

Chapter 5

Mental Perspectives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He elaborates on his role and objective as a teacher:

I realize I (often communicate) in a very critical manner. I am or have the appearance of being a very destructive or negative critic of many human habits, beliefs, and disciplines. (Yet), if I am supportive of collective pretenses, then I damn the (seeker) and deny him the chance to reshuffle his programmed conditioning. I believe my message must be as direct as possible, because my desired audience is one that through intuition will pick up the whole picture more quickly if he or she is not teased into changing direction by volumes of argument as to the illogical aspects of logic by popular acceptance. We have no time to change the world, in order to get the message across to a person of intuition. (Rose, 1985, p. 262-263).

He adds:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rose explains the decision point this way:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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