

## Chapter 10

# The Observer

As can be seen throughout this paper, starting with the very title, observation is the central theme and guiding track in the entire Albigen System. The essential question to ask oneself is: “Who sees through my eye (‘I’)?” Rose reworks this question to be: “Is man that which he sees, or just the ‘Eye’?” (Rose, 1982, p. 37).

There are many practical implications to these questions. One interesting realization our meditation will reveal early on is that personality – what is considered the self by mainstream psychology – is actually a projected creation and not a fundamental state of being. We project qualities and attitudes into our social world that we want others to believe we have or are. Our personalities are in turn also projected onto us by genetics, family, peers, culture, and other environmental influences. Furthermore, we project personalities onto other people and conceive of these clusters of characteristics as constituting a distinct person with a recognizable “face”, rather than seeing plainly what is in front of us without the overlay of singular identity. We tend to anthropomorphize people.

An exaggerated analogy is how ancient sky-gazers had gotten into the bizarre practice of arbitrarily designating amorphous groupings of stars as “constellations”, when in fact there is no such thing, but only a sky full of randomly positioned, anonymous stars. Is a personality much more than this?

Nonetheless, what is most important to know in regards to one’s own personality is that we can realize we are watching it act out its role in life and experience its joys, sorrows, and changes. The “self” we had assumed we were and were told we must be is now in front of our inner vision. *It cannot be us.*

In the earlier phases of this meditation, one need not always specifically focus on some philosophical question or religious symbol. One can just examine what is occurring in one’s consciousness at the time and look more deeply into its nature. As long as we exercise enough gentle control to keep the central issue of self-definition as our intended priority and turn away from tangential daydreams, pertinent material will come before the inquiring mind by itself. Then, Rose advises: “We must likewise observe our thoughts and ask ourselves, ‘Why did I think that?’, or ‘Where did this thought originate?’, or ‘What is thought?’” This is now starting to delve into the real topics of meditation, according to the Albigen System.

The experience of thinking (which includes thinking about feeling, sensation, and all subjective experience) is studied as an object in awareness apart from that awareness. We are looking for the origin of the human being. Rose claims the human being is really nothing but an elaborate, crystallized thought-form that identifies itself as a distinct being; this belief-conviction of selfhood at one's core also being a thought. We assume we are someone. This is a hard habit to break. The way to undo this narcissistic thought-entity and arrive at the source of true selfhood is to thoroughly understand the anatomy of the mental constructs and processes comprising this "person" and trace their origins back to where they began; all the while purifying and strengthening the observer-awareness monitoring this self-study. When the nature of the birth, continual rebirth and concurrent death of this human being is witnessed, one is in for a startling surprise.

One way to measure spiritual maturity is in one's definition of "freedom." These preliminary points already suggest an entirely different meaning of the term than is its usual connotation to those who aim for it as the highest goal in life. Freedom seems to imply one's having unlimited choice of conduct and the opportunity to acquire all the objects and experiences of one's desires, with no restrictions by capability or circumstances. Once the mechanical nature of the mind and life-experience itself is fully acknowledged, including the ephemeral status of the ego-self, it is seen that real "freedom" means to be free from delusion within the dream-projection of life, and free from identification with the dream-projection; not really the freedom to do the things one "wants" (meaning: is made) to do.

Rose makes an important claim, to be used for further reference: "You are aware prior to birth and aware after you die: so you begin with awareness, but you are not conscious of awareness" (Rose, 1982, p. 144). (It must be noted here that Rose is for some unknown reason mixing up the terms "conscious" and "awareness" from his usual deliberate meanings for them. He generally refers to consciousness as being either a function of the somatic mind or content from some other source within the relative mind-dimension. He refers to awareness as being separate from and anterior to consciousness; awareness being of the spiritual Self and not subject to influence from the relative or mundane mind. To be consistent with the meanings in the rest of his teaching, perhaps the end of this above quote should more precisely read: "but this awareness does not realize itself", or possibly the more cumbersome: "but the real 'you' becomes misidentified with the creature that was born and will die, and does not intuit really being the awareness of the consciousness of this creature.")

The significance of this difference can be readily experienced within daily life as well. There are frequent periods of time when we forget ourselves and are totally immersed in some activity, emotional state, a social role we play, and so on. During those moments, we do not see ourselves; we do not see our experience; we do not see our inner processing of and reacting to our experience. We only know what is actually in front of us at that moment, within the viewing range allowed by our mental "blindness". Yet, we can recall our psychological state later on and become aware of aspects of our experience that were occurring in consciousness at that time, but were not recognized or acknowledged by us then. The key question is: what is it that *sees* these periods of forgetfulness in retrospect? What is awake while we are functionally asleep? *The awareness of consciousness* is always present, even when it is not aware of itself at the time. In looking back, we can see that something was seeing us, even while we were identified with sleep. (Our after-death state of reviewing our life may well be similar.) Our task is to become aware of the awareness in which we live, in the now – and find out who this awareness belongs to.

A further significant implication of this difference between consciousness and awareness is that reality is in the direction of awareness, whereas the strict identification with the contents of consciousness – which is our usual state – is spiritual oblivion. This was the main point in Merrell-

Wolff's teaching. Existence cannot be said to have any objective validity unless it is reflected upon from outside of it – from Reality. Keeping Rose's previous quote in mind: as the cultivation of such awareness rarely occurs, it could be rudely said that a lot of people do not realize they are alive, as they have no impersonal awareness independent from their experience of life. These are the same people who, after they die, will not realize they are dead. When death negates the human being and its world, which is the only reality it knows, "who" will remain to appreciate its having lived or its distinct existence in death, if there is no aware mind waiting separate from this self?

Rose also offers a curious angle on the nature of time; one with serious implications in regards to the notions of karma, reincarnation, free will, destiny, and purpose: "Time is not the ribbon whose near end is constantly being created. It may be that the whole ribbon is already created, and the future is that which we have not yet experienced [meaning: witnessed]" (Rose, 1982, p. 142). He has added that in actuality time does not move, as is our common conception, but rather we (the observer) move over it (the "ribbon" or "film" of life). One inference from these statements is that one could only realize this from having fully stepped outside the stream of time and relative experience, and seen it for the whole that it is. Another consideration is that, just as the motion of objects below us appears lesser and lesser the higher up we go into the sky, so our entire world of motion, including the completed lives of all the people within it who have ever lived or will live, would appear as a mass "still life" from such a non-finite perspective. Another implication would be that, in an absolute sense, the universe is not evolving but is already complete and perfect. What changes is our vantage point on experience within relativity. What sees our changing vantage point does not change.

This brings up questions such as: Are we choosing or creating anything? What created us and so determines what we "decide" to "choose"? Is eternity the endless future – or the constant Now, at a right angle to time? Another intriguing implication would be that the entire story is already written, in all its inconceivable complexity, and as it is all there is, it is inherently correct. Reality is "the only game in town", and so is in itself the only standard of validity. What is wrong is our vantage point on it and perception of it.

Recalling the metaphysical maxim, "As above, so below; as within, so without", indications of this principle can be seen in some otherwise seemingly ordinary psychological phenomena. For example, one aspect of the experience of paranoia – the sense that "*Someone is watching me*" – has a valid intuitional clue in it. **SOMEONE IS!** There are no secrets. All is seen. However, the identity of this watcher is misdefined as being some other person or agency, and one's own sick projections of blame, persecution, or grandiosity are added to it. One is actually being watched by a higher part of one's own mind, with a view polluted by whatever conditioned pathology is coloring one's psychological perception. However, the person is disowning it, being unaware of the dynamic involved, and attributing this observation to a false "other," rather than to the truer part of oneself. One would be wiser to accept the hint and follow this watcher back to its source; an ever-seeing "eye" the non-paranoid may not even suspect.

A similar unconscious reflex can be seen to occur with children – and insecure adults – who project their own observers onto their parents, teachers, authority-figures, admired others, or an appreciative audience. People are generally so disassociated from their own awareness that they need to borrow someone else's, through whom the longed for benediction from one's inner self is processed. Their actions and experiences are felt to be invalid until they are witnessed and acknowledged by someone else ("Look Ma, no hands!"). Would we as adults be as concerned about many of our values (fashion, prestige, ownership, etc.) if there was no one else to impress and to affirm our worth? This observer can also be internalized as an artificial mental construct, still experienced as

someone apart from the "me" who is subordinate to it (e.g. superego or narcissistic self-love), although not necessarily as pathologically as in paranoia.

The common denominator in all these cases is the misidentification of the individual as the person being seen by an outside observer, which is imagined to be located in some other person or entity, and distorted by one's own projected self-judgments, rather than realizing that one is really the observer of this person whom one no longer exclusively is, along with all of its projections and pathologies.

Rose once made a curious comment regarding the meaning of truth as it relates to observation: "Truth is a qualification of everything." He is saying that validity is not so much a static condition apart from everything else or the optimal arrangement of factors on the manifest level, but rather that the realization of Truth allows one to see the nature of things in a different light, as they really are. The direct-mind view from Reality changes the meaning of what is seen.

This ties in with another comment Rose has made about the nature of knowing. It is the inverted correlate to his earlier mentioned statement, "You know nothing until you know everything": "Knowing the true meaning of anything is absolute realization. To know anything truly is to know everything." This recalls William Blake's claiming to have seen eternity in a grain of sand. Rose is saying that while the mind is still trapped in relativity, knowing can only be conditional and the view only partial. When the final observer has been attained and one sees from this vantage point in Reality, what is known is known absolutely. The true Knower is the Philosopher's Stone sought for by the alchemists. Furthermore, everything is interconnected. A grain of sand is realized to be as valid as a star. This is Cosmic Consciousness.

The reader may have picked up the disturbing hint by this point that the search for self-definition does not culminate in the glorious affirmation of the "me" with which one is currently identified as being revealed divinity. Actually, the processes of backing away from untruth, retroversing the projected ray, and discriminating between the view and the viewer results in the realization of the insubstantiality of the human being as an individual, solid entity, and the final discovery of the sole anterior Self that is the real "I".

This course of self-inquiry through to its surprising conclusion can be likened to one's unraveling a ball of string to see what is at its core, and then finding when the end of the string has been reached — there is no center to it. Another vivid image is that of the old fantasy films of the Invisible Man in which the character, at first totally covered with clothes and bandages, proceeds to disrobe one item at a time, until the final garment of form is removed — and there is seen to be nobody there underneath!

This recalls Ramesh Balsekar's statement that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an "Enlightened person," as Enlightenment includes the realization that there is no person experiencing a spiritual state; there is only the All. It could rather be said that the Atman passing through such a "person's" mind recognizes itself, and by doing so, traces its ray back to Brahman, where there is nobody.

As has been stated, awareness is the guiding track along which the course of self-inquiry proceeds. There is much more to be said about the specific workings of this procedure. However, to briefly conclude this topic of self-definition and observation, Rose describes the state-of-being to which his system of meditation leads when the refinement of one's identity is complete: "When we become aware, we have reached the core of the Self" (Rose, 1985, p. 307). He has said that the experience or recognition of awareness in meditation, as apart from all the varied contents of consciousness, is the first actual "touching" of the real Self. A shift in one's point-of-reference finally occurs from that

of one's being a meditating self partially glimpsing the awareness in which it is immersed (so to speak), to being that awareness itself of the meditator – and everything else. The above quote could then be modified to more precisely read: "When we *become awareness...*" or "*realize awareness...*".

For a moment, Rose risks relinquishing his usual reserve about conceptualizing conclusions and plainly states: "Man discovers he is God." His hesitance in this, of course, is because: a) The statement is practically meaningless and unappreciable by the ignorant human mind that truly knows nothing about "God", and b) The words as stated may seem to imply that Man is God, or that God is Man (the human self as we know it), thus causing confusion or encouraging grandiose self-glorification (i.e. "New Age" cosmic narcissism). One legitimate implication of his point, however, is that the final answer to be found is not dualistic in nature: there is no individual ego (even a "spiritual" one – a "soul") who encounters a distinct, personal God. The shock of awakening to absolute, anterior Selfhood would be devastating (of course...to whom?). This is also pointing to an incomprehensible aloneness. He has elaborated: "You are not a part of the Absolute who finds the Absolute – you ARE the Absolute." There is no returning, no arrival. When the final delusion ends, the immediate awareness of utter Beingness without a second blows one's mind, and there is only the All. Obviously, one can derive little satisfaction from this promise until the concept becomes a realization. In fact, this cannot even be a meaningful concept. We really do not know who we are.

Something should be addressed at this point that is not discussed at length in the written material on the Albigen System: the differences between the male and female natures, and consequentially, the characteristic natures of their paths. The essential principles of the Albigen System are gender-neutral and impersonal. While the masculine nature is seemingly more inclined to be attracted to philosophy and mental analysis than is the feminine, which leans more towards holistic feeling and devotion, the basic truths about human nature, the laws of life, the mind, and spirit are universal, as are the questions we all must answer. It should be first clarified that what is being referred to here is masculinity and femininity as psychological traits or gestalts, somewhat derived from the physical constitution, not maleness and femaleness strictly as gender, as these traits cross gender-lines. There can be quite a range of variation in the manifestation of behavior on the physical level, whereas psychological tendencies are consistent archetypes, however difficult it is to define their qualities precisely.

What follows are a few general principles, only loosely inferred from assorted comments made by Rose, combined with observations from Jim Burns, Roy Masters, and others, as interpreted by myself. Rose may not entirely agree with these points, but might approve of their heuristic function in provoking self-examination and in clarifying an existent polarity on the spiritual path that teachers often prefer to diplomatically avoid addressing.

The major distinction was most clearly summed up by Burns: "**The male finds his answer through comprehension; the female finds her answer through function.**" By comprehension, he means the encompassing of the truth or the universe of experience through total mental understanding. Function means giving oneself in devotion to the holistic experience of living, as truthfulness requires one to be. The former refers to ultimate objectivity; the latter to ultimate subjectivity. Both are surrendering the ego: one to the Mind of Life, the other to the Heart. In the final realization, the beingness of Awareness and the beingness of Love are said to become the same. In the Albigen System, they are both indivisible aspects of "becoming the Truth."

In regards to the religious quest, a simplistic way to distinguish between them would be in their way of assessing the meaning of the metaphysical statement: "I am God." The pure masculine principle would tend to try to define "God" in some objective, impersonal, global sense and then

loyally align itself in relation to that. The feminine principle would focus more on the subjective experience of this "I's" submission and trust that this will lead to communion with God.

This example shows how there can be handicaps in the ways of both natures, complementing their advantages. The feminine has better sensitivity to and appreciation of personal experience, whereas the masculine is more rigorous in implementing the methodology of experience. However, philosophically speaking, the handicap in each extreme of identification is that the feminine does not ask: "What is the meaning of (my) life?," while the masculine does not ask: "Who is living (my) life?" In terms of their inner process, the male mind wishes to presumptuously think its way to God. The female mind has a weakness for wanting to imagine its way to God. Both are mental projections in the attempt to define or attain Reality. In this, at least, the genders are equal.

The feminine tendency for an imbalance towards exclusive subjectivity also involves a lack of doubt about the validity of personal experience, an insufficient objective overview of all the factors comprising experience, and inadequate consistency in the maintenance of a single state-of-mind, despite experience. The masculine tendency towards a worldly egotism also involves being out of touch with one's own inner condition and "heart," being moved more by pride and bestiality than innocence, projecting pain and failure outward in denial, rather than inwardly resolving it, and generally leaving oneself out of the philosophical formula as an essential factor.

It should also be clarified that in these above generalities, "mind" does not mean intellect, and "heart" does not mean emotions. They refer to different modes of being, experiencing, and knowing; mind relating to comprehension and heart to function. As mentioned previously, Ramana Maharshi does state, however, that Heart and Mind are finally realized to be the same thing, when one attains totality.

For some, the issue of equality may come up during this evaluation and the understandable humanistic desire for it may indiscriminately misinterpret this as sameness. The feminine and masculine natures are held to be equally legitimate in terms of their processing of experience and being mutually integral to the flow of life, as the Yin and Yang are interdependent dynamics within the whole Tao, but they are not the same. Not understanding this and forcing a pseudo-equality upon them that suits neither ends up violating the merits of both and hindering one's rightful course towards the highest goal. Paul Brunton provides a good explanation of the relationship between gender archetype and spiritual inclinations:

There are three states of spiritual development: first, religious; second, mystical or metaphysical; third, philosophical. In the first stage, women are overwhelmingly ahead of men. In the second stage, women and men are roughly equal in the success of their attainment. In the third and final stage, it is mostly men who succeed (Brunton, 1986, p. 111).

It should be clarified that by "philosophical" he is referring to the "Fourth Way" or Raja yoga path of total introspective inquiry and essential transformation, not scholastic concept-juggling alone. By "mystical" he means the intuitive, emotional inversion towards communion with the Beloved. "Religious" means the dualistic worship of and submission to an external, humanized God. (It is not clear why he designates this as being more a feminine mode, when there are probably as many men as women invested in the religious mind-set. Perhaps he is implying that women are better able to truly benefit from this form of worship if they serve their God sincerely, while men have greater inner obstacles to such devotion, and thus tend to mimic or usurp more than live it.) He is saying the masculine nature at its best tends towards the most subtle form of seeking, yet acknowledges that truthful seeking can occur and progress be attained in whatever form that suits one's temperament.

He elaborates on this difference; an assessment with which Rose concurs:

Most women who aspire to the Divine look for, and find comfort with, the idea or the image of a Personal God. For them the path of devotional love is more attractive than any other path. The strength of their emotional nature accounts for this. But male aspirants are generally more willing to take to the various non-devotional approaches. Their intellectual nature and their power of will are often stronger than those of women. It is easier for them to comprehend, and also to accept, the idea of an Impersonal God. For these, and for other reasons, although there have been many successful female mystics in history, there have been few successful female philosophers (Brunton, 1986, p. 117).

Rose offers a simple, realistic summary of this entire topic:

If we are male, we should advance upon the battlements of ignorance with the tools of the male, with aggressiveness [assertive discrimination]. The female may find the mark better with passiveness [innocent receptivity]. Both parties should never lose sight of human exigencies, right up to the day of final victory [Realization]. Until that final day, our role can only be that of the fact-man that is knowable (Rose, 1978, p. 140).