

Zen and Esoteric Christianity by Richard Rose

~ From the transcript of a talk given at Los Angeles, California, January 1976.

The following transcription is from Richard Rose's 1976 lecture in Los Angeles, California. 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.

Note: The original tape used for transcription was of poor quality with many inaudible or indecipherable segments. Ellipses (...) indicate that a short or longer section was inaudible, or that there was a pause in speech.

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We're going to talk about Zen. There's not a lot you can say about Zen. Zen is supposed to be an action thing, but nevertheless you've got to talk. A lot of authors will tell you there is nothing to do and nothing to say, and they will write whole shelves of books, so they must be saying something. There must be a purpose for it, there must be some proof for that effort. We do have to talk, but I don't believe that you can go at it in a cut and dried logical evaluation. You can try a little bit to evaluate things, and that's the purpose here tonight. We will try to evaluate for you the possible experiences I've had both in Zen and esoteric Christianity. After that, I'd like to turn the meeting over to some questions, sort of an informal discussion. After the meeting, if you want to ask any questions you didn't want to ask in the meeting itself, I'm perfectly free and willing.

The topic [of] the lecture is supposed to be "Zen and Esoteric Christianity." I found that there were eminent enlightened men in both camps. Being raised as a Christian somewhat in my childhood and youth, I was reluctant to accept this, while I was living with my parents. I put quite a few years in before getting to Zen.

So what I want to do is throw out a few ideas. And then I want to make some statements, some controversial statements. The thing is that you don't have to believe anything. The basic thing behind Zen is that you don't believe. It's to question ... the koan. The Zen koan itself is a question. You hear talk of a person getting a koan.

Some of the Asian koans you get are maybe a single word -- why? Translated into Chinese or Japanese, that might be "Mu." But "why?" holds the challenge to an entire life's philosophy. You challenge why you are doing one thing, and then you get into challenging everything. Why do you do anything? Why do you think the way you do? Why do you accept things from your childhood, and allow them to become part of your state of mind?

Zen puts no names on things, at least it's not supposed to. There is a definition of Zen. I think it is a good idea to remember this. Though they don't want to put a name on it, so there aren't definitions given. In viewing or evaluating some of the present Zen systems flourishing in the country today, it's a good idea to apply this in your examining.

Supposedly at the time of Bodhidharma -- Bodhidharma came to China -- there was the definition given that it was "a transmission outside the scriptures." They don't pay much attention to this today. There is a lot of attention paid to sutras and formalities. This definition given at that time negated the need for scriptures of any sort, and negated the need for any particular type of form. Since then, of course, any group with different forms results in sects and schisms - soto Zen, rinzai Zen. And seemingly there wouldn't be a need of this unless there was an extensive amount of attention put on form.

When we talk about pursuit -- the pursuit of death, basically -- toward the final answer of the Self. Let's say a hint perhaps, if you don't accept the thing verbally, is that it's finding out the god within you, or finding your essence. We find this in Christianity as well. Christianity is pretty much split up into two groups: the school of immanence and the school of fundamentalism. Again the fundamentalists are the same ones that have the sutras, or the equivalent of the sutras in Asia. Christians also have a school of immanence, whence they believe that you have to find *that* in you -- the answer lies within.

Zen challenges the self, so does Christianity in some aspects. Christianity advises self-scrutiny. Zen mechanics -- there are certain mechanics applied to anything -- whether lighting candles or wearing prayer beads. Zen mechanics include primarily sitting, they call it zazen: the koan. But neither of these is religious. Christianity employs a large variety of disciplines which it labels as religious mechanisms or leading to holiness. Zen postulates nothing beforehand. Christianity postulates before finding. A child brought up in a Catholic or Christian school or something of that sort is taught that there is a god, he isn't taught to find god, he's taught that there is god. Zen doesn't teach that there is anything.

And this is a significant difference, basically. Of course, again, Zen is an esoteric Buddhism. Now we look around for where is the esoteric Christianity. It's very difficult to find, and believe me, I spent a lot of time trying to find it. Even with the rare preachers that you run into like Thomas Merton. By the time he got to the point where he could examine esoteric Christianity and compare it to esoteric Buddhism or Zen ... it was late, [but] he tried.

Zen is corruptible, but not as easily corruptible, because it is not rigid and dogmatic. Christianity is corruptible. You find that ... years ago I was initiated into, I went around and joined a number of sects, for the purpose of digging, and I joined the Radha Swami sect. The last of that line I've heard of recently is Kirpal Singh. There was a schism, Kirpal Singh and two other sects split up. They had an idea, that as soon as you organized religion, you develop a body, cybernetic-like. It gets large, complicated, and starts to live like an entity. As soon as it starts to live like an entity, it gets a disease. The disease is the devil -- Kal. They didn't quite feel as the Christians do that it was a terrible evil creature that's waiting on the fringes to take over and subvert. They maintained that this was a force of Nature, that we're not all supposed to escape. They claim that there was a bargain made upstairs, and that Kal had certain "hunting rights" for humanity. The purpose is to keep people ignorant, and to keep people on this planet, this plane. That was the theory behind the Radha Swami word "Kal."

I don't say it's something you should believe, but I see the significance of this. As soon as you get too formal an institution developed, you immediately have a struggle for power, and a struggle for ideas, and the thing gets political. And the next thing you know it's not a religion anymore.

Zen is not that easily corruptible, because it denies all the time, any form. You'll find that some Zen movements can't wait to get into some form. They can't wait to buy equipment -- special pillows, special robes, and all this sort of thing. They start organizing as a religious unit. So when that happens, I find it an open door for corruption.

I want to say a few remarks about the goal of spiritual work, particularly Zen. We use a word, we hear a word called "enlightenment." Because the word is used too freely, of course it can't be understood. So any use of it seems superfluous. The attempt to define it is almost a waste of time, but nevertheless we get back to this thing that we have to say something. We have to try to use some common sense in the communication.

They tell the story about Buddha, that somebody approached him and said, "If you prove to me that you have something on the ball, I'll follow you. If you can prove to me that you can take me to satori or enlightenment, I'll follow you."

And he said, "I can't prove this to you, I'll have to take you there."

Because this is not a picture-show, this is a trip. The whole thing is a method of becoming. So this sounds pretty final. The fellow who's talking to Buddha would have to have some sort of intuition in order to guess this fellow has something on the ball, because he's not proving anything in advance.

Now, I don't think it's that bad. I think that there can be some conversation. I think it is needed, it's necessary if you are going to put years of your life into something, and manifestly from all the stories that we hear, that the pursuit of this goal takes years -- very dedicated, directed years. If you get on that sort of path, there's going to be many times when you think you're kidding yourself, that you're a real nut, because there's no guarantees along the way, there are very few milestones.

I say that there *are* milestones. There *are* things you can talk about. There are definitions if you read enough of it you'll get a vague idea, at least. That somebody down the line experienced something. You don't need to just say there's nothing, you're going nowhere, that this is the study of no-mind. These are fallacies. If there's no-mind, believe me that is oblivion -- quit, get drunk, eat, drink and be merry.

This business of no-mind is not the end of Zen. This is not enlightenment. To do nothing is to make yourself a vacuum. Nature abhors a vacuum and Nature will ultimately absorb a vacuum. Let's go back to the authorities, to these people who I think are honest people. Down the ages we've had some honest people that experienced. I had confusion, when I first got into this, sorting out these various stories of experience.

I had a man come to me one time, a man I thought a tremendous lot of, an old fellow. He healed people. A Pentacostal. He did some marvelous things. I knew him well enough to know he was utterly sincere, and I believed every word he said. He'd tell me he'd been saved, that he saw god. I thought, "That's strange. That doesn't sound like some of the other accounts."

And then I encountered people who said they had reached satori. I read their books, listened to their talk, and I saw there was a difference. A fellow who reached satori, had a brief, what I call an algebraic "eureka" experience -- something popped.

Then I read a book by Richard Bucke called *Cosmic Consciousness*. It's available in the libraries. He gives case after case, they're a little jumbled. I think he's got two categories in there. He talks about people suddenly becoming aware of an enormous allotment of time, the transformation of scenery around, the sky being lit up, actually lights being created that even neighbors could see and that sort of thing, by virtue of this experience. They came to St. John of the Cross the same way. And then there is an experience beyond this. The experience beyond this is one in which a person knows everything. Because all these people were not too sure.

Richard Bucke says he, I think it was in Montreal, Canada someplace, walked out onto a veranda or something and all at once the spell hit him, and he said the city became like Chicago on fire -- bathed in a rose-colored light. His description was that at that moment one drop of Brahmic bliss fell upon his soul, and from that time thereafter he was at peace with god.

But he answered no questions, the symptoms were decided. I find that all the experiences put out by people who have experiences fall into these categories: one of salvation, one of "wow," one of cosmic consciousness, one of enlightenment. They're all different. They're levels. The thing is, so many people are mistaken, that as soon as they get to one level, they think they've had it. They look down their nose at everybody else. They say, "You should be converted to my movement and have this great experience." And everybody they meet they give the same treatment.

So it was a long time ... I'm not quoting myself. I've written a book. A lot of this is explained in the book, but I'm not quoting myself here tonight, because it's not necessary. The most important book I read is on the description of enlightenment. If you can get this book, then compare it to people that are running around today telling you they are enlightened and starting all sorts of crazy cults. It's by Ramana Maharshi. It's called *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi*. Very simple. The greatest things are told, I think, in a very simple tone. You don't have to have a lot of piety, or quotations from the Bible and that sort of thing, to convey the greatest truth there is.

He says that there are two sorts of what's called samadhi. There's kevala nirvakalpa samadhi, and there's sahadji nirvakalpa samadhi. I have trouble pronouncing those Hindu terms, so I like to abbreviate it and call one kevala samadhi and the other sahadji samadhi. He recognizes that these are the two peak experiences that it's possible for a human being to experience.

The kevala samadhi he describes as equivalent to a bucket that has been lowered into a well by a windlass, and left lying on the bottom. What happens is that the mind has entered an experience. It's dropped everything, it's inert. But it can return at any time. That mind can return. The bucket

can be pulled back up. You can go back, entering your old personality, not knowing too much. You have an experience, but you don't know the whole story.

The other one, the equivalent action involved, is of a river flowing into an ocean. When a river flows into an ocean, it loses its identity. Presumably the drops of water are there, but they lose their identity. They're no longer seen. They cannot return. There's no returning. I find that this analogy, if you want to call it that, is the best that I've ever encountered. I realized when I read it, that if this man hadn't experienced it himself, he must have been in contact with people that had. I think that there are some other things in Ramana Maharshi that are well worth reading. It's not Zen, but I think it describes the maximum experience.

I think one of the greatest difficulties with Zen today, is the fact that they've made the word "satori" as the maximum experience, same as the Pentecostal people named "salvation" the maximum experience.

Now it all depends on what they mean by "satori." They may say, "When I use the word apple, I really mean orange." By examining all the writers on this, and current writers as well, you'll find their use of the word. ... For instance, we have a description of a person going into a zendo. They sit there and they are harassed for hours, or days, or weeks. And then something happens. They go in to talk to the teacher. He's given them a koan, and they're supposed to be shouting the koan, at the same time he's supposed to be working their [head?]. They go back in this room privately with the teacher and he says, "Do you have the answer yet?" And the fellow says, "Yeah, here it is." "No you don't have it." He goes back out and they harass him some more, when he comes back he says something, and the guy says "Yeah, you got it."

Now, this is not ... it. When Ramana Maharshi had his experience, he died. This is how heavy it is. Because to know everything, you have to die. This is an old maxim that comes from many different writers you see in the literature. That to know, you have to die. To know what the story is after death, you have to die. The thing is that by some quirk of fate they come back. For some reason, by virtue maybe because they put so much importance on bringing the message back to humanity. I think that may be it.

But the simple thing is that also they put under the answer that they don't really want to die, so the organism continues to live. Ramana Maharshi passed out, and the people with him took his pulse. They were quite convinced he was dead. How long he was out, I don't know.

The people who have satori are not hauled to the hospital. They are not picked up and carried out -- it's "Wow, oh I've got it!" If you don't believe what I'm saying, look at the books. All the accounts I've read about satori are very brief "wow" experiences. You can get the same thing by intensely studying algebra. You can get that same thing by just intensely studying any set of symbols - like the Cabala. Keep your head on it and wisdom will come, and with it will come a revelation.

Now let me try to explain to you the mechanics of this. I don't know how many of you are acquainted with Gurdjieff. Again, I'm falling back on somebody else, because I don't like to bring all this out of my head and say these are my ideas. I'm drawing on names so you can use

them for reference. Gurdjieff had a movement, which I'm sure some of you are acquainted with, in which he labeled men as divided into four categories: instinctive, emotional, intellectual, and philosophic.

The instinctive man is every man. Every man is instinctive. Presumably, most remain in that level and die there.

The emotional man is the man who has abandoned, at least momentarily, the instinctive level. He does this by emotion, so he can get away from the instinctive level. It has to draw him there. The emotional level has to draw him. He falls in love. He falls in love with Jesus, or he falls in love with some guru. By dropping his egos, this fat-headed idea he has about himself. He now considers himself worthless; this other person, very significant. He loses himself over this, or over the opposite sex. He or she loses himself in the opposite sex, momentarily, and there's a revelation of ecstasy or beauty. The same thing applies in the religious sense. The person loses himself over Jesus, they become transformed. The love affair is such that they lose their desire for booze, or dope, or anything. These things are true.

This person has now gone to the emotional level. He doesn't necessarily live there totally, he still has instinctive traits, but he is dominantly and forever now an emotional person, a person on that level. After a while, this is the case when you examine some people's lives who have been "saved", but after 10 or 20 years of what they call backsliding, they find out that they are missing something. That which they thought was a personal voice guiding them perhaps -- they want to take a second look. They start, as I said before, perhaps studying the Cabala, Astrology, fundamentalism, digging a little deeper. One day something pops again, and they have a revelation, the pieces fit -- the eureka experience. And the person says, "Hey, I was a fool, I was letting my emotions guide me!"

Gurdjieff categorizes the different levels by saying that in these levels are such things as the fakir, the yogi, the monk. He puts the monk in the emotional class. He's not a mystic. He's just an emotional, devotional person. But after he becomes freed by, let's say, persistent application of common sense. By persistent use of his intellect he *finds* his intellect. He is so overjoyed, that he thinks, "Now I can do anything. I've got a powerful head. I can do anything I want to do. I can solve the secrets of the universe by just continuing to study the Cabala or continuing to work with ... [interrupted by latecomer to lecture].

After a while, there's another realization that sets on a man -- if he lives long enough. These changes, these states sometimes last ten or twenty years. I think again, the majority of people who enter into them, die in it. The old fellow I knew who was a healer and a Pentecostal, he died in that state. He could see ahead that he didn't have all the answers. He was, incidentally, a little inclined to discard the fundamentalistic grip he had on things. He realized that wasn't the only the way to speak. Some people couldn't understand his quotations.

When a man reaches this realization -- whether it is by studying the Cabala, whether it is by sitting in some zendo, attacking yourself with a formula, a symbol, or a set of symbols -- the result is that the head "pops," and illumination occurs. This is the eureka experience. Again, when he emerges from this -- of course they call it satori -- he realizes, looking backwards, that

once again he was not the victim of his instinctive self. He was the victim of his emotional self *and* his intellectual self. Now he recognizes that intellect is a vanity. In Zen, you ultimately are supposed to realize your intellect is a vanity. That's what the purpose is ... to take one beyond that. Once you realize your intellect is vanity, you have no place to go.

I went through this myself. I would wander all over, from one group, one cult, to another, looking to maybe be given a hint. ... And say "what do you do that is neither reasonable nor lovable?" See? [laughter] So you just fish, and flop around and flounder from one thing to another, but strangely enough never give up, if you're really...

There's no hope, there's no path, you've run out of railroad tracks. The only thing you have left at this stage, in my estimation, is you've got a "vector." You've pulled the arrow back so far and it has to go someplace. It has to keep moving. Sometimes out of a clear blue sky there will be a revelation.

Bucke's came, it happened without any prediction. He walked out on his back porch and -- boom! St. John of the Cross was in a prison cell, put there by the conventional authorities for not holding the party line. He had a revelation. His cell was lit up so much that his jailers thought he had gotten himself a candle. The same thing happened to Bucke.

Again, I say this is powerful. But where are the answers? What do we know, after all this lifetime? Here's this old man, who finally gets this enormous flash of light. He doesn't know if he's having a stroke, which might bring a vein flash, or if he is imagining himself.

Regardless whether he considers it solid or not, there's no particular answer. There's no answer in it. Except that he feels at peace with god, or feels at peace with himself, something of that sort. So, you can trust that, or else you can continue once more to search.

It would sound that we are into a cumulative spirituality -- that the more you go, and struggle, the more you get. Well, this can't be true. There has to be an end to the path of a human being's experience. My life experience is a culmination, a top, and that is enlightenment. This is an experience that recognizes that you don't have the answer yet. You continue the search.

This is the progression of what Gurdjieff called "man number four," above the philosophic sense. You're not now a philosopher. You're not a person who threw all the symbols of all the mathematics into the computer and came out with one big burst of [blazing?] light. You're now obliterated by your own ignorance -- the realization of your own ignorance. You go clear to the depths of despair, perhaps, in the realization that you're nobody in the final analysis -- one of three billion ants on the earth.

You go at it first of all thinking all sorts of things, that we're very important. Then you get into that intellectual thing and you think, I did anyway, I thought that I could solve any problem. I thought that I'd go on to college, learn to use a slide rule, and I'd read some books. I thought, boy I can take this stuff apart, all I have to do is keep chucking this stuff in the computer! Then I found out that the only way I could get the answer -- I didn't know this, this is hindsight -- was

when I threw so much into the computer, it blew up. Then I got the answer. This is the equivalent of the river entering the ocean.

I want to ask some questions. They're koans, if you want to call them that, American koans. Do you understand yourself?

Do you need to understand yourself?

Can you understand yourself by an objective study of behavior, by the study of psychology?

Is it possible to understand yourself without completely understanding your origin and destiny?

In other words, a man has an experience of radiance or cosmic consciousness. Yet he still doesn't know where he comes from. You ask that man where he comes from. He still doesn't know. Where are you going to go when you die? He just says, "I just have a lot of faith, whatever that beautiful thing that happened to me, that everything will be OK."

This is one of the keynotes of spiritual searching. There's yardsticks. In the book I wrote I have these. Whenever you go to a new movement, that you have to examine before, put these yardsticks up against it. Some of them are: does it answer these three questions -- Who are you? Where did you come from? Where are you going? If it doesn't answer these to some satisfaction, then you've got to still keep on looking.

Another of the yardsticks is: does it pretend to trade an infinite or absolute value for cash? There's no price you can put on it. When they say there is cash involved, I'm inclined to turn my back and walk away.

Is identification of the self necessary -- the isolation of the self from the environment?

In other words, is this self that we talk about -- like me -- a distinct creature standing here, or am I just sort of an amalgamation of force fields and electrons, so to speak, one of the Universal Brahman. Where's the line of my individuality? Where do I stop and you begin? Where do I stop and my children begin, or my parents?

Do motivating factors, such as the appetites, fall into the category of being separate from the self? In other words, when something attacks you, like if you get a flea or a bedbug, we don't consider that as our self. Perhaps there's some viruses in our bloodstream, we don't consider that our self.

We do have things that divert our attention. In other words, we have a desire, maybe to get drunk. Sometimes it seems to louse up our previous appreciation of ourselves. Now this is the question: is this the self, or is this something external?

Do curiosity and desire belong in separate-ness categories? I use these two words deliberately, because I believe that without curiosity and desire, no one could look for the truth. Yet with curiosity and desire, we might wind up in the whorehouse, in an entirely different science.

One of the themes behind spiritual work, in my estimation, is what I call "reversing a vector." We have a vector that's aimed at the cemetery and at reproduction of the species that fertilizes the planet. Most of our progresses in fertilizing the planet are the result of our curiosity and our desire. By self-scrutiny when you get into meditation you will find out that these things are not something that belong to us, that we created. It is not *our* curiosity and *our* desire.

You can examine the progress of children as they get to a certain age. You don't have to tell them, all at once they have the curiosity. The curiosity continues until the desire increases, and then there is a vegetative process.

I watched this on the farm, with cattle when a calf was born. The calf is born with a curiosity, and unless it has that curiosity it ends up dying. The mother of that calf is bait. "Here, you better start hunting for the pouch, or you're going to die." That calf gets up and staggers around for a few hours time, exploring. It keeps on exploring until it finds the udder. And that's when it lives. If it doesn't find it, it dies.

So this is the plan. It's like something in the DNA molecule, if you want to call it that. This is genetic. So consequently it's not a great personal attribute or psychological quality, that maybe we get evolved with. The idea is there is possibly a system of using this, and again this falls into the category of reversing the vector.

Once you momentarily forget the udders, and the other appendages, and start getting curious about "Where does this character come from?" "Where did I come from?" "What's going to happen to me?" "Is it possible to do something about my death." It seems like it's physically unavoidable. So we, what I call, "change the direction of the vector," from morbidity to introspection. We start to become curious about ways and means of changing out destiny...

With this of course, it is in the opposite direction. Once we get curious, you grow a habit of sorts. Spirituality can develop a spiritual desire. This is when the ol' train is on the tracks and it runs on its own momentum. That's the synthetic desire, it's transformation.

Now this opens up a whole line of esoteric philosophy. I call this the "transmutation of energy." This is known in yogic systems as kundalini yoga. But if we use everything that might use us ... it's possible to, in other words, "go whole hog." Either go whole hog or don't get into the... Because you wind up with rationalizations. If you go whole hog you'll ... you'll say, "Well, its going to be one day a week, one seventh of my time," or something of that sort...

Then we get into the realization that, after all, we were not learning. We get to thinking -- like studying Gurdjieff, or the yogic routines, or something of that sort -- that we're learning, we're getting smarter. We're getting formulas, and think that one day we'll use one of these formulas, that the atmosphere will part, and aunt Mae will say, "Hello! Glad you're here! Meet me through the door." We get the idea that it's cunning, we can become wise with cunning. But it isn't!

What it amounts to is that we change. In Christian theology, there's a statement that "The finite mind will never perceive the infinite." This is true. We are grubby, relative creatures. Dimension

prohibits Absolute dimension. A person that deals in relative symbols and words -- good, bad, white, dark -- *cannot* comprehend an Absolute answer. So this stops people right there. They say, "Don't do any more thinking. Just go to church, and pay your ten percent, because you're a relative creature. Sharpen up. We have light, and the light is from the man upstairs, and he'll take you through."

The truth of the matter is, that there is an approach to this -- that we can become less finite, and by being less finite, we become more absolute. This is the key. This develops into a system of Zen.

When I was 21 years old, I remember saying this to myself, a person that had confidence. I was going to college and majoring in chemistry -- "I'll take this world apart!" I was going to get into splitting atoms, taking matter apart, and behind matter there had to be something. I get into chemistry a bit and I realize that it is an infinite tangential science. That it just goes off into branches upon branches. It would take 2000 years to get to. I was talking to a fellow yesterday about splitting the atom, and now they're splitting protons. They think they'll have the answers. They have a method of maybe actually watching energy come to life or come into existence, but still we don't know what's behind it.

But regardless, you've got to have a shortcut ... or just revert to the animal. My intuition told me somebody's bound to have found the part-way trip, so let's get into the library ... as I tramped around the country. Regardless, by keeping up with the thing I kept the thoughts in front of my computer. By continuing to challenge the computer, I think that aided the...

"Is the body part of the self, or is it karmic-force spirit, like an engine?"

"Is the mind the self, or is it only part of the self?"

There's different contexts. Modern psychologists define the self as that which you see, and you get what you see. Yet behind this manifest self or personality, there is a... If you go into meditation you can discover that there is a person who is observing thoughts. Then there is an observer of this whole mechanism. So that this seemingly is a mental process, a mental process that may well be defined.

"Is mind a faculty with which we observe thought, or *can* we observe thought with the mind?"

In the concept of Zen, we can't see the mind ... the mind has to be killed.

Question: [inaudible]

RR: I think that before you drop your head, you have to fatten it up. You have to fatten your head up. You have to pursue wisdom. You have to examine, turn every stone over, look into every man, look into every religion, every philosophy. And then find some yardstick by which to measure. This is the path of wisdom. And you have to become, as you're going along, become intuitional. Then there comes a time when all this is dropped.

I don't know about this dropping egos. I don't think you can drop egos. I think the rug is pulled out from under you is what happens. You fold up, that's all.

There are a lot of things that are manifestly egos. Such as, a fellow wants to be a rooster ... being powerful, competent ... that they can dominate the chicken coop, and we call that an ego. Eventually somebody bigger beats him up, and he finds out that he's no longer a rooster, and he drops it, and he's easier to get along with.

But there's another ego. Here's the ego of power, or the value of logic ... the appetites, like wanting to drink, or take dope. This is an ego. We go on beyond that, and we find out the desire for life. The desire to have life.

I know one time, we had a little group, back in Ohio. The lady of the house belonged to the group, and the husband didn't. It was mostly a phenomenal group, scientology and unannounced spiritualists, and whatnot. I said to this man, his name was John, "You're into publishing, why don't you join this group?" He said, "Why do you think that John is so important, that he needs to live forever?" I never forgot what he said. He never joined the group, but he left that little bit of wisdom, that "What makes you think you're that damn important you have to live forever?"

I couldn't help but realize that this man had really dropped an ego. He wasn't trying to live forever. We were trying to find mechanisms to live forever. Of course it sounds like we're drifting in the direction of resignation to nothingness, oblivion. Yet, this is the last ego in the path that has to be overcome. Not the fact that you're going to die. You can accept that. But there's only one other ego, and that's the ego that you are immortal. Come one day, and you are done. Three billion, four hundred forty years, and they picked you out ... its exactly worth something for the incinerator.

Then we realize that we are not important. That we have no proof, absolutely no proof. As far as the facts when the chips are down -- we are zero. There's no logical essence to show...

Strangely enough, it's only when that last ego is dropped, and when it is dropped, and it can't be dropped voluntarily. You can't say, "I have the formula now and I'll drop it." It's only when that thing is taken away from you, that the answer can occur.

I want to turn the rest of this over to more intimate communication, what comments you have...

Question: [inaudible, ends with "What's your opinion of LSD?"]

RR: There's no proof that it can expand your mind. In fact, about five or seven years ago, I got the idea, I heard this guy talking about having an experience where he talked about finding god, the god experience. [chuckling] I thought, "Why not? If that'll bring it back. Two or three dollars worth of chemicals if you can find a maximum experience, or reasonably find it," so I took LSD.

I found it to be an intense sensual experience. A sensuality that strains the nervous system is what it's about. It takes years and years (to find something worthwhile...), but these drugs are supposed to find it in five minutes time. I didn't have any revelations.

Question: [inaudible - something about Atlantis and Lemuria.]

RR: I'm not too concerned. I can't be concerned about everything.

I realize that to get something done in your lifetime, or twenty years of your lifetime, you have to narrow your field down. You have to go at that which is pertinent to yourself or your self-definition. So, "After I find out who I am, if I have time left, then I'll go back and look at Atlantis." See? I think it's important to find out who's talking about Atlantis first.

Question: [inaudible - something about whether or not RR claimed to have experienced the Absolute.]

RR: Oh yeah. I thought I had made that point. I believe I would be a fraud, a thief to you if I didn't know of what I was saying, if I hadn't been down to an experience. And that's my point, to not evaluate just halfway down the trail.

I don't think there is a language to convey ... except that: (1) There's nothing to postulate and search. You can't say "I'm going to find god." It's nice to say that. Or you can say "I'm going to find the truth." That sounds nice. There's nothing wrong in saying that. But as soon as you say it you know that you've created something. Why not say "I'm going to find Gizmo"? See? Because immediately there's an amount of ... because we say what I mean by "god" is not Jehovah, or Krishna. I mean the maximum, the absolute, the top answer -- the final cause, the first cause, whatever you want to call it. And we say, "Yes, that's understandable." But still we label things, we start to make a label.

The next thing of course, is that we've got to eliminate. We've got to eliminate anything that doesn't. So consequently there's nothing wrong in saying we're looking for the truth. A fellow says "I'm looking for the truth." But I differentiate and say there are two truths -- capital "T" and small "t." Small "t" is relative. Hydrogen and oxygen and copper sulfate make water -- that's small "t." That might prove wrong. They might find that there's three elements in there someday. See? Small "t" truth changes. Capital "T" Truth is "That which Is."

We have to start to define what we're talking about. As soon as you do this you have to start making definitions -- like the word "enlightenment." You use the word "enlightenment," and words in themselves are self-defeating. Because, unless a person's ears are at a certain pitch, they don't hear a certain sound. And unless they've done a certain amount of digging, they don't appreciate what you're talking about.

Consequently, I'm willing to tell anything I value to somebody else on the path, somebody who's looking for something. But to say that it is important to someone else. The only thing that's important to an individual is to know that you are ignorant. To know that you know nothing. Then you can start to do something. But if you say, "God says to me to get these suckers in line, and get them to go to this church and listen to me."

My little routine I would say would be entirely alien to what you would go through. I find that different cases are different. I'll give you a case, an outstanding case I ran into by accident in Akron, Ohio.

Incidentally, I was supposed to talk about esoteric Christianity and Zen. This man never heard of Zen. He never heard of anything, except the Lord's Prayer, and the Bible. Yet he had one of the most profound experiences that I've ever encountered. I've never read anything like it in a book even. The account is like Ramana Maharshi.

He had been a pilot, a bombardier or a pilot. Regardless, he bombed Japan. He dropped some of those big bombs on Japan. He was a Christian, a devout Christian. When he came back to the base he said, "The Bible says god observes the fall of the sparrow. If he observes the fall of the sparrow, where was he when 80,000 people went down?" So he started questioning the religion of his parents. He took this up until they heard him talking to himself, and they sent him home. "Take a vacation. Go back home."

So he went back to Texas, Dallas, Texas. He was still mumbling to himself, still brooding over this, "Where's god? Where's god when the bombs fell?" So his wife says, "You're going to have to get back to work." He couldn't work. He had to have the answer before he could go back to work. She dumped him. She went and got herself another husband. He had children. The children kind of looked down their nose at him and took off.

He says he went back and he told himself that he couldn't lose the faith of his childhood. Somewhere there must be an answer, and he picked up the Bible and started reading. In the Bible he found a statement that, "If you would pray ... pray thusly." And it was the Lord's Prayer. This fellow took the Lord's Prayer, and prayed it and prayed it until he practically got obsessed.

He took a job. He was losing one job after another, but he took a job in a car dealership and had a job selling automobiles. It seemed that the more he prayed the more hell he got, the more trouble he got. But he kept it up. He decided that was the only thing left for him and that the only hope for his sanity was to keep on praying.

He said he had some people come in to look at an automobile one day, and he couldn't take it. He'd tried to kill himself 2 or 3 times. He didn't have the courage. He said he just laid his head down on a desk and prayed for god to kill him. He said he never took his head up off the desk. They hauled him to the hospital, he passed out, or maybe he was rambling and raving. He was in the hospital for weeks, seven days a week. And in those 7 days in a week the man saw the beginning and end of history. He saw everything that had ever happened. He knew the totality of experience. When he came out he was at peace. There was no more struggle. He never had to worry about a job. If he worked, he had money, and when he didn't work, he had money. He would talk to little groups and the like. He never charged any money. There was always opportunity. And some of them seemed utterly fantastic -- I heard him tell about them.

But the thing that I noticed about him, is that this man's experience was more *complete*, and more sensational -- if you want to put it that way -- than anything I've ever read about in spiritual

researches, in spiritual experiences. He had done it absolutely without any knowledge of Zen, or any knowledge of esoteric philosophy -- just by going inside himself.

Question: How do you define your term "intuition?"

RR: Well, intuition is like refined emotion. In other words, because we are relative creatures, we have to approach everything with two tools, so to speak. If we just used our cold logic, nothing much would be solved. If we just used our emotions, nothing much would be solved. Intuition is somehow a sort of emotional mathematics, and a sort of ordering form of emotion, emotional thinking. In other words, we *feel*, we learn to *feel* instead of reason every little step of the way. To me, I consider it a new faculty we develop for the computer. And incidentally, in my writings I mention this. This is one of the major steps that you have to have if you're going to do spiritual work. Because we can't afford, we can't read every book. We don't have the time to read every book.

I made the remark in the book that a person can go to church for 20 years -- and I've known this to happen -- where a person went to church and hung on every word the preacher said, and to find out later that this man did not even believe what he was saying. He'd tell you so, when you got him into a few beers. Down on the bar he'd say, "Oh that's for old ladies, ho, ho, ho. Don't bother me with that stuff!" So these people were spending their lifetimes in this church listening to this man, because they had no intuition.

But you have to develop it to save yourself fifty or a hundred years of time, you've not got a hundred years to spend logically diagnosing every little book and every word. But when you read a book with the intuition, you don't just read words in the line, you read *between* the lines. You say, "Oh! I bet this fellow is sincere," or "I bet this fellow is just printing books, just selling books is all he's interested in." See, he just tells people what they want to hear, or whatever. So consequently if intuition isn't natural, it has to be developed.

I maintain that a man, the male, is more inclined towards orderly thinking. The female is more inclined toward intuition, and she calls it intuition, but it's basically feeling. Somehow for the female to become more spiritual, she has to become more orderly in her thinking, and he has to develop more feeling. ... I know there is a lot of disagreement on this.

Question: [inaudible]

RR: I tell you, I don't like to discount any effort. I want to think that I'm above the instinctive level, so I can talk about the instinctive level, and I think everybody here [is] or they wouldn't be curious enough to come. I see things which to me would be a waste of time, like going into the church and pounding my head on the floor and saying to god how sorry I am for drinking a beer ... or whatever. To me that form of religion is almost unnecessary, but I don't want to make fun of them because I know what it did for her [his sister-in-law]. She threw her cigarette away, she threw her booze away, and was "saved." So, consequently, this is a level of development.

Now, the same thing is occurring today in Zen. One of our great contributors to it is -- he's responsible for nearly all the young that are interested in Zen today, or I know that nearly all the

young people I've talked to have read [Alan] Watts. Watts gives what I consider the erroneous philosophy that there's nothing that can be done, and if there can't be anything done what the hell did you write a whole shelf of books for -- to tell them that they're going to find nothingness? This is absurd. If I thought all you were going to find is oblivion, I wouldn't be here talking, you could find that out from Watts.

When I was sitting by my mother's bedside when she was dying. She was raised a devout Catholic. She believed the saints were going to come and take her. When she died I leaned over and kissed her, and I kept my mouth shut. I didn't say anything. And this is what we must do with people who have no capacity [for a higher view]. This allows them to die peacefully. If a certain brand of Zen is going across and it's doing something for somebody -- OK -- but to me *this is not the final answer.*

Question: What I got from Watts is not that everything is nothing, but that everything Is. Sort of the eternal Is. That you don't draw a line between is and isn't. That everything always has been and always will be. That we pass through that particular importance outside of the importance of everything else that is also happening and will be happening. The thing that turned me on is that everything Is.

RR: Sure. You can at best only know that intellectually. I've had people come and repeat this. Well, these are two little emanations of Watts. One is "that there is nothing you can do," and the other is "that we are already there -- that we are *already* enlightened." Now this can be a *massive rationalization* unless you are already pretty convinced that you are already there. This to me is like a man that doesn't know the answer, doesn't know how to get there, so he just tells you, "Well, you are already there! Forget it!" And the people who are lazy, or don't have any energy saved say, "Oh well! We're enlightened! Everybody is enlightened!" And it stops the argument if they can convince you that everybody is enlightened. You don't have to work!

Question: What Watts is really saying is that, we're all part of the Taoist flowing river.

RR: I know all that, but that's poetry unless you experience it. We can indulge in all sorts of little sayings like what a fellow said to me the other day, "I'm the center of the Universe." That's sophistry, that's sophistry. Sure, everyone is the center of the universe. Wherever you stand is equidistant in all directions around the globe, you're the center of the universe. But this is sophistry. It's the same way as saying, "I'm part of Pan" or "I'm the Atman and the Brahman." It's all right. That may be true, but *You - Don't - Know - It. The difference is finding it out.*

Questioner: What's important about Alan Watts for me, was that for a lot of people what they don't grasp is that they are a part of things and not just a separate ego. The ego is just a symbol for reality, it is not the reality. [etc.]

RR: That may be. I found that when I read Watts, that I found him very interesting. But it's a fact that although a person expounds a philosophy and it sounds very good, that you are putting your life on it if you don't investigate it.

I'll give you an example. There's a theory called the "space-time continuum theory," in which -- developed by Einstein and others in collaboration -- in which there is no time without space, and no space without time. In our head this sounds very plausible, meaning that nothing is happening. Meaning that we are like a frozen light strand in a landscape, in which our consciousness is running down this strand experiencing sixty years in extension, or eighty years in extension. Now this is plausible and it's understandable to the head, but we still go about getting in our car, and fixing the motor when it breaks down, so that we can indulge in motion that doesn't exist. We have to. So consequently this thing cannot apply to us unless we experience it for our selves. There's a difference between a concept and visage.

Question: Do you have any ideas on reincarnation, life after death, etcetera?

RR: Well, I think that reincarnation, first of all, can be a massive rationalization. I'll tell you why. I think the Christian concept of things can very well almost be a weapon by a priest craft who would say, "If you don't listen to me, you'll be gone forever. If you don't burn three candles a week and pay your ten percent, and do what ever is necessary -- you're gone forever!" Perhaps this all wouldn't be enforced so well if it wasn't for this drastic threat.

Now if we go to India we find reincarnation believed in by possibly more people or as many people as Christianity claims. It sounds to me, and came to me as more of a justice, that here is somebody who is damned forever, perhaps someone is born an imbecile, or has an incomplete mentality, and here he is supposed to find god, guess his name, guess how to worship him, and all this sort of thing, when he's dealing with a god who is supposedly omnipotent and all-powerful, and could take this poor idiot by the hand and say, "Hey, here I am!" So he's going to hell if he don't find out all about this stuff. This is unreasonable.

We go over to India, and the Indian says, "Yes! This is unreasonable." This man gets another chance. In his next life-time this idiot will be a three-quarter-wit instead of a half-wit, see? He will be reincarnated -- unless he's done a lot of damage -- he will be reincarnated and get another chance. The result is *millions of people do nothing*, except wait for a second chance. This is the danger of it in spirituality. It's alright to accept a concept, but when you make that concept your life-pattern without exploring it, that's dangerous.

Question: I'd like to ask a very simple question: did you ever learn anything from a book?

RR: Yes.

Question: I heard of a Zen story where the master tells the disciple that writing books about Zen is like putting legs on a snake.

RR: That's true. You're pretty close to my age, but when you were 20 years of age, the only thing we had about Zen was in books.

Question: I read thousands of books, but I wouldn't say I learned anything.

RR: It depends on what you mean by "learn." You can get the Cabala, for instance. You can learn, you can grow in Wisdom by studying the Cabala -- that's learning.

Question: That's "small t" truth.

RR: That's right. It's all "small t" until you pop through the top. It all ... [interrupted].

Question: Maybe I should ask the question, did you ever learn anything about your self through a book?

RR: No. No, I didn't. I learned about books from books. That's true. About the science in the books. [laughter]

[Audience conversation about seeking enlightenment for the self.]

RR: What you are saying is that it is possible that the whole thing is an ego-trip. Is that the idea?

Question: No ... it's the motive for it I am questioning.

RR: Well, I agree with you. I don't know exactly what you are getting at, but I'll give you my own reactions on this.

The experience I had occurred when I was 32 years of age. I didn't talk to too many people about it, and learned to keep my mouth shut. In other words, I was talking to people that had no comprehension, and it was only after I read some books about it and that other people had mystical experiences, that I realized that these people were on the instinctive-emotional level, and they didn't know what I was talking about. So I finally gave up on this. I said "That's it!" In fact I got married, I raised a family. I never had any hope I would be talking to anybody about the experience or the possibility of somebody else having an experience. But I had this *urge* -- and it could be rooted in ego, I won't deny it -- I had this urge to talk about it. The reason I had this urge is that when I was 21 years of age, I started out as I told you, rambling all over the country, looking for people who knew something, looking for books that would tell me something, and I was beset with tricksters, hucksters, perverts who wanted my body, and that wanted to trade something for truth, and I thought, "Damn it! If I ever find anything, by God, I'll put it out where someone can read it!" That was my motive. Now if that is ego, then that's my angry little ego.

But I didn't do anything. I was 52 ... 53 years of age -- I'm now 58 -- and I got sick. I had a whole pile of papers -- ideas I'd had about spiritual work. I thought some of these hadn't been written before, that nobody had advised this type of formula. So I thought, "I've got a farm out in the country, and I'm going out there, and I don't care if I don't make a cent. I'm going to spend the necessary time to get this book written! The pile will be at least in manuscript form, and if I kick the bucket, somebody might pick it up and look at it. If it is *supposed* to be looked at, somebody may pick it up and look at it."

Well, circumstances started to happen. I live in West Virginia. There's not many people there who are interested in doing anything but fighting [laughter]. Amazingly enough, while I'm typing, I'm being pestered by young people who are coming out. Some just looking for a place to smoke pot, but some saying, "Hey, can I help you do that typing?" One of them has a book of yoga tucked under his arm. I rented some room in the farmhouse to them, and next thing you know somebody got word to the Theosophical Society in Pittsburgh that I knew something about Zen, or spiritual work, and they invited me up for a lecture. People came to the lecture from the University of Pittsburgh, and said, "Hey! How about coming over to the University and giving a talk?" And then a university group started. I said, "Hey, I've found a few people interested in reading the book." It was printed on typing paper, stapled with a roofing staple gun. The cost was outrageous and poor quality, because I had to go to a local printer. Eventually so many people got to be buying this, that I had to print it in paperback form.

The result is now that every place I've been is by virtue of someone hearing about it, and saying "Hey! Come out and give a talk." Incidentally, I do not derive a penny. I came to California at my own expense. I do not charge, and I refuse to attend a meeting if they charge, unless it is a university paying it, and I believe they are financing people like Jane Fonda, so why shouldn't they pay me my gasoline money? That's the reason, I will accept that type of money if its coming from the public treasury, but not from individuals.

Question: [inaudible] ... at what point can a person sit down and expect he's getting something worthwhile from a teacher and not just another ego-trip.

RR: Yes, now first of all I want to comment on the vibrations of this man laughing over here. I know what he's laughing about, and he's laughing with us, not at us. [laughter] He's not critical. But, to get back to your question or your comment. Teaching of course may seem, and I thought it at the time, I resented someone talking like they *knew*, because I had good reason to. I found that there were a lot of strange teachers. [laughter]

I have to admit though, that if it wasn't for some good soul (of course they get paid) teaching the abc's we couldn't read a book. And this goes on up the ladder -- somebody taught her or him. You go to high school, and someone goes to college to teach the high school teachers, or the high schoolers teach the grade schoolers. ... Its just a matter of going down to the woods and, "Hey, Injun Joe over here knows the way to go through that woods." That's all it amounts to.

Question: What about Krishnamurti? At the same time he seems to be a teacher, he turns around and says there are no teachers. I'm a little confused.

RR: Well, regardless, I presume there are people that couldn't stand Krishnamurti, and read that there's others who are very much addicted to him. I know people who will fly from Los Angeles to Switzerland to hear him talk. But I think that if that carries them, if that keeps them on the path, that if Krishnamurti keeps them thinking, then that's good. I don't think he is consciously rejecting people. I don't think he wants to get into the business of running groups, that's the idea. Although I do know there are people associated with him. We have a man who attended the lectures in Pittsburgh. His daughter is or was traveling with Krishnamurti all the time. I presume

if she was traveling with him, she was getting something, some training. This was for quite a few years.

I wonder why Krishnamurti takes as many poses as he takes. He makes statements, for instance, "that we have to change the world." That we have to all act nice. There's a Pollyannic strain running through Krishnamurti. By acting nice we can change the world. This is actually verbalized in those words, "We can change the world!" I can't see, first of all, the importance of it, and I can't see how the "ants" can change the world.

Question: Why did you write *your* book?

RR: I don't pretend that I'm changing the world. See, I labor under the impression ... for instance, Bucke in his book *Cosmic Consciousness* says that only *one in a million* receive cosmic consciousness. His book was manifestly written for one in a million -- that's why it has poor circulation. Consequently, I don't pretend ... this is what I'm up against.

I would be a fool, for instance, to try to submit that book [*The Albigen Papers*] to one of those big presses, like Dutton. Because they don't have the circulation. There are not that many people interested in the subject material. I know it is very difficult to find a publisher that handles, or a distributor that handles Krishnamurti books. And there are other authors even rarer, like J.J. van der Leuw, who writes *The Conquest of Illusion*. You can only find him in the Quest book listing. [gap in tape]

RR: [laughter] I was talking to a Krishnite once, and I was talking about the Absolute. He said, "Oh, Krishna has that too!" I thought no use talking to him further, this guy has it all! His purpose was for me to get a franchise from the Krishnites. [laughter]

The only thing I can figure is that there is an inclination, there is a *desire* to help somebody else. Why it is I don't know. It's called a spiritual law. I witness it every place. Wherever there is someone who has found out something, there is someone hanging around trying to find it out, or like the Zen teacher at the river he is trying to tip someone off, to save us a little time. That was my point, and possibly as was said, it might be an egotistical point.

In reference to Christianity ... the massive spread at the time of Christ, and we say that "Oh! this man changed the world!" But I just wonder -- did it change the way he wanted it to change? Or was it just another accident? We could say that Adam and Eve changed the world, too.

Questioner: ...but don't you think that they change anything, that...?

RR: No, no, no. Don't you realize that it could well be that they are *being* changed?

In other words, if you explode something and say "That would change the world." That it would mean we all have to take a bath. That doesn't mean that *you* changed anything, it means that a circumstance happened. I live, not by the virtue that I chose to live or talk. I live by the virtue of the fact that something happened 58 years ago, that's all. And all the stuff that I produce is a result of an accident that happened 58 years ago.

I don't think it is necessary ... in other words, if there was an atomic explosion -- that that would change the world. No, no, that's *part* of the world. That explosion is part of the world. Sometime in space-time history there is a nuclear freeze or something -- a part of the scene, a part of the picture.

We can argue totally from the fatalistic viewpoint. I don't or I wouldn't be talking. We have to somehow carry both on our shoulders. We have to realize, perhaps, that "we are under the thumb of god," but also realize that we have to struggle, because something inside us says that we are an individual, and we can struggle.

Question: Are you familiar with the writings of H.P. Blavatsky, and what is your opinion of them?

RR: They're good.

Question: Many accept her writings at face value, instead of looking for deeper meanings.

RR: I wouldn't say she doesn't have deeper meanings. Well, there are possibly a couple meanings to the alchemical sciences too, but again, I don't have time to look into them.

Question: [inaudible]

RR: I see what you think, and this is what I see. We're actors on a stage. Then there's a few that get philosophical, and they leave the stage and go sit in the audience. But the man that reaches enlightenment goes out on the street, that's all. When he enters the ocean, he just leaves the drama. He doesn't change the world. In other words, what's going on, what's projected onto the void, this drama that is projected onto the void. I can't see *How* he can ... he may even change his lines, because as soon as he does it that's part of a...

Question: [... expostulation to the effect that when Krishnamurti talks about "changing the world" he is talking about changing one's own inner world, and the way one experiences the world, and not changing the world "out there."]

RR: Let me pose this to you now. I've gone through this thinking. When we realize, when we look at this curtain here, we say that it's blue. Scientifically, they say that it's not blue, it's every color but blue. That white is not white, it's every color. That black is not black, it's no color. Now, we don't know this, we have to learn, and when we learn it, we change. When we learn that we are not what we thought we were. When the day comes when we thought we were a rooster, and then someone proves we are not a rooster, we seem to change. We don't change, we only get a better reality of that which already was. Now there's a difference between changing and getting a better idea of what already is.

Questions: [Mild argument and discussion between audience members irritated and aimed at one guy repeatedly asking questions ignored by RR.]

RR: The idea is that when you ask a question, ordinarily you either ask it to learn something, or to lay the groundwork for tricky argument. These are the two points, and of course I'm always alerted for that. And there's people also who like to use questions as speeches. In other words, the means of getting their philosophy into the podium. I like to think that everybody who is asking questions is saying, "Say, tell me about this next bend of the trail. You've been down this trail and tell me about one of these bends and how I can avoid getting hurt." But it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter to me. See, I don't think I can advance your cause. I don't think I can help you in this. [to repeated questioner.]

Question: [Same questioner goes on another ramble, seemingly oblivious and out of context, and about restrictions placed by spiritual groups.]

RR: I will answer your question with another question. Do you take drugs?

Question: I've taken marijuana a few times.

RR: Well, when people ask questions, I expect them to ask questions of me. [audience remarks about being drunk, laughter, etc. and general babble for a minute or so. RR asks an older, knowledgeable guy in the audience about himself and what he was into.]

RR: I would have loved to have run into somebody when I was younger that knew something and I thought could have expedited my trip. I read some books which I thought were very good, like Paul Brunton. Of course 20 years later I was able to get hold of some of these other books, like van der Leeuw. They were almost impossible to find then. I ran into various teachers too, that conceivably had a lot of power. I know [Vivekananda (?)] was still living. He was over here on the west coast when I was still here. But I rejected them. Because there was always something lacking. I didn't think they knew the answer, for number one, or I thought they were too dictatorial.

But the thing that happened to me happened without any provocation from anyone else. Consequently, I don't *owe* anything. The idea of me owing anything is not fair. The only thing I owe is that I was angry when I was 21 years of age. And out of this anger I made certain determinations and they may have been imprinted in my mind and...

Question: I think where you left off, you were talking about the color of the drapes and that.

RR: It's that your path to truth must start with mundane things. I don't deny that you change, but a lot of the stuff that I think is interpreted as change you project with your period of wising up. So first we get the idea that white is white and black is black, and things are good and things are bad. And there's no such thing as good and bad. I don't tell this to people generally, especially if there children are with them. Because they have to go through a process of believing that certain things are good and certain things are bad.

I was writing one time to a minister's wife, and she said, "Mr. Rose, do you believe there is any such a thing as evil?" And I said, "No. I'm too stupid to do anything wrong!" I don't know what it is, what the factors are in doing something wrong. Who am I to say what's wrong? This is

foolishness. Much less to say, "I'm committing a sin." That means that god's impotent. If I commit a sin, god's impotent. How can I offend somebody who's almighty? See? All this sort of thing. We got to get these things straight in our head.

A lot of people interpret that as change, but it's more or less the liberation from the fetters of dark thinking, imposed upon us by our parents and ... you carry the thinking, and that sort of thing. Right at the time when you start to change, when you start to develop a faculty. When you first go to school you can't read, maybe one word every five seconds or ten seconds, it is that difficult for a child to concentrate. And after a while, you get so you can ... they tell me you can read *The Exorcist* in 58 minutes.

Question: You might regret that though, better 58 seconds.

RR: Yeah. [laughter] Right. So consequently, this is the result of a change in the mechanism of reading, and the same thing occurs in the mechanism of thinking, and the same thing occurs in the mechanism of bringing in power or force, or something of that sort.

Now, a person can heal. You can heal people. This is a mechanism. But you have to change a little to do it, you have to grow a third arm. You have to develop a new faculty. It's caused by the transmission of energy, and then the ability to project it out of your body. And if you do that, then you can change them. But first it has to happen by virtue of you changing yourself, or being changed by circumstances, whichever you want to call it. You get into a certain line of thinking, and you suddenly develop a new third arm, so to speak. It's possible to be reasonably expressed after a style.

This business of changing -- I think Krishnamurti talks of this too, this business of changing the world -- is that of learning to live with that which is. To learn to live with that black is the absence of color, that evil is included in the two sides of the same coin. The characteristics of god, and this sort of thing, are subject to politics, the politics of the time.

For instance, the god of the Old Testament, was a petty creature. Very, very ... if you read the book, very jealous and angry. He had a habit of sending the angels down to help Gideon. See? But then they nailed his son to the cross, and there wasn't an angel that showed up. See? There was no bolt of lightning. No miracles to get this guy down off the cross.

These things somehow we have to face and say "Hey! What happened there?" Are we kidding our self, or can we be free of this superstition of our ancestors about things that happened? Of course if we do, we feel free. If we throw off this type of thinking we feel free. And that may be called becoming or changing, or you may call it just wising up.

Question: What part did meditation play for you?

RR: I think everybody meditates. It depends on if you accomplish that which you meditate upon. We might have some genetic changes here, though, as he seems to be meditating on pornographic literature! [laughter, joking at someone in audience]

If you meditate on spirituality, if you meditate on your essence, then nine chances out of ten, then you'll get closer to your essence, that's all. I think everybody does it automatically -- whether you want to or not -- if you're interested.

I know when I'm going down the street I see things that other people don't see that are there, but I have a different perspective. Somebody else goes down the street and all he sees is the particular sex he wants to see, or the beer joint, because he's dry, or that he's figuring which guy he can stop and get fifty cents from for the beer joint -- that's meditation.

Question: [inaudible ... about "change."]

RR: Let me tell you something I discovered very early on the path. Maybe it will bring a little bit of a light on what we're talking about. I found that in all spiritual seeking -- reading, studying, whatever you want to call it -- the paradox permeates everything.

Now, I was at Niagara Falls. There was a young fellow that supposedly lived there, like a hippie, fifty years ago or so. He had a shanty, down by the falls. One day he jumped in and drowned. Before he died, all he left behind on this earth was scrawled on the wall with chalk: "All is Change."

So we can say -- it is paradoxical -- what is going on is the construct, the divine construct, the ferment. We have to live in this world. Looking at it from the Absolute viewpoint, once you reach the Absolute, your immediate reaction is "I." This is the validity of the "I" observing change, but the "I" does not change. That is my belief. All we do is observe the change in the Absolute. Because that is you. When you reach the Absolute, you are god. You experience it -- being god.

So consequently this is all pretty much like a projected game. You hear the playwrights, the actors, the opera, everything. But if you change it, it is like it's inconsequential. It's just like a bunch of kids saying, "Well, we'll get a new version of Little Red Riding Hood," or something of that sort. That's how significant the change is he talks about. And yet this world we look at, which is a relative viewpoint, is the only thing we have. There's no use of talking about the Absolute viewpoint. The only thing we can talk about is from this point -- yes, things seem to change.

Question: [a couple of minutes of person explaining and expounding on Krishnamurti's view of change and "living and dying."]

RR: What you are trying to say is that it doesn't agree with you. [Krishnamurti's philosophy] I know that you are trying to say something, and it's probably coherent, but it's vague to me and I just don't pick it up.

Question: No, I have to admit that I'm John the Baptist [for Krishnamurti].

RR: I have a different evaluation of living ... and from my viewpoint I don't need that, and I don't need to be "born." I accept it as an eternal experience. Being born is an eternal experience, and dying is an eternal experience.

Question: [... another guy talking about everything is "changing forms" and trying to explain the previous question. Then another inaudible person about another subject.]

RR: The man who starts on the path may not be the same man who finishes.

Question: ... some things are mundane and some things are infinite.

RR: Yes, but everybody doesn't know that, that has to be established. You can say that's truth, but nobody knows that, and you don't know that unless you're infinite. This is the difficulty with this sort of ... is it an infinite reality, or an infinite illusion?

Question: [older, knowledgeable guy making a point on illusion and reality.]

RR: What you say is very true, but the average person takes himself a long time before he admits that. [More discussion with audience.]

Question: [inaudible -- woman relating some ideas and experiences for a few minutes and reading from an account.]

RR: Well, this is the difficulty. The thing is ... from what I hear, it sounds like they are talking from an Absolute viewpoint. Ramana Maharshi wrote a book about an Absolute experience. Ramana Maharshi is dead ... I can't talk with him, all I can do is read his book. But we have no way of knowing that Ramana Maharshi didn't just copy somebody else's book, that he never had the experience. This is one possibility.

Question: What does matter is if it is genuine. All that matters is if you are genuine.

RR: No, No! What matters is if you *know* it is genuine or not. Do you *know* that that matters or not?!

Question: [inaudible]

RR: It sounds like the enlightenment experience you're speaking about, because it's exactly what occurs. You drop all relative evaluations. You drop thought, the mind dies, in this experience. The mind actually dies. The realization is still there, in -- you use the words "pure intelligence." I say you transcend even that. That's my comprehension. Now, what I'm questioning is, how do you know this? Where are you coming from?

Question: It has nothing to do with knowing.

RR: But how do you know it has nothing to do with knowing, unless you've been there and are quite sure that you don't have to know, or are you just spinning something? It sounds like the guy who made the invisible robe out of gold, you know.

[inaudible audience discussion]

Question: You cannot know. It cannot be communicated. You cannot say for sure what I am talking about.

RR: Why can't he know? We're talking about an absolute experience, though, see?

Question: But it is what you label it.

RR: No, no, no. If you tell me you've got a wallet in your pocket, or that you've got a map to China in your pocket, and you produce it, then I know you've got a map to China. This type of knowing is transferable. What value are we to each other if we can't. ... It is like two rocks in the desert that don't even know they are rocks [laughter].

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The following transcription is from Richard Rose's 1976 lecture in Los Angeles, California. 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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