

Chapter 13

Meditation

With the seeker's foundation now in place and the necessary preparations made, we come to the central theme in any esoteric teaching: meditation. In the Albigen System, genuine meditation—or going within—is defined as: **“Finding reality by finding the real part of oneself”** (Rose, 1981, p. 19). The final objective of the practice is to arrive at the true state-of-mind, or ultimate sanity, which is considered to be synonymous with Self-Realization.

This subject seems familiar enough to students of esoteric philosophy and spiritual psychology, yet becomes confusing when one recognizes that “meditation” does not have one, obvious, unanimously agreed upon meaning, but is rather a generic term that refers to several different forms of “going within.” It cannot be automatically assumed out of generosity or enthusiasm that all methods and philosophies lead to the same place or at the same rate.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the mystics and sages throughout the ages have always testified that the Truth, or God, is inside of us, but reliable recommendations on how exactly to go about finding this have been hard to come by. The student finds the different meditational techniques taught in various spiritual traditions are often conflicting in principles (e.g. should we use the mind or try to escape it?, should we worship God or contemplate the self?), seemingly incomplete in scope when compared with one another, and do not always answer to common sense and intuition. For example, some offer exercises and disciplines that are so arcane and contrived (breathing patterns, physical postures, visualizations, studies of metaphysical symbology) that a sincere student of truth could never discover and implement these principles from personal, direct inquiry, but only acquire them if they were deliberately taught by someone else. Can Truth that is immanent and universal be inaccessible through holistic intuition and found only by the elect through some secretive, idiosyncratic technology?

One wonders if God spitefully wishes to remain so hidden that only a lucky few who have been given the magical combination of factors can ever unlock the door to find Him. (Note: The occasional reference to God as “Him” is strictly a cultural colloquialism and not meant to suggest a Deity that is personified as a large, muscular male with a white beard, wearing a toga, who speaks King James era English, and who angrily hurls lightning bolts to incinerate those poor wretches who have the misfortune of chanting the wrong mantra.) How does one sort through all of these diverse paths, without being able to devote a lifetime to test each one? The seeker may be left perplexed,

wondering if there is a reliable, honest approach to Truth that the individual can discern and validate personally.

The process of meditation Rose advises requires no faith or dogma to practice, and verifies its legitimacy and relevance in the student's own experience as he goes along, step by step. It is not solely an investment or preparation for an all-or-nothing "pay-off" later. Whereas those spiritually intended disciplines that contain a strong element of fantasy or premeditated manipulation leave the seeker more or less in the same condition after the flight of fancy is over, the course of inquiry described here goes in only one direction. If the work is done correctly, one does not come back. One becomes...different. In addition, while each individual's "going within" is unique to that person, there are a number of general principles and themes involved in this search into the self that are impersonal and apply to everyone.

A few distinctive points about Rose's approach differentiate it from some other forms of meditation. As mentioned earlier, one of the most important ground rules is that the person is not to start out with a preconception of what is to be found at the end of the search, or during the process of inquiry. One is not to concoct an image of what spirituality or some attractive, higher state is supposed to be, based on descriptions picked up in books or one's own desires. The person cannot honestly know in advance what the goal-state is, and so any conception about it can only be an imagining.

In this state of imagining, one may well *create* the experience one expects or demands to find, even though it is not genuine. The maintenance of this belief-structure and gradual immersion into its resultant projection unawares then leaves no room for the recognition of the TRUE nature of things, and the realization of Truth in the non-finite dimension beyond the mind. What instead happens is that one *simulates* a condition or state-of-mind of what spirituality is assumed to be, and this simulation, of what may be an erroneous postulation to begin with, is substituted for true understanding and discovery. Rose states: "It is necessary to drop all of the egos in order to have a realization that isn't colored by relative idealistic thinking" (Rose, 1985, p. 184). By "egos", he is partially referring to convictions and identifications which are maintained as distinct psychological entities obstructing the process of objective inquiry. Also implied is that Reality is not to be regarded as merely an extension of the best qualities of human nature, within the range of our finite comprehension.

Rose recommends an alternative to creating a chosen mood of peacefulness through the induction of a self-hypnotic trance, or mimicking "no-mind" by suppressing thoughts through some mechanical technique of distraction, or indulging in gratifying fantasies of visualization as if they were genuine experiences. He advises a process of open-ended **inquiry** and **search**, rather than belief and simulation of symptomatology. He urges us to start from zero, and go on from there; in other words, to start from a point of acknowledged ignorance, and then look honestly for understanding about the reality of things (including oneself), by seeing what is. This is genuine faith. Genuine innocence.

Thus, one does not start out meditating by looking for joy, peace, thoughtlessness, Heaven, or "God." One starts out by soberly assessing one's current condition and status, and asking oneself some important questions: Who or what am I? How does my mind work? Where do my thoughts and feelings come from? What do I not understand about myself? Are my values working? How has my conditioning created my life-view and sense of self? What is life on Earth for? What are my assumptions about life? What are my projections onto life, myself, and others? What are my rationalizations about religion? What does the reality of inevitable death say about the meaning of my life?

After I die, who will "I" be? What do I know for sure? What is worthwhile? What is the real desire underlying all my other desires? **Who is asking these questions?** *Who is aware of this asking?*

Rose insists that one cannot look for Heaven, God, etc., because one does not know what these terms really mean, where the reality to which they refer are located, or if they even exist. Artificially induced, temporary peace-of-mind is no substitute for the genuine contentment of residing in the Truth. Meditation techniques that offer a mantra or chant only lull the mind to quiescence, but may not result in the insight that would liberate one from the source of the turmoil—or from the lull of quiescence. Visualizing spiritual imagery or characteristics can serve as a reminder of a desired goal, at best, but provides little means of attaining it. After some metaphysical study, to boldly proclaim: "I am divine. I am perfect. I am immortal," but without proving it—without first even accurately defining this "I" who alleges having these glorious attributes—is just a pretentious bluff. One will only remain in one's own narcissistic fantasy, and never arrive at objective knowing, or realization.

Many meditation practices, rituals, etc. create a "spiritual" state-of-mind, yet this is not equal to freedom from all states-of-mind, which can be the only real meaning of sanity. While they can be partially conducive towards bringing about such an aware self by negating the obstacles in the mind to such awareness, the created state would also have to be eliminated at some point, as it is itself an obstacle. Yet, this can be difficult to accomplish if the habitual, substitute state is comforting and mistaken for reality. Hypnosis is not freedom from hypnosis, no matter how idealistic its intent, although temporary, deliberate hypnosis into such a "spiritual" attitude or conviction can be helpful in rousing one from one's current, mundane or even pathological state of hypnosis. Even so, some aware presence of mind would need to remain outside this state; one that monitors the process of reindoctrination and could wake the individual up once the person is free enough of the previous state of obsession to begin to think clearly. Either that or the seeker would have to trust that God, the Guru, or one's higher Self will intervene at the proper moment to end the therapeutic interlude and show one the next step towards an objective quality of mind.

Rose has conceded that in the beginning of the introspective discipline, some preliminary techniques to quiet and center the mind—mantra meditation or concentration on the breath, for example—can indeed be useful or even necessary, if one is too turbulent or mentally scattered to engage in any sensitive inner research. However, after one is sufficiently calm and "present," in true awareness, one should begin to work on resolving the issues that have generated one's turmoil or exteriorized one's confused sense of self, rather than going to sleep, dreaming of Godhood or bliss, and mistaking that for samadhi.

As the emphasis in this meditation is always on self-definition and increasing mindfulness, rather than the creation of any state that would divert our attention away from our awareness, the most pertinent mantra one could use would be "I am" (not any combination of Sanskrit syllables of supposed mystical import), as the literal meaning of these sounds would be a constant alerting to wakefulness and pointer to selfhood. Knowing Rose's personality as well as his teaching, I suspect that another mantra he would heartily endorse is: "bull-shit." Its continued repetition will make one wise.

Using any of these methods goes under the heading of "using mechanicalness to defeat mechanicalness." This means that while we realize we are not fully capable in our present condition to think, perceive, and intuit clearly, nor to work without error, due to the defects in our mechanical nature, we do not have to be stopped in our efforts by this admission. Rather, we can utilize strategic means to outwit our programming and counter our defects. The inverting of curiosity and desire has already been discussed. Another example would be that our natural urge for gregariousness can be guided towards appreciating the association with people of a philosophical nature with whom the

serious questions can be kept before one's attention. Another would be to take the primal programming for survival and extend that to the desire for essential survival beyond the physical, and have the innate abhorrence of death add further compulsion to the search for what does not die. These examples are one implication of "Running between the raindrops."

It is in this beginning phase of meditation that Rose's comments about curiosity and desire, as well as intuition, come into play. One notices feeling homesick—even when one is at home. It is at this moment that one becomes a mystic. The attention turns inward, and one follows the homing signal through an invisible labyrinth. Rose refers to the *becoming* when he says: "The yearning brings you."

He states: "The aim of all meditation should be control (of the mind) for the purpose of discovery; not a search for peace only, nor for mental pleasure" (Rose, 1979c, p. 88). The discovery to which he is referring is the direct realization of one's source and essence behind the mind, not any creation within the mind that simulates the humanized, presumed symptoms of spiritual attainment. He insists that we need to achieve an objective understanding of ourselves and of life, and not settle only for subjective, emotional assessments of things (e.g. the old Hindu parable about mistaking the coiled rope in the grass for a snake) or for comfort within one's own, unquestioned paradigm (any subdivision in Plato's Cave). We have to accurately see what is visible before we can see what is invisible. One has to become tired of sleeping. It is tragic to not only not be Awake, but to fall asleep within the dream.

This reversing of our vector is clearly a radically different direction of work than what is promoted by most psychological and even spiritual teachings. Few modern psychologists (Jung, Frankl, Assagioli, and the existentialists being some of the rare exceptions) appreciate self-knowledge as a goal in itself, leading to self-transcendence, but value only outer accomplishments and adjustments as objectives. Their purpose generally is manipulative therapy, rather than self-definition; the process toward which would inherently involve therapeutic change. Likewise, fundamentalistic religious doctrines place most of their stress upon correct behavior and social responsibility (the Golden Rule), and much less on pin-pointing that part of the self where God touches us; the experience of which could only result in truthful living. As Rose makes a clear and crucial distinction between the view and the viewer, he tends to lump most modern systems of psychology (exoteric religion could be included as well) under the heading of "behaviorism" in the sense that as long as the focus of the work is primarily the rearrangement of relative factors before the observer's vision for the benefit of the actor on the stage—whether the variables be feelings, thoughts, relationships, values, or actions, this is really a kind of behaviorism in relation to the inner self.

Rose's verdict is blunt: "Behaviorism is a disease" (Rose, 1979c, p. 3). This philosophy of psychology not only denies any hope or means of realizing this Self that is apart from the projection of life, it denies there might even be anything other than the actor; anything more real than the picture-show. Actually, to even regard such an approach as valid for personal therapy but not for transpersonal search is still somewhat generous. Rose claims that materialistic psychologists will always be inadequate in shaping and remaking people's psyches because they can never account for all the relevant factors that go into determining the human experience. The real source of our troubles lies far deeper than they know. Rose's accusation is that "Modern psychology removes symptoms only, as does a tourniquet around the neck or a sledgehammer" (Rose, 1982, p. 142).

He likewise makes a parallel assessment of what he calls "utilitarian spirituality," meaning those practices and social involvements that primarily aim at providing temporal comfort on a human, emotional level, rather than working to achieve the permanent end of the ignorance that creates our suffering in the first place.

A common theme is apparent in Rose's assorted comments about our subjective condition: our minds are not true, and since our experience of ourselves and our lives is processed through the mind, our current self-definition is thus also invariably mistaken, which in turn only further distorts our experience. We must question what we see, how we see – and who is doing the seeing.

He brings up a curious point; one that Gurdjieff also recognized and which had prompted him to teach the principle of self-remembering. Rose says: "One faculty of the mind not considered by psychologists is the ability to forget. It's a curse" (lecture, 1985). At first glance, this may seem like an oddly trivial matter to bring up, yet it is significant in two ways: 1) one is able to periodically forget the commitment to the search for truth, as it becomes overwhelmed or sidetracked by the desires and concerns of the other "I's" within our psyches, and 2) the true, anterior "I" can forget itself, as its attention is seduced away by its amnesic identification with the other selves and voices playing out their drama before its vision.

Although Absolute Reality is not immediately attainable, the seeker can gradually isolate one state-of-mind that is relatively true, clear, and consistent; an aware self that monitors all life experience from a neutral vantage point and keeps in mind the desire to find its origin, instead of being forever lost in its manifestations. The establishment of this psychic center of provisional sanity can be considered one of the beneficial, intermediate products of meditation.

Whatever distortions, traps, and changes to which one is subject in daily life, it is good to maintain some measure of mindfulness within these fluctuating states; one "eyeball" that remains open, however much the rest of the person is caught up in its succession of paradigms. Rose suggests: "The ideal balance is to be able to bring yourself back each day to a valid state-of-mind" (lecture, 1985). It is at this time that one can sort through all the deviations from this state that occurred throughout the day (and night), and get wise to how this core "I" continues to become deluded by life. Until greater cohesiveness and objectivity of mind is achieved through consistent work on the self, this regular meditation becomes our saving grace; our lifeline to something more real. He adds: "You can't engage in spiritual contemplation 24-hours a day. You have to bring yourself back to the valid state-of-mind each day."

These above comments contain a serious warning: we must become aware of the humbling fact that we do not have one valid and consistent state-of-mind, as we commonly take for granted. It is a trick of consciousness that every state justifies itself as being intrinsically correct and singular, while no notice is made of the fluctuation between diverse states by an impartial observer apart from those states; each state taking itself seriously in turn, thus allowing the illusion to continue that there is only one "I."

This is one reason why Rose places such a special emphasis on sexual restraint, as the state-of-mind associated with sexual activity is so powerful and results in such a major distortion in consciousness. It is dangerous to lose oneself in any state so long as no relatively stable and mature "I" that is not victim to the delusion has been isolated from all lesser "I's." He warns: "The man who places the cup to his lips is not the man who places the cup down" (Rose, 1981, p. 18). We too often fool ourselves into believing there is one objective, sensible self who remains real throughout any experience and is unaffected by it, while the truth may be that some change occurs in one's sense of self along the way, and one becomes less able to judge the validity of the experience afterwards. This caution applies equally to obvious dangers like drug and alcohol abuse as it does to less obvious traps, such as placing oneself subject to the psychological influence of some aberrant group of people or engaging in some supposedly spiritual practices that only result in a distorted state of hypnosis which may consume valuable years of a seeker's life before wearing off.

One needs to be rigorous with oneself in distinguishing what is valid in one's experience from what is not. The truth is not that complicated. The rationalizations we come up with to avoid facing the truth are complicated. Rose encourages the iconoclastic attitude in the seeker of one's assertively rejecting any proffered value or subjective condition that one's intuition deems insensible. He states: "There is no rebellion against absurdity without discernment" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). Contrary to our currently popular repudiation of the term, our problem on every level of personal and social life is not "discrimination," but the lack of proper discrimination between what is more or less true. Our failure to recognize this is itself an example of it.

The exercise of this faculty is especially important in the process of reversing one's vector because it is critical not only to know what is false from what is less false, but also to discriminate between what is "me" from what is "not-me." Rose explains how this kind of meditation is different from the kind of "self-development" with which most of us have been indoctrinated in Western culture—that of needing to make oneself into a solid, impressive person, "to become somebody": "One arrives at the knowledge of his ultimate state-of-being, not by a process of education, but dis-education—plus *becoming*" (Rose, 1985). He is fully in agreement with Nisargadatta Maharaj's contention that the process towards self-knowledge largely consists of knowing what one is not; thereby finally realizing what one actually IS. Rose states this succinctly: "Knowing unreality leads to reality."

He does not regard meditation as being entirely a lofty, sublime interlude of serenity or rapture. Rather, he refers to much of the earlier phase of meditation in undainty terms as being "garbage sorting." This means examining and assessing the merit of every significant component of one's personal experience, and refining one's store of valid knowledge from out of this pile of raw data. This inner realignment and purification of mind is one aspect of "becoming the truth."

There is an excellent metaphor for the nature and course of inner work the Albigen System advocates. Rose has described the human, relative mental dimension as an erroneous field that must be traversed in order for one to arrive at the true Mind or aware Self that lies beyond it. Right now, our point-of-reference of identification is that of the oblivious little person roaming the stage of life, who has only some vague sense of restlessness and dim remembrance about our "home," elsewhere. At this point, we are becoming aware of one thin ray of the light of observation passing through the "Cloud of Unknowing" above us that separates us (the "us" we now experience ourselves to be) from the Reality that is as yet unknown to the little person.

The mind can be likened to a channel or pipe that passes from the human, particularized end of experience to that of the non-finite, non-localized "end" of absolute awareness. The channel is clogged with garbage: ignorance, egos, identifications, forgetfulness, emotion, lust, and all the rest. At best, some faint voice of intuition can weave its way through the obstructions in the channel to alert the robot that it is being watched, and that the robot would be wise to trace back the gaze of the watcher—leading to a big surprise. Religion, philosophy, and psychology have been perennial attempts to clear out the channel in different ways, although the garbage in our minds has too often tended to reduce these occasionally noble attempts to only more garbage to block us. True meditation can be considered the work of clearing a passage through the channel to the top end. Much of "the path" itself is essentially psychic detoxification, from within (right mindfulness) and without (right action).

At the risk of overburdening a metaphor, there is a further, important aspect of this process to consider. The work can proceed from either end of the channel. There is work to be done on the lower or personal, psychological end: the complex process of self-correction, of the elimination of errors in cognition, perception, feeling, and behavior, and the refinement of the intuition. This is all to

dispel the cloudy state-of-mind in which we exist and to bring the finite human being closer within hearing range of the Truth. The clearing through from the top or transpersonal end of the channel is less willful and involved. This is generally the practice of mindfulness, of residing more and more in the still, pure observing awareness of all relative experience, until one is established in this as **beingness**. This is the reversing of the vector in its highest form: the continued refinement of the definition of the observer and pulling one's point-of-reference of attention back along the ray of awareness through oneself into its ultimate source.

This dual-sided approach to the work should optimally be done concurrently, as this would double the speed in which the channel will finally be cleared through, although some teachings tend to stress one aspect more than the other. This strategy is also seen to be necessary when the reality of duality is recognized and one realizes the ever-present paradox requiring another paradox to resolve it. When we examine the question: "Who am I?" we discover there is really not only one, distinct reference point of selfhood as the answer. When we become sufficiently familiar with the subjective pole of our mentation (the "I"), we can see that we identify our self simultaneously with both the human experience of life as well as with the *awareness of this person's life*. Jim Burn's teaching emphasizes the bottom end of this channel, Jean Klein's the top end, and Rose's addresses the entire range of work. The promise is that when the channel is cleared through from both ends, there is the realization that there was really only one change ever occurring—the shift in point-of-reference from the multiple lesser to the anterior-most "I", and only one, all-encompassing Self remaining.

Sincere, single-minded devotional meditation upon the longing for one's God (a good, elementary definition of prayer) may also be considered a form of attending to the top end of the channel, so long as one is not too exclusively identified with oneself as a devotee (i.e. exoteric religiosity). Likewise, the practice of passive observation of the mind without stressing the personal effort of self-correction, proper action, philosophical discernment, psychological insight, etc. (Vipassana, for example) is working mostly on the top end of the channel. The assumption in both approaches is that by surrendering one's individuality to a higher state-of-being ("God") or residing more in choiceless awareness (Krishnamurti's term), the truth of life-as-guru will bring about the required changes in character and understanding by itself, without one's willful effort.

There is merit in this notion. However, the Albigen System teaches that while being short of complete self-definition, it is more honest and reliable to take the in-between path of committed action, being guided by one's higher intuition, while taking care to not regard oneself as the "doer." This is because the issue of will vs. no-will is all dependent upon the question of identity or point-of-reference: is one the person meditating—or the awareness/grace being cultivated? Are the changes due to the "person's" will or does one just see changes happening as they need to?

Keeping all this in mind, strict devotional or mindfulness meditation could be likened to riding an escalator up to "Heaven." Self-inquiry meditation is then like climbing the escalator too while it is going up. Pure devotion or mindfulness does enable betweenness to work behind the scenes to change inner factors and make things happen. Self-inquiry experiences this same process of transformation, but more consciously and deliberately.

This theme relates to the principle of kundalini, or transmutation of energy. As earlier explained, many methods have been put forth in diverse spiritual teachings to raise this energy to the apex point in the head. Rose had studied and practiced many of these himself and concluded that the real key or common denominator in all of them was **concentration**. It is concentration that redirects this vital energy back into the self, from its usual waste and dissipation in futile, external obsessions, and then raises this energy through the different centers of consciousness (he seldom uses the term "chakras") up to its rightful seat in the mind.

As referred to previously in another context, Rose (and Ramana Maharshi, Gurdjieff, and others) adds a significant development to this work beyond this initial premise. He teaches that one need not settle for only an impersonal, somewhat passive method of transmuting this generic energy, while waiting to be transformed by it. Rather than only doing mechanical or symbolic techniques to bring about the pre-requisite raising of the energy to the head, he is urging the seeker to go beyond this – to USE one’s “head” (meaning mind, not only intellect) directly for doing the inner work one really needs to be doing that would lead to Realization. Concentration on the massive task of self-knowledge raises this energy and furthers the essential work at the same time. This is another instance of non-duality: not to meditate as a discipline, to “do it” as an exercise apart from oneself, in order to pay one’s dues for getting something else later, but to engage in self-inquiry directly for oneself, in order to become progressively more real in the now. The seeker is one with the path. This is real faith: to act boldly on the truth as a whole person, rather than attempting to effect progress by manipulating one’s reflection in the mirror.

Both Gopi Krishna, in his books on kundalini, and Richard Bucke, in his Cosmic Consciousness, stated their belief that spiritual realization was an inevitable product of slow, natural evolution. This may be true, but Rose would certainly suggest that one not complacently count on it and risk waiting entire lifetimes (should any others prove to exist) for this to occur, but to do everything one can to speed up the process and bolster the odds. He shares Gurdjieff’s stress on the importance of the esoteric school, due to his belief that proper partnering with like-minded co-workers further augments one’s solitary efforts, in addition to the prompting of any possible higher aspiration of Nature. On the other hand, to the honest seeker, procrastination masquerading as humble faith is invalid. Cosmic Consciousness is unknown to us. Ignorance and suffering are not. This is the reference point from which we must work.

A seeming contradiction has been presented in regards to the necessity for effort. On one hand, it has been stated that results are directly proportional to energy applied. On the other, Rose admits most people cannot be involved in “spiritual” activities 24 hours a day. The explanation is that it is the quality of the energy generated, not its quantity, that determines the amount of effort applied. This is a special type of energy generated. It is an energy, and utilization of this energy, that transforms one’s very “being” and raises one’s level of comprehension to a higher rung of the ladder. It is not merely the development of knowledge, faculties, or increasingly joyful experiences while remaining at the same reference point of mundane identity.

Various comments have been made thus far about the notion that the individual human being is a fictitious character that believes in itself; that there really is no such thing as a “person,” as we imagine ourselves to be. The claim is that all there is is an identification in the mind (whose mind?) with a composite, mechanical entity that is not separate from the rest of the complex, relative stage-play in which it is embedded; all of which exists in a larger Mind that is what is truly alive and real. One may then justifiably wonder why the work towards the correct self-definition of a non-existent self would be important. This would be like saying: “Before burning these papers, let me make sure they’re in alphabetical order” (Brilliant, Potshots).

A point mentioned earlier bears reiterating in this context. I had once asked Rose about why it should be necessary to deal with the personal, human component in the inquiry, as a part of the larger search for something infinitely beyond the Earthly scene. Why can we not simply work to attain direct access to some higher, transpersonal dimension (in other words, the top end of the channel), and exit the mind forthwith, leaving our little self behind? He summed up much of the Albigen System by replying: “In order to find the truth, you have to become the truth, and to become it you must first manifest the truth about yourself as a relative human being.” He explained that this was

not because the individual person is especially important — or even real, but because, whether one's path is primarily one of devotion or mindfulness, the human ego-mind is the major obstacle to the finding of truth, and so having oneself change in accordance with the requirements of truthfulness is the prerequisite or doorway to making possible the realization of the Self behind the person. Yet, a part of the grand paradox is that we must first fully inquire into the "me" who is making the efforts towards transcendence and would attain the Self, in order to end this "me." Our current point-of-reference is in the illusion, not Reality. He states:

Many people on the spiritual path overlook the need for physical (and psychological) adjustment. They want to jump into what they think is the heavy stuff — this pipe dream of Enlightenment, and by studying the symptoms of Enlightenment as described by charismatic teachers, say, "Pop — there I am," or just act like they have no mind (Rose, 1979c, p. 68).

Rose offered a rare comment on cosmology when he said that although the world may well be found to be an illusion in the final analysis, it is still a well-organized creation and that there is an "authorized" or fundamental, intended nature to the cosmos that is supposed to seemingly exist, totally apart from all human projections superimposed onto it (Rose, 1981, p. 29). By extension, it could be reasonably surmised that as an aspect of this "official" illusion of the universe (despite its being maya), there may also be a "real" human being or sane pattern of programming that one is meant to naturally be behind all of one's personal delusions, even though this self or functional point-of-reference may also be ultimately found to be fictional, so far as being its owner. The path to Reality must pass through this self. One cannot just chop this self's head off and immediately find oneself in the Absolute.

As noted in the above quote, Rose stresses this personal "house-cleaning" because he is aware that it is possible to cheat oneself on the path through pretense by identifying with the conceptualized True Self and believing that whatever the human being now does or experiences is irrelevant and does not affect this Self. Or, one may engage in the trick of pseudo-self-observation: of watching one's state of pathology or delusion as it is happening and accepting it as being innately valid "as is," as if only observation matters, the human being is only doing what it is meant to do and cannot help being that way anyhow, and this person is not "me" regardless. There is an important catch to this attempted rationalization, however, which Rose's numerous examples of confrontation attempt to redress.

The human being's nature, when it acts and perceives in accordance with the truth, with no subjective reactions within duality nor ego-contaminated mentation, does function properly without friction, imbalance, or error. All forms of immorality, mental disorder, disease, and foolishness are due to the ignorant ego-self still obstructing the human being's functioning in some way, and so belie the bluff that one has indeed transcended the mundane plane and is wholly residing in spiritual consciousness, etc. This untruthful behavior (thought is behavior too) would in fact prevent the realization of this higher Self from being possible, as the indulgence in this false ego would be blocking the way out of the mind of one's point-of-reference of "I am" that is still mistakenly trapped in it.

We must see the whole picture clearly so that we are not fooled. All mental delusion is rooted solely in the ego, having no life apart from it, and this ego is itself kept alive only by the energy projected into it through one's identification with it, as one's attention forgetfully merges with and thus nourishes this ghost. (Although, as pondered earlier, there may be nothing existent that becomes identified with the false self that is not itself only a subtler aspect of that very self, it can be said that experientially, if not in actuality, the "one" referred to as being deceived is the anterior Self.) True

detachment would not merely allow the ego to go its merry way, under the pretext that it is irrelevant to the Self who is regally disinterested in its unruly antics, but would in effect sever its lifeline by no longer feeding it. To pretend to turn away from the ego-self, while de facto still being at best only the thought of transcendence maintained by this same ego, is to be once again out-witted by the mind. This must be seen.

On the other side of the paradox, however, this human self is not to be derisively regarded as garbage to be thrown out or a sinner to be deprecated, as this would still be another subtle form of identification within duality, implied by one's desire to disassociate from it or repudiate it. This common religious attitude is dangerously misleading. Personal delusion is better likened to a cancer of a body system, in which the objective is to locate the cause of the disease and remedy it, returning the organism to wholeness and vitality; not to cut out the offending body parts as if excommunicated. The human being is not the Self, but it is evidently an intended part of its total manifestation. Non-duality in regards to the Self is to incorporate the "self" (purified of the ego that would inhabit it) as a part of the whole picture of reality too, and not something contrary to it. What is required is to allow it to be, truthfully, as a relative, human self within its own domain – which is within the Self's larger domain, yet to realize that one is not it.

This discernment requires precise inner vision. Genuine self-observation involves seeing into the mechanics of the mind and dynamics of the psyche, including seeing the reasons animating one's false patterns and resolving them. To just look at the surface of behavior and personality and justify all pathology by saying: "I am watching it and what I see must be the way it is supposed to be" is a sneaky rationalization, and not the practice of true self-observation. It is a contamination of such vision by something subject to one's view which does not wish to be exposed. One must look underneath the "skin" of the mind to see this evasion tactic too.

The process of honest, objective self-inquiry along with surrender to the inner changes brought about through correlated right action exposes and eliminates all ego-interference in psychological experience, leaving behind a mind that is true and clear. The mind is freed of psychological memories: the identifications with and reactions to experience. Based on this simple explanation, the metaphor could be used that "becoming the truth" (that aspect of it relating to personal psychology or the bottom end of the channel) means the small "s" self becomes a properly chiseled key that can be pulled out of manifested life and dissolved, by the observing, anterior Self, leaving behind the whole IS. As long as we take ourselves as crystallized egos seriously, the door remains locked.

There is much work involved in freeing one's (whose?) self-definition from the ego's projection onto it and the entanglement with the distorted picture-show character that it witnesses. This work is much of what meditation really is. It is the discrimination of the false from the true, and even the true self from the "I." Without this mature inquiry, one can only imagine starting out on the path "100 miles up in the air," as Rose puts it, but in reality being nowhere. We must first wake up in the dream (which involves correcting our errors within the dream) before we can wake up from the dream.

Admittedly, there is a messy paradox in all this. Even these false egos and one's dishonest attempt to justify their meddling in daily affairs might be a part of the overall "program" too, and not "one's own doing," as there is no real "person" to do anything, but only the awareness of all this conflict and confusion at once. Nonetheless, the falseness must still be purged somehow, regardless of who is "doing" it, and whose "fault" the error is.

Rose does not specifically resolve this paradox for us. On one hand, he states we are only the observer of a robot that has been programmed in its functioning as a part of the whole system of life.

On the other, he lambastes us for botching up our lives due to stupidity, conceit, weakness, etc. (while in our robot role), and for violating our rightfully intended nature. The obvious questions that come up are: Is this ego-contamination also intended by the Master Programmer or are "we" willfully responsible for it? Even if we are, what caused us to do this, and is there even an individual "we" apart from the robot in the first place who is responsible for the robot's choices and conduct? If we are ignorant victims of faulty programming, can we be held responsible for being ignorant and hurting ourselves? Is there "sin against God", or only delusion within a bad dream, dreamt by no one?

This is one more koan to add to our list. Yet, whatever caused "the Fall" – and to whomever it occurred – the direction home remains the same.

The first step on the spiritual path is honest self-awareness. And so are all the others. The Albigen System of meditation confronts this self by mental observations and analysis of personal behavior and experiences. Neither self-confrontation nor confrontation from co-workers is meditation in itself, but is a technique used to provoke meditation; to get the mind off dead-center. As long as one remains in any state-of-mind that is complacent and unquestioned, however "spiritual" or peaceful it may seem, there can be no real meditation occurring. Any of the many questions posed thus far provide plenty of material for serious self-examination. Rose states: "People who complain about not having material for meditation are those who have the most" (Rose, 1981, p. 16). He recommends that one meditate on oneself rather than on some symbolic or devotional object external to the self, as this way the problem is always urgently before one's view.

There are many things of a personal nature one can meditate upon as a start. Any source of strong emotional involvement and turmoil, such as issues regarding one's childhood, interpersonal conflicts, and sexual experiences are important to study and resolve. Actually, our path has a most obvious beginning. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that generally we search, initially, not for "spirituality," but to get away from discontent or pain. Our truthful priority should not be to look for something better "over there," but to see what it is we are attempting to flee. To fully understand the origin and nature of our suffering and to take the necessary, courageous steps to undoing it is spiritual work in that one is both delving with urgency into the exploration of one's direct experience of life and, by correcting or healing what is found to be wrong, also bringing oneself closer to the core truth one is searching for in the more idealistic sense.

It is difficult to work through those issues with a strong affective component to them while one is still too identified with the feelings aroused to assess the matter objectively and is making decisions based on self-justifying or self-defending emotions. One has to be able to view even the feeling level of one's nature as an object of study, rather than assuming it is one's inherently valid baseline of experience, or further, that one is this human being, however healthy and sensitive.

Rose has advised: "Develop away from the emotional stage. This is done by mechanical effort." Again, this is not because emotions are considered negative, but because they can be a serious coloration of inner perception and philosophical evaluation. His intention is not to place an emphasis on avoiding negative emotions, as Gurdjieff did (anger, fear, grief, etc.), nor to promote only positive emotions, as the "New Agers" do (love, joy, serenity, etc.), as being indications of spirituality. Rose is not encouraging the pursuit of one pole of duality over the other, but the transcending of all relative colorations of experience to a vantage point of sanity, which would include correct and appropriate feeling, but without the identification. He does add a functional consideration to this: "There are no negative emotions...except that they do harm to the possessor by holding up his progress" (personal correspondence, 1978). The mechanical effort in part refers to the practice of impartially monitoring one's emotional state, developing discernment as to the relative merits of the emotions experienced, and through incremental adjustments in perspective and intention, to reside in and act from a higher,

more inclusive center of being. While it is of course better to be emotionally healthy than not, the symptoms alone are not the goal of the spiritual quest. However, this removal of the emotional distortions of genuine feeling allows intuition to unfold.

Another fascinating, and disturbing, subject in meditation is the watching of the interplay of voices, urges, emotions, values, and tendencies in oneself, noting how they battle for rule of the whole person, how the decision is finally made, “who” the arbiter is that makes the decision – and *who* it is who is aware of all this elaborate melodrama.

Another rich source of insight into one’s psychological nature is the examination of forms of mechanicalness in behavior, relating, feeling, thinking, and evaluating. Rose goes so far as to state that most, if not all, of our inner functioning is mechanical. He says that when the anatomy of our mental processes is studied diligently and honestly, without our prideful identification with them, we come to some unexpected, humbling conclusions. For example, he claims that what we call Will is actually found to be directed, urgent reaction, Reason is a series of reactions to a previous pattern of reactions, and Imagination is a reaction of memories upon memories (Rose, 1981, p. 25-27).

All of these reactions are automatic. However, a part of this meditation’s value is that the recognition of this mechanicalness weakens its power, begins to free one from its coercion, and enables one to alter most instances of pathology or damage in the patterns, to a large extent. It would be more precise to state that the cybernetic principle allows the robot to automatically clear its circuits once the trouble is located and admitted. In more human terms, Rose has said: “The biggest part of your troubles are solved when you confess [acknowledge] them.” This application of energy inward in self-observation is what brings about the return to a truer manner of functioning as our residing more in our own inner observer loosens us from the strict identification with the problem-gestalt bound into the person. More importantly, as this insight forces us to relinquish our claim to ownership of the mental faculties described above, we thus find ourselves liberated from the burden of responsibility for them and their resultant compulsions, and left to wonder who we really are, if we are not exclusively this automaton we see before our inner vision.

Another obvious, rich source of insight into our selves is the examination of past traumas and afflictions to the individuality-sense. This includes three general categories of disturbance. The first involves the ways in which our original, innocent sense of self was violated by the abuse and misled by the deception seemingly unavoidable as we enter into life, which result in our distorted self-estimate and associated states-of-mind. A subsequent category as we “mature” (meaning: become corrupted) involves the appropriate affronts elicited from life by the false ego-poses we present to others, who rebuff us (when we threaten their ego-pose), in this way confronting our vanity or veiled aggression. We must learn from these traumas, as they expose our impurities, thereby revealing the true. Finally, we learn the wisdom of humility after submitting to repeated demonstrations of our helplessness and limitation in the midst of the complex drama of life swirling about us, as we are forced to admit we are not the masters of the world after all, and never were.

We start out this confusing journey as a child feeling an undivided connection with the flow of life-events as they occur, with no sense of separation or reaction within experience, taking no offense at pain and feeling no glory in joy. By puberty, we begin to believe we are actually doing something as individuals and can control circumstances to our advantage, at this point developing a distinct ego-center removed from our holistic experience. We believe in our own sovereignty, until continued suffering and disappointment finally lets us know we are only a part of a larger story and are not the one writing the master script, possibly not even our own role in it. These afflictions are not so much to the falseness in our ego-state or the sad inheritance to every innocent soul of some collective

curse on mankind, but to the inherent falseness of our very notion of selfhood; not as individualized awareness within the all, but as discrete identity apart from it.

From all this inner evaluation we can see how certain values and attitudes, reaction-patterns, personality-aspects, states-of-perception, and so on developed in us. Then, as we purge our minds of their distortive influence and heal our hearts from the damage done to us by harsh lessons and repercussions of foolishness both, we can begin to appreciate a clearer perspective on things and mode of being for us.

This is not to say that every aspect of one's personal psychology must be perfect before one can achieve transcendence. Certain folds and wrinkles (as it were) in the psyche may never be fully removable and one may not be able to return to pristine innocence again. However, one can get them "straightened out" enough to allow one to be functional in an honorable way and to see the truth of one's totality in clear awareness. In other words, the channel may not need to be purged entirely of debris and damage, but just enough space must be cleared to allow one ray of light to pass through it, from seeker to sought. This conditional sanity is what matters. A broken leg may never fully heal, but one can limp along the path like a man. Furthermore, it is the increasingly recurrent remembrance of the being-awareness of "I AM" that serves as a psychic dilator (so to speak) to open up that alive space through this inert, insentient contraction of egoity and delusion with which one has identified, and enables one to pull back along this ray of awareness to the original observer at the top of the channel.

It is important, though, in studying one's prior experiences of conflict and suffering, to watch them without ego-identification and renewed emotional involvement. To impersonally see the complex interaction of factors in life events and how one did not really do anything, but rather identified with a larger process within which *something happened to "me,"* frees one from the fixation and resultant reactions. Doing this cleanly, however, is difficult. Rose explains that this is one reason why Realization takes years to achieve, as it takes a long time to cool off and separate from one's experience-memory (Rose, 1981, p. 7).

Rose devotes more of his attention in the teaching to transpersonal rather than personal psychology. This may possibly be due to his having had relatively little psychological defectiveness to deal with in his own life and so being able to put more stress on impersonal philosophical and phenomenological concerns in his meditations, than therapeutic issues. Yet, there is some benefit in this disproportionate emphasis, as well. His blunt, gutsy, common-sense approach to understanding and confronting crippling psychological syndromes cuts through a lot of the neurosis and nonsense through which we process life, and enables the individual to come to a position of self-respect and self-mastery more directly. His irreverent approach draws out the latent assertiveness of one's truer self and encourages righteous rebellion against the forms of negativity that are detrimental or parasitical to that self, rather than reinforcing them by taking them too seriously. He believes that people and their problems are not all that complicated, and their solutions are likewise fairly straight-forward when the basic facts of life are understood.

His manner is similar to the principle in Logotherapy that much of the nature of intra-psychic troubles is that of a self-feeding mental loop that is best escaped by stepping outside of oneself through a commitment to an objective sense of meaning or responsibility, rather than remaining intimidated and overwhelmed by one's paradigm of self-recrimination. Rose urges people to boldly challenge their weaknesses and develop their "being" through proper, selfless action, in this way calling the bluff of the pathology and breaking its hypnotic spell.

While there is much therapeutic value to this first phase of meditation, the objective of the practice is not healing or well-being alone. That is only a welcome side-effect. The purpose is to

know the self better. The psychological analysis clarifies and purifies the mental processes, which in turn allows one to see their workings more clearly. This is some of the necessary preliminary work to finding the source of one's awareness, which is the final goal.

Rose says the natural predilection to direct one's inquiring mind outward into a study of the universe in the quest for knowledge about essentials is futile, so long as the one on the subjective end of the studying is not fully known. Instead, he advises:

The (seeker) should first use this system (of subjective observation) upon himself. In the process, he may discover and correct his voltage [vital energy], and his filtering and recording mechanisms [mental apparatus]. If he is lucky, he may take another step, with improved sensors [intuition], and come to know about himself and his essence. (Rose, 1981, p. 3).

A central principle in the Albigen System of meditation (as well as in Advaita Vedanta, Vipassana, and some of Zen) is the study of thought as a phenomenal object, meaning: all mental experience. As has been critiqued, the objective of many forms of meditation is the attempt to escape from the tyranny of thought directly by distracting the mind through some form of ritual or repetition, or stifling thoughts through repression, with the intention of leaving behind a still mind. Others instead use the mind to focus in devotional contemplation upon some aspect of conceptualized divinity in oneself, in principle, or in one's Guru, thereby hoping in time to blend in with this higher reality. While Rose is hesitant to claim that all these methods are wholly invalid, he does believe that at best, they are so slow that results would not be forthcoming in one lifetime, or at worst, one could fall into the subtle trap of substituting one category of thought for another and not know it, rather than escaping from the mind altogether. Even a mind without thoughts is not no-mind, as the "person" who is enjoying this tranquility is itself really only a thought-form in the mind, although admittedly this position can help get one closer to taking the last step over the threshold — if one does not get stuck in this state-of-mind.

Rose says it is most important to fully understand the nature of thought before pretending to do anything with it or about it. By this, he does not mean that one should fall into the opposite trap either of developing a tremendous intellectual ego by becoming a great thinker of complex thoughts and identifying with the obsession. He is instead referring to one's needing to understand what thought actually is and its relation to the observer of it. He starts out by stating: "Thought is a term more accepted than defined" (Rose, 1978, p. 38). He asks us to inquire into the issues of: who is thinking, what is the essence or nature of the product thought, and is it a product (of ours) or is it caused (received by us)? A further question to ponder is: what is awareness without thought?

Before exploring these questions, it needs to be made clear once again that thought, in regards to meditation, does not refer only to its conventional meaning as verbal, sequential, logical conceptualization. This would lead meditators of the other, general methods mentioned previously to assume that what they are indulging in is not some form of thought activity as well, but that they have gone beyond it. Thought, in a pure, phenomenological sense, also refers to the subjective experience of feeling, sensing, and remembering, as well as the content of spiritual practices like repeating mantras, concentration on the breath, seeing visualizations, contemplating a chakra, listening for celestial sounds, proclaiming affirmations, petitioning a deity in prayer, and all other activities of the mind. Thought could be better described as any relative experience occurring in consciousness that is witnessable, whether it be calculating algebraic equations or encountering beings of light.

Without analyzing the mechanics of mental functioning in detail at this point, the central message Rose wishes the seeker to realize in this discussion of meditation is the distinction and true relation between thought as a process in all its variety and *the anterior awareness that sees it*.

He starts out with the seemingly nonsensical question: "Do you think or do you only think you think?" (Rose, 1981, p. 11). His point is that we tend to reflexively assume we are whatever we experience, including our mental functioning, and that we are more or less choosing what we experience. Rose casts doubt on this entire supposition:

It is possible that there is such a thing as a will, and we have no choice [!] but to act as though we have one. However, it seems highly foolish for this milling mass called humanity to pretend to have a *free will* of unlimited range. Can we choose the thought that inspires us to think that we are choosing? Does the hog choose the butcher? (Rose, 1978, p. 37).

We read in metaphysical tracts that all we are is the result of what we have thought. This is pragmatically meaningful but esoterically meaningless when we realize that we do not know what is determining our thoughts nor who is thinking them. Some lazy mystics smugly infer that "life is but a dream" and languish into this concept—but in Whose mind is this dream occurring? It surely cannot be that of the finite human being that too is incorporated within this life. Whose dream-character are we? We have to know. We have not thoroughly examined our point-of-reference as a creator or experiencer of thoughts, nor ascertained our root source.

In the realm of philosophy, we find Descartes' noble declaration: "I think, therefore I am," with its implication that this is supposed to infer something profound about identity and validity. In actuality it proves neither, as this syllogism floats in thin air and has no foundation in anything real. This statement is defining the self as the thinker; the existence of thoughts allegedly substantiating the thinker's identity. Yet, can one even choose to stop or start thinking? If not, can we claim any pride in being a thinker? Or if so, who exists behind the stream of thoughts, remaining after the thinking has been stopped, and can then choose to resume thinking? Is there a thinker of thoughts apart from them, or is there only thinking—and the awareness of thinking? Is the "I"-self the thinker who is identical to the thoughts—or only this awareness? Is the human being the identification with the experience of thought (which is synonymous with mind)? Who is thinking this thought that may be all we are? In fact, the one who would remain behind and determine thought is too but a subtler thought, still within the mind and not outside it; this mind itself being one big thought. Rose counters the above dictum by saying it should be better stated as: "Thought will not leave my field of awareness; I suffer, therefore I am aware" (Rose, 1985, p. 307).

Briefly stated, he teaches that thoughts are reactions to input imposed upon our minds from sources external to us (including the thoughts of free will, self-determination, individuality, etc.), much like a radio broadcasts the program it receives through its antenna. ("External" here means in relation to the ego-mind as the self's experiential point-of-reference, not the larger mind dimension in which all this interaction can be seen to be contained). If meticulous introspection finds this to be true, then can we claim to actually think at all — **or is it only the echo of a knock on the door reverberating through an empty house?** Who is thinking one's thoughts? To even suspect that we are really behind our thoughts does not inevitably imply that we are the thinker of the thoughts. The thinker is of the thoughts. The real "I" is behind the whole sequence.

Rose states quite emphatically (while ever mindful of the paradox, yet hinting at the perspective of non-duality): "We have no control over the experience of life that is projected onto us from

outside us". Elsewhere, he adds: "No human being is responsible for his acts." Does a rooster's crowing make the sun rise in the morning? If we cannot even get a melody, obsession, or mood out of our minds, can we honestly refer to thoughts as "our thoughts"? (To further complicate the issue, he has mentioned at other times that one can gradually learn to deliberately think along self-defining or philosophical lines, breaking away from one's pre-destined groove of mundane obsession. This involves some measure of betweenness, however, more than willfulness overcoming mechanicalness, as the paradox still rules in this domain of polarity. In this regard, Rose has said he believes he had been programmed to be a free-spirited seeker; that he could not have been any other way and his rebellious path could not have happened if it had not been meant to happen. This perspective also helps to reconcile the metaphysical principle that our thoughts create our reality according to our will, with the mystical intention of giving up our lives to God, who then leads us. The former is the egoistic, dualistic realm of good and evil, while the latter is the path of oneness without blame. Yet, are we ever really free? Even when we intend to create our own reality – are we not still robots of "God"?) His above statements are of course not intended to indirectly condone the various forms of game playing, hedonism, etc. which he consistently criticizes throughout his teaching, as some may eagerly wish to interpret it.

The confusion is that the "us" and "human being" referred to in these quotes is not an entity separate from life experience who can choose actions, thoughts, and attitudes, but is an integral part of that entire life-stream itself. We do not choose our experience because: a) the "we" is of the experience, more specifically as the subjective pole of experience and mental identification with it, and b) the real "I" is the impartial observer of this mind that is passively receiving these impressions of life which it – as the human being – experiences. No one can be responsible for anything because the "person" is only a firmly embedded factor in a mass gestaltic pattern that already is, and is a mental projection from a dimension more real than this one. The frustration at one's helplessness is also the doorway to freedom from the person, where one can then wonder: "Who am I?"

This new perspective on thought also casts a serious doubt on the merit of the popular notion of "positive thinking." Certainly, positive thinking is preferable to negative thinking, but truthful thinking is better yet and not necessarily synonymous with what may seem to be positive, in humanistic, ego-centered terms, which may prove to be rationalizations or merely vanity. This would then also bring one closer to direct-mind knowing, as versus forever taking sides between poles in dualistic evaluations. (This state of "not thinking," within an aware, intuitive mind, is not to be mistaken for the popular, appealing sojourn into thoughtlessness within a state-of-mind of egoistic trance.) This qualitative shift becomes possible when it is no longer deemed necessary to maintain the mental construct of a distinct "thinker" apart from the simple recognition of the reality of things as it presents itself, in order to interpret experience, "own" it, or hold it together as a paradigm, and the plain awareness of what IS opens its eye. This is when one finally graduates to the Buddha's recommended third step in meditation: to think of nothing (i.e. chopping one's head off) – and find what is behind thought. Along these lines, Rose once defined the "Kingdom of Heaven" as meaning clear thinking, with a true mind.

The analysis of thought (or mental functioning) is directly tied in with the theme of self-observation, as ultimately the self is but made of thought. Rose offers a key explanation of how this works: "Thinking is a process which can be visualized as a series of pictures of thoughts. You do not think about thinking, but see the thoughts." He elaborates on this definition:

Thinking is a process. Thought is a vision. We do not think about "nailing," but instead see two pieces of wood nailed together. Thinking is a process by which a series of

projections are received by our awareness. We are behind thought. We cannot think about a thought, but we can think about thinking. (Lecture, 1978).

He is providing some important clues in these brief statements about the direction towards ultimate self-definition. Recognizing both this reflexivity and objectification of thought also adds another dimension of meaning to the earlier comments about our robot-like nature. It should be understood, however, that to say our inner workings are automatic only implies they are mechanical and relative, not invalid. It means we should recognize these processes as occurring on their own, and that **we are not them**. The objective is not to thwart the "knee-jerk" reaction when the hammer strikes, but to not be it.

A central principle in the Advaita Vedanta teaching, as well as in Rose's, is that as thought ends, so does the thinker. What is revealed behind this stream of mind-stuff is the Self.

Some discrimination needs to be made here about one point. Thought is not considered to be negative or false in itself, as many of these comments may seem to imply and happy New Agers and emotional religionists would hope to ordain. It has its functional purpose in relative life. What is negative is the substituting of linear, dualistic thought for direct-mind knowing. Our conventional form of thinking can be regarded as a perverse excretion of crippled consciousness. Our sense of experiential identity becomes located in a psyche that is a fragmented, distorted, projected creation before the inner observer's view. We become amnesically split off from ourselves and engage in complex compensations within that relative, kaleidoscopic mind-matrix to define and express our reality. A mind that is whole, clear, and true would not need to obsessively process and react to life experience through any form of thought, beyond using it as a mechanical device for computation and such. One would abide in awake stillness. Psychological thought is the corrupting of direct-mind knowing to a lower dimension. A part of meditation is to heal and purify the mind, while retreating back from it.

Related to this, a further level of discrimination needs to be made between valid and false thinking. This is the "garbage sorting" phase of the work that Rose describes. To the extent we still identify with our experience as human beings, defined by our thoughts, it is important to confront ourselves in every category of our experience and to back away from what is untrue or less essential, thereby becoming less of a fixated ego-self and more of a pure witness.

This process of self-inquiry is done from outside the mind, not from within it. A knot cannot completely untangle itself, but only create new knots in the effort of untying the lesser knots. However, when it is truly seen that relative thought, no matter what its form or how sincere its intent, cannot end itself, what results is that the mind's output of thinking slows down and returns to its original, natural function; one thereby being freed from compulsive identification as the thinker. One must stop feeding the thinking machine with undue attention, personal investment, and projected importance, and it will run down of its own fading momentum. Consistent, dispassionate observation is what brings this about. One stares it into submission. Yet, again paradoxically, one must use thought to its limit, to reach beyond it. One must learn to think truthfully before being able to relinquish thought and to know and experience directly.

Much of what Rose has presented thus far in regards to psychological self-evaluation may seem common-sensical and similar to principles already encountered in other teachings, both spiritual and mundane. However, he brings up some other aspects of mental experience that have seldom, if ever, been acknowledged by teachers of introspection. Overlooking them allows a serious obstacle to mental clarity to exist, and renders pure apprehension impossible.

The standard message we pick up in esoteric texts is that if we do not see the truth, it is because we are seeing through a glass darkly. There is nothing hidden. Everything is known. We just fail to see the obvious. Our capacity to acquire direct-knowledge is entirely dependent upon the degree to which we remove obstacles to knowing. We cannot hope to perceive either life, ourselves, or God clearly while our perception is colored or distorted. We cannot isolate the true "I" that sees our experience so long as it identifies with any of the many sheaths and filters that cover its eye. Many specific issues regarding values, egos, attitudes, etc. have been discussed thus far that obstruct our clear vision and must be worked through in meditation. In addition, there are even larger mental gestalts prior to these variables that affect not only what we see, but how we see. Fortunately, these obstacles to seeing *can themselves be seen*.

There are three main categories of factors affecting subjective perception that Rose asks us to examine in our self-study: states-of-mind, moods, and subliminal states-of-consciousness. Each acts like colored eyeglasses through which we perceive our lives. When they are worn long enough, the mind adjusts for their distortion and we see the view on the other side of them as if it was reality "as-is." It is only when we take the glasses off and see the radical shift in our quality of perception that we suddenly realize how much our view was colored all along. The common significance among these three categories of states is that we see and experience life through them, not with them.

States-of-mind are various massive concept-structures or gestalts which usually come about over a period of years of evaluation and increasing conviction. It is a composite thinking pattern that has as its chief characteristic one of the basic desires or fears of the individual in question and its resultant self-justifications, rationalizations, and attitude compulsions.

Another way of describing a state-of-mind is that it is an identification with the view of life from a point-of-reference that is incorrectly located, a range of perspective that is incomplete, and through a filter that distorts whatever much is seen, from that vantage point. It is an assumption about the nature of things, with conviction, based upon one's experience and conditioning.

However, they can also be brought about very quickly as a result of an extreme physical or mental experience. Likewise, a traumatic experience or incident of intense suffering is about the only thing that will actually bring about a change in the state-of-mind.

Rose warns: "We must first be aware that we are the victims of our states-of-mind, not proud possessors of them. And we can be aware of them by self-observation" (Rose, 1978, p. 167). He adds: "As long as you are in a state-of-mind, you will not have direct-mind communication" (Rose, 1985, p. 105). He also advises us to remember back to our earlier years when we were able to think more clearly and to recall the factors which made us think clearly then—and eliminate those that later damaged or corrupted our innocent minds, if we wish to think clearly today. He explains: "In this fashion we must become as a little child" (Rose, 1978, p. 168).

Rose poses this question to the seeker: "One wonders if the human mind will ever be able to discern, among these [our] many states, that singular state that might be called sanity" (Rose, 1978, p. 160).

He relates the principles of reversing one's vector and backing away from untruth to the process of self-inquiry:

The pursuit of Truth necessarily involves the understanding of present states-of-mind, first. Then there follows the automatic shedding of nonsense-components of these states-of-mind, from which comes an evolution of mental purity, approaching, all the while, the state (of spiritual realization, which) we can be sure is the only true state-of-mind. (Rose, 1978, p. 167).

More specifically, he is saying that the final objective of the meditative path is to transcend all states-of-mind, to NO state-of-mind, which is the only true "state-of-mind."

In case the need for this mental purification and concurrent change in state-of-being is not obvious enough, Rose offers a more ominous reason to be motivated for such work...while there is still time for it:

In the Tibetan Book of the Dead is the hint that all that exist are states-of-mind. And unless the individual finds some stable manner to keep track of the true self in the many turbulent and often terrifying nightmares of life, what will happen to us hence, when we can no longer flee back into the living body by simply awakening? (Rose, 1978, p. 169-70).

An obvious experiential corollary is that if we can so readily forget ourselves when dreaming, how can we confidently assume we will remember ourselves when dead?

Moods are States-of-Perception which are qualified means of seeing or perceiving and are generally of a short duration, being more factors of coloration than lasting states of conviction. Moods affect states-of-mind by triggering or reawakening them. One develops a conviction based upon continued moods.

Rose has evaluated the psychology of human nature and found that fear, seduction/acquisition, and nostalgia are the three primary moods from which all emotions derive. If one analyzes one's own subjective leanings (including their more pure expression in dreams), it is seen that every emotional impulse can be traced back to one or some combination of these as its root. For example, he has stated that all appetites are from the acquisition mood, whereas guilt is a combination of memory/nostalgia and fear. By some extension, I have found that the awareness of love and death brings about or enters into the mood of nostalgia.

Rose has added a new insight to higher psychology by pointing out the special significance of nostalgia. This mood is usually regarded as being either pleasantly idealized reverie of happier days or futile, wistful longing for something lost. Yet, he advises us to look more closely into our moods of nostalgia for a serious clue. He claims: "Nostalgia is a window to the soul. It is the soul's memory or view of prior experience" (lecture, 1978). We might gently ask ourselves: where is that innocence and quality of being now?

Rose asks us:

What is this thing in us that causes us to turn to fables; to dream of eternity? Even if we know that we cannot escape our lechery and hypocrisy. Down deep inside ourselves we yearn for permanent peace, inviolable virginity, and love without lust or penalty (Rose, 1985, p. 35).

He elaborates on this greater meaning of nostalgia as spiritual yearning:

Nostalgia is or can be a hang-up. But it is also the homing instinct of the mundane mind...that draws it back to the Father. I maintain that nostalgia has something to tell us. We are programmed to indulge in life, but the haunting nostalgia is the subliminal message from another plane (personal correspondence, 1978).

In these comments, he is pointing to a feeling, almost a state-of-being, we all have touched during our truest moments; a remembrance that leads us back home: "When the person consciously

leans too far [from himself], something in the soul brings it back, and the only language that the soul can do it through is through a mood" (ibid, p. 49); "Through touching these moods, you touch an eternal something; this is the only door" (ibid, p. 50); "With the nostalgic mood, especially in dreams, comes the feeling that — this is it, this is mankind's voice of rectitude, this is the evenness, this is the even voice of man" (ibid, p. 52).

It can be better understood now how the development of direct-mind ability facilitates the reception and projection of such moods:

There is a factor which makes it possible for a two-way communication, or at least a better way of getting answers from intelligences so far unanswered across the thoughtless dimensions reached only by the accidental seeping of moods into our dreams or visions of mystics. This factor or implement is rapport (ibid, p. 43)

Keeping all this in mind, Rose brings up a dangerous aspect of our robotlike nature by pointing out that our states-of-mind vary during the course of sexual activity; the urge towards which is in turn largely prompted by moods. He has added a further disturbing note by claiming that many moods, especially those of a negative nature (lust, fear, hate, depression), are entity projections onto our minds. The meditator must not only know his own psychology well enough to discern the real meaning of the moods experienced and their resultant states-of-mind and actions, but also be wary enough of one's own subjective conditions to be able to determine when their source is really some external, adverse agency that is exploiting a vulnerability in one's psychological mechanism, and not a legitimate consequence of some life experience, however distorted it may be by ego.

Subliminal states-of-consciousness are perception-constructs of longer duration and greater intensity, and have the ability to dominate one's entire perspective or perception field. They are ubiquitous states of consciousness that are very strong and yet very elusive as regards to scrutiny or analysis. They are not states-of-mind, which are identified with ready self-observation and conviction. They are not consciously acquired nor willfully maintained. An individual will have several major, alternating states-of-mind, while having one primary subliminal state-of-consciousness as the larger, uniform context or container for all one's states-of-mind and moods. Much like a fish not being able to see water, it is almost impossible to study the subliminal states in which we exist and through which we view experience, except subjectively through intuitive awareness, once they are suspected to exist. This difficulty is due to their being so close to our mind's eye, consistent, and deeply melded into our presumed identity as a valid perceiver.

Nonetheless, it is important that they be objectively recognized and accounted for because they invariably have the ability to affect states-of-mind in a drastic manner. They are more dangerous in being blocks to finding our true self than the latter because of the subliminal states' being more difficult to apprehend and examine. In this regard, subliminal states-of-consciousness can be likened to the Gurdjieffian principle of Chief Feature in that they personify one's primary mode of being. This pervasive distortion serves to prevent one from seeing the truth about oneself or the larger truth about life that the individual does not want to admit, and for which the subliminal state-of-consciousness is some reflexive, defensive compensation.

Rose has referred to three major examples of such subliminal belief-states: love, rationality, and religiosity. Each of these is a "god," which all convictions serve and through which all experience is processed. All are essentially false and ego-based, even though originating from a genuine intuition. They can color one's entire life and define one's very identity, yet be a massive state of delusion and rationalization which may not be exposed until the moments preceding one's death — if

even then. To these three might also be added, to varying degrees: atheism/cynicism, vanity/pride, "Pollyanna"/hedonism, and grief/mourning. Along these lines, one's more deliberate philosophical assumptions and projections onto life also need to be acknowledged and then questioned for their accuracy, as such major gestalts not only affect the course of one's life but may determine whatever spiritual destiny one may have beyond this life. It could be said that our very identity as a person is ultimately found to be a subliminal state-of-consciousness as well. The final overlay on our vision to be removed is us!

These various forms and instances of coloration can be considered as egos, or are derived from egos. One of the purposes of meditation is to recognize all egos for what they are and free oneself from those not helpful to the search, while deliberately using, yet remaining disassociated from, the ones that still are. St. Paul's famous declaration: "I die daily," can be understood in this context to refer to the progressive relinquishment of the egos of self-importance and willful individuality, and the gradual giving up of oneself to the holistic becoming of Truth.

Rose echoed this sentiment when he referred to the necessary transition from dualistic, externalized mentation to the direct, intuitive insight that makes realization possible: "Somewhere in the being of man, there is an eye that must open. We open it by closing all other eyes, or egos" (Rose, 1978, p. 225). Every desire, every assumption, every identification, every hypnotic obsession is an ego that must die; an investment in the illusion that must end. As long as any other strident or beguiling voice takes precedence in our lives over the sole, quiet voice of Intuition, demanding our allegiance, we are not only trapped in Maya – we are Maya, as we are what we do and we do what we believe.

Rose has defined no-mind as that state (or more precisely: that non-state) which remains when all egos and their related mental patterns end. However, it is a troublesome fact of the path that the pseudo-self that we are is reluctant to die; thus all the varied techniques, strategies, and disciplines taught over the centuries to aid in bringing about the death of this congregation of false masks and filters with which we have otherwise helplessly identified.

The psychology of this letting go and *becoming* is complex and individual. No standardized formula can be provided. As Rose has mentioned, generally some severe shock or emotional crisis is necessary to change major states-of-mind. However, in the same way, sometimes a trauma can make one hold on even tighter. This "grasping" onto our concept of selfhood or ego is not always due to self-love or complacency, which is the most common cause cited in puzzlingly uncompassionate spiritual critiques of human nature. It can also be fear and the feeling of isolation in an increasingly empty and hostile world.

A more mature cause of the ego-self's reinforcement can be the growing awareness of and concern about the difference between how things appear to be and how one suspects they really ought to be. In other words, the development of a dense and tenacious ego can be due to a spiritually immature individual mind becoming aware of the evident absurdity, injustice, and pointlessness of life, as seen from the human level, and finding no trace of a wise and benevolent "God" to make everything all right. Such an ego then becomes a substitute for this God, who seems to be absent in the midst of the on-going trauma, needing to be the only resource of sense and meaning in a world apparently without either, and being the vector towards the possibility of attaining that comprehensive vantage point where all could be known. This insistent desire *to know* is one aspect of the larger philosophical koan itself – the "doubt sensation" – and can be the origin of possibly the only legitimate ego there is.

A further, significant, yet little recognized point should be made about the psychodynamics of reaction to trauma. When a person experiences severe life trauma and collapses into despair or

pathological ennui, this may be regarded as having had one's "spirit broken", which would indeed be something most difficult to mend. However, this is a misunderstanding which may take years to realize and correct. The lesson in trauma is to break the ego, not the spirit. Suffering is the truth calling us home the hard way. What actually happens is that one's self (which on some level, even if sub-consciously, is regarded as a spirit) has throughout one's life generally been entirely identified with the ego, and when this is crushed by circumstances and one feels personally destroyed, this is erroneously interpreted as one's having a broken spirit (meaning: self), thus leaving one in oblivion. Yet, the spirit cannot be broken. Sages promise that it is what waits beyond the death of that ego (if one's philosophical ego was sufficiently fattened up beforehand!). In the despair of personal loss, one is nonetheless identifying with a residual ego of egolessness that still exists (the one identifying also being an ego). When the reality of one's condition is recognized, one is freed from the illusion of ever having been a doer, one who is subject to loss or gain, and can then become one with the more expansive truth of life circumstances as they unfold. Those who commit suicide sadly do not realize this in time.

Regardless of these egos' specific nature or cause, Advaita attempts to disassociate the real Self from one's ego-self by backing away from it in mental observation and rejecting all that is seen as "not me." Zen attempts to accomplish the same by blasting away, outwitting, or exhausting all egos to where only the aware Self remains. The Albigen System blends together both approaches, applying them as is appropriate in "running between the raindrops" of paradox. It could be said that Advaita is Zen taken to its extreme in betweenness.

There is a partial parallel here with the old fable about the battle between the cold, fierce wind and the warm, gentle sun to see which could succeed in getting the coat (ego-self) off the traveler (seeker) on the road first. The sun won because the wind made the man cling to his coat more tightly, whereas the sun warmed him up so that he took his coat off. A hurricane may have also torn his coat off, but killed the man in the process (too severe a psychological trauma can cripple a seeker in making further progress, e.g. destroying the ego-mind through drug use, ritual magic, or masochistic cultism). Too much adversity can also counterproductively thicken one's ego armor or cause one to sink into inertia, still as an ego, but one that is overwhelmed. Of course, too much "sun" alone — meaning: teachings and practices that excessively soothe, placate, or flatter the seeker — can likewise reinforce one's ego-state, as one would wish to continue luxuriating in this influence of nurturance, joy, affirmation, etc., instead of feeling safe enough to stand naked before the unknown. To risk overburdening a metaphor once again, Rose might add the suggestion that the traveler exercise some betweenness in finding that part of the self that stands apart from storm (whether harsh confrontation or willful negation) and sun (innocent devotion or passive mindfulness) both, and watches all of one's changing dynamics impartially.

Although this principle of needing to divest oneself of egos is encountered in most esoteric teachings, Rose adds to this an important qualification that has seldom if ever been addressed elsewhere. He states that it is foolish, and even dangerous, to read in a book about the falseness of egos and then proceed to abandon all of one's egos at once (even if it was possible to do so), with the assumption that instant salvation awaits for the now psychically naked seeker. He advises instead the progressive relinquishment of egos; the more obviously absurd or harmful egos first, then gradually the more subtle and non-essential, until finally, the one letting go of the egos is seen to be an ego too, and it dissolves into the nothingness in which it floats, as this nameless seer of it is now more real. We would start by recognizing and eliminating egos of laziness, weakness, lust, gullibility, corruption, resistance, conceit, etc., but retain the ego of believing oneself to be a viable doer who will continue to fight to become whole and insist on maintaining some measure of relative sanity — until

discovering otherwise. This ego of "I am a seeker" is the only vehicle back to our source that we have. To abandon it prematurely, in the imagination that one's "being" has already arrived or that any exercise of "will" is a sin, would be a dangerous mistake.

For example, it would be detrimental to immediately give up the egos of pride and health as their being excess baggage or superfluous to the "Self," as one may then allow one's self-respect to be degraded by various compromises and one's well-being to be jeopardized by a lack of discipline and propriety. This would then not be conducive to further spiritual development, but rather would be suicidal.

This is one of the differences between the appreciation of Zen in Rose's teaching and what could be a shallow understanding of Advaita. He says we cannot give up all egos at once and immediately realize we are the Absolute, however desirable this may sound from one's reading the esoteric books. Even the desire to be egoless and desireless is an ego of desire, which cannot finally answer itself. Yet, recognizing this impossibility should not be used as justification for not doing everything possible to reduce ourselves enough to fit through the eye of the needle. The shift in point-of-reference from the human being to Spiritual Awareness is gradual (in one sense: Rose says we return back into the Absolute, but at the same time find we were back there all along), and it is futile to pretend in imagination what one is not in realization. He recommends the more realistic and safer path of ridding oneself of all extraneous encumbrances and refining the sense of self down to the point where finally one is nothing more than a pure, conscious question mark, inquiring into one's source — and being aware of this process occurring. He claims we cannot give up that last remaining ego of being a seeker who follows the dotted line and wants to find some spiritual answer. He promises, however, that at the end of one's path: "**The final ego will be taken from you**" (Rose, 1981, p. 16) (re: Christ's saying on the Cross: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.") We are not alone or autonomous in the search. Reality knows and reclaims us, when it is time.

In keeping with the procedure of backing away from untruth, it cannot be overstressed that one must recognize and reject all false, or lesser, forms of mental seeking; to resist feeding the spiritual hunger with junk food. Seeing the various ways in which we may be inclined to fool ourselves, be diverted, or take the easy way out, helps us to back into a truer quality of mind.

As has been discussed, in aiming for the desired state of conscious freedom from all forms of projected thought, which is intuited to be the doorway to Awakening, Rose does not advise the methods often recommended in other teachings that suppress thoughts through will-power, substitute for them with some thought of spiritual inspiration or symbology, erase thoughts through use of prolonged, repetitive chanting or mantras, artificially create a state-of-mind which contains one pervasive thought of no-thought, or slip one into a fetal, hypnotic stupor that simulates no-mind with semi-conscious thoughtlessness, yet no anterior awareness (Rose, 1978, p. 215-7).

Techniques in other teachings that aim at soothing body turbulence, quieting the mind, controlling errant thoughts, developing one's power of concentration, and surrendering oneself in devotional contemplation are all useful and not being discounted — so long as they are done sincerely, and not merely as excuses for avoiding the work of self-confrontation. However, Rose, and the other teachers of his kind, consider these to be preliminary techniques or supportive aspects of meditation that, at best, prepare one for what is regarded as the real work toward attaining self-knowledge and direct realization of Essence. Observation is the key tool throughout this work.

It is worth describing these distinctions more specifically to prevent misunderstandings; ones with serious consequences. Rose delineates critical differences between the goal of no-mind and other meditative states that may be mistaken for it from a lower vantage point in consciousness. He notes a difference between: 1) a thought within the mundane mind of nothing or no-thought, 2) the

awake mundane mind that is empty of thoughts (attained through zazen and Vipassana meditation), and 3) genuine no-mind, in which the individual, relative mind itself ceases, and only the Unmanifested Mind as an impersonal dimension behind all projected experience and perception remains. Using Rose's analogy of the human mind's actually functioning like a radio, Number Two can be likened to a radio that is turned on, but neither receiving nor broadcasting any signals. Number One is a radio that is broadcasting the sound of silence. Number Three is a radio that is turned off. The Buddha's instruction "to think of nothing" does not mean its literal interpretation as Number One, but rather the state of Number Two, which then makes Number Three possible. To indulge in some pretentious concept-juggling for a moment for the purpose of better understanding Rose's metaphysical schema, the experience called Cosmic Consciousness might occur somewhere in-between categories Two and Three: it is a state outside the personal ego-mind (although with its reference point remaining an individual experiencer), but still within the Universal mind. The final witness of even Cosmic Consciousness is from Number Three.

The metaphor of the thinking mind as the text in a word processor can help to illustrate these distinctions more clearly. It must be understood that there is a critical difference between an empty space and a space with nothing in it. Pressing the cursor key moves the cursor over by one unit, but this unit does not have a content. It is an empty space (analogous to Number Three above). Pressing the space bar also moves the cursor over by one unit, but this space contains something: nothing (Number Two). Typing in the word "zero" would be equivalent to Number One. (And let us not forget to wonder: who is watching the screen all the while?)

Some measure of concentration and thought-control is indeed necessary to guide one's inquiry through the mental maze, and to avoid distraction, possession, or forgetting. While deliberately preoccupying the ego-mind with some form of ritualized meaninglessness can be a good strategy for freeing a deeper part of one's being to come into play, there can be the danger of one's continuing to identify with the theatrics of this regimented mind and not awakening to that which is watching this game; the realization of which is its intent. The more extreme tactic of willfully suppressing thought to achieve thoughtlessness does not ultimately work either (although the conditional quiet temporarily won can be of some value in enabling further introspection with mental clarity) because the one who is suppressing all thoughts is itself only a thought-gestalt, and not a real spiritual being. It too must end, but cannot directly end itself. It is ended when it exhausts itself and is seen for what it really is, *by something else*. Rose's Psychology of the Observer is the blending together of Zen's mental work on the koan within duality and Advaita's retreating into the formless awareness of this mind.

All these points are meant to stress one key principle about meditation that must be understood in order for one to ever attain the true goal: there is a major, qualitative difference between the somatic, individual, mundane mind (which is consciousness), and the spiritual Mind-dimension (awareness). The two terms are often used interchangeably in psychology textbooks (those that are at all aware of awareness as a subjective experience, regardless of how its nature is conceived), and even in many metaphysical texts. Rose has stated that the pursuit of "higher consciousness" is a common misunderstanding of what spirituality actually involves, although acknowledges that to a large extent such work is a requisite aspect of attaining that transcendental awareness of consciousness. This is because although awareness is equally apart from the true in consciousness as well as the false (as all of consciousness is in a sense one dimension or plane), and in principle one can become aware from any point along the spectrum of consciousness, realistically the shift in point-of-reference is harder to make the more one is immersed in a corrupted mental state. The seeker must give the witch's broomstick to the Wizard before being allowed to go home.

As the references to Advaita Vedanta have also stated, the real work is not strictly that of progressing through higher and higher realms of consciousness (as Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, and other occult/metaphysical teachings imply) to some ultimate Enlightenment as the final stage of one's glory. Rose's teaching is that **Truth is at a right angle to all states and levels of consciousness**. It is equidistant from them all, as it is forever apart from all consciousness. Reality is a different dimension altogether. It has no qualities, measure, or location. He explains why this common misconception about the desirability of attaining higher knowledge is incomplete: "First, there is no knowledge. Second, when you are everything, there is nowhere to go; there is no expansion. This is a misnomer. The theory of mind-expansion is valid up to this point – of final death or realization" (Rose, 1985, p. 57-58).

Yet, the paradox in this, as has been described in a previous section, is that one must become the truth first before being able to finally realize oneself as that Mind or Self beyond all categories of minds and selves, and this involves purifying one's "personal" quality of consciousness of all egos, false beliefs, identifications, projections, compensations, etc., etc. This cannot be bypassed. One must clarify and correct one's state of false consciousness – which is one's self until found to be otherwise – and sever one's deluded entanglements within it. This frees one from the barriers to hearing the higher Intuition and developing direct-mind ability, thereby enabling the seeker to retreat back from one's absorption into the picture-show and finally re-enter it – and the seeker's – source.

Again, there is another paradox within this paradox: Who is doing the clarifying? Whose consciousness is being clarified? The answer is that when the small "s" self stops believing in itself and relinquishes its authority, in awareness, the inquiry/purification "does" itself.

The "common denominator" throughout this entire system of introspection, in all its aspects, is **observation**. One observes the observer; this then providing further material for meditation. Establishing this form and direction of inquiry is crucial and is too often overlooked in meditational practices that aim directly at achieving Godhood; hence the reason for its belabored emphasis throughout this report. We cannot hope to reliably define life, the universe, or "God," before first even knowing how and from where we see, how we judge – and who is doing this seeing and judging.

We do not normally stop to note that our perceptions, sensations, thoughts, states-of-consciousness, etc. are being experienced by some self or mind anterior to the experience. We can more readily note the distinction between the seen and the seer when some change occurs on the plane of what is seen. We then become aware of the change as being something apart from the seeing "I," rather than our being identified with the experience throughout its course of change. For example, we can learn to watch our quality of mind alter when intoxicated, ill, hypnotized, in some powerful mood, etc., and see its fluctuations and distortions from a more valid state-of-mind at a vantage point separate from it. Some claim to be able to see the inner components of their own eyes. Yet – with what are they seeing? If we are quick and alert, we can see the change in vision-content during the moment while our eyes shift their focus from distant to nearby. *What sees our seeing?* We can also become aware of the transition from a dream to waking consciousness as a succession of states-of-consciousness before the view of a neutral mental viewer. This higher aspect of the Albigen System of meditation recommends the detached, impersonal observation of all mental processes without resisting nor rearranging them. The more one identifies with the mundane ego-mind, the more it needs to out-wrestle itself to become "right." The more one resides in a compassionate awareness, the more readily the innate truth of the psyche will manifest itself without fear or effort. Self-observation consists not only of watching specific acts, thoughts, emotional responses, memories, etc., but also general states-of-mind, associative patterns, motives, convictions, projections, and colorations of mood. One must become aware of all voices, egos, and false selves, as well as the conflic-

tive dichotomies between these centers of identity in the mind. Then, beyond these specifics in content, one studies the pure mechanics of the mind and the nature of consciousness itself. One becomes aware of watching one's mind, which reflects one's world while continually recreating it.

This complexity of material is gradually seen to be a stream of interconnected thoughts passing before the mind's eye. Thinking is discovered to be reflexively associative, like elephants in a parade holding each other's tails in their trunks. It is separate from the observer of this material; this observer gradually being found to be a more real self than was the bundle of tangled, projected experience with which the self had chronically identified. As Jean Klein puts it, the aware "I" is the hinge on which the door of experience swings.

It is taught that the consistent, impartial seeing of all this mental activity, without one's meddling in it, eventually leads to the slowing down of this manufacture of excessive thoughts and diminution of obsessive emotionality, and one's mental functioning returns to its natural, non-ego-regulated condition. However, it must be understood that this clear, non-judgmental seeing of one's psychological experience does not automatically condone every mental pattern or physical activity witnessed as being intrinsically correct merely because it exists, as a shallow, dishonest interpretation of such mindfulness meditation might try to rationalize. The flaw in one's psyche that reinforces the pathology or delusion in question is a parasitical ego that needs to be revealed and then purged from the system, like a cancer. Actually, such naked seeing allows one to better recognize the errors in one's thinking, perceiving, desiring, evaluating, and responding to life, without the defensive, ego-motivated self-justification that usually sets in reflexively and thwarts any effort at honest self-correction. Even this sly tendency towards corruption or resistance can be seen. Such self-reflection brings one into closer alignment with the truth of one's natural, intended condition.

Self-observation has some important implications for therapeutic work, whether on oneself or with others. Erroneous self-definition, with its concomitant peculiarities and pathologies, is the primary nature of all mental troubles. We identify with the experience of a false, ignorant, divided self. Objective observation is what severs that ego-identification and allows a person to become truthful, without bias. Recognizing a state-of-mind breaks its exclusive hold over the self and enables one to become free of it.

This is one of the big keys in transformation: when you see it, you change. The nature of psychological work is not that of adjusting or improving certain qualities in one's personality according to what one imagines to be better or more expedient in getting what one wants. As in philosophical work, the process is that of retreating from error and becoming what is more essential or real. As Rose explains: "You do not change—you drop", adding: "The ability or method of exposing, and changing by exposing, is the means of genuine, true psychological teaching" (Rose, 1979c, p. 38).

This practice of watching the mind has a good, illustrative parallel in the process of fasting from food when the body is sick. When one stops feeding the body (projecting thought) and does not give it any extraneous medications (false beliefs), but provides it only clean water (observation), the body purges itself of all toxicity (maya) and gradually returns to its natural, healthy, unpolluted state. The mind functions likewise. Awareness is to the mind what water is to the body.

Again, regarding therapy, Rose has offered some helpful advice about how to deal with suffering, whether its cause be mundane or spiritual. When a person experiences some hardship, injustice, offense, or violation, one must strive to see the whole situation with all its interrelated factors as one picture, and not identify with the individual self's pain or disadvantage (which is what is interpreted by the ego as suffering) within it. This is how the child experiences experience, before a distinct ego-self develops that reacts to life and attempts to influence life, as if it was separate from it.

For example, if one has been abused by one's parents, it helps one's healing to not divide the experience strictly into "them" against "me," but to also see how the parents' nature was the consequence of the numerous factors in life and family that largely created them, and they may not have been able to manifest the truth any better than they did. This does not lessen their crime nor end one's pain. However, ending the projection of a discrete, willful "doer" and unfairly injured "recipient" onto certain clusters of factors within the experience, identified as people, does lessen the imagined gap between victim and perpetrator — when all actors are seen as interconnected pawns of ignorance and mechanicalness on one shared stage. As one fellow queried: "Is life better understood by looking at it more closely, or stepping back further from it?" (Brilliant, Potshots). He later noted: "Distance doesn't make you any smaller, but it does make you part of a larger picture."

This is all another way of defining the inner workings of "forgiveness." Forgiveness means more than its simplistic connotation of: "That's alright — you are pardoned". It means that when the larger truth of a living drama in which human beings are acting out their respective roles is seen and the real nature and dynamics of the complex issues involved is understood, the conviction of individual responsibility and thus blame is ended, the reaction of personal violation is dispelled, and the whole pattern is free to work itself out according to its inner needs in homeostatic self-correction. "That's alright" actually means accepting the situation. "You are pardoned" means not taking it personally. Seeing the truth — whether about other's sins or one's own — and surrendering to its demands is the forgiveness. Honest meditation brings about this perspective.

In cases of less serious trauma, and especially when one's troubles are due to one's own foolishness or immaturity, Rose encourages Zen's emphasis upon humor as a way of distancing oneself from one's condition and seeing the values in collision causing the problem more objectively without the identification, thus undermining its formidability. He has said that self-observation leads to freedom from suffering when one can laugh at the self's predicament.

He has also provided some more pointed insights about that bleak stretch of the path called "The Dark Night of the Soul." In the Albigen System and related teachings, there is no concept of a loving, parental Deity to soothe one's troubled soul, or to help compensate for mundane hardship with some positive spiritual advantage. "The Void loves you" is not a comforting nor realistic image to contemplate. Rose sums up much of the teaching about meditation and change-of-being in this key statement: "Regarding despair: you do not look for comfort, but for the reason for being uncomfortable (and resolve it there). Face despair...it is the next lesson" (personal correspondence, 1977). This recalls a revealing line from his poem, *The Way*: "Only those with faith will find despair; and those who despair may come closer to Truth" (Rose, 1975, p. 67). It is the ego-self that experiences faith and despair, and longs for comfort. The purpose of spiritual work is not to comfort the ego, but to expose its very nature, which is suffering, and negate it. What we really long for can only be found on the other side of that negation, not in further affirming the validity of the source of the problem. Rose's is a hard teaching.

He has elaborated further on this whole theme of observation. I had asked him what one should do when reaching a state of no convictions, of conscious ignorance, of being "poor in spirit," and feeling that the experience of being blessed by a loving God, as many religious people believe they are, is out of the question. I wondered if this was a valid state. Rose replied: "All states-of-mind will go...even the empty one...*by continued looking behind...by constantly watching and observing*" (personal correspondence, 1977). This is critical advice. He is saying that even the state of no-conviction is a conviction-state too, maintained in the mind of a person who is himself nothing more than a conviction-state. No state-of-mind — whether despairing or joyous — is ultimately real, and whatever

psychological condition in which one finds oneself, the key thing to remember is to keep watching it and backing away from it. No state is valid – only the seer of all states is.

Several comments about dualistic mentation versus direct-mind perception have already been made. Rose gives another important instance of this distinction. In the Albigen meditation, one must take care not to dichotomize oneself by picturing one's body in action, but rather should study the reasons for the actions, the thoughts and feelings that generated the actions, and the anatomy and source of these thoughts. In a broader sense, to dichotomize means to mistakenly submerge oneself as the observer into one finite, relative vantage point within the scene being examined, in opposition to other aspects of the scene, as the subject facing an object, rather than to be the observer of one's whole subjective scene at once, paradoxically from all angles within the experience, yet from outside of it.

This issue ties in with an important principle discussed several times previously. The reason why we should not conjure up a vision of ourselves in this self-study and watch that image is because this would then only be another form of visualization, and not the direct viewing of our inner experience. We must be careful not to fall into this trap of watching a visualization of ourselves and then believing we are watching the whole process – that of watching ourselves watching ourselves, ad infinitum. We must see this dichotomization itself occurring and see that this process is not real, but is a mental fabrication.

Here we reach a significant point: "Once we have run the gamut of this multiple splitting...we will become aware of awareness. We will then have placed our finger on consciousness [in this usage meaning: awareness, not changeable mind-stuff], and distinguished it from sensation and perception" (Rose, 1981, p. 20). A further consideration is that in looking into the motivations animating our actions and reactions, we must also be careful not to re-identify with the emotions involved, but to view the emotions themselves with dispassion, as a thing apart. He adds: "This dichotomy (of watching oneself clinically, not with personal involvement) is only to the re-run and is not really a dichotomy, but the looking at memories while unaffected by egos or emotions" (ibid, p. 21).

Likewise, one should not intellectualize one's thinking processes or wonder about the fruits of one's complex, pattern thinking, but rather view this phenomena directly, and think directly (Rose, 1981, p. 6-11). This observation must take place in the ever-present moment and not become crystalized into a trance-state. The viewing should be like that of a motion picture of a still scene, as versus a photograph of it. This quality of pure, detached observation, without one's getting caught up in what is observed, takes great discipline, mindfulness, and discernment.

One's desire to be whole is the railroad track leading through this convoluted process of inversion back into the Self, and the commitment to serve the truth is what protects one from the forces of adversity that would hinder one's journey.

Rose explains the intended focus of this phase of meditation:

The most important thing to ask oneself about thought is the source and direction of thought. Thought is not something that is born, and which later terminates within the individual mind alone. There are two directions of thought, and both are projections. Thoughts are projected into our minds by others, or other entities, and we are capable of projecting thoughts into the minds of others. Every thought is a projection (Rose, 1979c, p. 64-65).

One implication of this statement is that what is even more important than using thought in philosophical contemplation or meditative disciplines (and all mental practices, however ethereal or

mystical their nature, are forms of thought), is to recognize all patterns in consciousness as being a stream of activity separate from the viewer, and to attempt to discover their origin and relationship to oneself as this viewer.

This study of personal psychology thus consists of fixing the attention upon thoughts, reactions to thoughts, and reactions to experience. As the basic elements of thinking — a percept and then the reaction — are found to be mechanical, Rose recommends a second level of meditation concurrently with this self-study: the direct observation of the interplay of these pure thought-forms and their sources, and noting the arbiter of them. In other words: who is the experiencer of one's experience? Who is the "I" that one refers to when saying, "I am"? One cannot be this lifeless, mental machine being seen. This level of work will be described more in the next section.

The principle of duality has been discussed several times thus far in a large, philosophical sense. The form of self-study described here also allows one to recognize the experience of dualism in one's own psychological processing of life — as versus direct experience without the reactive interpretation and projection — and to reconcile it. A good metaphor for the start of duality or mental division in our early life experience is that of a cassette tape that jams as the flow of tape gets stuck at some point on the rolling wheel, and then doubles up from that point on. One must follow the tape back to its initial point of stuckness and free it. Once the flow continues, there is only oneness of experience and no trace of there ever having been anything else (i.e. sin, suffering, separation, knowledge of good and evil). This reconciliation of one's psychic splitting off, whether it resulted from a specific trauma which could not be fully processed and assimilated at the time it occurred or simply due to the birth of the ego (within the individual mind, which is itself a more diffuse form of ego) in childhood, as previously explained, will be seen to directly relate to the ascendance of the observer up Jacob's Ladder.

Meditation can then be described as having two simultaneous phases or dimensions to it: first, to define oneself properly as an individual human being by correcting the errors contaminating the ego-mind, and second, to back away from that self — and into the Observer. He explains this another way: "This is a system of meditation that is like holding a mirror up to the mind, which leads to a state of being in which there seems to be no mind or mirror, no separateness and no comparison" (Rose, 1979c, p. 61).

It is also claimed, by those who have followed this practice out to the end, that as one's attention becomes drawn back into its root of inception, outside of or behind the human, relative mind that has been witnessed, this relentless self-observation results in the mind's actually stopping at some critical point of climax, and one experiences no-mind — the experience of nothingness.

Rose notes that one phenomena discovered during the course of this meditation is that self-consciousness occurs from the perception of one's individualized memory. One actually becomes *aware of awareness*, alongside or outside of all the thoughts, memories, visualizations, etc. that are witnessed in this process observation. It takes an abundance of somatic thinking and an accumulation of an abundance of energy to propel us back over the reverse vector. The more intense this application of energy is to the observation of thinking processes, and to this study of percepts and the reactions to them (meaning: thoughts), the more one will come back to the true relation (or apparent non-relation) of the whole thought processes to the central awareness, or the original, pure unmanifested Mind behind all of this mental activity (Rose, 1981, p. 19-27). This awareness is ultimate attention, and is the real state that most other meditation techniques can, at best, only simulate.

The subject of meditation is quite complex; the Albigen approach recommended by Rose especially so, with its encompassing of psychology, philosophy, phenomenology, the transmutation of

energy, and the transcendence of the mind through observation all in one system. A report of this size can only offer a general overview of the main principles involved. For the purpose of comprehension, following is a summary of this system's major aspects, as discussed thus far.

First, the basic steps in preparation for meditation:

- (1) Find a place that will allow you to be quiet (in a larger sense: getting your house in order).
- (2) Reduce body-turbulence (including: proper diet, exercise, sobriety, etc. for a body that is free of disease; curb appetites; and do preliminary meditation techniques – watching the breath, using a mantra perhaps, or whatever helps – to get calm and centered).
- (3) Do not fight Nature, but take a holiday from the whole Nature-game (artfully deferring sex and its consequences).
- (4) Provide synthetic irritation to keep the mind working (meaning, everything that has been discussed about self-confrontation regarding personal and philosophical issues).
- (5) Be aware of all obstacles and Laws (avoiding adversity and implementing principles of expediency).

Once the body has been brought under control and its influences upon mental functioning been taken into account, the actual work of studying the mind can begin. There are several phases to this level of meditation:

- (1) The first step in controlling the thoughts is to realize that our thoughts happen of their own causation; one thought paving the way for the next, and that causing the next.
- (2) The second step is to establish an objective which we wish to insert into this seemingly unbreakable chain of thought-caused thoughts; in this case: the scrutiny of the self.
- (3) The third step is to avoid trying to view the self directly and objectively until the mind is placed under some control.
- (4) The fourth step begins the work of controlling the thoughts – although indirectly, not directly, by blocking out unwanted thoughts and turning the mind towards one's desired concerns.

Some points of elaboration are required. For one, we should use this blocking-out technique *only after we have vocally or manifestly made our commitment, which was the second step*, otherwise we could be left stranded and rudderless on a dark sea.

Something happens after this routine of artfully deflecting tangential thoughts is practiced for some time. We begin to notice a motion within the head of a "mental head" that literally turns away from a view. When you are able to turn this internal head, whenever you wish, without any inability to continue thinking, you are halfway home.

However, a peculiar thing can occur after awhile. The mind will seemingly lose interest in looking for the source of thoughts, despite the initial conviction of urgency one may feel about the quest. We may witness for the first time the phenomenon of a mental weariness which is not an emanation or reflection of physical weariness. Why does this happen? Rose can only guess that the computer is not programmed to take abstractions seriously. Especially at the stage of reversing one's vector from projected thought ("going within"), the inverting of consciousness devoid of content can result in a form of mental oblivion if the aware being that would contain this emptiness has not been readied beforehand to sufficient presence, and this vacuum in consciousness implodes into itself, taking the unstable viewer along with it. Regardless, we cannot force ourselves to think about thinking or not-thinking, if the mind momentarily wishes to think of weariness. We will believe that it is

weary and may never know *the real nature of that mental weariness*. One must then either somehow wake up outside one's state of pseudo-sleep and dispel it or mechanically convince the mind to again become interested in some form of introspective research that will lead back to the study of the self.

Other than these four steps, there are no further steps, beyond reminding the self of the urgency of the study, setting up of ways and means to renew the interest of the mind, and exercising the imagination to find new avenues to approach the study. (The simplicity of this list of steps should not mislead the seeker: the fourth step contains a vast territory yet to be covered.) From the fourth step, all depends upon the increase of inspiration by the fruits of our labor into introspection. (preceding outline and comments condensed from: Rose, 1979c, p. 87-90).

Meditation can thus be described simply as watching oneself perceiving, interpreting, and experiencing life, as well as defining the source, direction, and nature of thought, and its relation to awareness – until realization occurs through one's entering the source of this awareness.

A few additional comments should be made to clarify how the Albigen system of meditation relates to other forms of meditation. A crucial distinction has been made between consciousness and awareness; consciousness being relative, changeable, illusory mind-stuff and awareness being forever pristine, contentless, and prior to this projected mind-dimension. Some forms of meditation attempt to modify or alter consciousness through the use of various techniques and practices, with the intention of eventually purifying and perfecting the mind's processes to where it attains the highest state of consciousness in manifestation (Cosmic Consciousness). Others aspire to one non-relative step beyond this to where one becomes or makes some final transition over to the aware, unmanifesting Self (Enlightenment). Such methods of facilitating this shift can run into a problem if instead of purifying consciousness, one is actually creating a subjective condition that consists of a pleasant trance-state or some appealing paradigm within consciousness, and then identifying with it, thereby making one reluctant to leave this psychic pacifier behind in exchange for the naked Reality one does not yet know.

A difficulty born of paradox is encountered during the process of introspection advised by Advaita, Vipassana, and Roy Masters. The transition intended in this discipline is for one to shift from being the watcher of a busy, troubled, and deluded mind to that of a gradually quieting, saner mind, as the clear, impersonal watching of this mind purges it of ego-generated distortions. All the while, no deliberate efforts are being made to change any aspect of one's mental functioning. The hindrance to this practice is that the ability to attain this lofty position of detached self-observation is limited by the extent to which one is tied to a mind that works improperly. Some method of managing the mind needs to be employed while being engaged in the work of escaping it.

The Albigen System attempts to work both ends of this "channel" at once by using the mind to resolve its own imperfections, thus allowing one's inner vision to become clearer, while concurrently, the highest part of the mind dispassionately observes this complex process occurring before its vision. At the same time, this awareness is what helps this correction and purification to take place, as one becomes free of the mind's self-perpetuating state of confusion. The energy involved in this dual process of work on the self and the refinement of observation is one's "vector"; the objective of which is to generate enough momentum to escape the cohesive gravity of the mundane mind. This observer is itself still a part of the mind (the highest part) – however, it is the doorway to the spiritual Self waiting beyond this mind.

This understanding of meditation also answers the objection of the overly strict interpretation of Advaita that accuses all mental/psychological systems of work of fostering the illusion that there is a "progressive" way possible of attaining a non-relative state, whereas Advaita is put forth as a direct, non-dualistic route to such Absolute realization. Rose teaches that while in one sense this is

true, this latter approach is also progressive in the experiential sense in that the aware Self cannot be fully realized the first moment one grasps its significance conceptually, as the identification with the small "s" self does not disintegrate instantly on command. The quality of this observation must also be refined progressively, as does the verity of the human mind it is witnessing, even though the final "leap" from here to Here is instantaneous and outside all relativity. This massive effort at self-definition is what enables the shift to be made and prepares one to "appreciate" Reality. This understanding also offers a simple explanation of the relationship between the more feminine path of surrender and devotion (self-definition through function) and the more masculine path of observation and discernment (self-definition through comprehension). Both recognize the ego-self as being the obstacle to be eliminated. Pedagogically, the former could be said to be dissolving it from *inside* experience, while the latter dissolves it from *outside* experience. In Rose's teaching, "becoming the truth" is the joining together of both means in non-duality. This is the working through of the channel from both ends at once.

Although he does not specifically address this issue, one may well reasonably surmise that there is also a "heart ray" that can be retroversed, the same as the "mind ray," which is the work emphasized in this system. Yet, the real Self may touch us there just as well. The Heart and Mind are divided and in frequent opposition only on our human level. In Reality, and its reflection in the whole person, there is no division.

In summation, Rose describes the Albigen System of meditation as consisting of five basic levels; the discussion in this report only briefly describing some aspects of each:

- (1) Remembering incidents of traumatic or reactive nature.
- (2) Finding the final self among the many selves of voices.
- (3) Analyzation of thought-processes.
- (4) Going within. Employ whatever means necessary.
- (5) Transmission. (Rose, 1981, p. 30).

Throughout the teaching, Rose stresses the paradox that one must make tremendous efforts to rouse oneself from sleep in order to attain the state beyond care, where the futility of all effort is realized. He offers a vivid metaphor to describe this course of meditation:

This equation of applied energy producing an understanding of a state of no-energy is similar to a fish swimming upstream. We must gather up such a ball of energy that it matches the force of the production of illusory projection. We swim upstream through the swift places [betweenness] until we find an immense pool that is tranquil. And when we reach that, all of our balled up energy breaks forth and even the somatic emotions release their energy when it is apparent that all effort and energy are no longer needed. Such is Satori (Rose, 1981, p. 29).