

Chapter 15

Jacob's Ladder

It is time to present what is Rose's most valuable contribution to the field of transpersonal psychology. **Jacob's Ladder** is the term he uses for the inner "map" he has devised as the central framework for his system of Psychology of the Observer. The term refers to the Biblical "ladder" by which Jacob ascended to Heaven. Rose claims the guidelines he provides will lead the seeker to God Consciousness, if one is determined enough to follow them out to the end. He is thus boldly testifying, from his own experience, that this ladder is not only a poetic metaphor in an old book, but an actual *inner way* that exists and can be traversed.

The diagram of Jacob's Ladder is shown in Rose's book, *Psychology of the Observer* (Rose, 1979c, p. 31, 42). Whereas much of the earlier discussion about meditation dealt with the inner search in an open-ended, exploratory sense from the individual seeker's point of view, this map provides the transpersonal overview of the entire path and describes the specific structures of the mind corresponding to the different phases and levels of this work one will find as one personally goes through the process of inquiry.

The diagram is not offered, however, as proof in advance of discovery. It is not suggested that one deliberately look for the points designated, as that would again be falling into the trap of creating an image of what one expects to find – however well-intended the effort – and then embracing the conceptualized simulation as being the reality it represents. Rather, one should follow the recommended course of meditation as has been described, and then these reference points of significance will be realized in experience as one ascends to them. As teachers of transpersonal maps always warn their students: their maps are never the territory to be covered, and there is no substitute for one's making the journey for oneself, to personal discovery. To be an armchair pilgrim is futile.

Rose, himself, did not have any such map to guide him during his years of search, and he only devised this map subsequent to his maximum experience of Realization when, in retrospect, he recognized the phases of progression through which he had passed. He offers the map at this point simply to indicate the integral significance of what is happening within the overall structure of relative mental perspectives as the inquiry continues towards some final – unknown – state-of-being that is Absolute. This multi-dimensional assessment merely serves as corroboration for the seeker's own experience; as road signs along the way. It also provides the individual with the encouraging (and humbling) implication that further progress may be possible beyond one's current status, that one's

present conviction about things is not final and comprehensive, and that one may yet reach another, higher rung of the ladder.

This map is also not intended to suggest that there is a rigorous, standardized set of procedures to which every seeker must adhere or predictable experiences to expect. While the mental states and their relationships which Rose describes are considered to be transpersonal and universal, the specific manner of discovering this for oneself must be personal and individual. As Rose acknowledges: "Each person blossoms from a different catalyst. The only thing that Enlightened people have in common is that which they find. So, it is better to encourage the inward search, without demanding to find for the student an exact formula or discipline" (Rose, 1984, p. 28).

The various points described in the diagram refer to particular aspects of the mind dimension. There is an ascension of mental vantage point – and thus self-identification – possible on these "rungs" of the ladder. It should be noted once again that "mind" does not refer here exclusively to "intellect," as is the usual association with the term, nor is it strictly limited to the somatic mind, which is mainstream psychology's sole domain of study.

Jacob's Ladder refers to the mind as a dimension, of which the individual human body-mind-ego is a part, and in which, in turn, the intellect, emotions, sensations, perceptions, memories, various states-of-consciousness, and sense of self all reside. This mind dimension is not restricted to, nor located in, one's head. The personal, human "i" is located within IT, as are all other "i's" – and the entire universe. The one in whose Mind this is, is *the Self*.

Rose explains his intent in presenting this information and how he wishes the student to work with it:

My purpose is to outline a system which will prove itself as it goes along, and which will reward us at any point along the line by finding for us a more disciplined and skillful mind, and a mind that is more aware of itself. So, the different levels of the mind, or anterior observers, should be discovered for oneself, and not accepted on faith [or merely maintained as concepts] (Rose, 1979c, p. 62).

The meaning of a key principle in this teaching, briefly referred to in other contexts, can be better understood now. The purpose of one's climbing up Jacob's Ladder is contained in Rose's personally validated rebuttal to the previously quoted theological aphorism: "The finite mind can never perceive the infinite." He refutes the implication in this of the hopelessness of one's attaining knowledge of God, and thus the indirect advocacy of faith as the only option (and thereby the continued employment of the bureaucrats of the faith business) by countering with: "...but the finite mind can become less finite – it can become infinite" (Rose, 1982, p. 139). This work of self-inquiry is what refines the definition of the self-as-observer and develops the essential being that would be able to apprehend or appreciate a spiritual realization if it was forthcoming. As Rose puts it, with a touch of portent: "We must desire the truth and have a capacity for it, or else we could not receive it even if it came to us by accident" (Rose, 1984, p. 19).

In the Albigen System, the person is defined as being three-fold: essence, mind, and body (with body-mind). The structure of Jacob's Ladder reflects this. It is comprised of three ascending triangles, each corresponding to one of these three levels of self-definition, or points-of-reference of experience. From the lowest to the highest, they can be categorized simply this way: (1) The identification with the contents of consciousness, i.e. relative, somatic, worldly life; (2) The observation of the subjective experience of this consciousness and the reactions to it, and (3) The spiritual awareness of this entire dimension of consciousness from outside of it.

In his book, *Carillon*, Rose divided up the body of material into three categories; each describing the level on which its meaning is experienced. He referred to them as: The Dream, The Dreamer In The Dream, and The Dreamer Of The Dream. The three ascending triangles can be considered somewhat analogous to these levels of reality, and likewise a gauge for measuring our own existential status.

The ladder more precisely refers to levels or qualities of observation. The apex of each triangle is the vantage point from which the domain below is witnessed. Point "C" (the Umpire) watches the body's experiences, point "E" (the Process Observer) watches the mind dimension, and point "G" (the Absolute) "watches" awareness or essence – as well as contains the entire ladder. Understanding this progression of levels of comprehension clarifies the reason for this report's sub-title: The Path To Reality Through The Self. "God" is not conceived of as being some distinct, capricious "other", residing elusively somewhere over the rainbow, and who is hopefully amenable to flattery or bribery. Rather, the path is intuited to go directly inward, following the ray of the "I am" back through oneself to its ultimate source, the ground of Being; to the only definition of God or Reality possible in words: "I Am That I Am." This is the single eye at the top of the pyramid on the back of the dollar bill.

This diagram is just a pile of concepts; of value only as guidance towards action. The top point on the ladder cannot even be conceptualized, as it is beyond anything the human mind can imagine. Rose offers an intriguing formula, though, to define the term: "'Absolute' has about as much meaning as the mathematical term, infinity: *one divided by zero*" (Rose, 1978, p. 202). This profound spiritual equation is a purer form of his dictum that one must fatten up one's head before chopping it off.

Continuing with this theme, the following familiar philosophical metaphor vaguely elucidates the workings of the entire path. One starts out as an undefined self that is being continually divided in half (meaning: backing away from untruth and discerning the observer from the observed), thereby gradually approaching the final value, or infinity. The last "half step" to the Absolute can never be taken by any relative effort. The "leap" of becoming occurs at the critical moment when the fully readied vector is catalyzed by a shock – resulting in death. According to Rose's experience, when the nothingness of death confronts the everythingness of unity in truth, the result is an absolute realization. What is discovered is the Self that one really is behind all forms of existence. The casually propitious timing of the catalyst for this final awakening is best illustrated by the simple Vedantic allegory of the bird landing on a branch, causing the ripened coconut to fall (on a meditating seeker's head, probably rousing him from sexual reverie, Rose would mischievously add...).

Another major point referred to in previous sections begins to take on more meaning now in relation to the different levels of validity or beingness symbolized by the rungs of the ladder. One important lesson we repeatedly learn in steady meditation is that the false self fools the anterior Self. In any form of error, whether in behavior, understanding, or perspective, it is always this more essential Self blinded behind the cloud of mind that is deceived, because of our misidentification with some lesser self, or ego (or – does this "our" actually refer to the ego which identifies with itself, as this is all it really is and can never become the Self, and the Self does always see even this blindness? What is deluded? What becomes Enlightened?).

Appreciating the significance of Jacob's Ladder also shows us how the personal phase of work (therapy, self-correction) relates to the transpersonal work (self-inquiry, purification of the observer). The common theme in both phases is the movement of *backing away* from what one is not. Stated simply, the personal aspect of meditation is the backing away from what is seen to be false in oneself and one's view of the world. This includes refining one's philosophical values, one's quality of mind, and the morality of one's actions. The transpersonal aspect is the backing away from even this rela-

tively true, human self and its accurate perception of the world, as this “me” is still not really oneself, nor is the world that is seen as real as the Self that projects it.

As complex and arduous as this work of self-definition is, Rose assures the seeker of a successful outcome if the key tool of the inquiry is diligently employed throughout: **observation**. He states this simply: “The (observing) mind kills the false self if it stares at it long enough.”

Before describing the structure of Jacob's Ladder in detail, it would be helpful to summarize the different levels of activity of what is generically called meditation. This not only provides an overview of the various forms of introspection, but also indicates the differing levels of work in Rose's own teaching and how one progresses through them. The common practices of ego-centered “positive affirmations,” self-hypnotic amniotic “bliss”, and transient tantric exaltations are being bypassed here. For the purpose of this discussion, four basic categories of legitimate meditation can be delineated:

- (1) Techniques to calm, still, and negate the ego-mind; essentially offering oneself up to Heaven and letting God “find” us (some variation of this is what is usually meant by meditation; this can also be referred to as devotional prayer).
- (2) The work of attaining self-knowledge, philosophical contemplation, and refinement of discrimination and intuition (this includes Jnana Yoga, Gurdjieffian psychology, and some of the Albigen System).
- (3) Impersonal examination of the thinking and perceiving processes directly from a vantage point of awareness-observation (Vipassana emphasizes this, as well as the more advanced stage of the Albigen System).
- (4) Going within: turning away from the mind in all its forms of consciousness and pulling back into the core of one's being, or anterior Self (this includes the final stage of the Albigen System, Advaita Vedanta, Zen, and some of Raja Yoga).

In regards to the work of self-therapy or correction of one's psychology, it should be mentioned that Rose does not give substantial attention in his teaching to the emotional component of the psyche, nor to the role of emotion on the path in regards to life experience. This may be a serious deficiency in his approach to teaching for many students and is why material from Roy Masters and Jim Burns is being included in this report. He generally considers emotion to be a lower level of experiencing and identification than that of conscious thought, a coloration of judgment, and an inferior mode for spiritual searching (i.e. Gurdjieff's level Number Two of humanity). Most of Rose's references to emotion are in the form of advising people to analyze the foolishness of their personal troubles due to garbled emotionalism and to study their emotional reactions to the assaults by life on their individuality-sense.

On the positive side, he does state that both feeling and thinking have to be blended together in order to arrive at a more balanced, reliable sense of guiding discernment in regards to subjective evaluations. Cold cerebration alone, without thorough self-understanding and emotional integrity, leaves one open to shameless rationalization and shortsightedness in determining the worth or authenticity of one's convictions. More specifically, he has defined intuition, in part, as being: “refined emotional thinking.” In fact, the development of intuition—or rather the elimination of the factors that hinder our sensitivity to its call—is much of the purpose for the therapeutic phase of the path. Likewise, the work of healing the heart-center to allow it to open up to holistic attunement with life experience, as well as correcting one's manner of sexuality, frees up one's tangled up and misused energy to be used in fortifying the spiritual vector. Honoring the mood of nostalgia and being true to the yearning it contains for some unimaginable soul-satisfaction is a still deeper prompting of the

heart. Even human love, as fallible and frail as it usually turns out to be, is at its basis a well-intentioned pointer to a higher Love.

Jacob's Ladder consists of three intersecting, ascending triangles. A key principle involved in their structure and ascension is called the reconciliatory principle (Rose, 1979, p. 29; adapted from Benoit, 1959, p. 6). Each triangle has, as its base, a spectrum of polarity. The human mind is cursed by duality, and Rose repeatedly warns that the paradox permeates all relative inquiry. He adds: "We have not yet merged with unity and lost our identity" (Rose, 1978, p. 143). However, there is hope for the seeker, as one's perspective expands; as one's mind becomes "less finite."

In each triangle, one starts at the point on the bottom left (A, C, E), which is seemingly stronger in influence or obviousness than the point corresponding to it. There is, concurrently, a seemingly built-in tendency to pull towards the point on the right side. A tension exists as one is shuttled back and forth and stretched along the baseline between the two poles. As one continues the practice of self-observation meditation, at some critical point of tension, or perhaps precipitated by accident, one comes to recognize at once the influence upon oneself by both sources of input, and thus becomes aware of the whole spectrum of relative possibilities along that line of polarity. At that moment, one's point-of-reference ascends to the apex of that triangle, to the reconciliatory point of that domain of duality.

Ours is a constant struggle in the attempt to define the truth of things while still being fixated at any one position on the relative plane. No evaluation can be conclusive while seen with only "one eye" from within the paradigm being considered. It requires some spiritual maturity to rise to the level of objective comprehension where one has learned to not be strictly identified with either pole of opposites, nor any point along the line of experience between them. As Rose puts it: "The conciliatory principle is the ability to judge from a detached state of being" (lecture, 1979). It means seeing not through one eye or the other, but seeing with or from the one mind that sees through both. This vantage point can be likened to a marriage counselor who is able to see the whole situation in a relationship of conflict at once, with all the interrelated factors involved, and assess the view impartially. Proper meditation brings one to such objective observation of one's own life condition also.

It should be understood that this reconciliatory point does not mean the synthesizing of opposites, taking the average of two values, or compensating for one extreme by going to the other, as these are all still on the same relative line of polarity. Rather, it can be likened to the sky that incorporates the alternation of day and night; the Tao that incorporates the Yin and the Yang. This is a single "Eye" that sees duality from above it, not as any predominant ego from within it. It sees that a zebra is neither white with black stripes nor black with white stripes: it is transparent—with black and white stripes. The proverbial glass is not half-full (positive thinking) nor half-empty (negative thinking): it is a glass that is half-full and half-empty at once (truthful, holistic thinking, or direct perception).

Looking at this matter from another angle, Rose has posed the question: "When we look into the mirror and see our eyes looking—is the observer facing the mirror or facing eyes which are looking?" (Rose, 1982, p. 137). The real question is: *what is aware of both perspectives?* This same line of thinking can be extended to address a paradox in principles commonly found in metaphysical and psychological teachings. On one hand, our world is said to be a projection of ourselves, and concurrently, that we are largely the result of the myriad life-factors comprising our nature. What is the solution? It is that we and our mirror-image move at the same time—and "I" (the Eye of observation) watch them both.

This reconciliatory principle has another, theological implication. As a generality, the conception of "God" in the understanding of conventionally religious people is actually that of the "good"

side of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; not the Tree of Life, or the Absolute. Likewise, on the human level, the notion of the archetypal "shadow" is sometimes regarded in New Age metaphysical teachings as the polar opposite of the true self, which is deemed to be totally "good." This is an incomplete understanding, motivated more by humanistic desire than philosophical integrity.

According to Rose, what is eventually realized is that the true Self or "God" is what contains and is aware of both these identifications with good and evil. In this regard, one could well wonder: is Satan God's adversary – or employee? With this understanding, a general distinction can thus be made between exoteric religion and esoteric spirituality. The aim of the former is to lead people to good, from evil. The objective of the latter is to lead these people to Life, from the ego of good.

The metaphor of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil undoubtedly refers to the relative ego-self's cursed side-trip through duality and delusion, and the Tree of Life refers to the true, eternal, observing Self above all of this, that is One.

All this is not merely theoretical discussion for the purpose of exercising the faculty of conceptualization. It has direct relevance to the experience of meditation. Frequently, people practice forms of meditation that bring about feelings of joy, warmth, comfort, tranquility, and so on. These results are obviously appealing. However, Rose alerts the seeker of Truth to not be seduced by these feelings (even generously assuming they are genuine), as they are still states of reaction within the realm of Nature, and not necessarily symptoms of the process that leads to actual transcendence, other than to the extent this joy is a reflection of one's living in harmony with Nature; this then allowing one to go further, if wishing to.

Rose has taken this point a step further, in response to a question of mine as to why spiritual work so often seems to lead to greater turmoil, rather than the resolution one would naturally like to find. He answered: "There is no joy and no agony. All you have to do is realize it" (personal correspondence, 1977). Another time, he made a similar remark: "There is no such thing as happiness – or unhappiness. When you realize that, you are nearing awakening." This recalls his comment that the seeker has to learn to live without the dream: either of hardship or its compensations. Suffer if need be, but do not be the sufferer.

Actually, one may be forced to arrive at this point whether one wants to or not. If one is really serious about the relentless self-analysis and merciless negation of illusions Rose advocates, there may come a time when even one's joy becomes but another form of pain. One will become troubled when noticing that. There will be no alternative at that point but to go through the one remaining door that only then becomes visible.

Rose offers one more explanation for the meaning of the joy sometimes encountered on the spiritual path, juxtaposed to the nature of true freedom. This also implies the answer to my question to him mentioned above:

A plateau on the path, where the warrior rests between two upward battles or periods of growth, can be recognized by its accompanying bliss. There is no bliss in the final realization. There is no pain or bliss there, because there is no polarity (Rose, 1986, p. 40).

The task of firmly facing oneself, confronting one's ignorance, wrestling with one's weaknesses, purging oneself of egos, coming to terms with one's emptiness, and generating the courage – or faith – to stand naked in the void is the hard work his teaching emphasizes. The occasional respite from this unreconciled tension is the tranquility.

To clear up some possible confusion on this topic, it is important to discriminate between three levels or phases of what is generically called "joy" or "bliss" and are usually referred to interchangeably by the same term. (The joy of hedonism, vanity, fantasy, etc. does not count). The casual use of these terms in spiritual literature can mislead the seeker of eternity who reads them with human eyes and inadequate self-knowledge into some time-consuming side-trips. Joy can mean: (1) being in tune with Nature, one with the flow of life, and appreciating the beauty of creation; (2) the reaction-state of relief from conflict or self-responsibility, or the plateau of emotion-based salvation; and (3) the bliss of Cosmic Consciousness, of Union, as described by mystics. The first two are ego-states; the third is not, although still experienced by an individual experiencer. Each is valid on its own level. Rose's intent is only to point to the impersonal state that contains them all.

The acknowledgment of the relationships between these different phases of reactive emotions is one of the ways progress up this ladder can be recognized, as one no longer takes any one state-of-consciousness too seriously, as being exclusively valid. Another indication is the increasing recognition of the endless paradoxes encountered at every turn, as one continues to monitor and evaluate the interrelated factors of life experience from multiple perspectives; whereas before, everything seemed simple and certain to the uncritical, egocentric mind.

This awareness of greater complexity and troubling inconclusiveness is of primary significance in this ascendance up the ladder; one which can have the distressingly ironic consequence of making one feel like one is actually regressing rather than progressing. The real situation about this must be understood. In order to have a conviction about anything, especially about oneself, it is necessary for the conviction to have as its basis, one, stable, irrefutable point-of-reference. This presumptuous status is generally referred to as "me". However, what one finds during the course of diligent, assiduous self-inquiry is that this real "me" becomes gradually less exclusive and fixed. As one sees more and more of oneself and the numerous possible vantage points on experience, the ego of distinct, absolute selfhood dissolves, and the "me" becomes more the observer of the various points-of-reference existent in any given situation.

Here is there, left is right, and right is wrong. This is the "Immanent Paradoxicalness In All Things Relative" discussed in an earlier section. Rose is quick to point out, however, that this does not mean there is no relative right and wrong, and this acknowledgement of multiple perspectives should not be rationalized by the dishonest mind to excuse any form of personal error as being one's private "right." While each point-of-reference will have its own inherently valid paradigm to it within its particular domain (or is derived from one), this validity still has to answer to objective facts of life that have no concern for our human preferences and justifications. For example, the alcoholic may have perfectly understandable reasons to drink, but the body will rot just the same.

Nonetheless, this heightened awareness and expanding comprehension takes one through an insecure phase of having no certain answers without nor a firm resting place within. To be the quest (or vector) and maintain the desire for Truth as one's sole remaining reason for doing anything – this becomes one's identity; one's reality. To provide adequate momentum and proper trajectory to carry one through this difficult phase is why the original fundamental commitment is so important.

This exercise in tension between polarities is also what brings about the magic of betweenness, which is given birth by the isolation of this reconciliatory principle from its subordinates. Jumping ahead for a moment to the highest rung of the ladder, this betweenness is what makes possible the non-finite shift from the relative to the Absolute that contains the awareness of all the lower levels of existence.

Rose gives a hint of what is found through this kind of meditation: "The consideration of any two opposites creates a third, middle force, which may have nothing to do in relation to either. Likewise, the contemplation of life and death may bring us quite a surprise" (Rose, 1985, p. 266).

One comes to know gray by the consideration of black and white. One arrives at equanimity by sufficiently knowing agony and ecstasy. Rose has described Enlightenment as "the experience of nothingness and everythingness simultaneously" (Rose, 1978, p. 217). He has also provided several examples of the most significant forms of triangulation (Rose, 1985, p. 249).

Rose presents some other "spiritual equations" that are even less understandable conceptually, and can be regarded as authentic koans: "The tension between being and non-being is Enlightenment" and "A thought and Enlightenment occur halfway between nothing and everything" (Rose, 1975, p. 65-66). The awareness of the span of being from zero to totality is the Absolute.

Rose has described another form of this magical transformation; one that is more readily experienceable: "Blending intuition with logic can lead one to wisdom. And the entire pattern is one of being, for the first time" (Rose, 1985, p. 213). This shift to a higher level of comprehension and *being* is difficult to even simulate in strictly conceptual understanding, as the nature of the realization can only be known by experiencing it, and this necessary transformation can only result from fully working through one's koan. Still, this experience of mental ascension to the reconciliatory principle – and possibly the actual dynamics of the entire path – can be more easily conveyed, as follows.

There is a "gag" card on which is written the question: "How do you keep a fool busy?" At the bottom of the card it says: "(See other side)." The other side of the card has exactly the same messages written on it. After spending several hours frantically flipping the card over and over, with increasing desperation, wondering: "Okay, so what's the answer already?" the astute seeker is suddenly hit with the realization: "Hey! – I've been a fool!" Such is a koan.

The base triangle of Jacob's Ladder is that of the physical, somatic realm. It is where most of us live and identify, most of the time. We spend our lives trying to move away from the negative pole of experience (pain, loss, death) and move towards the positive (pleasure, success, life). This activity and range of values is of the world of Nature and is designed and operated by Nature, for its own ends. We are a part of this pattern, on this level. Humanity is line A - B.

There is a regulating faculty programmed into the human organism to promote its well-being in this domain. Rose calls this the **Umpire** (Rose, 1979c, p. 15-20). It is a somatic awareness that operates largely on reason, and has as its priority the health and continued functioning of this unit of Nature called a person. Its own functioning is automatic, however much we subjectively experience our values and reasons as self-chosen. Rose challenges this pride of doership by stating: "There is one aspect of Man – the body combined with the somatic mind of Man – that is nothing but programming waiting upon environmental circumstances to bring out predictable reactions" (Rose, 1979c, p. 25). We are organic robots placed in a terrarium by its Creator, for some unknown purpose, and this faculty is planned to keep the robot from destroying itself before harvest time.

Much of what has been traditionally referred to as conscience, in religious terms, is actually the Umpire. This voice of guidance is of Nature, not of Spirit, although the two are linked, as what furthers the vitality and mental clarity of the person will also work towards any spiritual aim one might have, whereas it is much more difficult to meditate or do spiritual work when one is ill or dead.

The Umpire functions as a decision-maker in regards to thousands of choice-points a day. Its authority ranges from decisions regarding physical health (diet, habits, sexual expression, etc.), social interactions, usage of one's time and energy, and generally the arranging of one's life in accordance with the pursuit of enjoyment, accomplishment, and survival, and the avoidance of suffering, de-

spair, and self-negation. The Umpire takes care to steer between unhealthy extremes in conduct and to reconcile conflicting values in the person's nature. The function of the Umpire can be more clearly understood if likened to the practice of responsibly managing one's finances, although in the larger sense one's money would instead be regarded as vitality and attention.

The Umpire has several general categories of operation:

- (1) The adjustment of data received by the somatic mind: there is an endless process of mental interpretation of percepts received through limited or inadequate senses.
- (2) Physical survival adjustment: balancing the output of energy for the sake of health (sexual morality), inhibition of personality factors that may lead to social rejection ("The mouth must be careful not to get the whole organism into trouble" is one way Rose puts it), and the drive for tribal, or family, survival (reproduction).
- (3) Mind-plane functioning: it weighs rational evidence to make conscious determinations. It also hesitantly accepts intuitional revelations into its decision-making, so long as the intuition is concerned strictly with processing mundane concerns and not inquiring into spiritual directions. It is also influenced by evidence from the anterior or Process Observer mind. However, the Umpire is not in contact with any part of the Self above or beyond the Manifesting Mind. (Rose, 1979c, p. 26-27).

Many people have a crippled Umpire; or rather, have obstructions or distortions in their psychological make-up that prevent the Umpire from functioning in them properly. Likewise, many people are forever racing back and forth between the twin poles of pleasure and pain, success and failure, and are not aware that there is a self-regulating mechanism at work in them doing its best to insure the individual's welfare throughout their daily drama. One's maturing to the discovery of the Umpire can be a major step up the ladder and may be interpreted by some as "salvation." Such people become true to Nature's way, are undivided in themselves, are somewhat free of their old tug-of-war between fear and desire, and have found some measure of peace. They have become the Umpire.

The individual comes to recognize the Umpire's existence after prolonged examination of one's fluctuating status along the relative spectrum of organic existence, and finally realizes that there is a fixed vantage point monitoring this panorama of life. This becomes one's new point-of-reference; one's new identity.

Rose provides an intriguing perspective on the role of the Umpire in the scheme of life. While at first this assessment may seem threatening or demeaning to one's claim to noble autonomy, appreciating our experience from this viewpoint allows us to relax our superfluous hold over the mechanics of our lives and feel more at ease as we are knowingly taken through the course our story must take. He suggests we contemplate our drives and their consequences in this way:

[A man] is aware that he desires. But does he desire, or is he caused to desire? Does he select things as objects of his desire, such as picking a type of person for a wife, or is all that selection determined by computerizations more intricate than his conscious mind is capable of having, in that they take in thousands of factors which go to make up his compatibility; factors which he consciously knows little or nothing about?

Something within him urges and inhibits. Something within him encourages bravery and fear. Something in him causes him to enter joyously into the game of life, and something in him, at times, makes him long for death. And yet, all of these things seem

to form a pattern which makes for some sort of destiny. Something within him, if he allows it to, will make decisions for him, take care of his children, and condition him for dying when the time comes (Rose, 1979c, p. 81-82).

We do not live. We are lived. Once we become aware through objective self-analysis of processes within our decision-making that are not our own, we are forced to admit that perhaps we do not make many decisions after all, but that many of our decisions may have been programmed into our genes before we were born. Acknowledging all this humbles us and frees us. But then— who are we? And why are we?

The Umpire is dutifully mundane, however, and relates only to the outer person, or to humanity as a whole, and its job is strictly to serve the Earth. It is not concerned with issues of ultimate, or essence, survival, nor does it stop to question the fundamental reason or justification for this flurry of complex activity it monitors called “life.” Rose goes on, offering a troubling insight into the limitations imposed upon us by this insidiously pragmatic programming:

And yet this destiny is such that it makes all things secondary to it. It is the plan of Nature, and the blueprint for the balanced aquarium of life. It has no consideration for the spiritual hopes of man. It is the plan of life which encourages all religions which encourage Nature, and it draws the blinds of drowsiness over the minds that speculate too long on immortality and the disciplines for guaranteeing spiritual survival. The Umpire shows little sympathy for the individual in the long run. (ibid, p. 82).

Moreover, it fails to account for impressions picked up by the individual that do not seem to come from the tangible world, nor phenomena of an occult nature that are not explainable by its laws of terrestrial reason. It does not question the source of this non-somatic awareness or experience, nor the implications of its presence.

Yet, one's suspicions are aroused when, despite one's best efforts, failure and suffering are encountered in pursuing one's desired goals. This is because, alone, the Umpire does not observe itself and so cannot know the limits of its jurisdiction. People who are unaware of the Umpire operating in them believe the umpirical decisions are theirs and do not stop to consider higher factors and sources of influence upon the mind. Those who are convinced they are responsible for everything that happens to them will then either get angrier with their situation or slump into defeat. One must first become aware of the Umpire and then note the possibility that *one may be influenced by factors not immediately apparent nor taken into account by the Umpire, and that one is not wise enough to be almighty*. It is then that one realizes there must be factors determining the experience of life beyond the control of the Umpire (ibid, p. 32).

By itself, the Umpire is an objective voice. As explained above, one may mature — or be forced to by crisis — to the recognition of a subjective voice as well; one the Umpire had not previously taken fully into consideration in its deliberations. The voice may simply ask: “Why? — I am living a healthy, productive life, but I don't know why I am living, nor who is living. What is the meaning of this experience of existence; especially in light of my eventual death?” This is an issue the Umpire cannot answer, nor does it care to. This is not its business. The question comes from another, truer part of oneself. It is the voice of the **Higher Intuition** (Rose, 1979c, p. 30-32).

Rose describes the seeker's predicament at this point of spiritual evolvment and defines the only course of work that warrants any hope:

It is good to hear that man has some automatic faculties that work for the survival of his race, and for the survival of his body. But what is working for his immortality? It

seems the only time the Umpire works for some guarantee of life after death is when it and the individual have been conditioned by directed training toward the idea of a precise means to immortality (ibid, p. 83).

Tying together some previously discussed themes, one relevance to this statement is that although adherence to the path of Nature by itself cannot be assumed to inevitably lead to spiritual realization, Nature does leave some room to maneuver for further exploration beyond the bounds of the organic parade if one respectfully honors Nature, all the while seeking to find that sacred part of oneself that is not fertilizer alone. This is done by learning to use the tools provided by Nature as the means to escape exclusive servitude to Nature.

One graduates from the strict identification with worldly life when this voice of intuition first whispers: "So what?" Rose says that on this level, we are at war between Saturday and Sunday: "The Umpire is good enough until Saturday, but Sunday the higher intuition – the Sunday of the mind so to speak – takes over..." (Rose, 1985, p. 218). The voice continues to speak and to question, and one begins to realize that organic functioning, no matter how sophisticated its form or self-flattering its expression, is not all there is, as there has now come into the picture a quality of awareness that is not of the external world-scene – and is recognized to be a deeper part of oneself. One is now more than an actor, and begins to wonder who is acting.

This intuition comes from the higher mind, not the somatic mind, through which it may be processed. It is not so much the interpersonal sensitivity or situational compass that is what is usually meant by intuition. It is more an expression of spiritual maturity that is able to assess the merit of life values and directions with some discernment. The distinction between their directions of operation could be described as horizontal or terrestrial (small "i") versus vertical or transcendental (capital "I") intuition. Also, the latter is not to be confused with simple emotion or any of the many desires that would slyly attempt to masquerade under the respectable guise of intuition. Yet, the refinement of feeling is partially what makes one sensitive enough to hear the genuine voice. Like two knives that sharpen against each other, by tempering thinking with feeling, and checking feeling with thinking, the quality of intuition is improved.

Rose has also described it as a mass computerization of all data at once, into a direct, holistic understanding, rather than one's arriving at conclusions through step-by-step, logical analysis (Rose, 1978, p. 51, 216). This, in fact, would sometimes be impossible in regards to factors and sources of input that are of an origin unknown to the person. This Intuition can be likened to the term, conscience; the guidance of which may then be translated into tangible instructions the Umpire can carry out.

Through meditation upon the self, one now becomes aware of a larger range of possibilities, with the discovery of this new mental presence. This Intuition is not concerned with the organic issues of daily life, but is an inner sense that wonders about one's subjective experience of this life.

At this point, an almost accidental realization occurs in which we discover that something within us is watching this whole process of struggle and evaluation. *Something is aware, and one is aware that something is aware.* We find that this awareness is now focused in, or is expressive of, a definite locus of experience which is one's body, and that it recognizes the new polarity and opposition of influences. With the Umpire on the left side and the Intuition on the right, the baseline is formed (C - D) of a second triangle – that which constitutes the Mind Realm. The vantage point of reconciliation that sees both sides is called the **Process Observer** (Rose, 1979c, p. 33, 81).

The Process Observer is the mind watching the mind from behind the clouds of delusion in consciousness. Everything within its view is of the mind, as by this point, it is realized that one's

entire experience of life — sensations, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, memories, egos, etc. — is a mental experience, and not external (unless one considers everything outside of the anterior witnessing Self to be external to — yet, paradoxically contained within — that Self), and one that is *seen*. The readings of the Intuition are more fully taken into account, thus balancing out the entire mental realm of impressions. According to Rose, this range of study, of observing the observation of one's life, is much of what true, higher meditation consists of, as elucidated in previous chapters. Real meditation is the watching of gestalt, or pattern thinking, in addition to studying the mind's individual reactions, colorations, and such. In this regard, Rose considers most conventional psychologists to be crippled Process Observers, at best.

A part of this inner work is thus to examine all the myriad factors of experience that together comprise "the self." The observer will also gradually come to recognize the psychic tension or contraction holding together this collection of anonymous components and which transforms it by a kind of inadvertent "crystallization" into this composite conceptual entity called the ego, that feigns unity and sentient identity. Then, a further step after this phase of psychological self-analysis (actually all phases are done concurrently) is to directly study the mental processes themselves in terms of the actual mechanics of thought, perception, projection, etc., as previously outlined. This is a totally impersonal evaluation of the "bare bones" of inner experience, apart from any interpretation of the human meaning of the gestalts witnessed. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT REALIZATION IN ALL THIS SELF-STUDY IS THAT ONE HAS BECOME A DETACHED AWARENESS OF THESE PROCESSES.

Rose makes a couple of statements regarding a key point about psychological introspection; an angle that is not considered in most materialistic schools of psychology. He claims: "You will not know what mental troubles are (all about) until you have risen above the mind dimension. The mind cannot analyze the mind with the mind" (Rose, 1982, p. 146). He adds: "True observation must be carried on from a superior dimension. The mind cannot be studied with the mind. It must be observed from some point, outside of, and yet superior to the mind" (Rose, 1982, p. 138-9).

These quotes may be confusing in that he has also been previously quoted as saying that meditation consists of the mind observing and studying the mind. The seeming contradiction is explained in that he is using the word "mind" to refer to two different levels or vantage points of mental experience. The mundane, thoroughly programmed, and extremely fallible somatic mind is the level which the Umpire monitors, and is the domain of mind that is unable to objectively assess itself from its own level. The Process Observer is likewise a function or point-of-reference in the mind, but it is on the highest plane within that mind dimension and is able to see the panorama below it from a viewpoint above and apart from that relative scene, without being invested in it. It could be said that the Process Observer is beyond the mind while one is "in" the mind, but it is of the mind when one is beyond the mind.

Our attention is generally wholly focused on the experience of life in which we find ourselves immersed. The practice of meditation involves the deliberate turning of this attention away from this stream of consciousness that usually has us helplessly and unknowingly mesmerized, and reversing this attention back upon itself. The importance of making this subjective switch in direction is not to be underestimated. Rose has said that when one is able to turn one's mental head at will, one is halfway home. He has also stated that this shift in reference point to the Process Observer from the total identification with the workings of the Umpire is what is referred to in Zen as "killing the mundane mind."

This is a shift in the actual level of the origin of one's seeing and not merely a different direction of seeing from the same level. One does not get a glimpse of the Observer, but now *from* it.

It is the Reconciliatory Principle that once more results in one's ascending to this higher point-of-reference. One is no longer wholly identified with any or all of the incredibly complex contents of one's consciousness, as the viewer cannot be the view that is seen, and this mental tableau is observable. One becomes the Process Observer.

Upon reaching the Process Observer, the aware self has attained the beginning of unity in itself, and is no longer subject to the domain of duality, as it was at all points below this level. One can never be completely lost in forgetfulness again. This Process Observer (point E) is the mind at its highest capacity for relative comprehension, and is the intersection point with the lowest part of the true Self (Rose, 1979c, p. 42-43).

This observer simply observes. It is aware of all physical functions, as well as all of the intricate psychological reactions and processes that go on simultaneously with the individual's somatic functioning, different states of perception, and mental apprehensiveness or intuitive input. It is able to discern the incorrect visualization projections based upon faulty perception that are otherwise misinterpreted by the inner or experiencing self as being reality. It is above and behind all these varying states of consciousness, and sees them as things apart from itself. It is pure in its vision and takes no sides. This observer is now the master of a whole new scene. One has taken the first major step inside of oneself – toward the final Self.

This process of observation has two beneficial consequences. First, the witnessing of one's subjective workings allows one to fully understand one's nature, and to recognize where the errors are in thinking, perceiving, responding, etc. that developed in oneself due to trauma, conditioning, incomplete information or perspective, and so on. This clear seeing of oneself – without identification and thus reflexive self-justification or self-recrimination – thereby brings about correction, as the false is recognized, the egos that would hold one's pathology in place are exposed, and intuition reveals what is a truer, or more complete state-of-being. This is a therapeutic function, and a welcome side-effect.

The second, and more important, result is that one realizes what one is not. Through relentless observation of the infinitely involved assortment of experiences, impressions, and reactions that collectively call themselves "me," and with which the anterior observing Self has mistakenly identified until now, one comes to realize that **one cannot be what one is observing**, and so everything in this subjective realm being witnessed is ontologically subordinate to oneself. The self at this point is *the Observer*.

After the practice of meditation on the self has gone on for some time, one discovers a subtle clue in retrospect from this study of the massive accumulation of mental "snapshots" of one's experiences. One realizes that *one has been a constant eye-witness (or I-witness) to one's entire life*, even if one was fully identified with any given thought, role, mood, obsession, etc. at the time it was happening, and fully asleep to one's aware self. This course of meditation reveals our successive states of identification with every reference point in experience that occurs. As we back away from this inner picture screen, we see that our entire life has actually been one, indivisible unit. The self is not any one part of it. One is really the ever-present observer of the whole process, which is seen to be an unbroken stream of consciousness. Here we are facing a very important question: "Who is it that observes the glassy fragments of thought and self, which, if sorted and properly arranged, will form some magic crystal ball that shall for all time answer our questions about our future (and destiny)?" (Rose, 1979c, p. 84).

Rose takes this evaluation of experience a step further by stating: "We may postulate that the universe is defined only in relation to the observer, or that meaning is an individual and varied

reaction, or result of observation" (Rose, 1979c, p. 63). He is saying that the universe is real only in relation to the final Self that is aware of it, and who is ultimately found to be the projector of it.

One discovers this by climbing to the top of Jacob's Ladder and seeing for oneself. This Ladder goes clear through and exits each person's mind, but its ultimate apex is found to be a single point (yet whose dimensions are infinite), where there are no longer any individual minds. As complex and unique as each person's inquiry must be, Rose offers a simple instruction that remains consistent: "There is a method of digging, and that is in observing everything; keeping your mind open to everything. You take the conciliatory position in which you use two eyes and see both things at once" (Rose, 1985, p. 256). With this, one rises.

Rose sums up the definition of the Process Observer like this: "(It) is the mind in its maximum ability to observe the individual and its complexities. It constitutes the all of the mind, with all of the abilities of that mind in all dimensions" (Rose, 1979c, p. 33). It can be visualized as a single, unblinking eye overseeing every category of consciousness. Nothing is hidden. We are all naked before what sees.

One's ascending to this level in the Psychology of the Observer meditation indicates a major signpost of spiritual development. Although Rose is always hesitant to suggest the path can be quantified or systematized in any dogmatic way, he has claimed that when one has become distinctly aware of consciousness, one is 3/4th the way up the ladder.

He goes on to define this more emphatically, and in doing so, clarifies a critical distinction that many teachings of meditation concerned with "expanding" or "raising" consciousness overlook: "Your own observer-position is reality. This awareness is closer [to Truth] than consciousness. Consciousness can be changed. Awareness won't. Awareness is real" (Rose, lecture, 1986). In the long quest of sorting through the many realms and levels of illusion, one finally breaks through to the beginning of what is real.

As a glance at the top of Jacob's Ladder indicates, Rose is claiming that this mental observer is still not the final answer to the grand search. He is referring to the triangle whose baseline is E - F when he states:

Man sees the body as well as the physical world with his mind. However, the mind is still not the Essence. The mind is a cloudy dimension that serves as a bridge between physical projections of the mind and the Essence itself (Rose, 1979c, p. 16-17).

He is saying that not only are we not the body-in-the-world, but we are not the mind either; even that highest part of the mind that watches every aspect of mental (which includes the physical) experience.

What is beyond this? Rose has said: "Awareness [or observation] of consciousness is the basis of experience." Although it may seem like a contrived play with words, what happens is that there is also awareness of this observation of experience. The Process Observer gradually notices it is not alone – or rather, *something else* becomes aware of it (Rose, 1979c, p. 33). There is the realization that this all-seeing "eye" is floating in a sea of undifferentiated awareness, so to speak. We become aware of the mind as being external to our awareness. Just as the Intuition whispered to the Umpire: "What you see is not all there is", thereby raising one's viewpoint to the Process Observer, now this awareness is silently confronting it with the query: "You see all of life – but what Master do you serve?" In other words, the great philosophical question again arises: "So what?" **Experience is a worthless and transient existence unless the *experiencer* is known.**

Rose has explained that the Process Observer is of the Manifested Mind, whereas its complementary pole, which he calls **Individualized Consciousness of Awareness**, is of the Unmanifested Mind; the full entrance into which is "the Mountain Experience." (For the sake of consistency of terminology and avoiding confusion – if not brevity, perhaps this should have been more precisely called: Individualized Awareness of the Observation of Consciousness.) The former is contained in, or projected by the latter. The significance of the distinction between the two can be approximately illustrated by likening the Process Observer to an eyeball and the non-localized Awareness to the sunlight surrounding its vision. One sees; the other is the larger "context" in which it sees, or enables it to see. It is what sees the seeing.

By this point, one realizes that the Process Observer – that which is called the "witness-consciousness" in Advaita – cannot be the all of the Self, but it does serve as a keyhole between the domain of relative consciousness and the dimension of spiritual awareness or Reality prior to it. Individualized Awareness of Consciousness is like the ray of light that passes through this keyhole, illuminating our vision of life. This focus on cultivating the awareness of consciousness is much of what Klein, Maharaj, and Maharshi's teachings of Advaita emphasize. Their domain of discourse is almost exclusively the top triangle of Jacob's Ladder.

This polarity of awarenesses – one focused on the relative world, both inner and outer, and the other unfocused, without seeming form or function, and its source unknown – forms the baseline (E - F) of the final triangle; that of Essence. Point F is the last outpost of individual awareness. What finally contains both poles of the observation of consciousness and the awareness of this observation is the **Absolute** – non-individualized, maximum awareness.

Rose makes a statement that is of profound significance to the seeker who has long been on the quest: "Behind the Process Observer is the self that only watches the Process Observer without qualification. This is awareness – **this is getting close to the Absolute**" (lecture, 1979). While conceptualizing any of the points on the Ladder is not recommended, to attempt to simulate awareness or reduce it to a concept is especially futile. It is the ultimate pole of individual subjectivity, and as such, cannot be regarded as any object of study. Rose also warns of the trap of feeling spiritual assurance by pretending to oneself that one really *is* this "aware self," after reading some guru's glorious account of it (one's not actually realizing this is deemed irrelevant), while in existential fact one is only maintaining this as a make-believe concept within the mind, and the self's point-of-reference is still fully identified with the fictional ego who can only dream of transcendence. One cannot imagine, evaluate, or acquire awareness. One can only *become aware*.

One of the hallmarks of attaining this baseline running between the Process Observer and Awareness is the magical state of betweenness. Once one no longer identifies with any one aspect of the dualistic world-scene and resides dispassionately in the Witness, the complex display of life is seen in balance, without egoistic contamination. Such a perspective allows things to "happen" as they need to, to their optimal end. One lives in a state of grace. One does not wobble.

Rose has likened our involvement with the world to the statue, Galatea, which has life breathed into it by the love of the sculptor. By itself, it is nothing, and what it imagines itself to be is nothing. But he points out that the person who loves the Galatea is really no better than the statue. Not only is Galatea – our game of life – just ego-born fiction, but the corporeal self-belief of its creator is finally seen to be fiction as well. Despite the seeker's ambition to attain immortality as an individual or to experience communion with a personal God, Rose refines the definition of the Self to its final status: "The observer [or seeker] is also a statue, except that part of him that is Absolute. For the Absolute is forever impersonal" (Rose, 1978, p. 171).

The meditative path up to the point of the Process Observer can be described with some measure of clarity and organization. Yet, Rose states that once one has evolved to the Process Observer as one's highest point-of-reference, little can be specifically "done" to move beyond this baseline (E - F) and further one's vector into Essence. The seeker has now reached the part of the path where there are no more railroad tracks to take one to the final destination. No generic map can be provided for every seeker, nor can the individual map out his own remaining steps with any certainty.

It is even possible that Rose does not know all the factors that had contributed to the breakthrough to his own Realization, but could only construct his system of inquiry based on what he deliberately did, manifestly learned, and was aware was happening to him. He has admitted there were undoubtedly other forces and mechanisms at work throughout his process of search and transformation about which he could know and do nothing. Taking this into consideration, it could not have been feasible for him to outline a complete methodology which would account for every variable in every seeker's inner and outer circumstances. So, not only must each person's path be unique, but even to the extent one general formula does apply to everyone, the necessary mystery to much of the path means it could never be fully defined even by one who has attained its goal. This is another reason why Rose must leave the precise working through of one's path as a personal matter.

Still, he reminds us again of the paradox that while Enlightenment is an accident, one must work to become accident-prone. Advaita Vedanta emphasizes "half" of this paradox in teaching that the evolution towards Enlightenment happens naturally by itself and there is nothing one can do to bring it about ("one" meaning the hypothetical person, not the aware Self in which it exists), as the very notion that there could be an individual who has the volition to do anything that exists apart from the holistic flow of life, especially to bring about the Realization of what already is, is false all the way down the line.

However, the other side of this paradox that Rose's teaching attempts to fill out is that the mind can (and must) prepare itself so that Realization can occur, even though in retrospect one may realize this work was an integral part of a bigger plan not determined or understood in advance by the seeker. The *becoming* is the shift in the point-of-reference of selfhood from the ego-mind to the Absolute, and the increase in mental capacity that this involves, until it becomes infinite. There is a spiritual evolution leading up to this awakening, which finally does "just happen." As to Advaita's contention that the path appears to be progressive only on this side of the line of relativity, while on the other side one finds that the Absolute already and always is, we must refer again to the metaphor of a bird landing on a branch causing the ripened fruit to fall. It could be said that the process of ripening is gradual, but the falling is instantaneous. Advaita stresses the importance of self-inquiry as the personal implementation of this evolution, but whether one identifies with the process as one's "doing" or the watching of it as it "happens" is irrelevant, so long as it occurs. "Inquiry" could be considered the identification with the self-correcting function of the mind when it is freed of resistance and being openly watched by the Mind. (In the field of law, the term: "Acts of God" is used to distinguish certain ordained happenings from "ours" – *but what isn't?* Where do we draw the line, and by what justification?)

What moves one beyond the Process Observer is the momentum of years of desire, investigation, battling against illusions, transmutation of energy, reconciliation of paradoxes, and perhaps more than a bit of righteous anger; all this being simultaneously observed by the anterior Mind. This incessant exercise of inner work and self-observation, this mass-effort, is one's vector aimed at *becoming*, and is what may carry one over the threshold of the finite mind. This determined vector is what finally cracks the cosmic egg. After prolonged, vigilant watching of one's gestaltic mind-games, the

Process Observer, in some unspecified way, becomes aware of itself above and beyond the relative, dualistic ego-mind.

Rose describes the ascendance from the baseline, E - F, to the top of the triangle of Essence like this:

From this point, as we look to the right, we notice that we can also look at awareness, and we can be aware of consciousness, and of looking at ourself looking indefinitely. We do not take a step forward, but are taken forward from here, by that which seems to be an accident – an accident which does not come unless we have struggled relentlessly to find that which was unknown to us, by a method which could not be charted because the end or goal was unknown. We must have first become a vector. We must first have spent a good period of time studying our own awareness and consciousness with our own consciousness until we accidentally or by some unknown purpose – enter the source of our awareness. Directions beyond the Process Observer depend upon a determination that sustains the seeker in the face of no methods and no blueprints (Rose, 1979c, p. 92)

As stated in the earlier section on meditation, Rose has designated the final step in the process of introspection to be: "Go within – employ whatever means necessary." He clearly has a distinctive meaning for this term, "going within," as he is distinguishing it from all the other steps, which are usually also collectively referred to as going within by most teachings of meditation. The main point to be deduced from this is that he is differentiating between the mind and the Self. He is not saying to enter the mind; he is saying to enter the Self.

To enter oneself means "to look simply, with direct-mind, at awareness itself" (Rose, 1985, p. 219), directing this intense attention into the origin of that awareness. Beyond a point, it is realized that frontally entering deeper into this empty, open stillness, and backing into it, away from relative experience, are the same thing. The tension of the koan of identity is taken to its extreme.

What happens next? Rose here points to what awaits those who are committed to seeing this quest through to the end: "The Process Observer is the mind in its deepest potentials. This becomes, with relentless meditation upon pattern possibilities and observing the observer processes, a dynamic study of the mind with the mind, and the results are an explosive quandary – disaster" (lecture, 1979). This forecast is not intended to imply there is any predictable methodology to precipitating something that can only be regarded as incomprehensible. Rose states this key point more directly: "The Process Observer accidentally finds a means to explore the mind on all levels. It can be said another way: by accident, *our awareness transcends the mind*" (Rose, 1979c, p. 61).

His most concise instruction to bring one to this end is simply: "**Keep to the course of self-observation until Realization is achieved.**" The obsession he wishes to induce in his teaching is for one to realize the need to look, and to continue to look, until there is no longer a looker. The mind is seen as a bridge to cross; an erroneous dimension to transcend. The purpose of meditation, which is Jacob's Ladder, is to pass through this mental self, tracing back along one's projected ray of "I am," and to purify the definition of the ultimate observer, which is found to be Reality.

As should be apparent from the account of his teaching thus far, the path Rose describes is not one that encourages peacefulness and joy, and thus may repel many prospective seekers who insist upon a path that promises serenity or delight as its primary characteristic and sole criteria for determining the truth. Rose instead promises years of effort and aloneness, the hardship of confronting the many facets of one's ignorance, and restless wariness in the uncertain race between *becoming* and

death. Rose regards the Albigen System as one of artful sobriety, rather than presumptuous celebration.

Progress on the path is evidenced by one's becoming healthier in body, clearer in mind, and stronger in character, as many sources of conflict and suffering are resolved inside. This does result in some poise, in greater balance, and personal freedom. At the same time, however, the path becomes still steeper and more ethereal. One approaches relative sanity, yet finds oneself still stuck in a dreamlike dimension of no certain validity, and the sand in the hourglass running out.

At this point, the seeker of conventional expectations may reflexively assume there is to be a happy turn of events for the better, as a reward from the Divine for one's dedication and perseverance. But, to the contrary, Rose assures us that things will get seemingly even worse!

As a serious aside, it should be noted that it is difficult if not impossible to discern between what in Rose's teaching is objective, universal fact, and what is the testimonial of his own unique experience, translated into philosophical principles intended to be pertinent to everyone else. He admits there are other routes one may take that might also get to the goal; some less strenuous and definitely less direct. However, the biographies of the great sages throughout history indicate the gap between the relative and the Absolute is not easily bridged. The gate to the Kingdom only stubbornly opens. Their accounts are unanimous in agreeing that the price of Self-Realization is the death of what one previously assumed to be the self, along with all its beliefs about reality. What may vary is the amount of force it takes to effect this death, and this may largely depend upon *how much of the seeker there is left to die by the end of the path.*

The more one dies before one dies, the less there will be left to die at the end. Likewise, the transition into death becomes easier if at least a partial shift in one's reference point of identity has occurred to the aware Self before death. Just as abandoning a bad habit or forsaking a prized possession is painful in its anticipation and during its loss, but is then recognized to have been a barnacle of which one is glad to be free after one's identification with it has been severed, so is one's ego-self regarded after death as having been a nagging barnacle also, from which the "I" is now relieved. Zen explodes this ego-self. Advaita dissolves it. The Albigen System does both.

When old identities and realities are lost or given up, one must resist the temptation to replace them with what is desired, based upon human values and levels of understanding. Rose states: "Don't try to create a different paradigm. Don't try to put something down there at the other end of the line [the opposite pole from the known in the triangulation]. Put nothing down there. Don't try to replace it. Contemplate possible nothingness" (Rose, 1985, p. 248). Confronting the void within us as well as on the other side of death requires great courage, as well as honesty.

Ironically, although this teaching seems to be the direct opposite of the path of innocent devotion, this manner of search is actually manifesting true faith, and the maximum surrender. We do not really have faith if we substitute our own ego-generated values for that of the unknown God's. Spirituality means to die to the Truth, not to create what we want. Simply put: so long as we believe ourselves to be separated from Reality, faith means to trust that Reality is right. Moreover, the attitude recommended is not even a matter of faith, strictly speaking, as that is still dualistic and usually includes the assumption of divine benevolence in human terms, which the honest seeker has no right to assume. What is required is a mature posture of non-dualism beyond faith and non-faith both, which is the open acknowledgement of WHAT IS. This means to not stand separate from one's life and either feel confident that things will work out a certain way or fear they will not, with some celestial monitor of unknown motives tipping the scale. There is no separation. One is one's life and the totality of one's life is one's path. In such a state of betweenness, to the sincere all roads lead to home.

The unknowing that is being referred to here is not a simple matter of one's not knowing a finite piece of information. The unknowing becomes much more complicated; much more expansive. At some point, our very sense of living in a real world as a valid self and being able to understand anything for sure becomes jeopardized. This entire dimension and all its rules are found to be no longer entirely and dependably real. One finds oneself in the Twilight Zone. This increasingly desperate obsession with watching the world of experience, as well as studying the processes of observation, mental reactions, and personal convictions, leads to the point of uncertainty, confusion, and disorientation concerning the true nature of things, inner and outer. This is as it should be. "The world melts," or rather our ego's interpretation of experience that holds the world together – which is our world, and one accepts the possibility of there being alternate natures for things apparent.

It is important to understand a troubling aspect of the kind of path Rose and his peers are describing; something that differentiates this level of teaching from others that do not lead towards an actual change in being.

It is understandable to expect that the further along the spiritual path one goes, the more sensible and clearly defined things should become. We naturally want to become more certain about the truth of the values and meanings we see around us as we progress in our search. Towards the end of this particular kind of inquiry, however, one may find oneself becoming *less* certain about the definitions of specific issues, rather than more. This may cause the seeker to question the worth of the spiritual search itself or simply if one is dismally failing at it. What is the meaning of this development, and why do most teachings fail to account for it?

The reason is that most paths do not see the need to first accurately define the self who is looking for the Truth before proceeding with the investigation, but merely presume the seeker to be perfectly genuine and complete, as is, and the issue is simply a question of finding the right discipline or dogma that will reveal the answer to this individual. The error in this approach, as has been incessantly explained, is that the self is not inherently valid nor precise as found, and no final answer can be appreciated so long as the "I" who would be its happy recipient is still identified with any number of false or lesser selves. Strictly speaking, the final answer could not be experienceable by any quality of individual, as any form of individuality within diversity still implies relativity, whereas Truth can only be non-finite and irreducible. As Rose keeps reminding us, one can only **become** it.

What happens is that as the inquiry into self-definition continues, life-values are found to be in a state of flux because one's point-of-reference on the questioning and answering is no longer in one certain spot. This foundational, judicious self that one had confidently accepted previously as being "me" is realized to be in fact several selves and in many different places at once, or in alternation, having no single, objective overview. Since multiple possible vantage points within relative experience are seen to exist, all equally justifiable, every issue can be perceived and evaluated from more than one perspective. Therefore, one cannot claim to have the final, definitive assessment about the true state of things from any single position. The Mind that comprehends all conditional viewpoints in Reality is still "behind" us.

In this state, one can flounder in great insecurity. One is now doubting not only everything that is seen, *but even the very authenticity of the seer*. One existentially confronts the fact that the real "I" is unknown, and is left with only the nameless awareness of the assorted "I's" that all clamorously claim to exclusive selfhood. As distressing as this phase can be, especially when encountering others who seem to be quite certain and comfortable with their own settled convictions, this is actually a highly mature form of security in that one no longer has anything to hold onto – not even oneself as a concept of belief (which is all one ever was anyway, whether knowing it or not). All that remains at this point is the pure awareness of inquiry.

This can be a rough period in the search and will test the seeker's commitment to the truth to the fullest, as well as the resolve to resist grasping at straws of attractive make-believe...including the futile attempt to reaffirm one's own fading pseudo-reality as the ground-of-being. However, this open and humble state of uncertainty is still closer to honest knowing than is the certainty rooted in one's being fully identified with any one point-of-reference that is only an ego-centered and possibly even deluded "self" in the relative world, rather than that state of being that contains all selves and points-of-reference. Again: the unknowing is an essential part of the becoming. The proverbial Dark Night of the Soul is better regarded as the Dark Night of the Ego. Referring to this final transition, Jim Burns has added the peculiar comment: "If it wasn't impossible, it wouldn't be possible," meaning the real answer can only be wholly *other* and out of the human realm, across an infinite chasm of magic. We cannot ultimately answer ourselves. We can only be answered from beyond, where Truth resides. This is our prayer.

With this perspective in mind, Self-Realization could be described as the realization that there is no self to realize – and only then discovering the real Self that has been watching this entire, noble, pathetic process of futility and tail-chasing all along. This is what Rose means by looking until there is no longer a looker. Not only must all false selves and presumptions of knowing be abandoned, but all one's gods must also die – before God is finally revealed. This is the Crucifixion.