

The Path by Richard Rose

The following transcription is from Richard Rose's April 9, 1976 lecture delivered in Columbus, Ohio. If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please read his books, which are available at www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.

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I'm going to offer two postulates tonight. One is that I believe -- and this is the motivation for my coming to different schools and talking -- that all people are interested in the truth. The second is that there is a method of finding the truth.

The reason I bring this up, as the original generalization you might say, is that too often I talk for an hour or so and give the impression that perhaps I don't leave a blueprint or a system. That I do a lot of talking about what is true or untrue, but I don't leave behind a method. Well, the method is there. And I begin with the premise or promise that there is a method of finding the truth.

Now of course as soon as you start talking about the truth, you have your own definitions. And I maintain that it all goes back to the same thing: It's just an enlargement upon the simple definition of truth in any field.

If we didn't have truth in science, our civilization wouldn't occur, our blueprints would be faulty. We demand accuracy in science, and that accuracy is truth. We try to make a science of our abstract things as well, like psychology, sociology, and such, and we try to find some truth in that. Not that we always do wind up with the truth, but still we try to make it as truthful as possible and as scientific as possible. The same thing occurs with religion.

I believe that everybody -- a lot of people just give up -- but everybody is curious about where they come from. You hear people saying rather bravely (that's the idea, pretending to be brave): "Well, nobody knows. We're all going to die like rats and that's going to be the end of us. And the people who preach religion are basically hucksters who are just going to make a living out of it..." And with such bravery they turn aside the necessary effort, which is needed to find something.

But regardless, no matter what station of life a man is in, whether you find him in the lodge hall, the church, or the beer-joint, he'll break his conversation occasionally to say, "What do you think about this thing of life after death? Where do you think we're going?"

He's hoping of course to get it in between beers. And everybody's hoping to get this in between beers. Or, "Here, I've saved a few thousand bucks, let's go to this guru and give him a thousand or so, and he'll zap us, and we'll go back to work and pleasure."

Presuming that life will be exactly the same afterwards, and they'll have the same desires afterwards.

Somewhere there's an enormous gap between this idea of everybody wanting the truth and so very few people looking for it. And there's a still smaller percentage of people looking for let's say the final truth. Some people, when they get to looking for it, stop at that which they like to hear, and they label that the truth.

Many a time I've talked to a group of students -- and of course students like to presume that they're much more broad-minded than older people. But believe me, today the older people are more broad-minded. You get a group of young people today, they're more addicted to what they think should be heaven and hell. When you violate their concepts of what is beautiful and flowing and nice, or the current fanciful philosophy of the time, they get downright angry. But they don't stop to think that this may be a block. This may be a block from letting something in. It also may be a significance of their capacity. And, consequently, in most of my talks I speak in generalities, because I see no purpose in talking too plainly and giving out too much information -- when you're only going to give them an inspiration perhaps at the best, to the best, while fifty percent of them may be indignant because you tramped on some sacred cow. So, in the past I've always said let's talk about the iniquities, the foolishness, the lies that are prevalent in everyday life, and hope by talking about these lies you see that somewhere there might be the opposite of lies.

So I came to the conclusion that I'll spend this evening talking straight truth. And if it hurts -- well then, you can brush it off as being strictly my opinion, forget about it, and go back to whatever line of thinking you wish to indulge in. But there's not much chance of you changing, then.

I've got to go back to my own youth to explain what I want to tell you. I started off quite young believing that the most important thing in life was to know what life was. And I'm talking about my early teens and before my teens. I could not see the point about living if you didn't know who was living. Now that might sound like foolishness to you, because you'll say, "Oh, I know who's living -- I'm living." Okay, I can't argue and I can't explain further. Because you'll have to figure that one out yourself, if you think you're living.

Regardless -- I went out searching. And as a young fellow, I grabbed onto the parental religion and went away to the seminary and spent time trying to be a priest. I was seventeen when I had enough of that -- because I came to the conclusion that you can't scientifically investigate something that's inside your head if somebody's saying, "Shut up and do what we tell you, believe what we tell you, follow this dogma, say these prayers -- and you will go there."

And my answer is, "Where?"

"Say your prayers to God...."

And I say, "Who is that?" So when I asked too many of this type of question, they said, "Son, you'd better leave."

Of course I felt bad at first, but I left. And I started looking into everything. This is going back and digging up a dead horse, but the reason I'm mentioning this is that it might be of some value to you today. Because the same things I stumbled over then, you people are stumbling over today. We have the same number of phony gurus, the same number of hucksters, people selling spiritual values for sex or money.

So you wade through a tremendous lot of these until your reaction is to give up, perhaps. And I think that fifty percent of the people who really are sincere give up; they just run into so many hucksters that they say, "I've had it. There's no truth, there's nothing but lies and chicanery; and I might as well get into the rat race and make my bundle and lead a vegetating existence."

Well, in my investigations I found that there are two systems of looking at things if you're looking for self-definition: Who we are now; -- [and] where did we come from, and where are we going. Well, strangely enough, it's important to know who we are now. And to find out who we are now, it doesn't do any good to ask the priest. You've got to ask yourself.

This is psychology. Everybody has to study psychology -- pure psychology, not the garbage that's given out today to make the robots behave a little better. I'm talking about genuine psychology in which a man knows himself. And sometimes through that knowledge he's able to step into another man's suit and also know that man. This type of psychology is necessary in this type of search.

The other thing of course is the science of "paths." Finding ways and means. You can go talk to somebody who knows something. And of course every time you go out to talk to people you have to run the gamut of phonies. You have to run the gamut of organized religions which have long since lost any great intrinsic value and are just preaching for that religious entity's survival.

Then of course you brush them all aside, as a lot of the young people are doing today, and you say, "Well, let's go find a man. This looks as though it's not a prevalent knowledge; it's probably just in the minds of a few. Let's go find these few people that know it." And again if you hunt all over the place, you find that some of these individual people who are supposed to be sages and wise men have ulterior motives. Sometimes that ulterior motive is money and sometimes it's something else.

I went through quite a bit of things, and ended up pretty much in despair. The things that you have today were marketed in those days too. One of the things that you have to look out for are what I call gimmicks. Or you look out for the "appeal" that appeals to what you want to believe.

You have to first of all know that you can outwit yourself. You have to know that a person will choose a spiritual path because of libido. A man might join a church because it says you can have ten wives. Or a man may join a church because it promises eternity, or life after death. It promises what he wants to hear.

And I say that if you want to go out and look for the truth, you don't postulate ahead of time what you're going to find. You don't use words. You don't say, "I'm going out to search for God." It's alright to say that, for want of a better word; but it basically amounts to self-definition as that-which-is-the-answer. If there is something in control of the universe, that which that is, is what you search for.

You don't name it and postulate it, then get books that have been written about it and try to imitate formulae for placating that God. This is going back to primitive religion when you do that. Taking somebody else's word for it and then offering some sort of sacrifice or money in a collection basket or whatnot.

There is so much of this that even when we get out we rebel against our parental religion, and we go across the water and find somebody -- I've often said where you were buying beer for the local padre you're now buying hashish for the guru. Or maybe something else. Because the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, we look -- despising our parental religion and everything of that sort -- and we look for the magical. The man in the diaper as opposed to the man in the evening suit. And we embrace this sort of thing.

After ten or twenty years of it you come full tilt again, realizing that the truth is not in the organized, established religion of your ancestors perhaps, and it's not in the gurus of some Asian country. It's basically back in this thing called psychology. And basically you find it by looking inside of yourself.

I was twenty-one years of age when I came to the conclusion that man would not learn. People spend years -- I started off in a theological department with a twelve-year course of study of Greek, Hebrew, Latin, German, astronomy even -- for the purpose of being better able at the end of that course to preach to people. So I would have spent twelve years acquiring wisdom. But not any real knowledge. Just what somebody else told me was true. Just the material in the book.

When I was twenty-one years of age I realized that man never learns anything. You do not learn. There's an old theological premise -- I think Thomas Aquinas said it -- that the finite mind never perceives the infinite. This is very true. And this is a stopper. When you see this, that the mind is finite, that the brain is so constructed that it's dazzled and turned. Every time you start to think of something you forget it five minutes later.

Every time you start to hold a philosophic concept within your head, and within a half-hour it's gone. You pledge yourself to a certain type of life and in a couple of days' time the heat gets on you, your passions overwhelm you -- and you're down in the

warehouse or someplace and you've forgotten all about it. This is the type of mind we're dealing with.

So that you say, "How can this type of mind, this finite mind, ever do anything about the cosmos?" How can it ever come up with the knowledge of an abstraction that can't be blueprinted or recorded -- along with information brought through a telescope or rockets or something of that sort?

And eventually it dawns on you that this saying is true. The finite mind will never perceive the infinite. So what do we do? We have to find a system of changing. A system of becoming less finite. This was not mentioned by the Thomistic theologians. They just said, "Believe and shut up. Trust in God. And die without making too much of a racket."

But there is a chance. And the amazing thing about it -- the people who brought this first to me were the "pagans" which we despised for centuries. And all the time that we were wrestling with these Thomistic syllogisms there was a movement in Asia that went directly to the mind of man with a simple and direct psychology. And that's Zen.

Now I'm not saying that's the only way, because many of the Christians also -- the Christian saints -- went directly into themselves and found the truth. You go back and read their literature and you'll find it's there. We just read over the top of it, more or less. And when I reached my realization I went back and read certain things in the Bible that now had a meaning to me.

So Christ said, "Seek and ye shall find." Before, that was just so many words, which we read so often we pay no attention to. But now I realized He didn't say, "Believe." He said, "Trust me, I'm telling you straight stuff." But I don't believe that he said to just believe blindly, or he wouldn't have said, "Seek and ye shall find."

And this is the formula. There are other formulas also. There's a formula laid down in the New Testament that is also laid down by Buddha. That's the three-fold path. You have to work three things at once.

Regardless, this business of "becoming" was never given to the lay people among the Christian nations. Only the concept of blind belief, following and doing what you're told. But when you get into the lives of people who did rebel -- and they were prominent people in the Christian history, like St. John of the Cross -- he rebelled, and went into himself and found things out.

It's possible many others did too. Christ himself is supposed to have spent forty days up on the mountain somewhere meditating. So possibly a good many of them did. St. Theresa is supposed to have found a revelation from going into herself and finding her God.

Of course she labeled it and named it. The Asiatic doesn't name it; the students of Zen don't find any name in it. As soon as you name it, you're postulating, and that's the danger. You're postulating something, you're imagining it, you're creating it.

A lot of people have realized this, either consciously or subconsciously. A lot of young people have realized this by reading books by Alan Watts or something of that sort. They give up on the idea of finding or having any security in just blind belief. And consequently they turn to some of these movements which imply that there's a change possible or that a teacher can "zap" a student, the student will be changed, their eyes will be opened, etc. The sound currents, and so on.

I went through a lot of these yogic concepts. Kirpal Singh, which was the Radha Soami sect -- they believe in listening to the sound currents. I think that the Guru Maharaj movement is also connected with the sound currents. And various physical phenomena, incidentally.

Although when you get to thinking about it, you'll find that the mind and the physical body have little relation -- that a noise in the ear or straining your eyes to see a certain point out ahead of you has no significance in the Essence of Man. A little thinking will tell you that. Although it may put you in the mood, a contemplative mood, by which the mind may eventually do something -- but it seems like a long way around.

But so will prayer. You get down and you pray every day, and that prayer will be a reminder. I used to say, "When you pray and hear yourself, if you can hear yourself, you can answer and acquire." Because everything's inside. And you have to summon that which is inside to answer the external plea, and you satisfy your own prayers. In other words, you become.

With this knowledge, in that we have had a lot of movements hinting at the ability to change people, hinting that there's going to be a miraculous change with the application of a certain mantra and a little bit of money and perhaps a little bit of devotion -- once again humanity seems to be approaching closer to this idea of movements that promise a change of being -- but moving equally distant from it by virtue of being destroyed by the gimmick or game or the money involved in it.

In other words the teacher too often is interested in carrying a healthy bank account back to India more so than he is in bringing information to people.

So we go through a new process now of sorting. And you can't sort if you don't have an intuition. This is the reason that what I'm saying right now some of you may reject just one sentence after another -- "I don't like what that guy's saying" -- and somebody sitting next to you may be saying, "Hey, that rings a bell." Well why do these two different people have these two different opinions? I maintain it's different layers or levels of intuition.

We are dealing with an abstract thing, and if you do a little thinking on it you'll realize that this is not mathematics, where you take your slide rule out and add pluses and minuses and come up with my veracity or anybody else's veracity. There's only one gauge for my veracity, and that's the little meter within your head called intuition. And this has to function very rapidly.

It has to take in a tremendous number of factors, mainly words, gestures, books you've read, comparisons from other data that's in your computer. And you have to come up very quickly with an answer, or you might get zapped. Or you might get angry, if your verdict goes the other way.

It's impossible to go beyond this step -- it's impossible for people, even though they realize they have to become -- it's impossible for them to go beyond that unless they have an intuition that is developed. Because they'll reject things that their appetites reject and embrace things their appetites embrace. And consequently we have fallen victim in this country to a lot of garbage. And it's purely and simply that.

There are some simple yardsticks that can be applied. And if you get into enough books on it you'll find these yardsticks exist in the literature. Down through the ages it's always been written or said that money does not make truth, and you can't buy truth with money. And everybody's trying. Everybody's trying to put a little money ahead in the bank and say, "Well, I'll get what I want. If I want zapped, I'll give the guy a thousand dollars or so. If I want the Truth -- why, I'll go over there and...."

I remember reading Kapleau's book [*The Three Pillars of Zen*, by Philip Kapleau]. He said, "Well, when I got to be fifty years of age, I decided to get zapped. So we caught an airplane for Japan and we decided to stay over there until we got it -- it was that simple." Well, it isn't that simple. Because he's not going to go to Japan at the age of fifty and get Enlightened. He might get zapped, but he won't get Enlightened at the age of fifty -- unless he has spent his whole life straining in that direction. That's my belief. And number two, he's not going to get it just by paying off money.

This is the thing that we have to look for, the development of intuition within ourselves, as you go down the path. So that you know which to pick. Because how many years in your life do you have? I spent seven years in yoga, from age 21 to 28. And one of the high points or features of this yoga was "OM." That was my mantra. It doesn't cost a thing -- and it's just as powerful and just as valuable as ANGH or INGH or BANG or BONG. It will take you to the same place. It'll give you quiescence, it quiets the mind, and you can get it out of any book of yoga.

But I went into this for seven years, thinking, pleading for that magical door to open. I followed all the rules: vegetarian diet, non-indulgence in alcohol, sex, tea, coffee. They said it, and I did it. Because I was going whole hog. At the end of seven years -- nothing happened. I was twenty-eight years of age and a lot of life had passed by, and the only thing that happened was my hair was falling out.

So I came to the conclusion that there was something wrong with my judgment of a system. I had peace of mind. Peace of mind doesn't lead to greater and greater peace of mind, to greater and greater bliss, where all at once you blow through the top of your head and you're in some previously-idealized heaven. It was only at the age of twenty-eight that I started to fight, and when I started to fight tooth and nail is when things started to happen. Not by sitting on my haunches chanting to myself.

Consequently, I'm hoping to save [you] time. I'm afraid I know there are people who are going down the same road -- they're going to be addicted for eight or ten years to some movement or another -- without the knowledge that basically no movement is really necessary. All that's necessary is that you look inside yourself honestly and sincerely.

And of course I say it's good to associate with people who are doing the same thing. In that respect, it's like Alcoholics Anonymous. When the brain gets fuzzy or when you forget or you get fatigued or you drift out and get drunk or something -- somebody says, "Hey, maybe you'd better come back and do some thinking; you're getting too far from the center."

So in this respect -- this is one of the Laws of Three that Christ spoke about: the Way, the Truth, and the Life -- the "Life" is the association with people on the same spiritual direction. Buddha called it the "Sangha." They're pretty much the same. The Way is basically the discipline. The way can be a Christian discipline, or it can be a Buddhist discipline, or it can be a self-invented, self-created discipline, whatever you promise yourself to do.

And the Truth, of course -- it goes back to this thing of everybody desires. Everybody wants it, so live it. Don't lie to yourself. When I say don't lie to yourself, don't let your stomach dictate what your head does. Don't let your gonads dictate what your head does. That's only part of you. And when you do that, you're lying to yourself. You're splitting your energy, you're making of yourself more or less a vegetating being rather than a searching, sentient being.

This brings us up to the investigation of Zen. I got into Zen after I had my experience. I found that Zen is the purest psychoanalytic system you can encounter. And I still think today that modern psychology is wallowing in wishful thinking in a vain struggle to predict herd compatibility. Whereas Zen goes to the truth of the human being.

And once I had reached the point where I had something to communicate to somebody else, Zen was the method by which I was able to communicate. Because Zen is a direct, mind-to-mind method. The business of transmission from teacher to a student is direct, mind-to-mind transmission. No words. That's the reason you find so little writing, except foolishness, in Zen.

Again, the reason I'm getting into the different authors on Zen -- ninety percent of all the writing that has come out from Asia, i.e., Japan and China, on Zen -- is also garbage. Because -- some of it is history -- okay, the history is good, but who is interested in

history? I don't care if Christ had two pair of shoes, I want to know what he said. What formulae did he leave behind?

And you pick up books like D.T. Suzuki, and there's very little formula. So there are sutras, so there is poetry, so there are the Songs of David - are they inspiring, or will they tell you something? And I maintain that the real books that lead you into a knowledge of how to function in Zen are practically nonexistent. Zen is a person. Zen is represented by people, not books. People who are able to transmit. And this is where the proof is, not in the fact that they belonged to a certain thing.

For instance, I knew two Zen teachers in my time. (I knew more than two, but I didn't stick around them very long.) One of them was Sokei-an, and the other was [Alfred] Pulyan. And my belief -- here's a man, Sokei-an, who had a rubber stamp from Japan, who could not transmit, who had very little to give to anybody, lived his life out as a monk -- and Pulyan, a man from New York City [Kent, CT], practically unknown, was a man who could transmit and refused to advertise; the only way you could find him was by accident. Because he didn't believe in blowing a horn.

We're getting a tremendous lot of esoteric literature, and in some respects this is nice. But are you going to be able to wade through all of it? This is the point. We have a group that meets here, and this is one of the complaints I'm always handing to the groups - I go out to these groups and they've all got a library. They've got a hundred books. This is no good. Too many books are no good; action is what counts. And you read a book, and you read a reference in that book to somebody else, and you go running to grab that book and say, "Hey, did you read this?" And they're neglecting the action.

You can read books from now on. And believe me, as fast as you read them, somebody will write them, and they'll be in the bookstore over there. And that means procrastination. To use that as a rationalization to stop working. It isn't that impossible to start working on yourself tomorrow. Right now, that's all that's necessary. And if you start working, your ways and means will be better in your meditation. As you meditate, you'll find ways and means to develop meditation.

Now, I'd like to pause here and possibly see what you people think. I'm going to open it up for questions, and this way I can have more direct communication with you. If there's something you're puzzled about that I said, maybe an elaboration. There's only one thing I ask -- that you don't put me on the witness stand. In other words, that you don't start preaching, using the room as a podium for some other belief.

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Question: You talked about different formulas, different systems. What is your formula? What is your system?

Rose: Well, to give it to you -- I could try in a few words, but I've written a book, and it's in the book. If you contact some of the people in the group, the book is available. Basically, I'd say that it corresponds pretty much with what I went through, with the hope that it can be abbreviated in someone else's life.

It amounts to conservation of energy. And very certain physical laws -- that your results are proportional to energy applied. So that if you want to become a serious student of physics, psychology, anything, you can't just study one hour a day or one hour a week. You'll be twenty years getting through college. And the same with this. If you want to be a serious philosopher or esoteric student, you're going to have to put some time in that.

And there's terminology used in the system, used in the book, which might be confusing if I get into too much of it now. Some of them are engineering terms. I use the word vector. Man must build a vector. He builds a vector, and then he finds that he is the vector. He makes a direction, and then he finds that he is the direction.

And that's the reason -- of course, I'm hopping way ahead now, and this may not be intelligible to you, it may seem far-fetched -- that Christ made a remark that he was the Truth. We generally don't pay any attention to this. I didn't pay any attention to it. But this is the whole secret there. That means that Christ did not learn the Truth. He was the Truth. But he didn't just overnight be the Truth. He had to become the Truth. So this is the vector. A lifetime it takes, or ten or twenty years, before you become something.

So this system basically says, at first, to start. If you have a system of your own, then do it -- if you have a sincere path, and you think it's good. I don't say just do what I tell you. In fact, I say doubt. Everything -- doubt. Everything you read, including what I write. Find out for yourself. But if you see anything functional in it, something that's offerable, take it. Take it tentatively, and say, "Well, we'll try that. We'll try this exercise."

Some people in the group, for instance, eat meat. Other people don't eat meat. And they come to me and say, "Should I eat meat?" I don't care if you eat meat. I don't care if you kill people. Because I don't know what's good for your development. Maybe you'll be enlightened on your way to the electric chair.

Everybody's life is different. Everybody finds it through a different means. But do it with sincerity and with great diligence, and I maintain that you'll arrive. And that's the formula. Results are proportional to energy applied.

The old salesmen used to say, "If you throw enough mud at the ceiling, some of it will stick." You go out, and you make so many door calls, you'll make so much business. And that is true in this regard, also. You think like you're failing, that you're not accomplishing anything. But it's only when you look backward over a year's work, or two years' work, or consult some of the other people in the group, and they can start giving you details of the progress that you've made. But to yourself, you can't see it.

But I would like for you, if you're interested -- you can come to the weekly meeting. It doesn't cost a cent, there's no charge for any of this, and it will abbreviate a lot of time spent here tonight -- if you're interested in it.

Q: What happens when everybody sees the ultimate truth?

R: It would be a nice situation, I presume, but the nature, the present statistics -- Richard Bucke wrote a book called Cosmic Consciousness, and he predicted one in a million would see it. So if we can raise those odds a little, it would be nice, but we're not going to get too great a probability in that respect.

Q: When one reaches ultimate reality, he understands that human beings work against themselves.

R: They work for their natural selves, but against their spiritual unfolding -- let's put it that way.

Q: We're smart enough to invent atomic bombs to destroy the world, but we don't seem to be smart enough to eliminate starvation, to guarantee human beings' survival....

R: Did you ever stop to think, is it necessary for them to survive? Which is worse: starving babies or polluting their minds in our educational processes?

Q: ... Because it isn't sin that's the problem. It is money. It is the fear of starvation that in turn creates sin.

R: No, I don't believe that there is such a thing as sin. I don't accept the idea of sin at all. We're too damn stupid to sin.

Q: In order to survive, we must work, and for every action that we do there is a reaction....

R: That's true. That part is true. I agree with you that there are reactions, and these reactions are looked upon as good and evil. But of course, I don't choose to judge. I don't know what's good and what's bad.

We had a talk up in Akron, Ohio one time, and that came up, and I said that sometimes I don't know which is worse, to bring a baby into this world to suffer and go through a tremendous amount of misery, or to give an old man who's dying of cancer a pill and let him end it very quickly. They call it "pulling the plug" you know. One is considered murder. But I think sometimes the worse crime is to bring the baby in.

Both of them are doing things we don't understand. We're manipulating nature in a way that we don't understand, and that's the crime. It isn't the idea of taking a life; you might put the man in heaven. You put the baby in hell. But the very concept that having babies is bad -- nobody wants to hear that.

So you can't tell what is good and what is evil. We do know that people react. We get reactions for doing certain things.

Q: Can you elaborate on what you were saying about the finite mind?

R: Well, for instance, when you get into meditation, the first thing you're going to realize is the fact that you have no control over your mind.

In other words, the mere fact that a person sits down and studies for two hours on calculus or something like that doesn't mean you control your mind. You're pressed, you're forced by virtue of the economy. You realize you have to do a certain thing in order to get a certain job in order to eat. So you're pressed. But even then, it's hard to keep the mind on calculus. And there are times when your mind rejects it.

We have a girl in the group, for instance, who had one little course, one little paper to do to graduate, to get her degree. And her mind shut off and said, "No." This is the finite mind. The mind that is unpredictable, willful, that wearies with fatigue. When the oxygen leaves, it goes to sleep. When temptation goes by, it changes its direction. It builds a heaven to suit its appetites. So everything it does is colored by forces that it can't control.

So, in other words, it's finite. It's limited to the perceptions that come in and the voices that come in to dictate the messages. The thing is colored. We see the world through rose-colored glasses too often.

Q: Okay, do you think that once we find Truth or determine Truth that the mind is no longer finite?

R: Yes.

Q: Okay, then if the Truth is always there and we have just to find it, then will....

R: No. What I think and what you know are two different things. You must never dare to believe that the Truth is always there. See, the ultimate Truth from your vantage point does not exist.

Q: Then why do you bother, why does....?

R: No, no. Now wait. I'm not saying it doesn't exist for me. I'm saying that the only truth that you can have is what you postulate. You can aim for it. But nobody can aim -- we went through this before, some while back -- you do not aim at the Truth. It's impossible to aim at the Truth, the final Truth. It's impossible to aim at God. It's impossible to aim at the knowledge of Everything. The only thing you can do is retreat from the opposite, the untruth. You cannot go toward Truth. We don't know where it is.

Q: Okay, we don't know where it is, but in order to retreat, we must know that we're going toward something.

R: No. We don't know that we're going toward anything. The only thing we know is that we're just avoiding garbage. I say that we avoid what is manifestly ludicrous or ridiculous. And accepting tentatively things less ridiculous. Rejecting from those. Accepting the plausible and rejecting the things that are less plausible. Until we narrow it down. Until we're dealing with one or two things or abstract concepts that are possible and, just tentatively, more real than the whole mess of stuff that we rejected. This is the only way to approach a philosophic truth.

There's no such thing as saying, "Well, I'm going to presume that X equals 25 and then after I presume it, I'll prove it." No. We don't know what X is.

Q: So then "retreating from" means getting away from....

R: We become the Truth by simply -- quit lying. First of all, we do everything imaginable to be truthful. We quit lying. And then we find that we don't lie to other people -- it's easy to quit lying to other people, it's hard to quit lying to yourself. And after a while you realize you lie to yourself, so you quit that.

Then you go into -- if you've started to school your mind intuitively with this type of training -- then you apply that to a book of philosophy or theology or something of that sort, or some method of finding yourself. And then you pick the garbage from that. You reject the isms or the cults or the religions or gimmicks by virtue of your view of them as being either plausible or not plausible. And then you pick again.

The only thing you've got to work with is the choice of the absurd and the less absurd.

Q: But why is "God" used as "Truth" if you don't know that it exists?

R: Well, you've got to use something, and I say that we use the word "God" also, but as soon as you use it say you realize that you're postulating. And as long as you do that, as long as you recognize that you're postulating -- it's just like saying "X." I might say I don't know what X is, and you could say, "Why use X until you know what it is?"

Q: Do you have your own definition for Truth?

R: Yes, I have a definition for Truth that I can't convey to you.

Q: Why can't you convey it?

R: Well, because the way I arrived at it was by a change of state of being, not by an adaptation of vocabulary.

Q: Does that change of state of being entail knowing what is right and wrong....?

R: No, you don't know. The change of state of being involves not-knowing. Not-knowing. It's a process of being. Becoming one with. They don't say, "I know the Father" -- they say, "I and the Father are one." And, "No man knows the Father unless he come unto Him." These are little hints that signify that you have to become one with the Father. Again, "Father" represents God, or Truth, or whatever. I translate that to mean a change of being.

Q: [Referring to *Zen and the Art of Archery*] ... I understand the idea of the potter becoming one with the pot. But what is the lesson, what is the real value that I feel I'm missing?

R: I don't know. I never read it.

Q: Do you understand the idea of the potter becoming one with the pot....?

R: Yes, I understand it, but I don't understand.... See, what you have -- and this is what's happened in a lot of Zen books -- I believe that some people who have had realizations try to write it down. And these things they said were recognizable to other people, and even recognizable to the mundane mind. It's like the business that Alan Watts used to bring up in so many of his books, this idea of no-mind. No one knows what no-mind is until they reach no-mind. You can't put that in a book and convey it. And it was babbled about by authors and individuals who knew nothing about what no-mind really was.

So -- it's not conveyable. Even I think some of the masters in Japan, because they chattered too much about it -- people in the street were chattering about "This certain Master has acquired no-mind." How did they know he had acquired it? The only way they would know he had acquired no-mind would be if they acquired no-mind.

The idea would be that this acquisition or this state you arrive at is not what it sounds like. It sound like you lose your head. And in one sense you do -- but not in the sense that people take it, that you go insane or that you'd be completely lost, or something of that sort.

But basically this idea of the potter being the same as the pot is the same as the Atman and the Brahman in the Brahmanistic concept. There's a relation in all the major religions. The experience is there; people have had experiences in the Brahmanistic or Christian form of religion the same as they have in Zen. And they express that. The Atman finds himself one with the Brahman. He becomes the Brahman. And the Brahman expresses Himself through him. But just saying that may not convey to you what really happens. Because those are words, and how can you conceive of Atman becoming Brahman?

Q: What do you mean by meditating on the sound currents?

R: The Radha Soami sect, and many of these sects that come out of India, have what I call a gimmick that they build their group around. For instance, Yogananda introduced the Kriya Yoga technique, concentration on the third eye. The Radha Soami doctrine centered mostly around what they call the Shabd, and you were supposed to listen with your right ear, and not with your left ear, and you would pick up noises.

Now in the initiation ceremony they gave you corresponding noises, the conch shell, silver bells, and so on, which after you die you would be able to identify with the sound current. Consequently there was quite a little religion built up around that. Straining all your life to learn to pick up certain sound currents. Well, the result was some people imagined they heard things. Some people imagined they heard voices.

Q: Okay, what about something you would call a control, that would give you messages?

R: Well, I would check it out pretty thoroughly before I allowed it to influence my actions.

Q: How do you check it out?

R: Well -- you can check things out.

Q: Do you know exactly where it comes from?

R: I have an idea that you've heard something, yes, and you're wanting to know if it's valid or if it's something that upsets you.

First of all, there are formulas that you go by to keep yourself from being bothered. Then, if you're bothered, you're pretty well assured that it's not harmful. But there are a lot of things that have happened to people as a result of mixing sex and drugs that have resulted in voices -- that have resulted in possession, actually. So consequently I don't know what category your things fall in.

Now lots of times there are premonitions that come to people who have never taken drugs or never been into anything, and sometimes these are very valid. For instance, a close relative dying at a distance -- you'll hear their voice speaking or they call for help or something, and you check your clock, and you find out they died at exactly that time. That may sound like a voice in your ear, and it may be valid. Whereas a lot of other things may be the business of some entity tormenting you for some purpose or other.

Q: How do you change your state of mind?

R: Well, you can't change it -- there's no way you can change your state of mind. I think by recognizing it, it automatically changes itself. As you recognize something, it loses its ability to carry you off or force you in a certain direction.

One of the very important things, I think, if you're interested in this auto-psychological system, is to realize that there are things called states of mind. We hear very little talk about this in modern psychology -- that people get into what starts off to be a mood. And a state of mind is a prolonged mood.

There are things called states of perception. In other words, the reason you call these "states" is that they're changeable. For instance, if you look through a kaleidoscope, whatever you see through that kaleidoscope has a different appearance. And even though you only pick up an image, it will look perhaps dramatic, romantic, Lord knows what. And if you get up in the morning and look at the sunrise after you've smoked some pot -- that's a state of perception. That's not a state of mind. You're looking at the sunrise through pot, just like you would through a kaleidoscope.

But when you develop a conviction as a result of moods upon you day after day after day -- this is a state of mind. The state of mind can be to murder, it can be to love, or anything that may influence your life for years to come.

There's so little emphasis placed on this, there's so little research done -- I think some of the Gestalt psychologists have tried to get into this, they've tried to examine states of mind, but they've never had the hunch from the beginning what was going on, so they didn't know quite what to look for. They were just looking for behavioral patterns.

But we get into profound states of mind. For instance, when a man or a woman falls in love -- that's a state of mind. It's not reality. And when we get battered about in life over a period of time, in half a dozen of these different states of mind, it may cause or drive us to anything from love to murder -- and we have to stop and think, "Where are we?" We're talking about defining ourselves. Where are we where all this is going on?

The man goes away later, he sobers up the next morning and says, "Hey, how did I ever get into that mess?" -- which yesterday was a conviction. He was ready to lay his life down for this certain thing, or he may have while he was in that state of mind trotted off and gotten married, and tied himself up to a situation for twenty years or so that he regretted -- because he hurried the situation along.

So you're bound to come back to this thing and say, "Where was I at that time? I'm not that. I'm not the drunk. I'm not the guy that takes dope. I'm not the guy that makes love. I'm not the guy that gets greedy and eats too much. Because something else in me says, 'Hey, you're making a fool of yourself.'"

What is that which says, "You're making a fool of yourself"? Which one of these observers is really you? One of them is you, and the other is the state of mind. You've got to be able to pick this up in this business of self-analysis -- to be able to pick up when you are under the influence of a state of mind and when you are observing yourself.

Q: You talk about states of mind. Is this not just a portion of yourself?

R: No, no. I'm talking about dichotomy. See, now, there is a trend in modern psychology to think that all things are phases of "you." This is nonsense. You have bugs on you just like a dog has fleas. There are things upon you that take your energy that are not you. Now if you've taken enough dope, some of you will know. Some of you have met these things face to face.

There are many things. There are states of mind that are not entities. But there are even entities which people try to pass off as "Just a phase of me." But they're actual entities.

Q: So the state of mind actually isn't real?

R: Well, no -- it's still more you though than if I hypnotized you. If I hypnotized you, you couldn't say that that was just a phase of you, because I may have you out taking shots at somebody on a street corner while you were under hypnosis.

Q: But I would be the one who pulled the trigger.

R: Your body would have been the one who pulled the trigger. But which one are you identifying as you?

Q: Well, they're all part of you....

R: That's if you want to claim that. If you want to claim all these actions. But how would you want to claim that? If somebody hypnotized you and you shot somebody, would you go into the courtroom and claim that?

Q: I might tell them that I didn't do it, but what if I know that I did it.

R: Well, you know the thing you did -- parts of this body do things all the time that it's not necessarily in favor of. By that I mean it's a moment. But what you're telling me is that you would like to lay ownership to an irresolute being -- that takes ownership for all of the confusing and contradicting impulses which may get it into trouble.

My attitude is that the majority of people who commit crimes even, do not commit them. They are the victim of circumstances and strong, overpowering external impulses. Some of them are states of mind, and some of them are downright invasions.

Q: Would you say that you are separate from what your personality is?

R: Well, a personality is nothing more than something that you project that you want other people to accept. That isn't you.

This is what you have to determine for yourself, what you are. Because after you do a little bit of meditation, you'll realize, number one, that you're not your personality,

number two, you're not your state of mind, number three, you're not any of your desires -- until you are [instead] the guy that's watching all this stuff that going on.

Now when you find that, you're getting back to what I call the anterior observer. Not the ultimate or final observer, but the anterior observer -- the umpire, so to speak. Down inside of you somewhere there's an umpire that says, "Hey, I don't approve of that part of myself."

Now if you want to own it, then you're creating a dichotomy. And a lot of people are living with this dichotomy today, wanting to lay ownership to all of this. No. It's much easier to say, "There are things that I do I don't approve of. I would reject that part of myself." Then you can keep your head clear. But when you try to rationalize all of that as being one big happy mess, it doesn't work.

Q: Are there spirits that can influence a human being?

R: Yes. It's absurd to presume that we are the only fish in the sea. We like to believe that we're top dog. That all of these chickens and cows and cats and dogs were put here for our happiness and all this sort of thing. This is nonsense. You take this little play *The Exorcist* -- this is based upon fact. This gives a hint that there are things that have a powerful influence over human beings and all forms of life, which are invisible.

Now the psychologist says, "I don't believe in anything I can't see." This is their reaction to *The Exorcist*. "It doesn't exist if I can't see it, if I can't get it into a test tube."

You can't see a virus. You can't see oxygen. But we will accept a pill from a doctor under the basis of his idea that we have cancer, or something that you really maybe can't isolate. You'll accept that. His professional advice. But people will not respect the professional advice of the theologians who for centuries have dealt with these creatures.

Q: What about self-hypnosis? Do we constantly create conditions according to the nature of our own thought?

R: Well, we don't create them. We don't even create our thoughts. And this is a good little part to remember. If you think that you think, try to stop. If you think that you think, try to start. You don't start your day's thoughts. It's upon you before you know it. Nobody starts thinking; nobody stops thinking. It's caused.

All thought is the result of external environment. Until you reach a point where by some means -- this is the whole trick of Zen -- the robot's bid to find his transistor, to find his own crank in his back, and to move himself for the first time. Until that time, all people are robots.

And, incidentally, your conditional psychology is true in this respect. But the thing is -- conditioned by what? There are multiple factors. One person gets up on television, has

subliminal advertising or something, and he thinks he's conditioning the masses. A certain political arm will reach out and try to put out propaganda. But they in turn are conditioned. So that we don't ever know where all this conditioning starts. It only seems as though the human race always just fits into the blueprint of the zeitgeist [the spirit of the times - Ed.] -- that which is supposed to be.

In other words, we're in a sort of culture here. And no matter how magnificent our egos become, we still respond as the people did six or ten thousand years ago. Some die in battle, some work themselves to death, some become bums. The same thing. We just have a little fancier ways of dying, that's all.

Q: Do you think everybody is born with the same amount of conditioning.

R: Well, I don't know about the measurement. But beyond a doubt, as soon as you're born, as soon as you learn to talk -- you have to talk with your parents -- and you're going to learn their language, and you're going to get their hangups and their beliefs and their attitudes, even though they're not spoken....

* * *

The above transcription is from Richard Rose's April 9, 1976 lecture delivered in Columbus, Ohio. If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please read his books, which are available at www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.