothing. There is even the sense of being on the edge of insanity; of losing one's mind. God remains silent and aloof. One wonders if the commitment had not been conceited foolishness all along. Although many interpretations have been put forth over the centuries, perhaps this was the inner meaning of Christ's statement on the Cross as he was about to die: "My God, why have you forsaken me?"

I had once remarked to Rose that his written account of the experience of entering into Realization (see Chapter 17) conveyed to me a feeling of profound trauma and anguish. I wondered of its significance in relation to the terminal phase of our own paths, and inadvertently disclosed the underlying nature of my chronic psychological condition. He offered a revealing glimpse of (or from) his subsequent position and the period of spiritual turmoil prior to its discovery, in this response: "Your sensing agony from The Three Books of the Absolute: Believe me...before I knew complete detachment from the world-plane, I too felt that agony, only more so...to the point of suicidal desires" (personal correspondence, 1978).

To be precise here, even at the risk of a seeming lack of compassion, this quality of despair is not to be confused with the experience of basic emotional anguish due to grief or loss, or any measure of earthly frustration and depravation, however deeply felt. It is of another level entirely and only earned once the earlier phases of meditation and self-confrontation have been largely worked through. It is important to make this discrimination, lest one regard very human mundane suffering as the special kind of suffering reserved for those who have answered to all lesser concerns yet find themselves still unanswered and apparently stranded in nowhere. In this misunderstanding, one may possibly not deal adequately with those personal issues that can and must be addressed and thus not reach that point of exhaustion where one's human drama no longer matters.

He has stated: "**You are on the verge of Enlightenment when you see yourself in your totality and futility**." To see one's entire life and selfhood in totality from all sides is a profound thing, and is the end result of the years of thorough self-study. To see oneself in futility is to be aware of the unknowing surrounding oneself, the groundlessness of one's current existence as it is, and the seeming hopelessness of this finite person's ability to ever be able to do enough to realize what may be on the other side of this unknowing.

In fact, Advaita Vedanta agrees it is necessary for one to see the futility of this entire process of using the mind and one's will to get to "Enlightenment"—the impossible task: that the Absolute state-of-being can be achieved from any combination of relative efforts by a fictitious, mechanical ego-self, resulting in the becoming of what one already is—in order for the process to end. However, as repeatedly stressed throughout Rose's teaching, the effort must be wholeheartedly made nonetheless, otherwise this transcendental perspective, born of exhaustion and collapse, cannot occur.

In fact, the function of this final despair in the quest is to show the ego-self it is not ultimately in charge and that the objective answer is beyond its jurisdiction. There must be a break of will, a giving up—and thereby an opening to a fundamental shift in reference point of identity.

Rose has little respect, and possibly only pity, for that vast majority of humanity who fully identify with the fantasy picture-show of life and never suspect it is all a pathetic farce. Many of his comments are intended to poke holes through this mental charade, to confront people with the reality of their condition. Psychoanalysis is no stranger to the principle of denial and repression as defense mechanisms for dealing with pain or horror. Rose, however (and Jim Burns more so), sees this as being not only a pathological pattern in extreme cases of trauma, but as the human condition itself. All we are, essentially, is a defense mechanism against the truth. Humanity forever lies to itself throughout all of life, while concocting rationalizations to buffer one against the harsh confrontation with ever-present death. Our very identity is the buffer. Yet, occasionally, despite one's best efforts, reality breaks through. One's massive facade of pretense breaks down.

Rose has remarked that depression, even to the point of suicidal despair, rather than being strictly a symptom of mental disorder, is the closest condition to a true assessment of life experience we generally get, despite whatever secondary egoistic distortions it might contain. (The ego-self who is despairing is itself, of course, the primary distortion, yet we have no choice but to acknowledge the experiential reference point of our existence as we currently find ourselves.) He has even stated: "The man who is about to commit suicide is just like the man who is on the verge of Enlightenment." In both cases, one has come to the end of the line and given up one's investment in the dream (including dreams of impending Godhood), seeing no alternative to self-negation, even though in physical suicide a tragic overgeneralization occurs in which the self is mistakenly equated with the body and body-mind. To lose the identification with this small "s" self and its conviction of no-conviction, and then to purely be, in the unknowing, is the real spiritual suicide.

An insight gained from maturing meditation is that it is best to view life from the vantage point of death. It keeps one honest. One sees truthfully. The mood of nostalgia touches on this. In critical deliberations, our personal issues—from value decisions to psychological trauma—are perceived more directly, without the distortive influence of ego, and the desires and fears branching from it. Yet, this "technique" is still a mental attitude. To see all of life in its essential form, actual death (of the mind—as we are only a mental experience) must take place. This cannot be simulated. Rose has stated it simply: "**To know death properly, the person must die**" (Rose, 1979c, p. 73).

One of the most chilling moments for me in TAT group work occurred towards the end of a 30-day intensive. Several of us were informally discussing issues of meaning and direction, from our

inevitably human perspective. Rose then entered the room and quietly asked: *"How close is zero?,"* and walked out. No one moved, spoke or possibly even breathed for several minutes after that; mentally frozen in place at this blunt confrontation with the ever-present void. We knew the sobering answer to his question; one that all avoid facing: "It's right here, next to us, always." We also knew the ominous implication contained in his entire teaching: the Truth is on the other side of zero.

These last statements must be carefully qualified. The final relinquishment is not synonymous with the urge for suicide. Rose is, of course, not intending his comments to be mistaken for the exhortation to kill oneself. Something must indeed die in order for the Truth to be found, but it is not the body, and even killing the body might not kill the conviction of the ego-as-self—as a psychic entity artificially isolated from the totality of what is, the "hungry ghost" whose desire for essence can never be satisfied, and who carries the illusory burden of self-responsibility—that is much of the real obstacle to Truth. Even the desire to die is still an ego maintained by the false self, not true giving up, and must be surrendered. What must be ultimately given up is not one's life but one's very claim to selfhood. When one finally no longer cares whether one lives or dies, but can only remain obsessed with the riddle: "Whom does the Grail serve?"—this, then, is the real, penultimate state. To stand aware and alone, still and silent, in unanswered desire. Prayer is the exercise of this yearning, until it consumes us. "God" is what is left over.

The next is an exceedingly subtle point to grasp. It is the intersecting point where the paths of Zen and Advaita merge. Rose states that even the final ego—the spiritual desire to find the Truth and reside in it forever—must be lost too for the answer to be found. Yet, it cannot be given up by the seeker in any way. Instead, as he has promised: "It will be taken from you," (after it has done its job of getting one to the threshold). He explains further what brings this about during one's final moments:

> You go through death with no conviction of survival. Because you have to be truthful with yourself. All the tales that are told could be dreamt up; they could be fiction. But when you die honestly, you die with absolute despair. And the absolute despair removes the last spiritual ego you've got left (lecture, 1986).

To qualify this last point, it could be surmised that this despair is that of the spiritual ego too, possibly its final remnant, and if the path of pure non-duality and becoming is selflessly followed out to the end, even this "despairer" would have been relinquished, or seen to be extraneous to (or by) the sole awareness of the sacred question that is all the seeker rightfully is by the end. For this "you" referred to in the above quote to die honestly, all convictions would have to be dropped; the state of no-conviction also. Simply stated, the degree of this despair at death largely depends upon how much of one's allegiance of identity has passed from the one who is dying...to what is being died into.

He adds to this another implication of this experience of personal negation as one's story ends:

> You walk right up to the edge and you say: "Hey, my head's coming apart." And you get frightened. But that total lonesomeness takes you away from all of your contact with relativity. That lonesomeness is that your essence is separated for all time from (your loved ones and attachments to the world) (lecture, 1979).

The most cherished love object that one sees fade away into nothingness is oneself.

The philosophical attitude he has inculcated in the student, of uncompromising truthfulness with oneself above all else, must be maintained up to the very end. When entering death, one has little resource left with which to lie, regardless, as even the ego that would generate the cowardly motive for spiritual fabrication knows it is about to be snuffed. The wineskin is empty.

One cannot artificially induce this state of spiritual maturity. It has to be earned by fulfilling one's commitment. How can one know that this state of readiness is impending? It has been best defined this way: "The crucifixion of the self is accomplished when there is nothing left for which you wish to pray" (Goldsmith, 1956, p. 165).

Following is a series of statements Rose has made that concisely reviews the sequence of inner work he recommends, and to what this course of inquiry leads. He is essentially defining the core of Zen meditation in experience. As such, these comments, from their different angles, not only sum up much of the Albigen System, but more clearly indicate how this approach to validity differs from other teachings that primarily aim at creating an enjoyable state of consciousness within the mind dimension; one that is imagined to be the final answer. This is in contrast to bringing about the radical shift of vantage point to what is forever beyond all finite, objectified states.

He has explained what happens quite plainly: "If you think long enough, you'll stop thinking." The value of all the forms of inner work described throughout the teaching is thus two-fold. First, the attainment of thorough self-knowledge, mental clarity, transmutation of energy, etc. This is valuable both on the mundane level and as a pre-requisite for the breakthrough into Spirit. In this process of continually backing away from untruth, "...eventually it narrows down until there's no escape. You go through the funnel..." (Rose, lecture, 1986). Second, this determined meditation on the perennial koan, "What is Truth?" (John: 38), is what builds up the tremendous ball of energy that must precede the realization of the answer.

Rose has this vivid way of describing the mental dynamic that occurs as one's philosophical vector terminates in death:

> If the last burst of energy is not wasted on thoughts of escape, the mechanism might, by shutting off the disturbing environment, and with the automatic decrease in sensory impulses, bring about at least one chance in its lifetime to coordinate all the circuits in the memory bank and come up with a startling discovery (Rose, 1978, p. 61).

The self is stripped naked and one's freed attention enables the now unobstructed intuition to fully attend to locating the answer.

Rose again refers to the need for the seeker to *become,* and not merely to learn concepts or identify with any contrived state. He explains how this must come about:

The problem is continually fed into the computer and has to be solved, and it can't be solved without a change of being. He can't change his being, though, but his being is changed for him by a triggering by a little procedure, which is a neutral state—the humble, egoless state of continued energy-application with a desire to know. (Rose, 1985, p. 251-2).

The state to which he is referring at the end is betweenness and is the proper attitude to maintain throughout the entire process of search. He defines this more precisely: "Satori, or the experience of dying while living, is the result of the ability to become, being applied to the direction of awareness at death" (Rose, 1981, p. 28).

As has been mentioned, a key ingredient in the happening that is betweenness is the tension between polarities in experience, until the koan is resolved through transcendence. This is much like a tube of toothpaste being squeezed from all sides until the content shoots out through the top, where an opening has been made (awareness). Rose describes the reality of this transformation, in very human terms:

> What we have is the pursuit of truth, capital "T" Truth. Yet, we may be incapable of perceiving the Truth. So you have action opposed by conviction that you will be unsuccessful [or experiencing that you are not successful now!]. You live this. A person on the spiritual path lives this every moment every day of their life; they push, and push, and push...and then nothing logical, mental, or verbal can explain what happens—an explosion. Your being changes (Rose, 1985, p. 251).

This is one reason why the Truth cannot be appreciated or approximated before it is Realized, as is the case in so many teachings that function mostly on the emotional and/or intellectual levels. The one who starts out on the quest looking for the answer is not the One who one discovers oneself to be at its end—this Self <u>being</u> the answer. The one who starts out is not the one who "arrives."

Adding to this theme, Rose makes a couple of points about how the specific kind of inner work he teaches differs from some traditional methods of meditation—even a simplistic level of Zen—that he claims cannot reliably result in an ultimate realization of Validity, as the state-of-"no-mind" developed through such practices cannot help but still be a very subtle creation or conditioned sub-category of the human mind, and not the "letting go" or genuine ending of the ego-mind despite oneself, which is what such practices intend and which must occur before *that which is wholly Other* can become discovered. Furthermore, submitting to the work leading to this climactic shift in reference point is also what develops the "being" that would appreciate such nothingness, rather than one's remaining a mental self who becomes identified as a state within it:

> In some schools of Zen, they devised a system of deliberately bombing the head. It was the exercise of attaining no-mind, which I don't approve of. I don't approve of trying to make your mind go blank. The understanding is that when you reach the point of no-mind, the All-Mind invades it, and you know everything. (This is accurate in principle) but you can't go about it just by simulating; taking a symptom. You have to do it [through the above described effort], and have faith in (the process) and in yourself, regardless of whether you go insane, drop dead, whatever. Persist. Keep that computer going. And what happens is the head explodes. Not the physical head, but the comprehensiveness (lecture, 1979).

Rose alludes to the real issue in this crucial distinction when referring to the Buddha's last step in meditation: to think of nothing:

> You <u>can't</u> think of nothing. What happens is, after you bombard yourself with possibilities, you blow the head. And nothing is there. Your thinking becomes nothing. But you don't think of nothing. So this is the difference between what I call choosing the symptom—trying to imitate the symptom of no-mind—as opposed to just attacking the problem and attacking the problem, until the head just blows (lecture, 1979).

In other words: the self who would think of nothing itself <u>becomes</u> nothing. Thought ends as the thinker ends.

Following is another description of the course the Psychology of the Observer meditation will take. The frustration referred to is the recognition that nothing can be known for sure on the level of the mind, but yet all one can work with <u>is</u> the mind (in some form). This conflict, worked through to its climax, is what raises the vantage point of the viewer up to the apex of the top triangle:

> Watching the mind intently with the mind produces a tremendous frustration. You become more and more despairing, until you feel this is hopeless. But you must keep on working, until the explosion. **Then awareness is not in FRONT of the mind anymore** (Rose, group discussion).

This last sentence is of profound significance. It indicates the nature of the shift that must take place. We exist entirely within the mind. All our spiritual efforts—whether devotional, philosophical, phenomenological, or whatever—are within the mind. All our imaginings about what we would like Truth or God to be is also in the mind, as is any answer found that is still some form of relative consciousness. Right now, awareness seems to us to be an extension or faculty of the mind; the mind being experienced as its source and container, instead of its object. This form of awareness manifests as the observer. We never suspect there is an awareness anterior to the mind in which the mundane self and all its heavens and hells exist, and that the real Self is the source of this awareness. The seeker's task is to retroverse this ray of awareness back through the mind, until one's point-of-reference breaks through this Cosmic Egg and arrives at naked Reality, which is forever One and Awake.

We use the mind to escape the mind. This is the way of Zen. Without the certain commitment at the beginning of the quest and the determined vector maintained throughout its course, the ***being*** that would survive the death of the mind would not be sufficiently "prepared" for its realization, or one would stop short of the breakthrough. Rose explains this in an interesting way, dispelling some naive assumptions about spirituality:

> All people are automatically immortal, but we do not all go to the same place (after death). Awareness doesn't terminate, but you can't expect to advance into a dimension that you haven't mentally "vaccinated" yourself to beforehand. The mind with certain convictions and limitations, if it lands in a certain place, would consider it either oblivion or hell (lecture, 1986)

Why must this be so? He has explained that if one was to die today, and the only reality one knows is the body, on this planet, in this solar system, then when all this fades away—one's body is gone and the brain is gone with the body—what is going to be left to appreciate the next dimension? Where has one's point-of-reference gone? If it is still the human body, with all its egotistical obsessions about what it believes it needs or what "heaven" should be, then if one was to land in another dimension with no compass, vision, or grounding, one would be hopelessly lost. Without the prior establishment of inverted awareness, one would not even know <u>oneself</u>.

He has said: "The only thing that prepares you for death is conviction." By conviction, he does not mean belief in some postulated, happy outcome, as in his warning above, but rather the certain faith in one's essential self as being one with Reality, even though not knowing what the actuality of this means. If the commitment and surrender have been 100%, this quality of aware selfhood is itself a kind of knowledge.

In response to a mature questioner at a lecture who indicated a knowing rapport with his message, Rose infers one of the reasons why he places such an emphasis upon sexual restraint, especially during the critical, culminating phase of the path. Here he also reveals how he too had experienced life prior to the Realization; hinting at the hypersensitivity to the reality of the moment, the feeling of restless gravity, the growing intensity of purpose that has nowhere to go, and the need to somehow remain firm in one's conviction and vigilance while the appearance of the world and even the substance of one's psychological self become increasingly shaky and shabby all around this aware presence of concern:

> Q: "When you reach the point where the physical world and time become unreal in a way; when practical life loses its value and doesn't matter—it can become pretty difficult." Rose: "I know. I know that. The only thing I can say is to try to keep yourself chemically balanced, that's all. You can handle it, if you don't become unbalanced chemically." (1985, p. 97).

He is implying that the process of internal preparation operates largely according to a schedule and by an intelligence over which the seeker has no control or even understanding, that the ordeal—however frustrating and bewildering it becomes—is endurable, and that healthy body chemistry is one of the keys to a clear state-of-mind and to insuring one's safe arrival.

Rose assures the seeker that this period of trauma is the necessary doorway to the discovery of Essence:

> The observance of the mind with the mind, and with what might seem to be infinite variables for factors and explanations, leads to a resounding disaster for the mind. It is necessary to note here that the disaster which the mind encounters is the threshold of man's final form of existence—his final illumination, from which he looks back and correctly defines all that he previously experienced (Rose, 1979c, p. 57-8).

This testimony also indicates that we cannot have a clear, comprehensive perspective on our own experience of life while still within that life. It is only from having stepped outside that stream of experience that its real nature and meaning can be recognized by the final Observer.

The next three quotes provide some of Rose's most precise descriptions of the workings of the Psychology of the Observer in actual experience. Some redundancy is allowed here because so little lucid information is available in esoteric writings about the precise nature of the inquiry on this highest level of meditation, and this insight is most critical. Although his testimony is autobiographical, he feels that every seeker who goes through this process of work will find the same rungs of Jacob's Ladder being climbed that he did, and the same final point of Realization attained.

This first statement shows the realism of the path he describes: the actual experience of doubt, of abandoning oneself to the effort of self-definition, and of the unpredictable final triangulation:

> (You feel) you don't have any answer—nobody knows who they are, and maybe at that point never expects to find out who they are—but by the persistent sticking of that problem into the computer, on that binary system: "What is the relation between pure awareness, which I may be—I seem to be aware—and the pointed observer/awareness?"—you continue to analyze all of this. And all at once, the thing pops. Now, this is the path to Sahaja Samadhi. There's no rhyme or reason to it. But at a given time, this awareness pops and you are one with Oneness. And that's the end of the trip (lecture, 1979).

He next describes more specifically the experience of self-observation taken to its extreme, as one's point-of-reference in awareness struggles with the impossible task of realizing itself:

> The person who has reached the Process Observer becomes a very real creature. This is where a man is no longer living [solely] a somatic life. He is watching his own mind. He has risen to the point where he is concerned not so much with the body as he is with consciousness and the workings of the mind. He becomes obsessed with this—this is the center from which he works. But he again discovers that there is another relative

> line. He is watching the mind, but he is also aware of awareness. He is aware that there is something behind the mind—something that is seemingly almost indestructible. So he doesn't look with intuition anymore; ***he looks simply with direct-mind at awareness itself.*** Now, from this contemplation, the dashing back and forth across this upper line (E - F), man arrives at an Absolute realization of himself. He arrives at a point in which his head is on dead-center. There's no place left for it to go. And then, of course, if the experience doesn't kill you, you might be able to do something on a mundane level (Rose, 1985, p. 219)

Lastly, he describes how this process of meditation, of seeing inverting upon seeing, ad infinitum, culminates in the cataclysmic disintegration of the mind, and the spiritual nakedness discovered when it dies:

> We become aware of the mind as being external to our awareness. "We" are now observing all from a point of undifferentiated awareness. The mind still does not stand still but continues its labor of sorting and studying the processes of the mind. It simultaneously becomes aware of its own potential for awareness. The final throes of the mind are like the intense but hopeless motions of a beheaded chicken, *struggling to be eternally aware of the awareness that it witnesses.* It is for this reason that those who go through the experience of transcending the mind, recognize in it and describe it as being the experience of death. The mind does not die easily, and when the personality is gone, we find that we are still aware. Not only are we aware, but we are infinitely more aware than ever before (Rose, 1979c, p. 33-34).

These statements also provides what little description is possible of the nature of the mental dynamic on the top line (E - F) on Jacob's Ladder. The seeker has become the observer of everything by this point, but is also aware that even this observer is being watched. The question finally becomes: "What watches the watcher—and *who am I???"* Once the twin poles of Observation and Awareness are experienced directly as actualities, not concepts, no specific procedures to follow can be formulated that will causally result in the ascension to what ultimately encompasses both (Point G). One watches and waits in open, maximum tension.

As the esoteric warrior contemplates this voluntary entry in self-destruction, Rose offers this solace...to be recognized and appreciated by the only part of oneself that would remain:

> Achieving a union with Essence is the equivalent of losing the mind. Such discoverers (of essence) may return to the world with seeming incoherence. However, be assured of one comfort should such befall you: all who have attained...who have lost their minds, or who are about to lose their minds will recognize you (Rose, 1979c, p. 92)

Repeatedly throughout this teaching, the implication is made that the goal of the spiritual quest is not only not something that is learned or acquired, but not exactly even something "experienced," in the usual dualistic sense of the word in which a person experiences some desirable, conditional state that exists apart from the experiencer who seeks it. Rose insists that one can only BECOME the final answer. Much has been said about the work involved in this becoming—but what is the reality of Being, or Essence? And what does it mean <u>to die</u>?

To get beyond the dichotomized, polarized mind, one must go with intuition and betweenness into the inner mind, and then behind it. Both Jim Burns and Alan K. testify (see Chapter 18) that the realization of Truth occurs when the question—the polarity of asking and answering—dissolves

due to the absence of the pressure that generates the question, and thus the questioner/answerer. (This state is not to be mistaken for one's ignoring the question in the first place, yet remaining an oblivious, invalid "self," as is much more commonly the case.) **Truth is an experience of totality**.

Rose here attempts to clarify the nature of this final experience and its implications about self-definition, validity, and the meaning of non-relativity:

> To me the term Enlightenment refers to the Absolute or total realization you can come to. I don't use the word "soul" to mean something of a gossamer quality that floats around like a ghost, but I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the inner person or capital "S" Self is more real (than our human selves). The universe we enter at death with that Self is far more real than this (world). What we have right now is a big long line of thinking—bouncing around on this thing of relativity, whereas in a direct-mind experience of the Absolute, you only experience oneness; not multiplicity, not shades-of (Rose, 1985, p. 232)

The immanent realization of a non-relative state-of-being cannot be spelled out in detail, no more than one can explain exactly the meaning of the answer to a koan. Still, Rose does provide some insights into the nature of the transition from seeking to finding that one will experience—and the grave price it demands.

He has made the statement: "At a certain point in the process of self-analysis, the head stops and a phenomena occurs: the knowledge of nothing" (Rose, lecture, 1979). The reality of this is admittedly something impossible to understand, or even to conceptualize, as it is a happening outside of the mind. It must be "experienced." This statement also points in the direction that better explains a distinction brought up several times in this paper: how the Albigen System of meditation (as well as Advaita and Zen) differs from most other forms of meditation. Simply put, most forms of meditation are the immersing of oneself in a state of one kind or another; something that is regarded as being "spiritual." This is not without value. However, what Rose and his kind recommend is <u>the backing away from all states</u>—into an as-yet-unknown "non-state" of open, unlimited, contentless awareness.

There can obviously be no quantifiable method or technique within consciousness to bring about the final Revelation from this point (although massive efforts within consciousness are necessary for one to ever <u>get</u> to this point), as this non-state is not something created or cultivated, nor the accumulated result of something else. He refutes the teaching of any "button to push" that pretends to manipulate the mechanism of Grace and make the heavens open up according to our will, saying: "There is no method to a lightning bolt" (or earthquake!).

Rose's affinity with Zen is evidenced in his comments about what triggers this shift out of the relative, into what seems to be the void: "You reach an Absolute realization by looking between thoughts" (Rose, 1985, p. 251). He clarifies this by adding: "You take the mind in thought, and then take the mind in no-thought, then you have an Absolute realization. It is when the mind goes blank through tension" (Rose, 1985, p. 213).

He continues with this theme in addressing the special instance of transmission, which is this tension-energy deliberately directed at the highest possible goal. Yet he again reminds us that the simplicity of this principle should not mislead us into believing Realization can be effected in any mechanical way:

> The whole formula is not written, nor is it writable, because each case demands a slightly different formula. There is a personal variable and a propitious, unpredictable moment

> needed...and a teacher comes in handy; especially a teacher who is able to create a state of tension, and who is able to see the student's critical moment when Enlightenment is at hand (Rose, 1975, p. 64).

To those fortunate enough to be his immediate students, he is referring to himself.

We keep coming to this word: tension. To have an Absolute realization requires absolute tension, and this preparatory state is achieved by fattening up one's head to the maximum (The Buddha's second step) and then watching it from the vantage point of nothingness (the third). This tension is felt as one is stretched between the poles of life and death, being and non-being, and desire/faith and despair. The rest of the formula also includes the need for detachment from this seeking self; the ability to laugh at one's predicament in the midst of the struggle being a good form of this.

But, as in discussing any principle in this teaching, there is a paradox involved; the complement of which must also be recognized in order for complete comprehension to be possible. The "nothing" is not the final answer, as nihilistic Existentialism or a shallow understanding of Zen would conclude. Rose here refers to what the total experience—the summit of Jacob's Ladder—entails:

> There is a certain thing that reacts, or results from the contemplation of thought and no-thought at once; of "holding them in your head." The gut realization comes from contemplating truth and nothingness, like the Zen koan, until your head stops—and then everything becomes apparent to you. Everything and nothing are on both sides of the line. If you know everything and nothing, you become in union with the Absolute (Rose, 1985, p. 250).

Rose has said all this even more concisely, and in doing so, has summed up the entire Psychology of the Observer system of meditation in one sentence: "**When the Observer becomes aware of the small "s" self, within awareness, and realizes it is not this self, *something else becomes aware of both***" (lecture, 1979). What finally comprehends even the awareness of consciousness is the Absolute.

This aforementioned state of "nothing" or "no-thought" is not exactly what he means by the mind's stopping (the "no-mind" of Zen, which is the intersecting point with the Unmanifested Mind), although the two are directly related. The state of no-thought is still an extreme state-of-mind and being considered or witnessed by the observing self, which, strictly speaking, is a part of that same mind. No-mind means the non-existence of any finite self, including even this highest point-of-view within relativity (the Process Observer), which is still that of a mental self.

There is a necessary sequence to making this discovery, however. Rose had once remarked: "The intuition of the child is like the surrender of the aged," in relation to the preliminary quality of mind required to apprehend the Truth. He explained, "It's the awareness of one's nothingness—which then leads to everythingness." It is again this theme of one's needing to be able to see life directly without the contaminating influence of ego. He made it a point to emphasize that although these two sides of duality are equal in their actuality (so to speak) and their simultaneous appreciation is necessary in order for one to arrive at the ultimate non-dualistic state-of-being, "You must first experience nothingness, and then everythingness." An ever-familiar theme in mystical literature, he found that one must first enter the death of the self, before the all of the Self can be found.

Rose has made a curious comment in describing what can happen when this occurs: "When you lose your logical mind...if you make the right turn—you find Nirvana." He is indicating that losing the mind—"Nirvana" loosely translates as "extinguish," as of a candle flame (meaning: ego-

self)—is not the only factor in this transformation. What might this "right turn" be? The wrong turns that lead to insanity or more ethereal levels of mental delusion are obvious and documented well enough. The right turn can only be an about-face: the observer turning around to stare with direct-mind into the ultimate source of one's own I-ness. This is the ray of awareness that leads back into the Self.

This alludes to another qualification for this experience; one that has been touched upon in earlier sections. It is this principle of the vector, the commitment, of fattening up one's head. Rose has referred to "The Mountain Experience" as being the witnessing of the outer world as a projected illusion and oneself as that witness. This is near the top of the Ladder, but is still an incomplete experience. What is lacking is that one does not yet realize oneself to be the totality, but is still identified as an individual center of awareness tied to a lamenting human mind. The death of all that was known is experienced, but one's spiritual being has not been "readied" enough to enable one to appreciate the final realization of the Self, which contains both "maya" and the seeing of this maya. One is stuck in a tragic Twilight Zone dimension: dead to all meaning in a world that no longer exists, yet not having found Life. One's remaining days are haunted, until the final key for release can be found.

All this can come about because some death experience may have been precipitated prematurely or by accident without there having been a sufficient vector built up in the search, resulting in the seeker's not having enough "being" developed to carry one through to the final experience. This is what can happen should the ego-self be dissolved by drugs, some unwise meditation or kundalini-raising practice, or an unexpected trauma for which the seeker has not been prepared by years of deliberate work on the self.

It is the steadfast observation of the thinking and mental processes that dissolves the egos therein by exposing them; the spiritual desire ego being the last one to end. Only then can one have isolated that sole particle of "I am-ness" that can survive the death of the mind. The guidance of The Tibetan Book Of The Dead was provided likewise for this purpose of readying those about to make the final journey, so they would not become trapped in any other unreal mental realms, but return all the way home.

Occasional reference has been made to a "doorway" between the relative, material world and the non-finite, non-localized world of Spirit. The discussion on meditation explored the need to perceive all dimensions of mind from beyond them...until seeing a break in the fabric of thought. The mind is then STOPPED and does not perceive or project. Rose teaches that Enlightenment is found at this gap between thought and no-thought, and that some propitious shock will propel one through this gap, when it is time.

He has gone so far as to provide a most intriguing answer to the age-old question of where this gap specifically is: "Man lives in the space between the synapses. The synapses are the contact points between mind and body" (Rose, 1982, p. 138). By "man," he means the real or inner self; the eternal "I AM." By "mind," he is referring to this aware Spirit, not the somatic mind. The gap of the synapses over which our vital energy passes in its processing of consciousness is where the two realms touch, and where Mind watches mind. It is a model of the ultimate polarity in the cosmic koan between being and non-being; the tension of which keeps the whole universe in place. It could even be regarded as the "eye of the needle," the "straight and narrow way" to which Christ referred, requiring the utmost in betweenness and intuition to navigate through it.

Rose explains the essential issue this way:

> The task of the seeker of eternity is to die while living; to know of death so that the seeker will know of all the secrets of life. To effect this enormous task, the seeker must produce an enormous amount of energy. And to create that energy, the polar mechanism must have a large gap...a gap as large as death itself (Rose, 1975, p. 65).

> Something should also be mentioned about the dotted line (F - B) on the right side of Jacob's Ladder, which Rose calls the Invisible Current (Rose, 1979, p. 42). In simplistic, theological terms (which he might not endorse!): As we look for God, we would have no hope for attaining the top of the Ladder where He resides, unless "God" was looking for us too. This is similar, perhaps, to the theme in Michelangelo's painting in the Sistine Chapel, in which Man is reaching out to God, and God is reaching right back.

Rose suggests this Invisible Current is the silent, still voice of the true Self, alerting the actor in the dream to the quest that must be made to find oneself. In fact, its increasingly recurrent refrain of "Why?" has been the primary koan intended to raise one's point-of-reference from the stage play of life to the comprehending awareness <u>of</u> life. The very question is the memory <u>from</u> that ultimate reconciliatory point, wafting into the mind of the finite man. This anterior Self may well also set up the entire path the tiny person has to tread, once the firm commitment has been made. Seekers might not be able to find their way through the maze of the unknown without this guidance. He has also said this about the occurrence of the final experience: "If it's supposed to happen to you—it will happen at a safe time...it is arranged for you..." (lecture, 1986).

He refers to the happening of his own experience and his conviction about how the anonymous master forces on the other side of the veil engineered his awakening:

> I did not create my experience. As I've said, all spiritual experiences are different because there are certain mechanical things necessary (to enable it to happen). The experience itself may be a projection; a tremendous, vast mental projection. But it gets the message across to you, that beyond a shadow of a doubt, THIS IS WHAT REALITY IS. And without that help, I don't think we could do it. Now—where do we go further? How do you identify that? I don't intend to identify it. But I believe this: that there are levels of intelligence that help other levels of intelligence. (lecture, 1986).

Rose elaborates further upon this influence of Grace:

> By himself, man can do nothing. Unless. Unless man can, through some faculty for feeling, pick up a downward emanation from man's real Self, or from God, or the Absolute (F - B), he would not be inspired to resist the massive onslaught of negativity and hopelessness which he experiences on the plane of life (A - B). (Rose, 1979c, p. 42).

"The Voice" that Rose was describing in his autobiographical poem of the same name was a reference to this Invisible Current. In this he reveals the sense of destiny he feels had led him throughout his life of search: "There is something calling me. I have heard its changeless voice often in my life... And now if I hear it again, I shall follow it with all my soul...For that voice is greater than me." (Rose, 1982, p. 75)

In this sense, what in a religious context might be called "loving God" or "being in the presence of God," can thus be understood to mean one's being in touch with the Invisible Current or being one with it, on each step up the ladder; the ego-self being in tune with the deeper Self, and loving its manifestation as the path or the work.

Rose's repeated comments about intuition being the result of refined emotional thinking have more meaning now, and here blend with what could be regarded as a more mature form of devotional mysticism. With a poetic touch that taps into the nostalgic mood, which he considers the homing instinct of the soul, he states: *"The yearning brings you."* Recognizing the call of that dotted line, and following it, is one's prayer for the answer.

Chapter 17

Revelation

All the information presented up to this point about the recommended manner of search would be incomplete without some exposition on the moon towards which this finger points. Yet, unlike in a standard research paper, the results of the "experiment in philosophy" described herein cannot be presented as proven—with words and figures. As has been stated, Rose is offering the most thorough and direct road map he knew how to create, but it is up to each individual to seek according to its guidance and find for oneself whatever form of validation may await at the end of the road.

It has also been admitted that, as in most systems of psychology and/or esotericism, much of the teaching cannot help but be a reflection of the teacher: in this case, Rose's own nature, his path, his Realization, and his way of conveying this "message in a bottle" to whomever may be interested in making the same trip. He adds this qualification: "I have only an account of a trip or adventure and of my conceptions of that trip. That which I really know, I have been unable to express with an ever-relative language" (personal correspondence, 1990). He does not apologize for this, but can only hope his comments will be taken into consideration by the seeker who is attempting to define a personal process of inquiry.

One of the central themes running throughout Rose's teaching is that spirituality must be an experience of discovery, not creation from belief. He himself did not know what he would find at the end of his search—or if he would find anything at all. That what he found was not at all the humanized, glorious rapture of metaphysical and theological speculation provided extra validation that the answer that came upon him was objectively real, and not the prefabricated projection of desperate or romanticized desire. In fact, he states his not having known much about the occurrence of actual spiritual realization until after his own "experience" happened, when he read accounts of similar experiences in Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, and found that others throughout history had arrived at the same conclusion.

Thus, under the circumstances, in lieu of conventional proof of this map's authenticity, this section will present some of Rose's own testimony of his findings; the value of which as inferential validation is left to the individual's judgment.

Before beginning, it is best to examine one significant, although rarely discussed, sequence of information that Rose discovered only as he went along. It concerns the very nature of spiritual realization itself.

In starting out on the path, seekers generally have an assumption about what "finding God" or "finding the Truth" will be like, even if the imagining is humbly not too specific. Terms are encountered in mystical literature such as: salvation, satori, samadhi, Cosmic Consciousness, nirvana, and Enlightenment. Frequently, they are casually assumed by student and scholar alike to be identical in meaning; the differences in terminology ascribed simply to cultural variations. For, after all, truth is truth, is it not?

On the contrary, although each category of experience exists in all religious traditions, however varying the contextual references to them may be, Rose states these terms are actually different levels of spiritual experience and are not to be used interchangeably. Truth is indeed truth, but what varies is the individual's capacity to appreciate or apprehend it. To explain this another way: Brahman (Reality) already, eternally is and is always completely realized outside of maya (the projected illusion). However, how much the Atman (or individual ray of awareness emanating from this source) finds of its root-beingness through or behind "our" minds—and the quality of perception and level of perspective on existence corresponding to this—is what varies, and the diligent self-inquiry required for its discovery is the work of ascending Jacob's Ladder.

From all this it can be seen that "liberation," as a goal, is a generic term. Its exact meaning and extent depends upon who one believes is being liberated and from what. Is one being liberated from physical and/or psychological suffering? From the attachment to earthly experiences? From death? From rebirth? From the belief in one's existence? The distinctions between these different conceptions of liberation can be illustrated by the varying forms taken by reported after-death experiences and, by some parallel, psychedelic drug experiences. Although there is invariably disassociation from the body—especially when the body is dead, the definition of the self going through the experience and the nature of the dimension witnessed will diverge according to one's level of spiritual maturity. Many who cross over will still be identified with a "spiritualized" or astral body operating in some relative, earthlike environment; some with a disembodied, yet distinct, human personality that encounters other individual beings; some with an impersonal, inquiring mind that engages in a process of evaluating ideas and their relationships; and some finally find themselves to be only a centerless observer—of perhaps nothing. Liberation will thus be related to how finite or diffused one takes oneself to be as a self, and the coarseness or subtleness of the dimension from which one wishes to be freed. One's contentment will be a function of these factors. There is no "one," in fact, to be liberated. Real liberation is from the mistaken conviction of orphaned personal existence within relativity.

So these six major designations refer to different levels of discovery along the path. The first four can be regarded as signposts that one is heading in the right direction, but none of them should be regarded by the naive seeker as the final answer; the top rung of the ladder. Rose asserts that only what is called Enlightenment or Absolute Realization is the maximum experience, beyond all duality of knower and known.

He has talked about the experience of salvation, common to all the religions of the world, and considered by the believers therein to be the goal of the spiritual life. Yet, Rose claims: "Finding the Truth is different from being saved." He elaborates, hinting at the greater answer that beckons:

> Know thou of salvation? Of Saviours and Adversaries? From what art thou saved? From death? Then know that all men die, even saviours. For it is only by dying that one knows of life. For life has no value until it is lost. (Rose, 1975, p. 68).

While the exaltation and resultant moral conviction the person feels in this experience is certainly not being disparaged, he is saying that this is only one major step along the path and not its

intended culmination, being instead somewhat analogous to the graduation to the Emotional Level of Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teaching: to love and surrender to something more real than one's flimsy ego. Rather than finding the truth, being "saved" could be better understood to mean one's finding the path to the truth, leading out of one's current state of confusion or suffering, rather than remaining in full identification with it, unto death. "Salvation" could be compared to the joy and security Dorothy felt when encountering the Yellow Brick Road on her search for the Wizard of Oz. A sure way to the goal was found, but her journey was far from over. The equivalent for Fourth Way seekers would be the discovery of the self as the Process Observer, and thus being "saved" from continuing to identify with what dies, which is the body and much of the body-mind. Some religious people also conceive of salvation to mean the soul's being saved from oblivion or hell after death and instead reunited with God after a life of faith. Rose might say this is getting closer to the truth, but would add: do not just believe it, as such salvation is not automatic—act on that faith to prove it, otherwise it is not genuine faith.

This is a simpler form of the previously described trap in esotericism—Advaita Vedanta especially—of accepting on principle, conceptually, that one's essence is rooted in Reality, or that one is this Reality now, then having this conviction quietly cross over the line into an assurance that mimics attainment, although without one's having "earned" it through direct experience. Whether one "believes in Jesus (God, the Guru, the Wizard, etc.)" or "believes in the Self," one is positing an absolute value in imagination and resting in that simulation while one's point-of-reference of identity is still fixated within the ego-mind, instead of retroversing the projected ray passing through this finite self until realizing the object (so to speak) of that belief through unity with it.

One may feel justifiable security in the philosophical conviction that all experience is mental and takes place within a greater dimension of impersonal, spiritual awareness; that nameless reality which exists forever outside of time and beyond location, abiding wholly apart from the dream-spell of projected consciousness. However, experientially the critical shift in one's reference point must come about in which one is no longer strictly a finite mental being invested in relativity (and spiritual imaginings), but has attained the pointed **realization** of this awareness of the mind, as awareness inverts upon awareness, persistently, relentlessly...until the breakthrough. Then the mind is knowingly transcended, as knowingness finally comes to know itself.

Rose has described satori as the "eureka" experience. It is a term originally used in Zen, but the type of elation referred to can result from disciplines in any form of mental pursuit carried through to completion or exhaustion. It is specifically designated as a mental experience, as distinguished from a spiritual experience. It is the result of the mind's intensely working to solve a koan or perplexing issue of some sort, such as an unintelligible problem in algebra. At some point in the study, the mind reaches a climactic burst of holistic insight in which the issue is suddenly seen clearly for the mass gestalt that it is. The mind ascends to the apex of the triangle of the domain being investigated. There is an exhilaration of transcendence as one breaks free of the problem being considered. There can be a "philosophical satori" also in which the dedicated student of spirituality experiences a terminal explosion of comprehension and the true relation of factors in the cosmic paradigm being contemplated is understood. However, the realization is still on a mental level or within the mental sphere and does not experientially determine the identity or essence of the anterior Self in whose mind (which one identifies as oneself) is contained the insight. In a few quotes, Rose has possibly used the term satori inadvertently to mean Enlightenment. Still, there could be said to be a parallel in principle between the satori in the mind resulting in the discovery of the Process Observer, and the "satori" (as it were) outside the mind dimension of the realization of Essence.

Samadhi is a yogic term meaning a one-pointedness of mind in which the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation, whether it be a physical object, a symbol of devotion, a mental image, or an abstract principle. It is a temporary experience brought about through deliberate discipline in concentration and transmutation of energy. Psychic powers may develop concurrently. Although this kind of samadhi (as distinguished from two higher forms to be discussed shortly) is the result of years of intense inner work, it is usually not a spontaneous happening that claims one during the course of one's life of search for truth, as is the next category, but is specifically sought for, the faculty cultivated, and generally experienced in a formal meditation practice. While satori could be conceived of as the utmost state of "external" comprehension and samadhi the extreme end-point of inward contemplation, the two are related in that they involve a climax of mental tension (attention) resulting in a condition of unity and freedom from tension, or rather the holding of tension in suspension, as all movement in duality is transcended. Samadhi is an indication of mental mastery and can be the doorway to many possible discoveries of a paranormal nature. However, as is satori, it is still an individualized experience within the relative mind—possibly the mind's highest experience—and not the permanent residing in That in which the mind resides.

Cosmic Consciousness is usually considered the ultimate spiritual revelation in most metaphysical teachings. This is the experiencing of the universe as an undivided unity, of its being alive and conscious, of its being perfect and eternal, its every particle floating in a sea of Love. Celestial lights, colors, sounds, and overwhelming beauty are witnessed. It is an experience of mystical bliss and peace. One feels at home at last; secure in God's Grace. Yet, Rose asserts that even this—as glorious as it is—is still a relative experience, and not the final answer. There is still the duality of an experiencer and the experience, of a seeker and the God or Paradise that is found. The experience has a *content*, and its content is dualistically regarded as ultimately pleasurable and good. Yet, one mistakenly takes oneself to <u>be</u> this experience, and does not realize that this rapturous consciousness is occurring within a field of ever-present awareness as its backdrop, and that the Self actually is this awareness. This aware beingness is what contains all this duality, and it is One. The title of Merrell-Wolff's book, *The Philosophy of Consciousness Without an Object*, points to it.

For years, I too had assumed that all these various terms for the goal-state of the spiritual quest encountered in esoteric texts were referring to the same thing. When I first heard Rose distinguish between them like this, and largely dismiss even Cosmic Consciousness as a very high level illusion (although the True illusion), I was amazed, and wondered about the ultimate vantage point which he would have had to attain in order to be able to make such a bold claim. In his teaching, he seemed to be eagerly trying to convey a very specific short-cut to Reality, and steering naive seekers away from any number of tempting traps and plateaus which may seduce the unwary, keeping them from reaching the final Realization.

I had asked him what the point would then be of attaining this state of ecstasy, perfection, etc., if even this too was maya. For the sake of pure theory I asked if it was possible to aim directly for Awakeness, apart from <u>all</u> projection. His reply gives a good sense of how a genuinely awake mind sees the world of manifestation, and in this makes the seeker more humble: "Cosmic Consciousness cannot be skipped. We can look upon our adolescence as unnecessary or empty, but it cannot be skipped either" (personal correspondence, 1978). We must first see and experience the truth about the world of appearance, in true consciousness, before being able to fully invert upon ourselves and discover the seer and source of the All. This is the macrocosmic parallel to his earlier explanation of why the work on oneself to become a truthful—if fictitious—human being is an essential phase of the larger search for the Self.

Mention was made in a previous section about Ramana Maharshi's metaphors for describing the difference between these two highest levels of spiritual realization. Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Cosmic Consciousness) was likened to a bucket that is lowered into a well on a rope to get some water, and which can be pulled back up again. The purified mind taps into another dimension for a temporary visit, but retains its separate identity. Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi (Enlightenment) was likened to a river blending into the sea and its water becoming one with it, never to come out again. The individual self is forever dissolved. One has become the ocean. Yet—borrowing from another traditional metaphor, that of the destiny of mankind being likened to rain which falls to the ground, eventually forming rivulets and streams, all inevitably converging into one mighty river that finally merges back into the sea—Rose attests that each drop paradoxically remains eternally aware of its "dropness," even after having been reabsorbed into that whole, living, indivisible ocean.

Rose offers a further explanation—containing an astounding image—of this paradox regarding individuality as the essence of the seeker, after the (seemingly) valiant struggle, enters into the final Realization:

> ...It's like a drop of water in the ocean trying to break loose and vote. He might be there and he's conscious, but he is one—*the ocean is one big drop.* This is the paradox. When you get there, too, possibly, you might have more separateness than what you feel. You'll be separate. But you'll be one, because you're still observing. The drop of water is still observing the surrounding ocean. But its boundaries might not be the same (lecture, 1979).

Rose has defined two other critical distinctions between these forms of samadhi that need to be understood in assessing the nature of a spiritual experience. In the former (Kevala), the mind is alive, and is what has the experience. In the latter (Sahaja), the mind is dead, and Beingness remains to realize itself. In the former, the world is seen as being of Light. In the latter, the world is resolved back into the Self. As a perhaps indelicate analogy, if Cosmic Consciousness can be likened to an orgasm of the Self, Enlightenment is an out-of-body (out-of-universe) experience.

Based on some of Rose's comments, the Buddhist term, nirvana, seems to be similar in meaning to the "nothingness" aspect of Enlightenment (supported by Merrell-Wolff's stating that "the consciousness of the absence of objects is nirvana" [1973a, p. 104]), which is simultaneous with, or equivalent to "everythingness" (samsara). The entry into or appreciation of both at once is the total experience. This transitional appreciation is from that placeless pivoting point called no-mind.

The first four levels of experiences described are prior to Enlightenment; not beyond it. One reason why Rose points this out is because he feels it is important to prepare seekers for the fact that not all spiritual experiences are the same, nor are they all pleasant and blissful, even though some of them are. He wants to map out the way-stations on the final stretch of the path that are seldom accurately referenced, and in providing this greater perspective, allude to the "common ground" on which all relative experiences rest. Also, keeping in mind the Law of Progression and the reality of successive plateaus on the path, he does not want a seeker of greater capacity to stop short of the goal in the mistaken assumption that one has arrived at ultimate IS-NESS, while actually still being identified with some incomplete emotional or mental satisfaction that is *before one's vision.* If the seeker's real commitment is to finding the final Truth—and not a subordinate state of security, understanding, peace, or joy—and has sufficient self-honesty and intuition, one will always sense that there is more to discover, in total regression and expansion of self (or diminution, depending upon which side of the paradox one is seeing from), until one's very being has become one with Beingness, and there is no longer any division or differentiation of any kind.

In the following extended—and somewhat autobiographical—passage, Rose describes how the religious rapture of even the sincere seeker is still a condition of reaction bound within relative consciousness, and not equivalent to complete liberation. Such a "high" does not fundamentally change the one who is having the experience, as it remains a thing apart from the baseline state-of-being which one wishes to escape...although it would give a foretaste of a truer place. Recalling the aforementioned common ground of ultimate subjectivity as being the real goal of the spiritual quest (in the sense of the ultimate "I am," although at the apex of non-duality this would be supreme objectivity just as well), he invokes the conclusive triangulation on Jacob's Ladder in pointing to the necessary shift in attention that leads one out of the farthest reaches of duality:

> The mystic is both blessed and pitied. The fact that the mystic must return from joy to suffering again indicates that he is lacking in a sound appreciation of his state of mind (and being) at both times or experiences. He does not have the final answer. If he has really found God, he should be happy forever...if finding God brings to people the feeling of divine acceptance.
>
> The mystic *is* blessed, however. He should not be condemned even though—to all human standards—he is psychotic. He is a pioneer and a heroic casualty. He has dared to stand alone against nature. He has torn from his being the egotistical drives that beget children and enslave mates. He has struggled against the instincts of gregariousness and has ignored the customs and mores of his age. He has compounded his irritations, and so has stimulated his computer. He has gambled everything with the expectation of "nothing for certain," but prefers gambling to the game of desire and reward. He has fasted, sublimated, and meditated to sharpen his intuition. He should be able, therefore, to sense the sensible when it is advanced to him.
>
> Thus, if we can catch the mystic at the moment of his exaltation, he may be disillusioned enough to be thrown off his pleasant tangent—and he may be brought to the door of the Absolute (Rose, 1978, p. 222).

If one common theme can be found in all of his assessments of the different levels of spiritual experience, as well as the very structure of the entire path he has laid out, it is that the final answer lies in the direction of the ultimate, subjective source of awareness, and not out anywhere in the projection of the cosmos that is witnessed by this awareness. He is pointing to the state-of-being that is One, not two, and which contains all worlds and experiences. This understanding is best reflected in the last line of his poem, *The Mirror*: "I have had enough of this adventure into endless possibilities of myself..." (Rose, 1982, p. 95). This line conveys the image of a wise and weary old soul who remembers his Divinity after growing tired of playing the games of Lila, and is ready to re-enter death; ending the show.

To give this entire report a feeling of authenticity, of fundamental validity, it is important to get as clear a sense as possible of the Realization Rose had experienced, upon which the teaching is based. An experience as profoundly personal (yet impersonal) as this could only be adequately communicated in his own words. While this report has not been intended to be an anthology of quotations, it is not only fitting but necessary to present, as the anchor of this teaching, a glimpse of the final answer which he found.

Following is an account of the spontaneous experience of Enlightenment which happened to Rose when he was 30 years of age (Rose, 1978, p. 171, 224-7; 1985, p. 84). I refer to it only with

trepidation, awe, and some embarrassment, in the face of what it means. Its actuality and magnitude are unimaginable. But, as the Albigen System developed out of his discovery and how he came to find it, some approximate insight into the Realization is necessary, however inadequate the words and concepts used to describe it must always be.

These are the moments that preceded the event, in his own words:

> ...I was living in a glass house. Now and then, emotion would settle on me like a stifling fog, and it would interrupt my meditations or studies. Irritation set in and the respites from it were brief periods of mystical peace or joy. I found yoga to be a wonderful sedative. I thought at the time that I was dialing heaven. Years went by, and with the years, my conceit began to shred away. ...I decided I had been kidding myself. My intense hunger for Truth was waning. I was not sure of anything except that which I could see in the mirror, and that image was not faring too well at the hands of time. ...I had reached a sort of culmination of physical desire and spiritual frustration. ...I was playing the drama of life with one face, and was looking eagerly to heaven with the other. ...Then came *the accident...* I came apart at the seams. Very quickly. It was almost as though a chemical catalyst had been dropped into my mind. ...I did not do anything rash. I had no reason to. I had no reason to do anything. While the ego is being melted, there is no joy. Sorrow permeated my whole being...sorrow for myself and for humanity. The distress became almost unbearable, and it came upon me from the field of my mind, not from emotion. Emotion may have triggered it. Or a brick in the pavement may have caused it... However, once the catalyst started the change of mind, absolutely nothing mattered. I had no attachments beyond myself...*once I became...more deeply.*

In my opinion, this last phrase is the most meaningful line in the entire teaching.

He goes on to explain what happened as the transformation continued:

> I remember the early hours of anguish that preceded the great spiritual revelation... ...The experience described had all the symptoms of sorrow and despair, which changed as I progressed in the experience. The whole scene...was so dismal and so filled with despair that I wrestled with my sanity, or that which we call sanity... Only when my cherished sanity seemed to evaporate did I realize that this vision was only real as regards the perspective of the minds of men. In relation to the Absolute (which is real Reality), the whole thing was a mental tableau. It was a tableau of physical existence as opposed to ultimate Essence. The tableau is very much alive until we realize that it is mental. When we are about to step out of the mental into pure essence, we still have with us the memories of our evanescent intelligence [the Mountain Experience]... ...The initial attachment for myself became the prime source of my sorrow. I met myself face-to-face, and the division shocked me. Everything upon which I looked had a different meaning and aspect from previous comprehension, and was impossible to convey in language. Things in their essence are tangible only to mind-essence, and not tangible to the mind of everyday cognition. Somewhere in the being of man there is an eye that must open... I realized that I was both humanity and my individual self, and that I was everything. And in an instant, I realized that humanity didn't exist and that I didn't exist. But that I did exist in nothingness and everythingness, infinitely...

Rose represents the archetype of the warrior poet; the perfect blending of the Yin and Yang of human nature. He had written various pieces of mystical poetry prior to his experience, intuiting the direction to Truth, as well as subsequent to it, testifying to the reality he found. He has explained that he used an emotional medium, tapping into a mood of nostalgia, to describe something which ultimately was without emotion—that which gave way to the experience of Nothingness, and then Allness. He has said that towards the end of one's path, when there is no longer any willful methodology to practice or perhaps even any sense of direction left to take one further and no personal guru is available as a catalyst, something that can help push one over the edge of the finite at such a precarious moment is the reading of works of mystical inspiration, such as *The Three Books of the Absolute* (Rose, 1978, p. 229-236; 1988, p. 201-209).

What follows is a compilation of excerpts from various such writings, which collectively communicate a feeling, a conviction of another state-of-being, a view of existence from a vantage point not of this world. While no pile of words can ever replicate the realization of Essence, these words do convey a sense of what it means *to become...*

From *The Books of the Relative*:

> Thou and the Lord are one. He who is alive when the remainder are dead [egos and relative values]—he is one with the Lord... I am the beginning and the end. I am the bowman, the arrow, and the victim. I am the Way. I am the Path. I am the Ladder. And the numbers are so written that they can only be seen from above, when the feet are upon them. For that which climbs is always upon a ladder. I speak and thou hearest Me not. I am the Truth. I am the Love. And as I promised, I and thou are one. So that truly thou must be honest to thyself, and love thyself for My sake... For we are one. Long have I been divided against myself, but now thou hast found me. Let there be no question or answer... I am the voice of silence. I am the joy and the sorrow. I am the beginning and the end. Be still and know that I am the discernment. (Rose, 1982, p. 84-86).

From *The Mirror*:

> For God now breaks into many parts, observers watching observers, and observers of observers of observers, but which of these billions is really here now...which of these particles, among God's infinite number of particles, is watching God??? Is he alive to all who watch death and life, is he alive to God...who rejoices in seeing God particularized? Or is he alive who is not among the myriad observers, the myriad eyes that sleep or remain less asleep? Is he alive who hears through millions of ears, of greater or lesser dependability, or is he alive...that turns his back on madness, on rejoicing and despair, on pleasure and pain, on Gods and God-Particles, and who looks on nothingness with apathy and indifference, who laughs at the thunderings of Hell and the shrill insanity of Heaven, who feels with feelingness, as only God can feel... But who turns once more back to his fellow man saying I have become a mirror, look beyond my beauty, look beyond my ugliness, look beyond my wordlessness, my inarticulateness, my fractured mentality, for I have been back there freezing and exploding, burning and drowning—I have been the insanity of those observing, I have lost all my particles except that which is a mirror, which is nothing of me, but which gathers other particles which are inarticulate, And which identify with other infinite articulations of madness. I am that which gathers other particles, saying, let us be

> mirrors. I am not a mirror of moaning and misery, I am not a mirror of praying and pleading, I am a mirror of the process called seeming, I mirror the seeming...watching the watching of seeming and dreaming. The puppets of the Absolute have broken their strings, have formed agreements to dream dreams, have agreed to pretend to create other puppets, and have agreed upon madness together, until madness has become to them as reality, while unconsciously they hunger for the comfort of the guiding hands of their puppeteer. I am a mirror that madness looks upon, and sees a hope surmounting foolishness, I am a mirror that reflects no madness and seeing nothing but a seeming of madness. I am a mirror that looks not to reflect love for I perceive no love but a seeming of love, and I see no justice, divine or human, but a seeming of justice. I am a mirror that was not made and remade to reflect only seeming...I am a mirror also of myself, watching myself, watching myself, watching myself ad infinitum. I am a mirror alive and aware, aware of being aware of being aware of being aware...ad infinitum...Untimed and unspecialized, dreamless forever, not dreaming of life or dreaming of death, not dreaming of Gods or demigods. I am a mirror with my back to humanity, vainly lighting a direction, for puppets to pick up threads and contact, strings to the Absolute. I am a mirror facing the Absolute, there is nothing to face, until we turn our backs upon the void...upon projections...upon particularization, upon seeming...until we realize we are not turning away from a void or from confusion or meaninglessness, until we realize that we do not realize...except that the Absolute has a mirror which it turns upon itself, saying I have had enough of my adventure, into endless possibilities of myself... (Rose, 1982, p. 92-95).

From *The Book of Omen*:

> Man has sinned against Truth and has closed his eye to his lord, and by greedily trying to serve himself, serves no longer the Self. Woe, woe to the prophet. For the eye that sees the void swells into it, and the ear that hears a cosmos stilled by sacrilege is an ear tortured for all days, and the mind that grasps the collapse of all things is a mind made of nothing, sensing nothing. For space is upon us and all about us, and we are space and therefore nothing is upon us. Everywhere is nothing and we are nothing, and the memory of that which was screams at the void. But there is no echo... O Mind that peopled the spaces with thy thoughts, where are thy children? Gone is the question and the answer, gone is the hate and love, joy and sorrow. Gone is being and non-being, gone is the one and its many. All that remains is All. Woe to the probers of mind, to the dissectors of gods, to the analysts of gentle fable, for now all that remains is All (Rose, 1982, p. 81).

From *Yesterday I Went Insane*:

> Yesterday I went insane, and dwelt, as Nothing dwells in space; Normal now, my views regain, but wonder, which—the truer place (Rose, 1982, p. 18).

From *Between*:

> Between the art of love and hate, between the doubts between hope and despair, between the minutes we create, are seconds dead, and spaces vast and bare (Rose, 1982, p. 113).

From *1968*:

> Ah yes, I know that nothing is...that somewhere backstage a demon-god projects whiteness on a black screen that seems to live...and I complain, not that He has smiled upon the void, but that Maya bears life unto his smile, and that which *IS* will ever love that which seems (Rose, 1982, p. 78).

From *The Dawn Breaks*:

> Nothing is happening. Nothing is done. The eye and urge are beauty and life, the owner is disenfranchised. The holder lets go of his grasp and everything becomes his domain. God is in his thought, and his thought lives only in his God. Nothing is judged. Nothing is known. Nothing is meaningful. Everything is perfect (Rose, 1982, p. 112).

From *Friendship*:

> I passed through a deep crevice at twilight...before the backdrop of eternity...And I had a friend...Both of us had been to this same place, to the twilight in the narrow crevice, and because of this place, we are eternal (Rose, 1982, p. 110).

From *Transition*:

> ...And find at last that I am safe from beguiling light, and find voracious Truth deep in the infinity of Darkness and Eternity...deep in myself (Rose, 1982, p. 61).

From *The Three Books of the Absolute*:

> Out of the valley of the river came a wanderer. Peace was in his eye and his soul was wrapped in Nirvana. Peace to the wanderer. O Eternal Essence, I was that Wanderer. I it was who left the gardens of tranquility that I might labor for Truth... My eyes are extinguished although I see the earth beneath me. And my ears are destroyed and my mouth speaks no words for my feet carry me through a realm that needs no language. And my mind is silent and humble in its dismay, and all within that House there is not one thought. And within that House is heard the painful tolling of a tiny silver bell, and within that dome is felt the surge of mighty roaring tides that will not be stopped. For the keeper of the House is gone, and all that remains testifies that he never was. Exploding thunder shakes its walls, and heaven and hell are within its region. For All is within that House, swelling it to burst its comprehension. All joy is here, and all of joy is pain, torturing the House that cannot contain it. All of joy is tears, and the world will not contain the reaving sorrow of this House. All this House is fire, straining to burst forth until these walls stand no longer. O lamentation of lamentations, has thy agony no tongue? O sorrower in the spaces of desolation, who shall hear thy anguish, and unless it be heard, how shall the pain be stopped? I, O Eternal Essence, beseech Thee—where within Thee have I dissolved myself? Where are prisoned those who follow love? Where have I left my I-ness, and now having left it, who is it that cries out to Thee? Where is the dirge of sorrow that is all that remains of me? Who feels this pain that burns and consumes, yet is felt not by I-who-am-no-more? Who is it that looks from the windows of my mansion like a strange prowler? Who is it that hears and hears not, that yearns for life and lives not, that seeks out death and dies not...? O Ever-Allness, what is Thy pleasure in my sorrow? Thou hast damned me to

thoughtlessness, and yet I cannot leave off thinking, and still my thoughts are not words. Thou hast robbed me of my soul and mind, and my body laments for all ages, for my body dies not nor yet walks among men. Thou hast delivered me from my Ego, and what is there that remains? O Ever-Allness, forever insensate, pitiless to entreaty, speechless to my prayers—weep Thou with me, for I am of Thee...and all that remains of me is Thee. What is the magnitude of Thy nothingness! O what are the limits of Thy plenitude!...What is the thunder of Thy silence!...How quiet are thy cataclysms! Thus shall I sing the praises of myself. Peace to the wanderer!

...Who shall know of love and godliness, of peace and serenity, if knowledge is not?... Where, where is where...? Why, why is why? Where O wise among wise, is When...? In what drifting sandheaps are its footprints...? ...Who, who is who...? Can the sage, more the fool, say that which is being...and among beings, who are what? Is the spark an entity, or is it merely part of flame, and is flame only illusory heat...or does it live? Is not man a question asking questions, frustrated by the unanswered, laboring to answer himself...and creating a mountain of questions in the answer...yet who shall know? Who shall know the circle that has no radius, and who shall know the point that is a line of infinity...? Where is maya...? If all is maya, who, knowing, sees this illusion? Is not his knowing also maya...? In what pitiful hells are the wise...In what blackest abysses are the oblivious ignorant...? ...O wise and foolish, look about you in your joys. Where are the joys of yesterday...and being gone, did they ever live? Did you enjoy, or was it another's lips that drained thy cup?... Where are the years drowned in the ocean of the Unknowing? Think ye on the folly of light. Does it not perish when the eyes are closed? But the power over us by light is feared by man. He sleeps and dreams of darkness, and wakens, screaming into it... Relax ye and die and live the darkness, and enter the impassive pool of the Unknowing... What is time, O mind...? Is it the number of steps in a day, the number of thoughts in a step...? Then of the thoughts in a day, how many years of days would it take to know all that is known, and then how long—to know the magnitude of the Unknowing...? ...Mourn ye for the hour when the cloud of the Unknowing passes and the falseness of light dazzles the eye. For the light is a liar unto the Light, and the light is the darkness of the mind. Yet who shall know...? I is dead. Death is dead and life has no living...All that remains is All. I of the cloudier corpus is slain. It is slain that the "I" of the mind might live. "I" of the mind is slain, for the "I" of the spirit to live. "I" of the spirit is slain that the spirit may come into its glory. "I" of the spirit shrinks from the vanity of life. Space is upon it. Space towers above it, silently mocking its absence, and the spirit takes its leave like a thought...like the vapors and like the solitary sound that is heard not... Eternity wanders through infinity like a blind minnow in an empty ocean whose bounds are limitless...Yet who can see its boundlessness? Eternity probes itself like a blind idiot for it knows not its immensity, and it roars and rages in its madness because it cannot find its edges. Yet who can hear its roaring...? ...Eternity convulses in its pralaya, seeking for definition. Death agonizes silently for motion...And all that remains is All. O who shall hear of this anguish, for all that remains is All.

O Dream of Dreams, tell me, where is the dreamer? O Dreamer, speak unto me—in which of these dreams wilt thou be found? O dreamer, speak unto me, art thou the dreamer in the Dream, or the dreamer of the Dream? ...O Dreamer, answer me—how many people are dreaming thy dream? ...Reply unto me who walketh in wakefulness,

knowing not if wakefulness be but an illusion of wakefulness, or if sleep be the door of the Absolute...or if sleep be the dreamer awake... Speak unto me not in the ringing of my ears that know not if such stridency be the dawning of new perception—or the damnation of all that was real. O world, where are thou, that but a second past, clung to my feet? Where in space am I caught? O love, where are thy children—the friends of my youth? Who has frozen them in the eternal ice until they stand in transient memory, seeming as statues...? ...O never-never-forever...why art Thou? O tender I-ness forgive me... O lovable I-ness forgive me...for my hand has shattered the mirror, and I can see thee not. O hunger that begets creation, O wistful memory of myself, O transient I-ness, forgive me...for the probing finger has shattered the veil of illusion. I have shattered the chimera of all Knowing...and all that I know is naught. Time did I seize in the fingers of my mind, and that which seemed to move as a phantom did I hold in my fingers... The peoples of the earth did I see, all that had lived or will live, and their thoughts were upon their faces. Beneath my feet did I seize space... And in all this land there was not one sound, for my fingers held all time, and in time are the fields of motion. So that no atom stirred, nor did one audible wave afflict the ether. For the blood of the Serpent is coagulated, and in its mind all thoughts are one. And I saw the voices of men...and I saw the beautiful patterns of motion...but the world was as still as death...and the soft perfume of memory tinted the void with its essence... Plain was the picture for I had concentrated upon color and motion...and now they were no more. Strange was the land for I concentrated upon dimension until it waxed and waned... O friend of my childhood, O lovable I-ness, what have I done to my world? For I have turned my eye upon it and delivered it unto chaos! And now I look upon the looker...Twice I see myself, and then I see myself no more. I see myself as a suppressor of mountainous space and a conqueror of time. Mighty are my sinews, as I stand upon the mountain. Then I see myself as an infinitesimal man in the infinitude of humanity...caught in the congealed blood of life. I see this tiny man, happy, living, responding to illusions of color and motion and dimension, and happy in his response, knowing not the illusion of his indulgence in non-existent happiness. And looking upon the tiny man, I sees his joys leave him, for joy is a thing apart. And looking upon him I see his response leave him because motion is a thing apart. And seeing these things, my heart burns with love for existence. Yes, I on the mountain, conqueror of illusion, now weep for the beauty of illusion. And looking back into the panorama below, I, the mountained man—I the consciousness absolute, see that the tiny man now no longer liveth...for life is a thing apart. And since he no longer liveth, he cannot see me as I see him, nor can he see himself as I see him, nor can he ever know of his joys that are things apart...or know of his love which is now a thing apart. And knowing his love and his longing for the pattern, I on the mountain bewail and sorrow in his loss. Great is my anguish in his silence, great is my agony in his loss. And feeling my agony, I on the mountain, know that I am the tiny man in the endless cavalcade. And soon I see, looking ahead, that all my joys are not, that all my love is not, that all my being is not. And I see that all Knowing is not. And the eminent I-ness melts into the embraces of oblivion like a charmed lover, fighting the spell and languishing into it. And now I breathe Space and walk in Emptiness. My soul freezes in the void and my thoughts melt into an indestructible blackness. My consciousness struggles voiceless to articulate and it screams into the abysses of itself. Yet there is no echo. All that remains is All. My spark of life falls through the canyons of the universe, and my soul cannot weep for

> its loss...for lamentation and sorrow are things apart. All that remains is All. The universes pass like a fitful vision. The darkness and the void are part of the Unknowing... Death shall exist forever... Silence is forgotten... All that remains is all. (Rose, 1978, p. 229-236).

These poetic impressions describe "Rose's" experience of entering into Enlightenment, as he watched himself die. The essence of the Realization itself, however, can never be spoken or communicated. At most, like the Buddha's silently holding out the flower before his disciples, the naked reality of it can only be conveyed through direct transmission to a student who is ready.

As can be deduced from the glimpse these lines provide of what it means to be Awake, of the Reality outside the cave of shadows, the significance of life on Earth has an entirely different meaning when seen from outside of it, from the other side of zero. Rose has made the following revealing statement about what the prospect of finding the real Self might actually involve:

> My comprehension of the mind of the final observer is such that it presumes the observer to have need of neither mundane perception or memory to BE. It has a different perspective when the body is negated or removed, in that it no longer particularizes, for one thing. The memories and personality that we identified as being us in the body-coat have ultimately about the same dearness and wistfulness as the characters from a story projected upon a screen for our edification. It might be like coming out of such a dark theater—out of comfort and illusion; this business of finding our real selves. For a short while, the chilly shock of the out-of-doors reality is there. (Rose, 1975, p. 60)

He has suggested that after this awakening into Reality, the only purpose in returning into this world of appearance would be to bear witness and to point a finger at the moon.

To this end, for the benefit of the seeker, he has also summed up the core meaning of this experience in more accessible terms. He again refers to this key "rite of passage" of one's consciously entering death (in somewhat humorous terms here) in order to emphasize a critical point:

> You think, "Oh boy—there went me into nothing." You'll think you are going to die forever. It's good to think that because it kills the ego. When the person feels he is starting to die, he will drop all of his egos immediately. (Rose, 1985, p. 182, 184).

As traumatic as this transition is, he goes on to add the crucial message of the entire teaching: "But the amazing thing is that after you die, you find yourself still observing the mess, and that OBSERVING IS THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY" (lecture, 1986). This is the conviction he wants to impress upon the student who is contemplating the inevitable appointment with death: "The only thing I think is valuable to know is that when you go, the observer still lives" (lecture, 1986).

This also relates to the obvious question of validation: how does one know that a "spiritual" or after-death experience is valid and not some hallucination or creation of belief, as repeatedly warned against throughout this teaching? Rose answers this by referring to one's ability to become aware that, whatever dimension one may be experiencing—one is *witnessing a vision.* When the knower behind consciousness knows itself directly, all such splitting up of reference points of selfhood as subject and object and the consequential potential for distortion within any form of manifest experience with which one may be identified is transcended. This state of ultimate subjectivity is itself the validation. As such, "I am that I am" <u>is</u> also ultimate objectivity. Everything from Cosmic Consciousness to a bad night in Pittsburgh is found to be a relative mental experience and not real, or not as real as the One who watches it and in Whom it exists. Rose says: "You view the scene. And this is the only

proof; the only point-of-reference that you have: your observing self" (lecture, 1986). This final Beingness is Christ's: "I am the Truth."

Rose inverts this very question of validity. The usual scientific method of validating psychological knowledge is for one to pose as a theoretically neutral, outside observer who is witnessing an experiencer and an experience, and then somehow judging the authenticity of their relationship. Rose says that Realization cannot be validated from some vantage point below it or ascertained by the manipulation of any number of concepts subordinate to it. One's *becoming* the Truth is the state of absolute validity.

Rose has made a couple of other curious remarks relating to the question of validity. From the viewpoint of human experience, which is all we have to go by on this side of the Unknowing, the Buddhist terms we encounter, such as "nothingness," "void," and "emptiness," imply non-existence or limbo; some unconscious netherworld. This is because we can only conceive of our mundane, body-ego-centered existence as being the ground of reality, and its negation can only be regarded as oblivion; hence our deeply ingrained fear of death. This is also the motive behind the myriad religious fantasies we concoct to assuage our existential dread at entering this mysterious realm; a forbidding place, where our selves and evanescent world, though undefined, are threatened to be undone.

Yet, he claims this transition actually involves realizing that what is entered at death (if the death is total) is MORE real than what is left behind (including the various possible after-death bardos where one may linger unknowingly, if one is not entirely dead as a mental conviction of finite selfhood). In this sense, the Self can be likened to the "black hole" phenomena in astronomy. This is an object or source of energy of such unimaginable magnitude that it absorbs everything within its reach. Not even light can escape it. It can only be defined in negative terms as being "black," or an area in the cosmos where nothing else seems to be, as no positive quality can be ascribed to it. Yet, it is not a vacuum or an absence of something real. It is in fact much more real and intense than perhaps anything else in the universe. Black holes are suspected to be the birthplace of galaxies. The only way astronomers can describe it is the same as how Hindu sages describe Brahman: "Not this, not that."

Rose testifies that the Observer-Self is forever awake and untouched by all possible objectified states of consciousness passing before its vision. In recalling his experience, Rose has said: "I was aware of oblivion. It wasn't real." This statement has another significance, in addition to its reassurance that there is something eternally real beyond the dark, seeming oblivion of death. It is that the state of Realization *is always;* not only when "one" (so to speak) is on the other side. There is nothing that is not contained in ever-living awareness, including dreamless sleep. Even "oblivion" would be only a human conception or imagined sub-category of unconscious unconsciousness within the mind and could not really exist as a final state, as this too would be surrounded by the ultimate Beingness, which is that of maximum, aware IS-ness. Another implication is that this Self which has been rediscovered is anterior to both the "void" and the manifested universe which is projected onto it. Rose came to this conclusion after his experience: "When I came back, I was also aware of nothingness...then I knew I was immortal" (lecture, 1985).

The living presence of Rose's teaching was revealed to me once during a group discussion he was leading. He was talking about the different levels of spiritual experience (as discussed earlier), and how the occurrence of each higher level of realization is rarer than the ones below it, as the pyramid of humanity narrows to its peak. He referred to the frequently described accounts in the metaphysical literature of rapture, lights, and glory, and how what had happened to him reduced all that to a wonderful, though trivial, distraction. I picked up no trace of ego or vanity, as one would expect, in his stating he had encountered or heard of only a few people throughout his life who had

also experienced that final Awakening. I knew his having any form of pride in his spiritual status would be not so much foolish, as utterly meaningless.

At that point, I asked him—what I later realized to be—yet another naive, though honest question. It was a question asked from a strictly human perspective: "Do you ever get lonely, considering how few people have ever had the same experience you did; that so few people can ever really know 'where' you are and what you're talking about?" He replied to this instantly, without thinking about it first or trying to deliberately come up with some impressive sounding, "cosmic" remark, as guru's are supposed to do. This lack of a gap between question and answer indicated to me that he was responding genuinely from his essential condition, and not processing some strategic angle through his "Zen teacher" mind.

Rose said: "Lonely? I can't be lonely. **There's nobody here but me**." He looked around at the group of us on the lawn, as he sat on a large, flat rock, reminiscent of the scene of the Sermon on the Mount. We stared at him in awkward silence as he added: "I've been sitting here all these years just talking to myself!" At that moment, seeing the twinkle in his eyes as he looked at me, and then his bursting into laughter—the great Buddha's laugh—*I knew who he was.* His final revelation: "There's nobody here but me," has echoed through my mind like a haunting mantra ever since.

This has been a long journey; this discourse on the Albigen System. The full significance of Jacob's Ladder as a living experience is difficult to grasp at once, yet it must be maturely appreciated. In line with Rose's doctrine of backing away from untruth rather than attempting to define Reality directly, he has generally avoided making flat statements about the nature of the Realization he experienced at the end of his philosophical search. This is for fear that immature seekers would only turn any such definition-in-advance into just one more idol to passively worship, and hence an obstacle to discovery.

Following, however, is the most direct admission he has ever uttered on the subject; one that sums up his entire teaching:

> **The tiny man and the observer are one, and the final observer is the Absolute. There is nothing but me—this is the final answer** (lecture, 1979).

This, finally, is the explanation, in 25 words or less, of the essence of Rose's Psychology of the Observer. Tying this in with Jacob's Ladder, the tiny man is the bottom triangle, the observer oversees the middle triangle, and the Absolute is at the top of the uppermost triangle.

"There is nothing but me": the meaning of the words, when fully confronted, is like one's being crucified with a stake right between the eyes. All is contained in that declaration. The challenge it commands, for the rest of one's days, is to search for the exact definition of that "me."

This teaching has been Richard Rose's gift to us; his legacy. He has never claimed to be a savior for anyone, or an Avatar for the human race. His function has been to serve as a guide pointing the way back to our Source. In doing so, he has fulfilled his commitment to make available what he has found. It is up to each individual to make that same commitment to Truth, and follow it out to the end.

To the age-old question: "Does God exist?", Rose's testimony firmly replies: "Yes. You don't." He once playfully chided us by saying: "After I die, I'm leaving this place permanently. You guys aren't going to get any more help from me! Don't pray to me for any advice, like I'll still be floating around, watching you." Rose was not trying to be cruel. What he was getting at is that he is not the one who is watching us and drawing us home, always. He is urging us to find out for ourselves, Who is.

He bids us farewell with these words:

I will take leave of you
Not by distinct farewell
But vaguely
As one entering vagueness
For words, symbols of confusion
Would only increase confusion
But silence, seeming to be vagueness,
Shall be my cadence,
Which someday
You will understand (Rose, 1982, p. 71).

Chapter 18

Personal Accounts of Transpersonal Experiences

It cannot be proven to another's mind with words and concepts that the foregoing described map which Rose offers will lead one to spiritual discovery. The validation for the receiver of this teaching can only be in the form of direct, subjective realization for oneself, from having followed through on the manner of inquiry recommended. Otherwise, all these guidelines remain only ink on paper. This report, as is the Albigen System, is meant as a workbook, not a travelogue.

Therefore, in lieu of a standard "results" section, which is inapplicable in this situation, following is a collection of testimonies from several individuals who have devoted years to working with the general scope of teachings presented in this study. The experiences range from a glimpse through the veil of relative, egoic consciousness, to a temporary visit to a higher dimension, to complete Awakening. An appreciation of these diverse accounts will give the reader a feel for the meaning of transcendence. They serve as a pointer to another state-of-being.

These are being presented plainly, with minimal commentary. Their worth as validation, and hence corroboration, must be inherent in the experiences themselves, which the intuitive reader may be able to apprehend. Their living reality can be known only to the owner of the voice that describes them.

Mark J., a long-time student of Rose's, talks about a terminal experience which happened to him after a period of crisis and loss. He refers to the Realization only indirectly, commenting more on its implications to the path:

> I <u>did</u> have an experience. It was not the Absolute, but the basic experience for which the Absolute is the icing on the cake. It was the fundamental experience for which Rose's system aims—the death of the personal self and ego. On the other side of the ego, there is nothing bad. With that experience I could have ended my life, but as mountains are mountains again, and rivers are rivers, and egos are egos, I will go on.
>
> I got the answer from that experience. It isn't that I <u>decided</u> I got the answer, or gave up (I never gave up) and settled for something, but I actually got it and it's not something I have doubts about. The thing is: I'm certain it takes years to incorporate the insight. The somatic mind is what has the experience, but it takes years for it to come to terms with it and gradually alter its whole psychology in accordance with it. [Rose would

clarify that the final spiritual realization occurs outside the somatic mind, but that should "one" return into the body and projected world afterwards, the mundane mind would need to translate it into relative terms.]

I don't "own" it the way the ego owns something, because the ego got smashed in it. I think it is exactly the same experience for everyone. Actually, I don't think it is any ultimate answer, but a step to another level; something that is then the "answer" for it. The Zen "death experience" or "ego/mind death" is only one (level of realization).

The most important thing I learned from the whole experience is that you must make a vow or determine to yourself to want to know the truth, no matter what it means to the personal self; even if it means your total immolation. Even if you don't get the answer in this life, I don't think it matters.

The more you make spiritual efforts, the more all the negativities, inside and out, keep flying at you. It's more important to "live the life" than to go for the experience per se. I'm convinced that everyone gets it sooner or later irregardless, depending on how intensely you "live the life". (But) many will not make the effort to climb the spiral staircase, which has head-high steps not so easy to mount.

Wanting an experience automatically puts a block in front of it. One conclusion I've come to is that in going for Enlightenment, you don't go directly for Enlightenment, but that the experience occurs because you have placed an Ideal which is outside your personal ego above everything else. In Rose's system, this is "finding Truth no matter what it might be (whether to your personal liking or not)." In other words, you don't get Enlightenment from going for Enlightenment, but from going for a value you place as superior to your egos, wants, and desires. It's the by-product of serving an ideal, and sincere loyalty to that Ideal [the vector] above all else is the only thing that carries you through anyway.

Surrender isn't a passive thing, but really a dynamically more active consciousness than the normal aggressive-egoistic state. I've always had in the back of my mind that "surrendering" would mean to become some sort of vegetable. It's not true, though. The substratum of consciousness beyond the ego is a much more alive and individualistic state than the narrow ego. The philosophical conclusion I came to on the whole thing is: while the ego thinks it has to protect its existence, in truth, you can't be destroyed because you are an integral and absolutely necessary part of the whole, or Universe—like one of the facets on a jewel. The jewel (universe) can't do without that facet; it's part of the whole.

I went with truth and lost out on the material level, but got eternally rewarded.

Mike C., another veteran Rose student, had (possibly like Moses) a glimpse of "the Promised Land" after a period of intense philosophical work. The breakthrough was precipitated by his listening to someone read "The Three Books Of The Absolute" at the end of this period. Its penultimate line: "Silence is forgotten..." stuck in his mind like a monstrous koan. He wrestled with it constantly for weeks. Then—something exploded in his mind. Like Mark, he does not elaborate much on the experience itself, but on the convictions resulting from it, (in somewhat melodramatic terms):

It all began with a desperation and inspiration. The former was provided by me and my lifestyle, the latter by Richard Rose and his system and lifestyle. His Light shined

bright enough to penetrate into the dark depths of my self, where my Self had lain dormant, unknown for all my life. These were the beginning steps in the process of my awakening.

I had been saved from my own personal hell and had a glimpse of something greater than myself. It has been said that one glimpse is enough. If and when you have an experience, you will better understand what it means to Know, and Contain, and Honor. It is difficult for me to explain, and for others to comprehend, those things that were revealed to me in that fateful glimpse...of Reality.

My evaluation of that realization: from one side of the fence, it is and was worth dying for, worth sacrificing all of what appears to be life, all the "fun," joy, sorrow, tears of laughter and pain—everything is naught until they are seen from afar. And from the other side, it is and was and always will be my (birth)right, your birthright, and the same for everyone; if I, you, and they want it badly enough.

The most important things in life are friends on the path, a teacher who knows, and an eye for the truth; small t until capital T becomes unavoidable. And the truth is to be found or sought in every single moment of living, and it rarely is what our egotistical selves would desire, because the truth doesn't give a damn about those egotistical selves.

I do not exist except in the Absolute, and this life that we cling to so dearly is no more than a dream. You are no more than a dream, until you KNOW, prove, or discover otherwise. I wonder how and why I wasted all those years thinking I was someone. The great relief is knowing that you aren't. The great struggle is to forever maintain an even keel relative to the above facts; never allowing the mind to settle on either side of the line, but only in the middle, in-Between.

The experience did not change me. It allowed a certain Essence who inhabits a particular body, to find Itself, or become again in touch with Itself. "Me" is a misnomer, in that "me" indicates the presence of someone, or something. Forget how it will change "me" and allow that "me" to BECOME. The experience answers and satisfies the only true and honest desire we have (if we will admit it): that is to discover who or what we really are. It does not satisfy any needs or desires associated with that mundane "me" mentioned above.

The relevance of the process leading up to the experience? Damn it! It was never and never can be described as a "process." It is a life, a way of living, a way of taking each breath with a hunger for the TRUTH. If treated or looked upon as a process, it will be forever doomed to be an extension of the ego, the small s self, that is interested in such things as processes. Be careful or you'll miss this. Zen is never a process, only a questioning doubt, always a doubt, until the doubt breaks the shell of the illusion, the cosmic egg.

The Psychology of the Observer path is very direct and very subtle. So much so that it can be missed in the blinking of an eye (or in the passage of a thought). It is a very subjective, personal approach to something that ultimately is not so subjective or personal.

Our desire for truth will carry us through and allow the commonplace to become spiritual...or magical. Rose's system teaches non-thinking creatures the fine art and

science of real thinking about the self; not about processes, motorcars, ballgames, or making a living. It is solely dedicated to man discovering Man.

My recommendations to other seekers: Don't B.S. yourself into believing that seeking is fun or should be along socially acceptable lines, or even "spiritually" acceptable lines. Seeking is tearing your heart out milligram by milligram and dissecting it under the microscope of your enquiring mind, which is dedicated to Truth. There is no other way. We go out by ourselves, but if we are lucky, we may make the connection before the end, and thereby not remain alone for eternity.

If our concept of the small s self was not fragile, it could not be shaken. This self is the masquerader, the creator of deceit and illusion in our lives, and thereby the reason for our state of non-reality. Nothing can shake the capital S Self, for it IS. I know we cannot think or reason or rationalize or wish or love or hope or emotionalize our way into Realization. We aren't going to make it unless we leave ourselves behind. And I don't think that can happen by any act of will, but only by elaborate, intense, arduous preparation, and luck/destiny. The hills are again hills, and we are only blessed for that instant wherein we can see them from the vast perspective that is the Mountain.

You cannot comprehend the entire mental dimension. Better to become the Truth, and you will henceforth observe the mental dimension from a point of greater reality.

God has really provided me with some wonderful opportunities over the last year. Some of them hurt me a lot, but not the part of me that means anything. ...to be awed by the mystery of life and how it works in a pattern and fashion often unfathomable by my mind. There is always some dim awareness of the unfolding of events in the drama in exquisite order, right along side of the emotional involvement and attachment to it all. I feel the true nature of detachment to be another level of awareness in a person concerning life's events. He is both in and above the paradox at the same time; reaping the benefits of a conciliatory observation.

The forces of adversity are eternal and omnipresent, even when one becomes the Path. The trick is never to allow the mind to wander in reverie, and hence become more or less susceptible to those forces. A need for Enlightenment is just as destructive as a need for sex, only the action is more subtle. And harder to defend against. A man needs nothing; he just is. Period. We lack nothing. What we have is an abundance of concepts about what it takes to live—and die. A seeker IS the search, until he dies. If you were told that Enlightenment was just around the next bend, what would you be willing to do to make the turn?

You are not on Jacob's Ladder. You are Jacob, dreaming. Keep watching the spaces between your thoughts.

One anonymous individual provides a testimony of transpersonal experience of a different order. Although the account described was not that of an ultimate philosophical answer, the sequence of events and the psychic crisis that opened into revelation and resolution was a perfect parallel—if transposed to a "higher key"—to the hard course that would lead one to the final spiritual realization:

...For the previous year, I had been going through a series of hellish episodes of a mental or psychic nature. There was a profound feeling that what I perceived around me was possibly not real. At one point, I had the overwhelming and utter conviction that I was

losing my mind, my grip on reality. The conviction arose from a profound feeling that I had no point of reference to relate to. Concurrently, there was a manifest and growing conviction that I was going to die. Not physically, but a part of my mind was dying and there would follow a rebirth of sorts.

Strangely enough, with everything that was going on, I did not panic. What could I do? I decided that if I was going to go insane, I would watch myself go insane; observe the process. There was nothing else to do. I had gotten into the habit of analyzing the contents of (my mental experiences), trying to find some meaning or design which might possibly lead me to a way out of my situation. This went on for a year.

Finally, I awoke from the last of the recurring visions I was to have. I was desperately analyzing the contents of the vision, trying to make sense out of the whole horrible puzzle my existence had become. I reached the end of my analysis. I had no answer. There was no answer, at least that I could perceive. There was nothing more I could do. I gave up, totally, completely, to the depths of my being.

What followed then can only partly be described, for although there was somewhat of a visual component to this, what cannot be conveyed is the overwhelming absoluteness of the convictions experienced.

Immediately upon giving up, it was if I had been hit by a bolt of lightning. A tremendous surge of electricity seemed to course through me causing my body to involuntarily convulse and contract with great intensity. After this sudden shock passed, I became suddenly aware of every possible emotion I had ever felt: fear, love, hate, wonder—the whole emotional palette of my makeup. But these did not pass before me in sequence. I experienced all of them simultaneously; the entire range of feeling I was capable of in an instant, yet each individual emotion was distinct and utterly perceivable.

Then a great emptiness settled in my mind and the answer came to me clearly and distinctly, absolutely and without contention, as to what had caused all of my misery and been the source of the tormenting visions I had experienced: an overwhelming and total fear of rejection to the point that I had rejected myself. What I cannot convey here adequately is that this realization was not mere speculation or theorizing about a possibility. I was being shown a fact; I was not thinking at all. The possibility of intellectual doubt about what I was experiencing just did not exist. I was outside looking in at an absolute about myself.

As this realization about myself unfolded, I became aware that I was viewing two different worlds. I could still see my physical surroundings, but I was concurrently viewing an interior world or vision. I saw myself as an ego, an entity who at some time in his early, forgotten childhood, built a wall around himself to protect and isolate him from other people; a psychic wall, yet nonetheless very real and very solid in the dimension of my being in which it existed. I was amazed because I realized that there was no possible way, in my ordinary consciousness, for me to have seen this wall. I had not the slightest inkling of its existence. I was seeing something new and unknown for the first time, and as I marveled at its unsuspected existence, it melted; literally melted before my internal eye.

As this passed, I both felt and witnessed the heart area of my chest open up as if it were a door of some sort, and I went inside. I was now within myself in a vast region of space. I felt myself moving towards what I can only describe as a limitless intelligence

> of total power. It seemed to me to be a being separate from myself as I know myself. Radiating from it was a complete and total impersonalness or impartialness. My personal wants and desires were completely insignificant in the light of what I was witnessing.
>
> And then it ended. Suddenly. Whatever energy or force had powered this had exhausted itself. All I knew was what I had gone through for the past year was over. I was weeping involuntarily....

After first encountering Jim Burns at a group meeting, Rose explained he was "tipped off" that Jim had had the Enlightenment experience when Jim remarked to the others that one cannot know the truth about life, the mind, the world, and oneself until fully leaving this relative dimension and seeing it directly and objectively, as a whole, from "over there." From this, and his other insights about the real nature of things, Rose recognized that Jim had been to the same "place" he had.

An entire book needs to be written—and will be—about Jim's dramatic odyssey and extensive understanding of the inner path. His teaching is essentially the personal, psychological methodology of "becoming the truth." His testimony is based on a spiritual experience which concluded a period of intense self-reflection, philosophical contemplation, and prolonged emotional trauma, finally culminating in his death. It could be said symbolically that whereas Rose first climbed the Mountain (of manifested life) before his head was chopped off, Jim was crushed beneath the Mountain—but knew everything there was to know about it! Both died from the ordeal...and discovered the Self. He has referred to the experience as his having found "Christ Consciousness," and realizing that ultimately: HE IS THAT. For now, here is a sampling of his observations:

> The problems of the world are rooted in the fact that each individual person has not yet discovered the nature of his own consciousness. The grand awakening, should it ever come, would be one in which every individual person is brought to realization and complete, clear awareness of their own internal workings. The general maelstrom mankind finds itself in is the result of all the machinations of projection and transference in which everybody is working their own internal conflicts out on everybody else.
>
> If the average person's mind were hooked to a loudspeaker and you could hear what went through it, you would probably look for the highest building around so you could be dead the first time. You are walking around in a reality that is the production of this common consciousness. There are very few who understand the functions that the mind is trying to fulfill and maintain.
>
> The biggest desire of man is to know knowing.
>
> You don't have to know everything. You only have to know what you have to know.
>
> Completed feeling generates new consciousness.
>
> The ultimate form of emotion is insight.
>
> There is a perfected image behind every thought, and until you have every one of them honed to a razor edge, you can't achieve the comprehension that your soul so desperately needs.
>
> Your internal system is entirely capable, given the opportunity, to teach you what it is trying to teach you. Your inner being knows. Your outer being is always unknowing.

Your system is constantly trying to get some inner job done. It is perfectly attuned to the potential of expanding your total consciousness to its absolute maximum. It can guide you exactly to the thinking required to deal with the outer circumstances or other aspects of consciousness that is absorbing your attention. This is all built in by natural design. It is endlessly trying to do this. It can't stop doing it.

Truth is the elimination of the question; the emotional experience of the resolution of the problem generating the question. Understanding is that state of being where the questions aren't there anymore.

To be caught up with time leads to being outside of time.

I've been almost always in the exclusive "presence of myself." Generally speaking, I'm never in conflict with my self.

The attitude of my Being toward me is: "What did you do for me today?"

Everything is an extension of the questioning process. This is the point that most scientists loose track of. Why are they asking questions in the first place? Why are the questions so insufferably unanswerable no matter what they find? The reason is that they are answering the wrong questions. Reason is the handmaiden of emotion and not the other way around. Ego wants it to be the other way around. Intellect is a monster when it is not connected in comprehension with feeling.

Every time you break through into a sharp, clear realization or imagery in any area, all of a sudden you set up a whole new standard and everything you've ever thought up has to be brought up and compared with it. It's a standard process and you have to start all over again. This occurs until you break through and achieve the awareness of THIS I KNOW IS ME. When you achieve that realization, you break into the final frontier. From then on, after you've done the massive review and reevaluation from breaking into that final frontier, everything thereafter is done for the rest of time. I spent thirty years doing it.

When you start looking at yourself, you are looking at blind feelings. The point is not to go with your feelings, but to understand what is behind them. The last guy that "went with his feelings" is doing life for murder. People are like boiling kettles all the time, but become so accustomed to it that they regard it as normal. This is the "shadow side" of a person and is what is trying to get these feelings to the surface.

To be genuinely "clear" is to have answered to every question you have had to date, and I've been there on a regular basis. If that isn't paradise, I don't know what is. It is to have taken every feeling that ever came into your comprehension and to have traced it all the way back to its roots.

I put people into a trance by talking, but I tell them about it. I put them into a trance in the area of reality where resolution takes place.

There is the feeling of the first time you ever puzzled at something, and came to an insight about it and had that sense of relief, and that sense of space—mental space—that comes only when you have an insight. When you have enough insights about yourself, you maintain that sense of space ALL the time, and you become conscious of the fact that you <u>are</u> that mind; that is what you become. Once you maintain that, it never leaves you.

The ultimate basis of sexuality is the drive for all comprehension. When I'm in the mental realm, ordinary sexuality does not exist for me. Nearly all the sex urge is not genital at all if you experience the depth beyond the superficial. Real libido is beyond the false libido of sex. I have fought with the concept of sublimation of energy since the first day I heard of it. You advance the whole front. You don't take something out of here and put it over there.

The whole of society is endlessly trying to make good on things that are worthless. They spend their lifetime pumping themselves up with fantasy because they can't stand the facts.

If you get stuck looking at too much reality, you're going to come apart at the seams. Life will become meaningless and your mind will refuse to have anything to do with it. When you get to the point where you're not willing to put up with it under any circumstances, your mind collapses; which is what happened to me.

All mental illness is the result of loneliness. If you are true to yourself, you will be abandoned, and you will do anything to avoid abandonment—which is the whole crux of the internal argument. We have the habit built into us of blaming ourselves instead of others. It is easier to blame oneself than to face the abyss of isolation. And loneliness is something that always afflicts those with high IQ's. They have nobody that takes as obvious the things they take as obvious. They are bound into higher concepts.

We have finally gotten to the point [in social history] where we've bought enough time for a few people who have the genetic propensity to be the resolvers, the true researchers, the perceivers of new information and insight into the workings of the mind.

Because few children can cope with clear realization of the lunacy around them, they bottle up their instinct to clear insight and realization, and thereby pass over into the very lunacy they so fear.

Guess who holds the throttle, the choke-hold on the highest spiritual experience? What do you suppose it means in the Bible: "Until you become as a child..."? That's what it means! Until you pacify that child and he disappears, you do not have access to the spiritual heights. Take it from one who went that way and found out! All psychic energy first comes through the hands of that child.

You have to repair the bridge to the inner self that was broken in childhood.

A great problem is the fear involved in realizing that you know nothing. When I first came to the place of being able to face the terror of the unknown, I split the only rock that was ever difficult for me in my entire life. Facing the unknown takes a lot of personal quiet and divorcement from the world around you. I studied this very carefully. It is the bridge between the inner and outer man.

The unconscious is suppressed conscious capability. It is the large body of unanswered opportunities to answer questions. The need was there. The question was generated, but it wasn't answered to. I separate between that dimension and the true subconscious, which can only generally be reached through the meditative process. The subconscious is the generator, in my experience. To get to the higher levels, I had to answer to the unconscious to the point where it would give me five minutes off, and then get into the subconscious to determine what direction it wanted to go in. I would answer to that,

and when that was done, I would automatically find myself in the superconscious, which was the point of my thrust in the first place.

Ego is a very phony, slippery, and difficult thing to get hold of. Everything is "I did" and the truth is that you don't do anything. You are the victim [or result] of your circumstances, but at a certain point your need for identity takes over and you say "I did. I thought. I this and I that." If you really examine the thing, you are just sitting in a theater while this is taking place [including watching the ego believing in itself]. You're where it happened and that's about all you have to do with it.

We are at the crossroads of becoming. We have nothing to do with how things got here or where they are going.

Consciousness is at the crossroads of desire and fulfillment. When your consciousness doesn't get what it needs, it disintegrates. Ego is intrinsically involved in this, so the ego dies also.

I escaped into my mind from a world I couldn't stand. I forced myself to think. People were making me so miserable that I had to learn what made their heads tick. I had to do it with no fantasy involved and strictly and clearly see what made them operate. When I fully understood people to my own satisfaction and still it brought about no relief, it caused my inner death. I went to the other side.

The most overwhelming experience I've had was the knowing of my Overself. It answered to a whole realm of being that I had no suspicion even existed before the experience. I feel this experience is what has carried me through the rest of my life. I know that this body will pass and I will return to that place.

I died from remorse, from failure. I literally died from it; the pressure was so great. It got me to the other side and the minute I got there my first question was: "Did I fail?" My answer was: "You couldn't have failed if you tried to. You did a brilliant job. You went down like a valiant sailor." I haven't been bothered by failure again. I know it is a false concept. No one can fail.

I've been on both sides of the line many times in my life, and if it weren't for that fact, if I hadn't had the perspective of timeless things, I simply couldn't have maintained the ability to stay on the street.

In my experience, I had to totally give up the sense of any personal being and to take the chance that there would not be something there destructive to me. Which I was able to do and did.

I only have faint traces of memory of what it is like on the other side. I know I had complete freedom of choice whether to come back or not. I had complete knowledge. There were no blind decisions. I knew exactly what was involved, but for some reason I chose to come back.

You are rooted in this system. If you stop breathing while you're on the other side, you won't come back. It's as simple as that. Now, I had a choice over this the first couple of times I went over. I was given the opportunity to knowingly choose. The main reason for coming back was my attachment to people. I was so attached to the idea of my death generating a sense of loss in them. Over there, you have completely resolved all questions. You come back out of a sense of duty, which is generated out of being here. It is not native to that condition. I was still alive here, so I still would have died here.

> Had I ceased living here, the sense of duty would have evaporated. It is only generic to this condition. When you are on the fence and the life force and health is good, you tend to come back. You think you have a choice, but you probably don't.
>
> We are not all here. We are familiar with physical existence and accept it as being here. This dimension is truly being run, in my view, from a stable position of superior knowledge that we generally can't have insight into from here. When I was on the other side, this life I have now was just a sad, sad joke.
>
> I was 100 by the time I was 13. I've been an old man all my life.
>
> The source of (the universe) is an energy, of which the most physically understandable aspect is light. This energy is "slowed down" to an extent where there is time and space. In the condition beyond time and space, there is only a condition in, not a condition to question in. Our problem is our lack of ability to accelerate our being to the absence of time, the absence of motion.
>
> My deity is comprehension. I don't really view it as deity, but as a pain in the rear I have to contend with. But I suppose that's pretty much my view of deity too.
>
> People are always at war within, but most don't realize it. I'm different in that I've faced this war and came out the other side and had my "day in the sun." Once you've had your day in the sun, your system will not accept any other answer.
>
> I have stood at the peak of the universe and surveyed it all in comprehension.
>
> I accept the unfoldment of me before the only audience that matters—me. And I know I've had nothing to do with what I've gone through. I've been the little character that sits at the crossroads. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Alan K. has been seriously involved in spiritual work for several decades, notably Gurdjieff's Fourth Way teaching and finally graduating into Advaita Vedanta. In particular, he has studied closely with Jean Klein. In a dialogue, he recounted to me a climactic shift in spiritual identity that was occurring to him, as his "being" opened into Reality. His comments explain the higher aspects of the Psychology of the Observer very well:

> From a certain point of view, you could say the mind was maturing or opening. It could take in something it couldn't quite take in before. There is no real change, because Truth is Truth. There's nothing that needs to be gained or embellished or constructed. It's already there. The only difference is that the mind ceases to confuse itself. We see everything in a dualistic pattern. Everything is turned into subject-object and opposites. We take for granted the ultimate nature of objects in space and time. But at a certain point, the mind ceases to do this, to work in this segmented pattern. It just stops constructing this world of duality. Everything is already complete, as it always was. So, it isn't so much a question of expansion or discovery, but just a question of ending a process that was erroneous to begin with.
>
> Q. Your sense of "I" or anterior "selfness"—is that no longer "Alan"? Is Alan now a character you are aware of?
>
> It's felt as though there's a remnant that believes in itself. An appendage, almost, instead of a person. Like an old coat; it feels like that. But the old coat is only a problem for the old coat! It has nothing to do with me. It's not an issue. Like some old coat that

appears and disappears, at a certain point, it has no meaning, other than in its own sphere. Basically this is the difference between now and before. Now there is a conviction of certainty that I AM THE ALL. I am not the body, to put it in negative terms. Nothing has altered; nothing has changed; only that the mind ceases to get away with its usual style of confusion. But that little bit is incredible! Its implications are extraordinary! When that takes place, you feel there's no sense of need, fear, desire, or compulsion. Everything is felt present at once. There are no more dividing lines between things, or between me and everything else. That's just what the mind is: it's a dividing line that separates reality, supposedly "out there", from reality, supposedly "in here." The Absolute reality doesn't do that. This is seen as a whole. It is impossible to break up the Absolute into bits and pieces.

There is no arrival in any of this. There is no someone who attains Enlightenment or Reality. That would be a contradiction, an acceptance of the dualistic idea: that there could be such a thing as time and space. They are simply a mental construction. Within it you have objects and persons and things and distances, with time and space between them. Those are just mental forms of imagining. When it becomes an absolutely certainty, as a negative fact, that it doesn't exist—you will know. You will have a deep conviction that that's a fact. You will suddenly find yourself in wholeness, in emptiness, in openness.

There is a sequence to this that is important. It begins in our regular state, where we consider ourselves to be a subject in a world of objects; where you see the world outside, and feel yourself as somewhat distinct. But, little by little, we realize that even that is just an idea, another object, another imposition of the mind. At a certain stage, you will have the experience in clarity where you see that the world is really inside you (You). You are not in the world at all. The entire world arises and falls in Your consciousness. At a certain point, you find yourself to be that pure consciousness only.

This is the dualistic place. That had been my usual condition for a number of years. The difference now is that the world is not felt inside as a distinct entity, as an object that appears and disappears, but EVERYTHING is felt inside, in consciousness. There are no objects. Even objects are nothing but pure consciousness's expressions. So, all that's happening is that consciousness is happening to consciousness. On this level, nothing is happening; there is only pure consciousness; the whole thing. So, whatever you look at with this openness is just pure consciousness. This is the background from which all the dualities emerge. And knowing that, instead of feeling alienated from objects, from feeling as another subject-object in a world of objects, everything is then seen as pure oneness, pure subjectivity, with no separation or projection. It puts an end to desire. Everything is complete as it is.

Q. Is the desire for Realization valid? Has your sequence of search been satisfied?

The sequence of searching is seen as an illusion, at this point. I don't have the mind...*that was*. It is very clear that all desire is absolutely futile, in any direction. Even the desire for Truth is based on the illusion that you are incomplete; that you need to become whole or Enlightened. The only thing that needs to happen is the mind ceasing its indulgence in splitting and dividing things from each other. Or, put more simply: the mind needs to see that everything it experiences is the result of its own projection and measurement process.

All the thoughts that flow into you and out of you are part of a certain stream. It is purely genetic; all mechanical and involuntary. Within that happening, at some point, you (or rather the mind) assumed somehow, erroneously that you were this person; this body-mind mechanism; that you are the body or the thoughts behind the body, or the mental subject. All of these things are strictly ideas that occurred to you and you assumed they were correct formulations. *Actually, what happens is that the mind borrows the notion of "I" from the Absolute and identifies it with the body.*

You know when you are aware, either through conscious effort or from just sitting in quiet meditation. You know your awareness. However, the ultimate is to know that he who is aware is pure consciousness itself. Prior to that, the man who is aware thinks he is aware, as a being, as a person. This shift is a mysterious, perhaps chemical opening. It's really difficult to say what finally wears down that last veil of ignorance; that makes the difference between someone who practices awareness, who likes to be aware, who feels himself to be aware, and the other "person" who suddenly knows himself, who is aware of himself as the Self; who is pure awareness itself.

This movement is a movement into wholeness and openness. Just as the other process took place: the movement into concretization, into the world of objects, there is also a kind of gradual movement—only from the mind's relative point of reference—back to the center, to the pure consciousness, which you already always were anyway; to the realization of that. The Realization has no movement itself.

The Realization begins to re-explain the whole world to you in a mind that is not clouded; this TREMENDOUS disease called dualism. It's nothing but a mental affliction. Everywhere you go, you take the Absolute and you're holding this screen in front of yourself, and pretending that the things your senses are describing to you are actually out there and real—but they're not. You're always witnessing the Absolute. And the only thing that can be witnessing it is the Absolute. You know all this, intuitively, even now. You know that you are behind your thoughts.

Witnessing is a wonderful stage to come to. We pass through it constantly many times. At a certain point, you feel that that witness is all you are. But that's the stage that takes a very long time to get past. As long as you're in that witness stage, you're always going to still be in that duality. You feel the witnessing, but you still consider the objects to be apart from you. You still feel distinct. You have to finally get past that point. This is the only significant thing I have to tell you: that you see that the objects themselves are nothing but pure consciousness. In that place, there's no more difference. That at-homeness is the feeling...

Q. Are we ever truly outside of our minds, or is even this awareness we are trying to cultivate really a subtle mental construct also?

Yes, it is. What is most important is to look at the whole stream of life experiences as closely as you can. The details don't matter. We always take things as being at a distance; as though they were objects that are out there and that these things are happening to us as being the subject-object. We have to bring the picture a little bit closer. We have to see that the whole thing is happening only inside ourselves and that it's all appearing within consciousness. This is bringing the world, the perspective, very close to you. You feel yourself as being in the background of consciousness. So, if you do that, which is just a pure kind of seeing, you are in awareness at that point. You

don't create that. You just find yourself in that. You're not trying to hold or maintain the awareness. You're simply aware. You're in openness without a point of view. You are listening without there being a listener. What happens is you can objectivize the awareness, which is a very dangerous thing. Your job is not to do anything, but merely to see. You have to be very quick to see even that trick of the mind occurring. Otherwise, it becomes another object and it can't be real awareness.

Then, living in that as it flows, you have to see these objects that are appearing and disappearing, and tell: Where did they come from? How did they come? We will see that they are happening because the senses themselves create them. But they're not real. We often think that there is a tangible and genuine object out there in a real world impressing itself upon the senses and to the mind. But it doesn't work that way. It works the opposite way. There is awareness of consciousness, which flows through an inert part of knowledge, which is totally mechanical. Because of the way they function, they, in their outward movement towards reality tend to give reality to form, to space, to time. If you see that that's how reality is being formed—and it takes a very sharp awareness to watch that as it's going on, you will see that in fact you are creating this, you are dividing the world into bits and pieces, and then assuming it has absolute reality in itself. It's a kind of mental trick that goes on. In order to do this, you have to stay very close to the situation. This thing becomes paramount. You won't get stuck in any of the particulars or the outer limits. It becomes a question of the very way in which reality is being constructed by the mind.

This becomes a TREMENDOUS puzzle, and highly engrossing. You want to know what the hell is really going on!: is there a reality out there, or am I making it up, or where is it? You begin to feel you don't know. You watch this process as it flows, as well as in your in-between spaces, when it's just pure awareness. At a certain point, you will ask yourself the key question: *"Who am I?"* You will say: "Either I am one of those objects, or I am the consciousness behind it". It's just a question of disidentifying yourself with this body-mind mechanism, which is creating a reality of its own, and really identifying with the only other thing it can be, which is the background of all that. Then you will know. All of a sudden, you will cross a certain threshold. You're in a safe place at that point. There is nothing left that is outside of you. It all comes back into the wholeness, of itself.

Q. Did you experience this Realization as death?

There is no time and space in the Absolute sphere. That is the absolute truth. In the relative sphere, it is only time and space and that has truth only within its own sphere. But the relative sphere is wholly dependent upon the Absolute sphere, so ultimately it has no validity whatsoever. So, with it goes crashing, not just you as a person dying, but the whole world of objects dying; the whole thing dies. There's nothing left but awareness, by itself.

Q. The path can be very treacherous. There are some high level plateaus. How can one ever be certain that full Realization has genuinely occurred?

You're right—it can be very tricky. If there's any one touchstone to this thing, it's the feeling of your movement unfolding closer into Truth. I don't like to use the word "return", because it implies there's someone who returns. But, there is an opening. Instead of movement into greater clarification or more substantial certainty in truth,

there is a movement into greater solitude and unfoldment. Until, ultimately, the movement is into pure consciousness itself. In the end, there's nothing left.

Q. You become the ultimate subject?

No—even the ultimate subject too is a concept. The Tao that is the real Tao cannot be named. It's not only beyond the whole, it's unlimited in its Being. It is in itself a totally formless thing. Awareness is a movement back to itself, to its absolute place. You have nothing but that, and even that can't be named. The experience is like falling backward into what seems to be the void of this (dissolved mental world of relativity), into Yourself.

Q. Can we experience that clear awareness outside of the mind now, or is that possible only in the final Realization?

No, no. You already do, when your mind is not in movement, when it's between two thoughts or two states, or if you are in deep meditation; you taste this awareness. You don't realize that at that point *you are looking into your real Self*. You see it as a moment of awareness. And that's a part of the problem, because you still think you are the person experiencing that. But you will more and more disidentify with the functioning of the body-mind self and identify more with pure awareness as yourself. You will then see that the things rising and falling in your mind are your own creations. And then you'll realize they are you, ultimately. Then you will feel completely comfortable. You won't have any sense of alienation or discomfort anymore.

You have to see that you are clinging to the idea that you are an individual person in the world. This is the illusion. It's the only thing to wake up from. The events of life are not as large as you think. It's only because you see yourself as very small that you've given them credence and importance and absolute value. When you see yourself as the utter background of everything, those things become infinitely small. You almost can't even see them anymore. Then later, you will see that they don't even exist as separate entities. But you have to bring "the world" very close to yourself to realize that. As long as you keep looking at things from a distant perspective [from within experience], you will never see what the actual origin is of everything that is happening. You have to look very closely. There is a chance at that point that the sleeper will suddenly awaken from the dream.

Get as close as possible to your actual experiencing. Stay away from all theory, all philosophy. That is all still of the mind. Really watch how life flows within you and in what that life is flowing. Watch the unfolding of awareness in the background of it. Then, at a certain point, you're forced to make a hard choice and ask yourself: "Who am I?—the foreground or the background?"

At the end, you realize that everything is you. It's like the goldsmith seeing every object in his shop as being gold; not the objects of art made of gold.

To complete this section, like a signature on a self-portrait, and to provide the larger context for my involvement with Rose's teaching and the consequential writing of this paper, I need to mention an experience that happened to me at the age of 19, and the philosophical concerns which preceded it. This will explain why I could recognize the veracity of his message—and from where it came.

As a child of Holocaust survivors, experiencing life through an innately melancholic sensitivity, and raised with no supportive religious infrastructure whatsoever nor finding a satisfactory ex-

planation for this soul-staggering event later from any angle, my nature and perspective developed within a mind-set of extremely grim existential insecurity at the unknowing, at my ultimate groundlessness. From that first moment when, as a child, I found a book about Adolf Eichmann that my parents had forbidden me to see and saw in it the photographs of the piles of shriveled childrens' bodies being bulldozed into a snowy ditch and the skeletons of those who had been burned alive in the crematoria—and realized that, in truth, I was one of those people and nothing more, with no justification for believing I was any better, less vulnerable, or more favored by "God," I felt intensely that my entire life, of already uncertain value, had been rendered utterly worthless and I had to find the state of knowing that would answer once and for all the many essential questions posed by this monstrous experience. I have not viewed this specifically as a Jewish issue, nor cultural, political, or exclusively psychological, but ultimately spiritual. What admittedly began as an ordeal of personal pathology, in time I grew to regard the Holocaust as a metaphor for life itself; for our shameful estrangement from Truth and the harshest possible confrontation of the darkness in which we are lost. It has been the standard against which I have measured all possible answers to life. Any god that could not survive *that place* would not be worth finding.

I was unable to lie to myself, at least about the big things. I knew intuitively that the whole fabric of conventional life as embraced by the masses of humanity was a colossal work of fiction (although I was still victimized by it) and all the values—both religious and mundane—put forth to buffer us from the madness and despair were only more make-believe meant to further obscure our meaninglessness. I realized that the psychic context which enables most people to continue living and believing in themselves is the state of being ignorant of their ignorance, all the while stagnating within an imaginary paradigm. I have been forced to be aware of my fundamental ignorance, which taunts me from all sides. While knowing nothing for sure, in a world of pseudo-values and fraudulent answers, my philosophy of life became a stubborn: "none of the above." Much of the material in the Albigen System, consisting of insights which Rose had diligently compiled over a number of years critiquing the many categories and forms of maya on the human level, constitutes a total philosophical gestalt I starkly recognized when I was 12. Ever since, I have felt as a living corpse, the proverbial Wandering Jew, wandering intently in a state of shock, a ghost with no home or name, looking for the true Final Solution.

For reasons the full extent of which are unknown to me, once the trauma of absolute doubt initiated the split, the damage to the heart and mind was beyond healing. It went off the scale entirely. From that point onward, even gaining everything would be too little, too late. I have known that the only possible answer must be on the other side of death; the death of the one who has the problem born of incomplete perspective.

In tracing the origin of this "one," I find that my sense of self as a distinct ego, as apart from its being just a functional point-of-reference in experience, started from out of this trauma (although, of course, there had to be some latent seed of ego to begin with around which this experience could wrap itself and become a "personal" issue). A violation created me; the awareness of something apparently very wrong, which generated the question: "What is the whole picture—what's it all about?!", the growing fear that there is no truth, besides absurdity and tragedy, and the urge to wrestle with the issue regardless. My very existence became Po Shan's "doubt sensation." This status becomes Zen in that the greater the (seeming) violation, the greater is the transcendence needed to contain it. The maximum gap between being and non-being requires an absolute reconciliation to answer it. One complication in my case is that my ego-mind has been especially difficult to relinquish, as esoteric texts all advise one to do, because it developed specifically as a vehicle or means by which to find truth, not as an obstacle to or substitute for it, and so resists dissolution for the same reason as why it should be.

Each person's path takes a different course. Due to my nature and issues, my philosophic work has of necessity paralleled Jim Burns' direction of inquiry as much as Rose's, in my own unique blend. The three main questions at the core of Rose's search were: Who am I?, Where did I come from?, and Where am I going? The primary concerns of the masses seem to be: How can I get rich?, How can I be admired?, and How can I get laid? The basic issues prompting my quest have been: What is validity?, What is justice?, What is the meaning of life (or more precisely: What is the nature of the appreciation by the final observer of this mass-experience, and who is this Final Appreciator?), What is the meaning in life (in other words: What is the purpose or objective of life?), Whose universe is this?, and, experientially, What is the basis of all existence and being—the final resting place? In short, a plaintive, collective: Why?

In fact, the magnitude of this perplexity was one reason why Rose's teaching intrigued me so strongly when I encountered it. I have had many questions that apparently cannot or at least have not been answered on the human mental level (and the option of a simple religious faith that an attitude of piety alone would result in a deferred salvation in the afterlife was not satisfying to me). To track down the answers to all of them, even should this be possible, might take centuries—and even then their sum total might not be the real answer for which I have been looking behind it all. Rose attested, however, that there is a "key," a central or ultimate position of viewership and root of beingness where all issues are resolved and everything is known, and that taking the shortcut to this home base should be one's real priority. Furthermore, his claim that this goal is attainable by anyone who is serious enough to make the proper efforts and that the way is progressively validated by one's immediate experience made this a prospect which was worth my commitment.

As the notion of God as a loving and just Divine Parent was irredeemably refuted by the evident facts, my obsession with the horror (which Logotherapy only partially addressed) was in that I felt no philosophy of life could be considered true and complete unless it adequately accounted for the meaning of the apparent suffering of the innocent (i.e. the protest of Job), and that the truth of this must be known; not only accepted on faith as a concept. I was later to recognize that all this has been a koan serving to force comprehension, proper self-definition, and ascension to the correct vantage point on experience.

Years before encountering the teachings of Rose and Advaita, I had determined that the essential question in this koan was: What is the "connection" between the Observer and its observed Creation? I was aware of being both a character in a story and the watcher of this story, but did not have the overview that would explain their relationship and be their shared ground of being. Because of this, my strange curse has been that of having no home or identity either on Earth or in Heaven; both being knowingly invalidated. Plus, as part of my progression in the sequence of self-observation in the analysis of motivations, I gradually stopped in my tracks entirely and demanded to know: Why should I play the game at all, regardless of whether I win or lose, fair or unfair? Who is playing this game, and using "me" as a pawn? Indeed, if I am nobody, who then is the one concerned? Simply put, the primal issue I have faced in my life is: What remains after the self, the world, and one's god burn up in the oven—and this is witnessed? Anticipating Rose's teaching, my answer and functional identity became: the awareness of a question asking a question. Because of the symbolic meaning in this conclusion, in my experience the metaphor has become apparent that the Holocaust is the modern Crucifixion.

Due to my initial identification with my intellect (at least on the conscious level, and then only as a tool of investigation, not the expected domain of the answer) and not suspecting at the time the imperative to trace back the anterior awareness from Reality passing through me as being the essential methodology, my inquiry at first took an "outward" direction; the intention being strict philo-

sophical integrity. I began to search for an objective God who is not-me when I was forced to realize that the human "I," with all its desires, convictions, and sense of identity, was negated absolutely (in my case, by the Holocaust—which means a burnt offering up to God), and so knew that "I" could not be the final answer, nor could any possible conception of mine of "god." The Truth was something to look for, not something currently known. Perhaps Auschwitz was meant to wipe the slate clean; to serve as the final sieve of human illusion and subtleties of ego. It has compelled me to start the search from zero-conviction state; to negate even the ego that would identify with some concept of truth and so superimpose that over the Truth. This is why I had always reflexively rejected those false forms of meditation or religious belief that I suspected to be only another sly category of mind, a pretty filter over one's inner vision, meant to be used as an object for the ego to enjoy or a barrier to block out the horror. The insecurity of existing within this uncompromising unknowing, with no foundation, selfhood, or justification for faith, has been most difficult to withstand. Yet, while I cannot claim to have been a spiritual giant like Rose, I believe I have managed to be a tall midget.

Actually, even in this, there was one final conviction remaining: that all is false...all is hopeless. This state was a difficult limbo from which to escape—until I realized that this too is an ego of belief and I was better off not believing or disbelieving in any unknown god or human assessment, but to search cleanly for whatever really <u>is</u>.

I had conceived of the path as my needing to find objective Reality distinctly apart from "myself," as life made it brutally obvious that I (the ego-self) was an invalid standard of measure, and that my own definition and rightful place in the scheme of things would then be found only as a function of that. I did not know at the time that this was another route for coming to the same conclusion about the requisite nature of the path that Rose would later teach: that of rigorous impersonality in determining the facts, inner and outer—until these categories are seen to be the same...seen by *what* one was really looking for all along.

The problem was I did not realize at first that the clean context of aware inquiry I had wanted to foster was not <u>entirely</u> separate from the "I" (the ignorant, fallible, human lump) which I had wanted to escape, for in fact, this "I" contained—or was contained in—this exact same awareness of mind also, and so the self (small "s") that was feared to be an obstacle to the inquiry into the nature of things later was seen to became a part of that very same objective inquiry, by something anterior to both. Only later did the understanding come about that it is this same ray of awareness passing through both the "God" I was searching for and the "me" doing the searching; the ego being the common obstruction to their unitive discovery. As I learned from Rose's teaching, whichever is initially designated one's goal—to see the truth or to become the true seer, the search could rightly proceed from either end of the channel, if done honestly, and end up with the same final realization.

In retrospect, I could see that the question in me motivating the search has evolved from: Why the horror? (or What is justice?), to: What does this all mean? (or Why did God create the universe?), to: Who wants to know? (or What is the real Self?). This sequence is somewhat analogous to Rose's progression through "the Dream," "the Dreamer in the Dream," and "the Dreamer of the Dream." Again, anticipating much of what I found in his teaching years later, "God," to me, has not been regarded as a benevolent theological figure, but a direction of inquiry towards greater reality; towards more *being*.

From that day when childhood was terminated, I have known a sadness and loneliness that seems without end; the sun's warmth and light blocked by the smoke from that chimney at the end of the world. I have lived a quarter century as the man in Edward Munch's most famous painting. My core state-of-mind has been like it is one minute before midnight on New Year's Eve, in a nightmare; living always in the feeling as of falling in a dream, into a bottomless void. I feel—admittedly melo-

dramatically, but nonetheless genuinely—as if I carry the ghosts, cries, and destinies of millions within me.

This bit of autobiography has been necessary in order to indicate my state-of-mind at the time of absolute doubt and the intensity of the vector aimed back through the center of it. Then, an experience occurred which defined the course of the rest of my life.

It was a December 24th. Christmas was in the air. I was filled with the mixed emotions of longing and futility that the holiday seemed to exemplify. A girlfriend and I were in a botanical garden. Psychologically, I was at a point beyond hope, and even beyond despair. In a particular sense, I had given up completely and existed in a locationless neutral zone, yet with the desire for an answer remaining firmly somewhere inside, underlying all mundane movements of the mind and heart. I had no expectations.

She suggested we take LSD. I had never experimented with it before and knew nothing about what it was supposed to do. My only vague sense about it was that it enabled magic to happen. Although at the time I was not familiar with the term "paradigm," I instinctively knew that the dimension of reality (as it were) in which humanity existed as a psychic experience was false, and only a delusory sub-category of what Reality might be. I certainly did not assume that any drug could take me to Reality, but I suspected it might be able to "crack the cosmic egg" of the paradigm of the normal enough to allow me a glimpse outside it; to find myself in an open space where the search for totality might continue less impaired by convention and ego.

I mention this drug involvement hesitantly, as I am fully aware that most scientifically inclined readers, as well as the devoutly religious, automatically discount any experience induced by a chemical as having to be inherently invalid and illusory, leading more likely to hedonism or psychosis than Revelation. I do not argue this point from the outside in, but only present information from the inside out. That a small percentage of subjects in a controlled research setting have gone through similar or identical transpersonal experiences, with the same subsequent convictions, adds unneeded corroboration to my certainty that what happened to me was not some personal dementia or generic flight of fancy (Grof, 1975).

In addition, I consider what took place to be in a category by itself and, strictly speaking, not a "drug experience." This is because the experience did not entirely occur within the relative mind dimension ("mine" or that of humanity), but after a period exited it. The drug served essentially as a catalyst, a "hammer" on the shell of that cosmic egg; not an agent for creating only another category of fictional mind-stuff.

During the early phase, while passing through the mind, there were no hallucinations of any kind; no absorption into the usual kaleidoscopic phantasmagoria that drug "trips" generally entail. There was a distinct—though undefined—sense of "I-ness" present throughout this phase, and this "I" was never wholly drawn into any of the contents of the mental realm it witnessed. It did not care to. Years prior to encountering Rose's key principle of "reversing the projected ray" (that is, once I graduated from the intellectual level of search to the Fourth Way), I had the intuitive sense that whatever the truth was I was looking for, it would not be found "out there" anywhere in the manifested world, nor even anywhere amidst the complex convolutions of my consciousness. As the feeling-presence of my own being strengthened, there developed the sense (even if only subconsciously) of needing to pull back further and further into the anterior awareness which contained me, which is partially why the mind-stuff being sorted through did not undergo any hypnotic distortions to seduce my attention and hence identification. Entertainment and entrancement by fascinating diversity was never my intention in the experiment. Finding a more real point-of-reference (again, years before ever having encountered this principle), was.

A seeming contradiction is further clarified here. What had previously been intended as objective, "scientific" inquiry as a strategy for evading the inherent limitations and distortions of the ego-mind (this was before I had begun to seriously question who was doing the searching—and in Whom) gradually became this impersonal descent into extreme subjectivity, for the same reason. Their common denominator was the need to find the definition of Reality, apart from me (meaning the ego-mind "me"). While I innately feared the nihilistic oblivion of egocentric solipsism, I began to appreciate the gnostic possibility in the paradigm shift toward pure mysticism. Thus, what was at first a philosophical search for the meaning of experience became then inverted to an ontological search for the substratum of experience—in other words, the experiencer. I found that this course resulted in getting away from the trappings of mind also, but now by going behind it, not in front of it.

To continue, my primary reason for discounting the drug factor as intrinsically invalidating the subsequent experience is that the most significant aspect of this experience occurred outside the somatic mind realm and so was beyond the reach of where a drug could have any effect. Strictly speaking, what finally happened was not even an "experience", as it was wholly non-relative and non-dualistic, and had no experiencer. As such, nothing from the world of illusion could touch it. Once the "rocketship" transported me out of the universe (forced through the gap of the synapses, into Space?), both the rocketship and the universe disappeared (i.e. Wittgenstein's ladder).

The entry into the change in state-of-mind was so intense and my clinging to normalcy so minimal by that point in my life that there was no resistance to the inversion of consciousness as it occurred, nor could there have been.

There was a progression—or regression—to the experience. One of the first things I noticed was that there was complete disassociation from the body. The body was still fully operational in its own domain. It was not insensate. I simply recognized that the functioning of the body was an experience in consciousness, as was the ego-self that had up until that point always largely identified with it, and that I was aware of this, as though the psycho-physical gestalt was something seen on a mental screen in front of my inner vision.

It should be added that prior to this experience, I knew little of esoteric or spiritual philosophy, beyond vague generalities and concept-structures, but with no practical means advised for their verification. All my studies of mainstream psychology, academic philosophy, and conventional theology gave no hint that what I was beginning to realize for myself could exist. Similar to Rose's preliminary status before his "accident", I was maintaining no bundle of celestial imaginings that might give birth to an ersatz experience. I am simply relating what I found.

The next thing I noticed was that my mind and that of my friend seemed to be linked. Verbal communication was seen to be as inferior a mode of conveying meaning as was the linear thought that would generate it. There was the sense that I could know her mind directly and she could possibly "see" into mine as well, depending upon her degree and direction of attention. I picked up some thoughts from her and asked (in words) if this was what she had been thinking. She nodded "Yes" (with the knowing implication in her eyes: "of course I am"). This was apparently an elementary instance of the direct-mind rapport I would later read about from Rose.

There followed a sequence of fundamental insights about my nature as a human being. Major lifelong psychological patterns were seen directly, as a whole, from outside myself in a way I had never been able to see them before during all my years of introspection from within myself.

At one point, my friend began feeling insecure and wondered aloud if we were being "cool" being there in the midst of the people strolling about us, as if perhaps we were somehow behaving

inappropriately, considering our mental state. I was more detached than she and knew that outwardly we were completely unchanged, and no one was even looking at us.

I then stopped to specifically look at the people walking by on the pathway in front of us. From my now "other" vantage point, I could see that these people were robots. This was not perceived in the sense that they were moving stiffly or lacking in personal warmth, but in their being totally identified with themselves as they found themselves to be and having no awareness of their existence from completely outside themselves. Even their subjective experience of their very humanness was essentially mechanical. This assessment was years before my encountering the term "robot" in the Gurdjieffian and Albigen teachings. I looked at the people and "their thoughts were on their faces", as Rose remarked in one of his poems.

I then realized I had spent most of my life wondering if I was being "cool" or appropriate in other people's eyes, when in fact the issue was totally meaningless, as other people were even less real than "I" was, they were wholly asleep within their own private dream and so could not see me, and my own inner observer was the only judge there could be anyway. All else was a projection of my own tainted self-judgment. Although I would later be forced to return into "John" and be subject to his damaged psyche once again, these and other insights have always been maintained somewhere behind the mind, and his psychology has been gradually adjusted accordingly.

My friend and I were sitting on the ground. After awhile, we got the notion that it would be good to walk around a bit—but were perplexed to find ourselves remaining where we were sitting. In a particular sense, we found it impossible to move of our own volition. We were not paralyzed nor numb. The body continued to work perfectly well. We both simply realized at the same time that we had no independent will of our own in life and never did, but had only believed we did. We were not individual characters separate from the world, making self-generated choices about conduct, nor were we a mental ego-self apart from, yet animating, an obedient body. The entire world, with "us" in it, was recognized to be one, indivisible panorama, and its Master was outside it. I said to her (or was aware of its being said): "You know that we can't get up and move until God makes us, don't you?" and she said "Yes, I know". I was aware that this was the first time in my entire life I had ever used the word "God", except when swearing, that I knew exactly what I meant by "God", and meant what I said literally. "I do not live but that God lives in me" was known to be a reality. As soon as we both totally surrendered to our helplessness, the seeming duality was reconciled and we found ourselves standing up readily.

We were facing a tree. I had long wondered what the Biblical Tree of Life was meant to symbolize. Given our circumstances of date and location, as well as state-of-consciousness, I was interpreting our situation as the psychic archetype of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. There was some basic mystery needing to be understood, to end our exile. I gazed at this tree before us, wanting to apprehend its silent message to me. I felt like the disciple who pondered the flower in the Buddha's hand and intuited its meaning; too obvious to be seen by all but the innocent. I was not quite able to appreciate the immanent reality of this tree-as-teacher—I was evidently not yet ripe enough myself, but did pick up an "almost" sense about it, of what Life might be.

What proceeded next was an automatic sorting through of the contents of my mind. There was a reviewing of some of the major events, people, and values in my life; examining each one, and then watching it be eliminated. This process was analogous to the proverbial seeing of one's life pass before one's eyes before dying. As this introversion deepened, I could see more and more vividly how every component in my life, whether an actual experience or a resultant thought-structure about some experience, was an object in consciousness, viewed as though on a screen in front of me. Experiences recalled from different moments in my life were all perceived to exist at once, in this timeless

moment of seeing. I could see that they were not real; not as real as I, as the viewer, now was. I saw that nothing had any objective reality to it; not the world, and not John either. Their existence was all as an extension of me, although I did not yet fully know this "me."

One at a time, each component of my mind was disassembled and dissolved. At the same time, every form and category of mind content was recognized to be one thing; one cohesive gestalt on a singular mental plane. Gradually, my mind was nearly emptied out. The distinct vision I had of this mind was like what is seen when the film at a movie theater accidentally catches on fire and burns up; the images melting away, until only the white light on the screen remains.

It should be clarified that, by this point, the "my" whose mind was being seen was not that of the individual human being who started out the experience. Although, in entering death, some people are said to cling tightly to themselves and are reluctant to disidentify with whom they have gotten used to believing they are, my relinquishment on the human level was much easier, due to the already tenuous nature of my preceding psychological state. The character of "John Kent," in fact, died relatively early in the experience. As he was being psychically disassembled, there was a moment of sad, fond mourning at the loss of who "I" once was, like wistfully lamenting the death of an old friend who had done his job and was now put out of his misery. His final passing was only barely noticed, and then was quickly forgotten. Afterwards, there was no memory that he had ever lived (i.e. "silence is forgotten...").

While this phase was occurring, I was also aware of the possibility of entering "bliss"; of releasing from my locus of finite selfhood entirely and dissolving into the totality of being—but did not. Why? Perhaps the habitual contraction of my ignorance and fear of groundlessness even then was holding me together as a substanceless "I." It would require further work back on Earth to remove this final barrier out of relativity. There was possibly also fear (in whom?, in the still vulnerable seeker?) of the risk of captivated dispersion into manifestation while rootedness in ever-aware Essence had not yet been attained.

The mind which was undergoing these changes was that of "mind", in a generic sense. There was no longer any entity left who could pretend to claim sole ownership of a plot of the indivisible mental dimension and call that a person. The one seeing the changes was *myself*.

The relentless momentum of introversion brought me to a stage that was now no longer connected in any way with the physical dimension: either my immediate environment or the universe as an objective structure. The rest of the journey took place strictly inside (although "inside" and "outside" were non-existent categories by this point).

There was the direct realization that there is no such thing as time, as a real happening. There is nothing called "time" that can pass, and the space that would contain it (or be contained by it) does not move. There is only Here and Now, and "I" was in that. Likewise, once there were no more objects left in consciousness, there was also no distance, location, or positioning of myself as a viewer. All these things were clearly seen to be conditional factors within relativity, or mental interpretations, but which had no independent reality of their own, as there was no fundamental ground of being for them as a reference point. (For example: The velocity of the Earth's movement through space is always calculated in relation to the Sun as a fixed point-of-reference—but is the Sun itself immobile, or does it not also move within the galaxy of which it is a part? How can speed be measured as an absolute value when time and space are relative? What would be the difference between an object traveling through empty space at a million miles per hour, or standing still? How would one know? Does the universe as a whole have a still center-point anywhere as the final standard of measure? How would one know? *Maybe it is all center and motionless.*) Because of all this, it was not only

impossible but would have been meaningless to determine "how long" the final phases of this experience lasted, according to some "absolute" clock. There was the vivid recognition that one second was equal to a billion years, and neither really passed, once there was no longer any motion nor anywhere to go.

As I watched all the contents of my mind dissolve and fade away, leaving behind only the original, latent mind-dimension that had given rise to them, and how all the experiences of life and objects in the universe were mental projections from some central or anterior "cosmic womb", I was able to trace my way back to this source of the projections. I believe this matrix was what Rose would later refer to as the prop-room of Creation. I had the implicit understanding that every possibility of relative existence was born from this place. I could have gone off in any imaginable direction, to any point in "time", and created any object, experienced any form of life, or witnessed any drama. In essence, I experienced all the potential components of experience. This was in the sense that once one knows all 26 letters of the alphabet, no word is entirely foreign (i.e. Rose's claiming: "I know everything").

Although there were no distinct, linear thoughts by this point—nor anyone to think them, I knew there could be no final satisfaction in going down any of these infinite dead-ends, and that it was best to not even "enter" this place to play around with these "adventures into endless possibilities of myself", as Rose had put it. A side-trip that could have lasted eons (in those worlds; not Here) was quickly bypassed, with a subtle turning of the attention. I was being drawn backward, away from manifestation.

As this last dimension of mind was transcended or emptied out (by my having rejecting it), I experienced my being implode on itself. "I" found myself in a place that could no longer even be called a dimension. It was the state of absolute nothingness. It was not oblivion, like in a coma, as there was still awareness of this nothingness; an awareness without location or identity. It was not a state of floating in empty space. **There was <u>nothing</u>—*not even space***. There was only an undefined "me", in unknowingness. I suspect this was similar to what Merrell-Wolff described as "Consciousness without an object and without a subject".

There was no question—nor could there ever be—about the validity of the experience of this "place." It is impossible to convey or appreciate this through words. To explain: In order for there to be the possibility of any kind of error in experience, there would need to be a state of consciousness, with some form of content, and an experiencer or observer of this consciousness that is separate from it. This is the level or domain where a drug could be a distortive influence, of either the nature of the vision seen or in the perception of it. In the final state experienced, there was no duality of any kind. There was no mental content witnessed and no witness apart from or behind any "experience." The experience was of **being aware in the oneness of nothingness**—IT WAS VALIDITY; the very basis of is-ness. There was no meaning to the concept of measuring it, to assess its accuracy or room for delusion. It was as if there was only one yardstick in existence and there was nothing else more "authoritative" or objectively real with which to measure it. <u>The yardstick measures itself</u>, as it is the only standard.

It is at this point where encountering Rose's poetic descriptions of his Experience evokes a powerful memory in me...of a something that was entirely, overwhelmingly *other*. When he has said: "Nothing mattered...once I became...more deeply...", "Where within Thee have I dissolved myself...Where have I left my I-ness, and now having left it, who is it that cries out to Thee?", "The keeper of the House is gone, and all that remains testifies that he never was...All is within that House, swelling it to burst its comprehension...And the world will not contain the reaving sorrow of this House", "The mind that grasps the collapse of all things is a mind made of nothing, sensing nothing;

for space is upon us and all about us...and the memory of that which was screams at the void...", "The eminent I-ness melts into the embraces of oblivion, languishing into it...My spark of life falls through the canyons of the universe...", "Look beyond my wordlessness, my fractured mentality, for I have been back there freezing and exploding, burning and drowning...", "I have looked on death and lived, but my life is as empty as death; I have been dumbstruck, and crawled from the sacred unknown, bearing the look of horror and regret and pain...", and "Oh tender I-ness, forgive me...", I know what Rose has meant by these things. I have recognized his words, for I have been there too. I have been in hell. I have been insane. I have been dead. Yet, still I remain, but do not know this "I."

This was as far as the journey went. After being awhile in that placeless place without time, "I" gradually returned through the different levels of mind, until finding myself back on Earth, in a body, "in" John, in time once again, and left to wonder for the rest of my days about the riddle of my seeming existence and what Reality ultimately is.

I have also wondered further what this experience signified in itself and how it has fit in with the rest of my subsequent path. I did not "find God" in the sense of a final, comprehensive answer, other than in discovering a deeper part of (my) being. There was no "other," yet "I" was not the omniscient All. My original questions about the Holocaust, the meaning of life, etc. were not answered, other than in eliminating the cause for the questions, as well as the questioner, and any substantive context for an answer (i.e. "I am the beginning and the end, I am the bowman, the arrow, and the victim"; "gone is the hate and love, joy and sorrow, gone is the one and its many..."). Possibly the real reason why they were all set up for me originally was to make me forsake the quagmire of normalcy and propel me onward—or rather backward. And, possibly the questions are still answerable...when everythingness is known as well.

My assessment is this: In that final state of the experience, when only "I" was left, in awareness, but with no fundamental ground of Being, I did not have the intuition or spiritual maturity to "turn around" and see who was "behind" me or "containing" me (so to speak). This state is the extremity of point "F" on the top line of Jacob's Ladder. I knew there was nothing but me, but I did not know who I was. My only conviction about it is that I was *in the shadow of the Absolute* but did not know it, and was not yet able to realize that **I am that**, ultimately. Rose is indeed right: you do not know anything (for sure) until you know everything.

After a group rapport sitting once, Rose said to me: "You have (kundalini) light in your head—but you have no head." By this I presume he meant I did not have sufficient "being" or spiritual capacity built up yet to apprehend or to appreciate the Reality that was within reach. Likewise, I believe the experience was to let me know in no uncertain terms what my spiritual "status" was in entering this life—perhaps indicating where I had left off last time—and the starting point from where I need to continue the work in this life.

The full meaning of this next statement cannot be adequately communicated, but it must be mentioned. In the outer world, the most extreme or introceptive phase of the experience may have lasted an instant or an hour. There was no way to tell and the issue had no meaning whatsoever. However, there was—and is—the distinct understanding that the dimension of mind (and what lay beyond the mind) that was touched in the experience is an ever-present Reality, now and always, even though not readily perceived while our being immersed in this mundane, relative dimension. Although the remaining effects of the drug wore off several hours later, and one would naturally assume the "trip" was then over, there was—and is—the unmistakable conviction that *this trip never really ended.* It continues to this moment. In the truest sense, I am still "on" it. The daily drama goes through its petty fluctuations on the surface of life, but the Real Journey continues, behind the scenes.

I was given a "glimpse through the veil," as Rose put it. The "out-of-body" experience that would give many seekers a sense of self-transcendence was for me an "out-of-universe" experience—the transcendence of the entire projected relative dimension itself. This experience served to inform me as to what the real issue in, or behind, my life is, and the task that must be accomplished in my time here remaining. I feel I am racing my death to the intersection and do not want it to get there before I do. My conviction is that everything I have done (or has occurred to me, depending on my point of view) since that experience has had one purpose only: to develop that anterior "being" or soul-capacity that would be able to contain the final Realization, if and whenever that should become attainable (its happening is either impossible or inevitable—I don't know which). I do know that the whole of my life since then, and for the rest of my life, is a vector to prepare myself for going back to that place—and finishing the trip next time. That is my appointment and I do not know how many more grains of sand remain in the hourglass before death confronts me again with the final question.

As to how this drug-initiated experience differed from a "real" spiritual experience up to that same level of realization, I do not know. Nor do I know how much of my stopping seemingly one rung short of the goal is due to the unavoidable obstruction of the drug-catalyst as a factor, and how much because of my own limitation in spiritual maturity or "ripeness" at the time. Transmission from an Enlightened guru may not have been able to take me beyond that same level either, if my being was not ready.

The issue should also be addressed as to how all this relates to the Psychology of the Observer teaching. The sequence of my inner odyssey through the different realms of Mind was much like in *The Three Books of the Absolute*, although without reaching the final Realization. Rose has explained that the "mountain experience" consists of one's discovering the universe does not exist except as a mental projection which is witnessed, but one does not yet have enough of a vector or soul developed so that one could realize oneself to be the totality, including nirvana and this samsara both. There is still the experience of oneself as being an individual ray of awareness who is witnessing an illusion projected out from some undetermined, unsuspected source, anterior to oneself. However, the Self that is the ultimate ground of all existence is still unknown.

My best guess is that I did pass through this "mountain experience." I did experience exactly what Rose has described. However, the sequence progressed beyond this to where there was no longer a universe or any form of consciousness remaining to be seen, as that had all been resolved back into some primordial mind matrix (perhaps this was what Rose calls the Manifesting Mind), nor was there any distinct mental entity left to witness this absence of everything. Possibly the final state in which "I" found myself was the no-mind of Zen: the awareness of nothingness. I can only speculate that what Rose means by the Unmanifesting Mind is **what was aware**, and what would also be aware of everythingness, once the All is realized. As to the Absolute—I dare not even speculate.
Regardless of all the above conjecture, the import of that experience remains clear to me to this day. I started out in Disneyland. I ended up in Auschwitz. Then I made *the trip* and saw everything destroyed completely, including me. The only thing that has remained is a constant, gnawing, nostalgic yearning for something else...something undefinable. Rose has provided a likely map to it. Now, my life is a process of becoming, towards a meeting with death. All now is endgame. This is my autobiography in a paragraph. I keep in mind the urgent quest my waiting essence demands, as well as the inevitable destiny to which it points. Nothing else really matters.

Chapter 19

Reconciliatory Points

I come to you as a man selling air,
And you will think twice at the offer and price,
And you will argue that nothing is there,
Although we know that it **is**—everywhere.
I bring a formula largely untold,—
Of forces, mixed with between and betwixt,
And only seen when allowed to unfold,
And better felt when the body is cold.
I have a map to the home of the soul.
Beyond the mind is a golden find,—
The paradox is a guide to the goal,—
Though doubt is sacred, each man is the Whole
(Rose, 1988, p. 241).

With these words, Rose explains the nature of his gift to us, and his awareness of the necessary mystery to its discovery.

The material covered in this report has been diverse. Aspects from various teachings, although related like strands forming a rope, seem to conflict, as do some principles even within Rose's singular teaching. Discrimination has been employed to clarify the multiple factors and perspectives involved and their associative implications. As the paradox permeates all relative inquiry, an overview and summation is needed here now.

To begin this process of assessment, the matter of validation must again be addressed, specifically in regards to two aspects of the originally stated purposes of this dissertation: its accuracy in conveying and explicating Rose's teaching, and the verity of the Realization itself on which his system is based. As Rose's own evaluation is the only applicable standard of measure that can settle these two issues, following are his conclusive comments to me after his having read the foregoing material:

> I found your manuscript exceptionally good—and carefully objective. I have nothing to change about it. The clod will not read much of it. Nor will the pill-poppers. If it

> reaches the esoteric students, or the quasi-scientific professional critics, who are looking for something besides "love" or snake-pit propinquity...I feel certain it will hold their attention, and possibly inspire them to deeper enquiry.
>
> My mirrored view in regard to my spiritual message is that it is unproven, but reasonable. It is unproven because my personal Experience or Samadhi was not witnessed...which science demands. It was reasonable because it employed deductive reasoning in its truest sense...by finding an algebraic curve, bending in reverse away from less probable possibilities (personal communications, 1989).

To clarify an important point: Rose's experience was proven and witnessed—by his *becoming one* with the ultimate Witness, which he realized as the Self...the very ground of validity. It was not witnessed nor provable by others outside of the experience because, in Truth, there <u>were</u> no "others," nor anything "outside". The algebraic curve of retreat from error and projection that he followed, which is the path, terminates in the final equation: **one** (the awareness of unity) **divided by zero** (death) **equals infinity**.

It has been explained how one major problem in presenting any esoteric teaching is that the point-of-reference for the material being taught varies according to the level or relative position on the path of the student receiving the instruction. The apparent conflicts between equally valid principles exist only when seen from these different vantage points in experience. Understanding the sequence of spiritual evolution helps to determine where and how a particular form of work applies.

In the form and direction of inquiry discussed in this study, four progressive categories of experience-as-identification (or major rungs of the ladder) can be delineated:

(1) At first, one is totally identified with the picture-show projection of life (also known as "normalcy" or "sleep").
(2) One considers oneself to be a distinct person who is being aware; a seeker who is practicing self-observation.
(3) One's point-of-reference shifts to being identified as the awareness/witness <u>of</u> the person and this person's world, as things apart from the seer.
(4) The realization: "I am the All"—all objects seen in consciousness are known to be aspects of Oneself.

This is not merely theory. Clear introspection reveals that, while still on the path, our "I" as an experiential reference point of identity is found to be in fact two "I's" simultaneously: that of the little person who is living and searching, and the observer or awareness of this person. This is not a reference to the principle of "the-self-as-many-I's" which Gurdjieff exposed, for those are all on the same level of experience and are interchangeable. The two centers of identity mentioned here are of entirely different dimensions or levels of being and exist concurrently. We are not just one "I." There is a subjective, personal viewer of life (from "inside" us) and an objective, impersonal viewer (from "outside" us). Furthermore, one can <u>see</u> these observations from both vantage points on experience happening at once. The little person's self-consciousness is contained within the larger awareness of this person. *What is seeing or containing them both?* Rose's assertion: "The tiny man and the observer are one, and the Final Observer is the Absolute" is what reconciles this last duality.

This crucial point also addresses the heretofore oft repeated seeming conflict between the "There's nothing to do" aspect of Advaita Vedanta and the "Work like hell" insistence in Rose's form of Zen. What happens on the path is that the proportions or ratios between these two above "I's" of

identity gradually shift from the former to the latter as its source, as categorized more specifically in the four phases mentioned earlier.

This is much like a rocket going from the Earth to the Moon. At first, it is difficult for the rocket to escape the Earth's gravity field, the same as it is for the ego-mind to become disassociated from strictly mundane attachments. Gradually, it reaches the mid-point between the gravity fields of the two bodies of influence. This is the stretch of the path where the seeker really does not have a home, either in the world or in Heaven. This is the transition between phases two and three listed above, and where the committed vector is all one has—or is. By this point, one no longer regards awareness as "my" awareness (like the egocentrically designated borders of a country's air space), but as impersonal, boundless awareness (like the atmosphere of the Earth). There is no "picture-frame" delineating the boundaries of aware selfhood. From here on, one begins to identify more and more with the Observer than with the observed (including the person-as-self), as the gravity of the higher Mind pulls one back into it, reversing the Fall.

The advantage of Rose's method of teaching is that he does not allow room for the seeker to cheat by pretending in imagination that one is <u>really</u> "the Self", and thus rationalize sitting idly in ignorance, when this "Moon landing" has not yet been accomplished in experience. He is advocating that work be done on both "I's" at once, until the All is attained and there is no longer any division.

Advaita tends to emphasize only the top end of this channel between the aware Self and the human self, with little attention paid to the consequential follow-through from the bottom or relative end. Zen works from both ends at the same time: the mind's making the effort to answer the mind <u>and</u> cultivating the detached comprehension of this dualistic effort, until the channel is cleared through and pure awareness permeates all in unity. This comparison also somewhat parallels the relationship between Raja and Jnana yogas. Raja can be likened to Advaita in its emphasis upon the direct approach to realization of transcendental Being. Jnana involves Zen's attending to the discernment between the real and the unreal and thereby backing into a truer quality of mind. Thus the latter (Jnana/Zen) can be considered to be a part of the methodology to implement the aim of the former (Raja/Advaita).

Furthermore, to tie some other previously discussed themes together, the ideal of Raja yoga can be realized through either of its two forms or routes: the path of mindfulness (which is of the masculine nature) and the path of devotion (the feminine nature). When properly manifested, both are non-dualistic. However, one must be very young or very old inside to take either road effectively: young enough to not yet have a ponderous ego of resistance or old enough that it is dead or dying. In addition, despite the critical comments in the introductory section of this report about the path of devotion contrasted with the path of mindfulness, in mature experience these become more the same the more we become whole.

The Fourth Way seeker works both ends of the channel at once by employing the Heart's way to wholeness through function and Mind's way to wholeness through comprehension simultaneously. In practice, honest devotion is the underside of being. Doubting inquiry is the underside of awareness. Together they are the prayer of the soul, which <u>is</u> the channel. Whether the core of one's path is to reside wholly in the Witness or to genuinely surrender to God (meaning: "what is"), the result is the same: becoming the Truth. Either way, the mental construct that regards itself as a seeker who is doing the witnessing or the surrendering is at last dissolved and reabsorbed into the Self. This is also where the comments in the section on sexuality and transmutation reach their fruition. Love is not sentiment or sensuality. **Love is the feeling of being; the awareness of unity**.

Taking all this into account, Rose's use of Zen in the Albigen System could be said to incorporate the purest meaning of Advaita—abiding in the stillness of the aware Self that contains all experi-

ence, while acknowledging the reality of our current reference point within the projected relative world and thus "using" it, by deliberately promoting the dynamic identification with the process of mental refinement that is necessary and which can only later be recognized as having happened by itself, with no one "doing" it. His insistent claim, however, is that one will not reach that state of no-action without first committing to great action. Two of Rose's metaphors about the path could thus be blended together: one sits quietly by the side of the Ganges watching the river flow, while swimming upstream with determination through the swift spaces.

Although from one perspective, this progressive, from-part-to-whole approach (e.g. Gurdjieff's Fourth Way) is a lesser or more elementary path than is the start-from-the-wholeness non-path (e.g. Klein's Advaitic teaching), from another angle, what is regarded as "work" could instead be seen as the outer manifestation or concomitant adjustments of "inquiry", but without the pretense of autonomous, willful doership about it. This dimension of emphasis is important because while it is true in principle that there is nothing for the Self (as totality) to "do" in order to become what it already is, Rose's insistence is that **we are not this Self now**, but are experientially still a small "s" ego-self stuck in some dead-end maze of illusion, and so must "do" the work of *becoming;* of remembering oneself and returning to the Truth. We do this by answering to the homing signal emanating from the Invisible Current passing through this self, from Reality. Intuition is the living presence in this ray, being both its voice on one end and our ear on the other. Although the self is suspected to be essentially nothing but a state of delusion that takes itself seriously, to work both ends of the channel means to work on dispelling the delusion from within one's state, as well as from outside it through recognition of what this blob of mind-stuff really is and not feeding it with continued belief.

In order to refine our discrimination in the strategic approach to self-definition, it is worth pausing here and more intently confronting the question of precisely WHO it is who is deluded and suffering (or indulging in non-existent happiness) and what that (our) status has to do with Realization. Is the Self deluded—or only the self? As the self is not fundamentally real, is its plight real or is that too of the delusion? What must change? What realizes the truth? Does the self discover—or does the self's seemingly autonomous existence end and What Is is revealed...to whom? This is the final relative paradox. What needs to be done? The seeker's task is to find that sole particle of the seeker that is real; that point being one end of a ray whose other end is already and always in Reality. "I" is the ray. It was in reference to the eventual discovery of this essential unity of oneself with reality that the mystic, John Davis, testified to one of Rose's students: "Your soul is the ultimate judge."

This key issue can be touched more readily in our personal experience in determining: what exactly changes when one becomes aware of something in consciousness of which one was not aware previously (some hidden psychological pattern, for example, or a forgotten dream)? The content of consciousness was existent all along, expressing itself and coloring one's perception even without one's being aware of it. Much of psychodynamic therapy in particular focuses on bringing such subconscious material to consciousness, to then be resolved. However, this becomes esoteric work when one comes to understand that in actuality there is no such thing as the subconscious as differentiated from the conscious; the terms being misnomers. There is only conscious*ness* of which one's awareness is not yet aware. There is nothing that is not in awareness, yet the crucial issue is: where was awareness, or what was its quality, prior to such a shift in one's point-of-reference occurring—and what changed? There was awareness of consciousness during the period of unknowing too (otherwise it would be impossible to "see" the experience or gestalt later), even while "one" was not aware of, or in, awareness. Who is the one who is or is not aware and, as awareness does not change, what exactly is the difference?

The actual nature of experience is that **the observer** is what sees the on-going flux of consciousness. This is the mind watching the mind. *Awareness sees the observing.* The observer is a functional pivotal point at the highest edge of the mind and it is only when observation inverts upon itself that awareness becomes self-aware. This is our only difference from a pinball. This is the meaning of Jacob's Ladder. With this in mind: what would happen if seeing were to invert upon seeing, inverting upon seeing, interminably?

Nothing actually changes in any of this. The only thing that seems to change is the location and definition of the "I." We go from being a state of delusion that identifies with itself, to the anonymous observation of this state, to the aware-Beingness that contains this seeing.

Continuing with the previous theme, the spiritual depth psychology of Jim Burns and Roy Masters, the Gurdjieffian Work of becoming a capable seeker, the deliberation to purify and sublimate the sex desire, the attention strengthening practice of Vipassana, the exercise of triangulation involved in reconciling polarities, seeing the relationship between causes and effects in one's life, and overseeing all egos and states-of-mind so they are not in conflict, and all the rest are forms of effort meant to bring the human self into alignment with the Truth, which in the end is found to have been the real source of the impetus for this inner refinement all along, and not the bumbling ego; this false self originally being the root cause of all deviations from truth, until its becoming transformed into a philosophic vector. With this perspective on the paradox, "the serenity to accept what I cannot change"—which really means everything—is finally found to include that sub-category of factors which one can (meaning: is compelled to) change. Thus, the first step on the path is to surrender all egos but the one desiring Truth. The other steps take themselves. This entire debate is only another, though major, example of how the mundane mind sees reality in duality. This issue does not exist when totality is realized. The seeker, the path, and "arrival" are one.

A way of tying in all this with the Albigen System is in recalling Rose's statement: "You are what you do, until you realize you do nothing—that you are the Observer." In this sequence of spiritual maturation, "You are what you do" is the bottom end of the channel and "You are the Observer" is the top end. Regarding all of Jacob's Ladder as one large triangle of existence, the two lower poles of relative interaction could be considered the bottom end of the channel, and the summit "point" of comprehension (which is not a point) is the top end.

Despite the majesty of pure Advaita Vedanta, Rose is being realistic in declaring that it is impossible to start from the wholeness, however splendid this sounds in principle. We must admit this is not the exclusive reality of "where" we experience ourselves to be right now (depending upon how far one has been able to pull back from the picture-screen of life), and so the ultimate aware-Beingness can only be a concept at the outset. Faith is dualistic, whether the object of the faith be a postulated God or a Self, and the one maintaining the faith is separate and undefined. Becoming the Unknowing, and thereby becoming the Truth, is non-dualistic. Thus, the path is not a process of developing powers or choosing philosophies, but of dispelling false categories. To unbecome what one is not is the way of the Albigen System. One backs into Reality. This is Rose's brilliant contribution to transpersonal psychology. One big difference between his recommendations about the path and that of too many other teachers is he does not overestimate people, nor underestimate adversity.

Yet, even in this praise there is a paradox. One justifiable criticism of Rose's manner of presenting his views is that, in his efforts to compensate for the student's known weaknesses and the treachery of the adverse forces, he tends to reach down too low on the ladder in much of his discourse (ironically violating one of his own principles), and does not attend as much as he could to the finer distinctions in validity between partially valid teachings, or the subtler aspects of the work on the top two triangles of Jacob's Ladder. Many of the comments throughout this paper have been an attempt

to combine and reconcile the various relevant doctrines discussed, and indicate how they all tie in with the total system devised by Rose.

Rose provides much of this summary function himself in his assessment of the basic trap of narcissistic self-deception into which most human beings fall—many seekers included—and his perspective on what the honest manner of living and searching should be that would lead to spiritual growth. He presented this overview in the context of his feedback to me about how his teaching was interpreted in this paper. He focuses in particular on the key principle of "point-of-reference," explaining how he deals with it differently than I did, though not negating the emphasis or angle as already described. In this outline he addresses the task of establishing validity more from the "objective" mode of inquiry than through the "subjective" end as I did. In doing so, he is ironically approaching the issue the way I had originally done (as mentioned in the previous chapter), before I had encountered Rose's teaching and shifted my orientation! Regardless, here he offers his supplementary comments:

> Our (man's) point-of-reference is the Earth—and our body (feet) that rests upon it ever precariously. The only thing that keeps us from drifting out into space is a magnetic draw to this abysmal stage and grave. But mankind does not accept even the Earth for a point-of-reference. He creates other points-of-reference. One of these is God [meaning: our vain imagining of "God"]. If he actually used the EARTH as a point-of-reference—he would drift toward a clearer understanding of the laws of Nature. But in choosing [this created] God, he subordinates Earth—having the ecclesiastical edict that God created the Earth as a playhouse for those important micro-organisms (people). Man's only way to change or exalt his Point-of-Reference is to somehow transcend the earth by seeking its (and our) source and by relentlessly peering into our essence—or peering into the self to see if it has an essence. 2) The next point-of-reference is MIND. Not our synaptic toy, but the MIND (BEING or DIMENSION). 3) The final Point-of-Reference cannot be named, except that it is our definite Being. However, once that Being is reached—it becomes a Point-of-Reference that gives embodied man a clearer view (definition) of our self and destiny. (personal communication, 1989).

In these three stages he is succinctly describing the summit of each triangle in Jacob's Ladder. He is also indicating how our mental interpretation of life experience—whether conceived in religious or psychological terms—is upside-down: we unknowingly rearrange the view and live as if we were already at the top of the Ladder, regally subduing and consuming the world around us, when in fact we are generally hopelessly struggling along the baseline of the bottom triangle, denying our own meaninglessness in ever more insidious ways. Our only hope is to humbly note our real position and obediently follow the dotted line back up.

There is one common issue running throughout all the parallel teachings discussed in this paper, though defined and addressed in different ways: what ends the ego of "me" that obscures the real "I"? While on one level it is true that the "me" cannot ultimately end itself, as all its very efforts to do so also perpetuate its existence, Rose's recommendation to answer this predicament is a paradoxical, Chinese finger-trap toy method of strategic suicide; progressively narrowing the gap in duality up the ladder, until some shock from beyond or outside or inside the seeker abruptly shatters one's rooted identification in relativity and brings about this non-finite leap of being into unicity.

"Who am I?" is finally found to have been a trick question; a koan. There is no answer. The silence is the answer. "I" am the silence. The essence of the path is the pure witnessing of the life of the mind, while this mind attempts to answer itself, until the gestaltic thought-ego called "me" dis-

solves, ending the inquiry into the root of this self. It is discovered at the end that no one was ever really there—the thought-self has no core to it. This flimsy shell floats in Mind substance more real and alive than this imagined entity ever was. The "me"-ego is actually the crude reflection in the mind of the "I"-Self. This human self is found to be a conglomerate of nearly infinite factors, like a complex, multi-dimensional connect-the-dots figure, that believes in its own conceptualized sovereignty. However, when this is clearly seen, the real Self is realized to be the space between the dots.

This space is aware and one's progressively realizing this awareness—which is the "going within"—is the common thread running through this entire process of inquiry. This is why the path to reality has been said to go through the self and why self-knowledge must be a prelude to Self-Realization. One must correctly individuate before being able to justly obliterate individuality. The channel repeatedly referred to is really the aware ray of "I-ness" originating from the Source; the common "eye" between Man and God of which Meister Eckart spoke.

This treatise has been vast and complex; the labor of sorting through and evaluating its myriad elements has been nearly overwhelming. Much like the homeopathic principle of exponentially progressive concentrations and purifications of essences, we arrive here at a summary of this path of self-definition:

The Albigen System brings one to this open "eye" through a process of refining one's point-of-reference of selfhood along the reverse vector, motivated by curiosity and desire, powered by transmuted energy, maintained in betweenness by polarized tension, and guided by intuition. This is the becoming. This state of betweenness held in tension as one pulls back out of the projection is like masterfully balancing the world on the head of a pin, after it has stopped spinning. This is non-duality. The three-fold path of observation/becoming the truth (the Truth), self-inquiry/retroversing the projected ray (the Way), and chastity/ladder-work (the Life) is the vehicle that brings one to the goal.

By the end of the path, when one sees that the "me"-ego has no center to it, one has been reduced to nothing but a question mark, a conscious absence, a concern about the unknowing, steadfastly asking: "What is Truth?" There is also the awareness of this state. Awareness is behind the mind at this point, but this awareness does not fully know itself. To know that one does not know removes the final filter of mind and places oneself in a position to be claimed by the spirit of What Is. One can only wait openly in this stillness, dying into zero. The rest is Grace; its workings and reasons known only to God.

Although in Genesis it was related how the Lord had put Adam to sleep in order to create humanity, there is no evidence Adam ever woke up. In his troubled sleep, he dreams of having fallen. He dreams of serpents and demons, and sees visions of make-believe glory. The Tree of Life is forgotten, yet ever waits. This is the great task of the esoteric path: to wake up and reclaim our rightful place on the throne. The task is not easy. However, it is Rose's living testimony that the prize can be won and is not only the privileged domain of Messiahs and Avatars. He tells us what this quest demands and how it unfolds:

> The path to Truth, or Reality or Essence is very simple: It requires a Selfish man, an individualist not afraid of the annihilation of individualism, a fearless man not afraid of powers within him that are much greater than himself, and a man of suicidal relentlessness once his commitment is given. All that is necessary to find the Truth is an unconditional commitment—not putting a time upon the commitment nor a greater value on any other desires or fears. If a person sincerely makes a commitment, he automatically becomes a vector in a sure direction. But if we wish to see the commitment

> become an Absolute result in this lifetime, we must be conscious of our limited time, and of ways and means to expedite the realization. All energies must give priority to the vector. Every hour must be used in a way to expedite the success. So that as soon as the general commitment is made, we should immediately commit our energies which are generally used for anger or pleasure so that transmutation will bring Intuition. The voice of Intuition will be our most valuable teacher. It will furnish all future planning for the campaign. But do not rest. Make violent efforts, but do not disturb the sleepers. (Rose, 1985, p. 315).

The final statement in every mature spiritual teaching is: **All is One and I AM THAT**. The basic guidelines of the road map to this discovery which Rose has left behind are now before us. He can do no more. The rest is up to each one of us, everyday, for the rest of our lives. He had foretold his students years ago that the TAT group is a functional entity whose larger significance is as yet unknown to us. The full story is yet to be completed, collectively and individually. This consideration holds equally true in the circumstances of every person's life-drama. Will we carve out our own destiny towards Self-Realization—or be consumed by *the illusion?*

Rose leaves us with these final words of portent (written on plaque in TAT ashram):

> The secret of all relations between man and the infinite is to be found in the Self. The secret of eternal life requires a knowledge of death. The secret of death is found only by dying. To be a witness to this secret, one must die and return. Those who do not enter the Self, know nothing of the infinite. Those who do not die, know nothing about a greater reality called death. Those who teach disciplines, unless the disciplines are for introspection or for dying, are teachers of systems of orderly leisure, autohypnosis, or self-deceit. Let us convert our fears and emotions into energy, our doubts into substance and facts, our faith into a belief in our Self—and life into Reality.

Peace to the Wanderer.

Figures

Figure 1. Jacob's Ladder

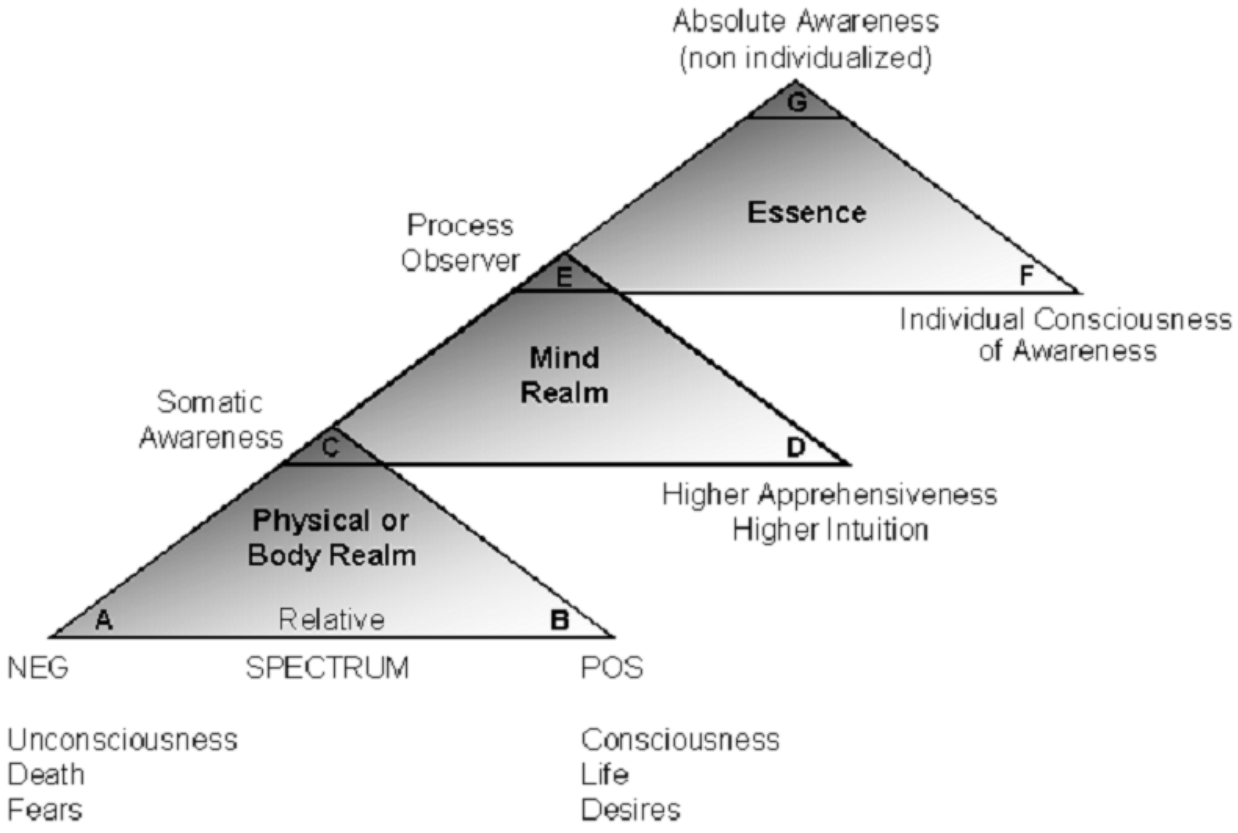


Figure 2. Transmutation Energy diagram 1

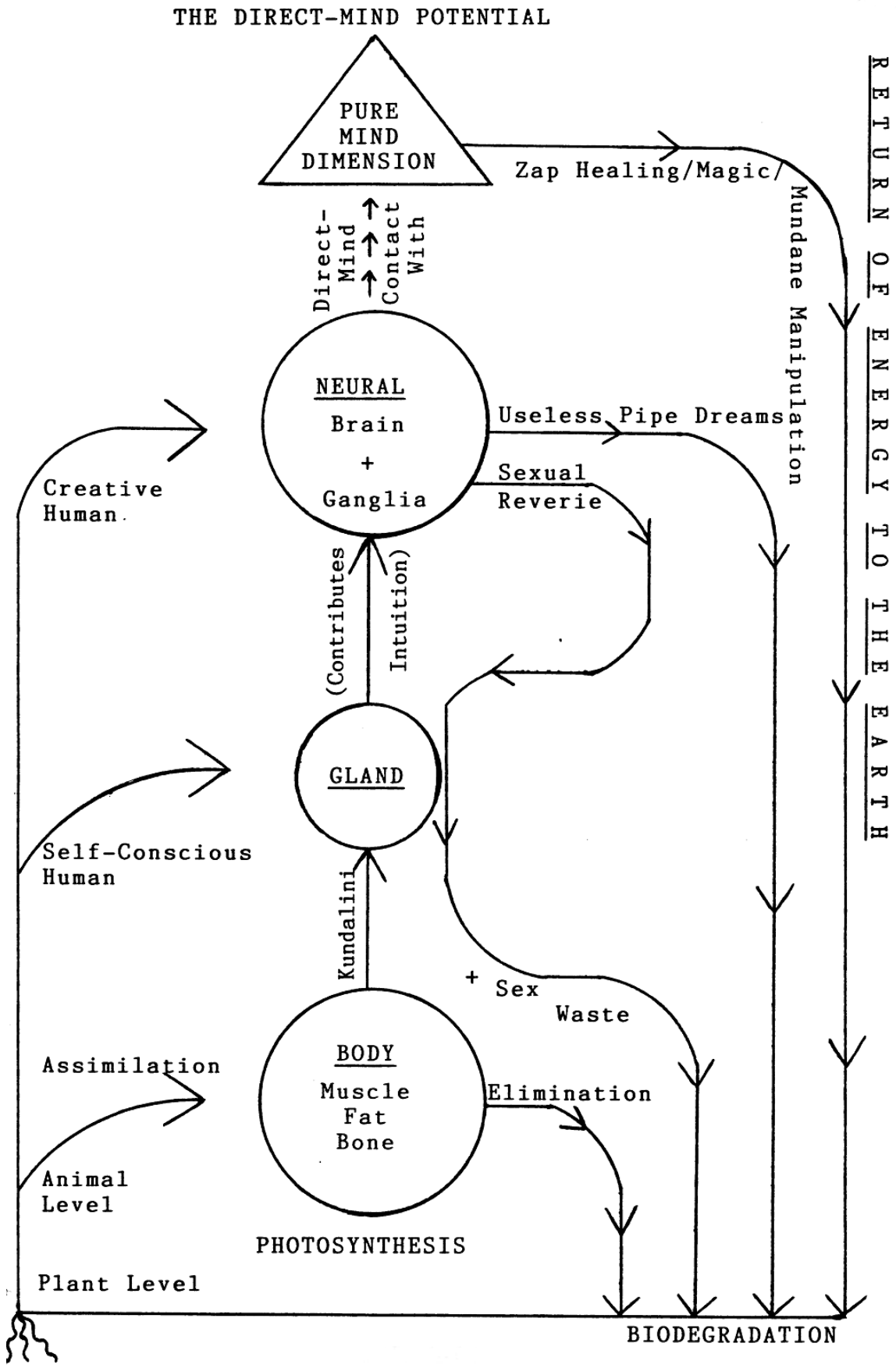


Figure 3. Transmutation Energy diagram 2

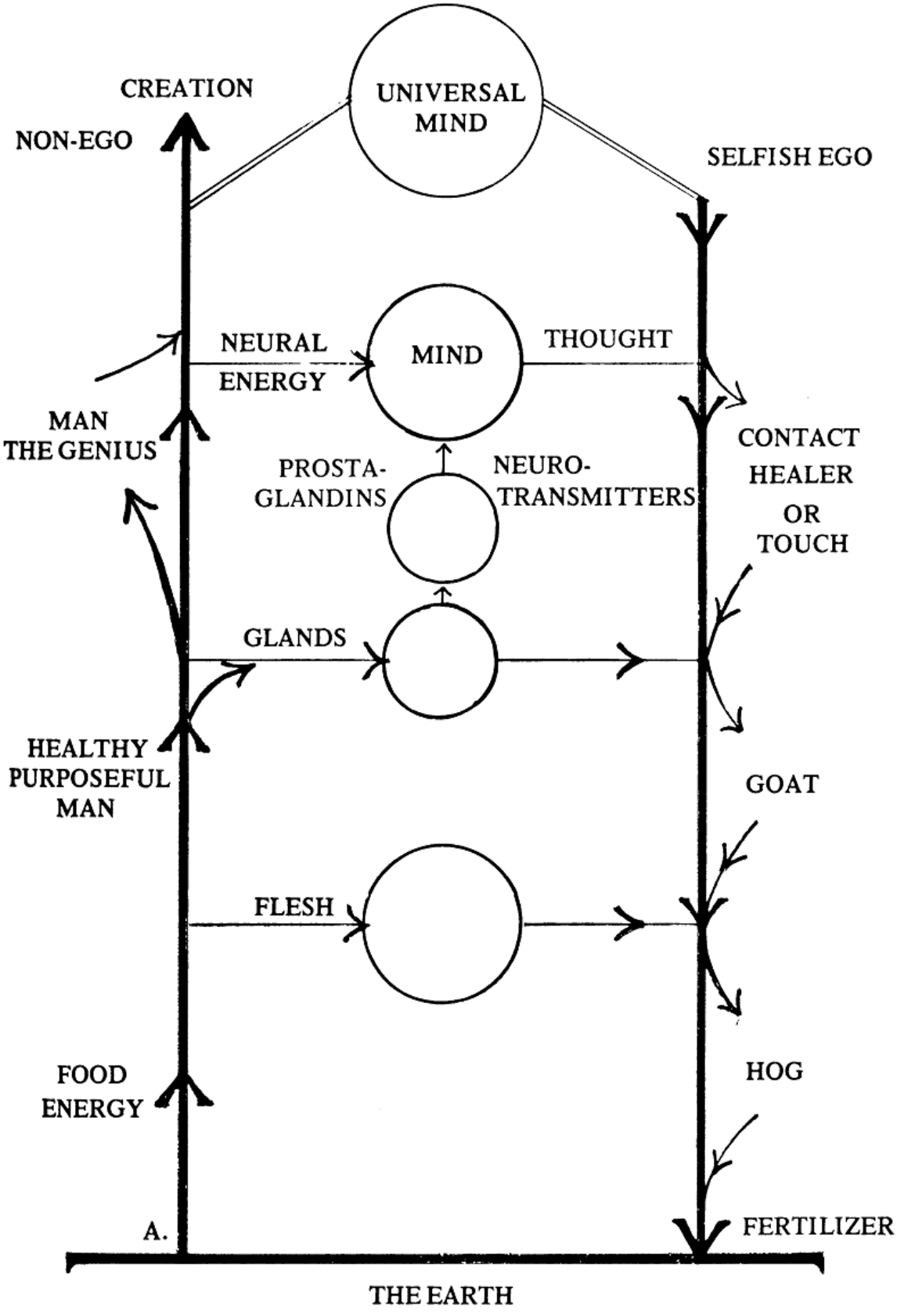


Figure 4. Examples of Triangulation

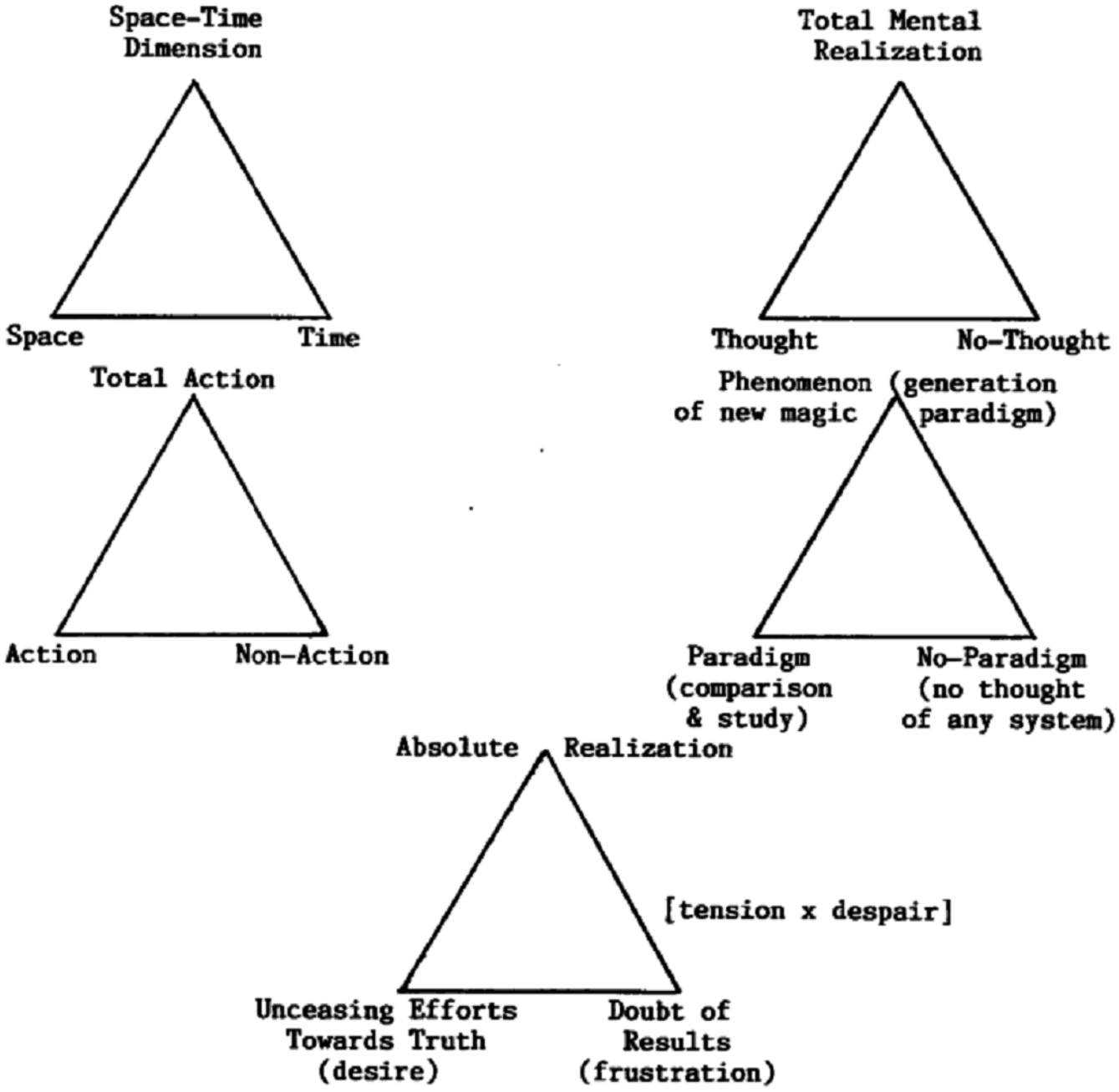
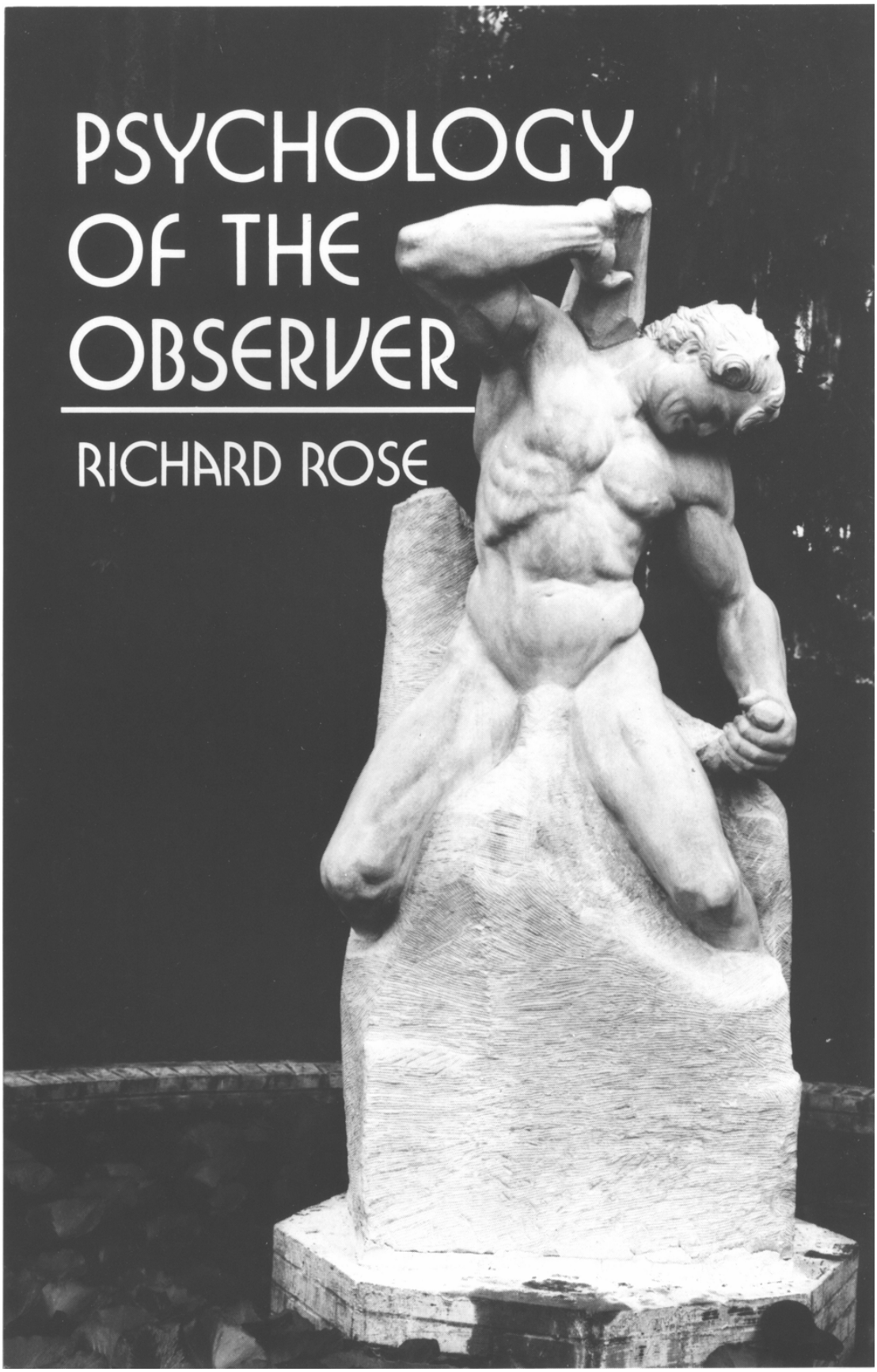


Figure 5. Psychology of the Observer book cover



Definition of Terms

Following is a listing of many of the key terms and principles in Rose's work, with brief definitions. This also serves as a general outline or overview of his system. Each of these points is elaborated upon and tied together in the study.

Advaita Vedanta: the teaching that one's true self is the Self behind all things, which is Reality, and that the path to realizing this is one of non-duality, of seeing the unicity of all things and how all is an extension of oneself. When committed to truth, all opposites and divisions are reconciled in oneself, and one is found to be the very path to the Beingness one has never left.

Albigen: Rose named his system after the Gnostic mystical sect of the Middle Ages, the Albigensians, as his philosophical views and lifestyle values are similar to theirs, and also as a tribute of respect for their commitment to their spiritual convictions, for which they encountered violent opposition from the ruling forces of the time, that killed them all.

Albigen System: Rose's esoteric teaching, also referred to as The Psychology of the Observer, which he developed after decades of search and experimentation, that resulted in an experience of Self-Realization.

Awareness: makes crucial distinction from consciousness: consciousness is the somatic mind's apprehension of its experience, while awareness is of the spiritual Mind behind this and is what *sees* this consciousness of experience; consciousness can alter, while awareness does not.

Backing Away From Untruth: that the process is not of postulating what the truth is, based upon desire, fear, rationalization, or conditioning, and then simulating it, but rather of retreating from error and backing into a condition of lesser error and truer or more comprehensive understanding.

Becoming: the main principle in this level of inquiry that Rose teaches: that one does not find, learn, or acquire spiritual knowledge, but must *become* the truth of it; also referred to as "change of being"; it is action that transforms insight into being.

Betweenness: the mental attitude or perspective of non-duality, of "running between the raindrops", of "holding the head" a special way that makes Direct-Mind capability possible, allowing one to tap into a miraculous dimension.

Commitment: that one must make a commitment to oneself (or "God") to having this path as one's priority in life, and that there is magic in this: it sets into motion a process of help and influence larger than the individual that would not happen if this promise had not first been made.

Conservation of Energy: that energy is of various kinds and is not unlimited; that a high level of quantum energy is needed for realization or healing to occur, and thus, the vital energies must be conserved and their use redirected.

Curiosity & Desire: two forces of natural programming that are implanted into all creatures to promote organic life and which can be willfully inverted and used by the seeker instead to find ultimate self-definition.

Death: the promise—or threat!—that the truth about the Self is on the other side of zero; that the work is fundamentally the preparation for death, in the proper state of readiness, and the deliberate bringing about of this premature death-state (while living).

Direct-Mind: a quality of mind, freed of dualistic, conceptual thought and ego, in which the functioning of the higher intuition brings about holistic insight into the nature of the self and of life, and in which various psychic or even miraculous phenomena can occur.

Ego: by this is meant the false sense of identity with which the, as yet undefined and undiscovered, real Self mistakenly identifies in its mental projection. Not the same meaning as in Freud's usage, and has a largely negative connotation.

Enlightenment: the Realization of the true Self behind all manifestations, the source of all being, and the answer to all questions. This is said to follow the death of the ego-mind when one dies consciously and properly prepared.

Forces of Adversity: that there is some agency of opposition built into life on every level, and especially in spiritual work; that this force has an intelligence and a will that is counter to the ultimate best interests of the seeker, and that this influence must be recognized and out-witted.

The Fourth Way: Gurdjieff's term for the philosophical or "becoming" level of inquiry, above the instinctual, emotional, and intellectual levels of living or searching; involves the harmonious development of these centers while developing ways and means of self-transformation.

Intuition: neither reason nor feeling alone are sufficient to guide one to the truth, and through all the delusion that blocks one's way; the living of a moral lifestyle (conservation of energy and psychic purification thereby) is largely what allows this wholistic intuitional sense and discernment to develop.

Jacob's Ladder: Rose's "map" describing the different aspects and functions of the mental dimension, which one ascends from the personal to the transpersonal; this is the framework for his entire system of meditation and transmutation of energy.

The Law of the Ladder: relates to above: that people exist on different rungs of the ladder of spiritual maturity; that the rungs below us are visible while the ones above us are not; and that helping the person on one's rung or one below it is an integral part of one's own process of ascension, as is being helped in kind by someone or some agency above us.

Laws: Rose describes a number of laws that he has found in regards to mental functioning and spiritual mechanisms, as well as aspects of the Path that are universal; knowledge and implementation of these principles involved in the search help the student to accelerate progress and overcome obstacles.

Manifested & Unmanifested Minds: the former is the universal mind-matrix that creates the relative world of experience; the latter is the unparticularized spiritual Mind of awareness that contains this vision, this seeing of the real nature of the contents of the Manifested Mind being "the mountain experience"; the Unmanifested Mind itself cannot be witnessed, but can be known by entering it.

Meditation: the finding of reality by finding the real part of oneself; involves psychological insight, philosophical inquiry, witnessing of mental processes, discerning between self and not-self, and refining one's point of reference from what is observed to that of the observer.

Milk From Thorns: related to Curiosity and Desire and to Transmutation: the deliberate using of some of the forces and urges being projected through us by Nature for mundane purposes, for our own ends, which require this extra energy and impetus.

Mind: makes important (and rare) differentiation between somatic mind, with which the Self is erroneously identified, and anterior Mind—which is a dimension and not an extension of the brain, and which contains the thoughts, feelings, sensations, and perceptions that are the somatic mind.

Moods: a coloration of experience based on prior experience and a determinate of motivations in living; seduction, fear, and nostalgia being the three fundamental moods from which all other feelings, attitudes, values, and desires derive; nostalgia is the soul's memory of prior experience as well as its emotional homing signal to the mundane ego.

Mountain Experience: a level of spiritual realization where one sees the manifested universe to be a illusory mental projection; it is not the final Enlightenment, as one does not yet know who the seer of this mirage is nor has realized the anterior Self that contains both seer and seen.

Observation: the key principle in meditation: the continued direction of attention towards observation of the self's workings and experiences leads to freedom from identification with this projection and arrival at the real Self; Rose claims observation is the secret of immortality.

The Observer: the central theme throughout the teaching: that the view is not the viewer; whatever can be observed—even the thoughts and feelings "inside" ourselves—is not the real anterior Self, and is only a derivation of this final, observing Self.

Paradigm: the notion that we are never experiencing life in a state of clarity and comprehension, but always through a filter of distortive conditioning and projected beliefs, and that the recognition of all of one's paradigms—massive and subtle—and stepping out of them is essential to arriving at the true state-of-mind (which is no state-of-mind).

Paradox: the curse of duality that qualifies all subjective inquiry of a psychological, philosophical, and religious nature with its complementary perspective; much of Zen involves recognizing and reconciling both sides of a polarity of views; this work requires walking the razor's edge in a state of Betweenness.

Point of Reference: perhaps the essential principle of the teaching: that the work is to refine one's point of reference of identity and perspective through all lesser identifications, until the true state and comprehensive vantage point on existence is achieved.

Process Observer: the superior point of vision on Jacob's Ladder that watches the workings of the Umpire, as well as all the other processes of mental functioning within the individual's experience; it also notes intuitive input from outside the somatic mind; it is above duality and is the intersecting point with the real Mind or Self.

Projection: the process by which our world, our experience of life, and our sense of selfhood all emanate from an anterior mind-source; the recognition of and backing away from this complex projection is much of the work; a key point that is emphasized more than in its conventional usage.

The Pyramid: Rose's term relating to the Law of the Ladder: that humanity is pyramid in shape in regards to all forms of effort and attainment, whether material or spiritual; the base is broad, while the Fourth Way is not heavily traveled...and fewer still are those who finally graduate from it.

Quantum Energy: the highest form of human energy, refined and transmuted from food into physical, then glandular, then neural, and then finally into quantum, or spiritual energy, which can be used for creation, healing, or realization.

Rapport: involved in direct-mind communication or transmission, whether between teacher and student, therapist and client, or between peers; the conscious sharing of a state-of-mind or gestaltic understanding that is direct and without words or concepts.

Reconciliatory Principle: in recognizing that the paradox permeates all relative inquiry and that the identification with either side of a polarity results in an incomplete perspective, one must ascend to the top of the triangulation of duality to see the whole picture; this ascension being a major aspect of Jacob's Ladder.

The Relative: all that we experience and know is seen as being within the relative matrix or dimension; all factors are conditional, fluctuating, and particularized, and related to everything else; this is the realm of polarity and paradox; as contrasted with the Absolute, which is entirely outside of relativity and is unchanging validity.

Reversing the Vector: or retroversing the projected ray of life: meaning this vector of attention and energy is not to be aimed at external achievement or creating one's desired goal-state, but rather pulled back into one's anterior, unknown source of being, from which the rest is projected.

Robot: regards the realization that we do not "do" anything, but are done to and identify with what happens to us; seeing the mechanicalness of the processes of thought, feeling, perception, and motion, and the beliefs that condition them, helps to correct their flaws and automatically backs one away from identifying with this automaton and into the true observing self.

Self-Definition: the central aim of the work: that what is most important is not so much philosophical speculation, theological faith, metaphysical postulations, socially-utilitarian psychology, or pseudo-spiritual simulations, but to accurately define **the self**—answering "Who am I?"; this when fully realized, results in the knowledge of everything.

State-of-Mind: an assumption about and identification with a view of life from a point of reference that is incorrectly located, a range of perspective that is incomplete, and through a filter that distorts whatever much is seen from that vantage point; a state of conviction or personal paradigm based on prior moods and the energy projected into them; we have varying states-of-mind.

Subliminal State-of-Consciousness: similar to above, but more pervasive and harder to recognize; all of one's life may well be processed and experienced through such a subliminal state without one's being aware of the distortion; rationality, religiosity, and love are three major examples Rose mentions.

Tension: has a positive connotation: it is life-energy held in suspension between opposite poles of force or influence; it is this vital quantum, when utilized in a state of Betweenness, that pulls one's reverse vector back into its source of awareness, or ultimate at-tension.

Thought: briefly defined as an associative chain of impressions imposed upon the mind from outside of it; all of relative experience is finally discovered to be some form of mind-stuff that is witnessable; studying the content, functioning, and nature of thought is much of Rose's meditation system, which aims at transcending thought.

Three-Fold Path: one must work in three domains at once for this process to work optimally: A) to manifest the Truth in all aspects of living and being, B) to employ a Way of searching that brings about transformation, and C) to live a Life of mutual aid with one's associates.

The Three Questions: what Rose set out to answer in his search, and what he said must be answered by any true philosophical system: Who am I (ultimately)? Where did I come from (before birth)? and Where am I going (after death)? He claims to have found out.

Transmission: the Zen principle that when one has attained some measure of knowledge or power, he can convey this state to a student who is ready to receive it, through direct mental rapport, and influence the mind of the student along certain lines, if the student is willing.

Transmutation: the conservation, sublimation, and redirection of the life-force upward into neural and quantum energy, through efforts along psychological and philosophical lines; the real meaning of alchemy; also referred to as Kundalini.

Transpersonal Psychology: the domain of psychological inquiry dealing with philosophical issues such as meaning in life, psychic/occult phenomena, spiritual identity, and preparation for death; these also have therapeutic implications; Rose has not used this term, but partially founded the field.

The Truth: ah yes—what is it? Rose uses the term to mean the undefined-in-advance goal-state as well as the dependable criteria for progressively working towards it; he calls this final state—which can only be experienced and not known—the Absolute, which he prefers to use instead of "God", which he finds has been culturally perverted into meaninglessness.

Umpire: a principle on Jacob's Ladder describing the function programmed into the somatic mind towards promoting organic well-being for the individual; this operates largely on reason rather than intuition, monitors ceaseless fluctuations between polarities of experience, and is aimed strictly at the physical-scene.

Validity: the state of true knowing, seeing, and being; the condition of absolute fact, from which all error has been removed; the final contentment; is claimed to be synonymous with Self-Realization.

Vector: the physics principle of a unit of energy moving in a particular direction; that one must make of oneself an undivided vector towards self-definition, rather than remaining a robot moved by forces not of one's choosing, towards conventional or destructive ends.

Visualization: the ability of the mind to create, project, and perceive its own forms, as versus the validity of direct-mind apperception; this is considered a potentially negative quality and is an automatic faculty of the mundane mind, although meditation will free one from the traps of its added egocentric distortions, interpretations, and imaginings.

Zen: the chosen form of Rose's teaching in which the mind is used to overcome the mind through the duality transcending attention to one's philosophical "koan"; it emphasizes the direct inquiry into the source of selfhood and the experiencing of this original state of Beingness, without dogma, belief, or concept-building.

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