

## Chapter 7

# An Approach to Validity

Once these prerequisite guiding principles of the path are understood as a foundation, how does one begin to inquire? We begin by coming to know the extent of our ignorance. Recognizing one's current state of confusion is the first big step towards wisdom. Rose repeatedly asks us: "**What do you know for sure?** Do you believe more than you really know?" This is a most humbling question. We must ask ourselves serious questions about our nature and identity, about the meaning of life on earth, about why we are driven to keep reproducing relentlessly, about the workings of thought and mind, about the possibility of spiritual knowledge, about *knowing*. When we do, we will become increasingly troubled by the admission of our lack of answers. We come to realize how much of our lives has been lived in a dull haze of assumption and belief, of projection and pretension, in comforting sleep that buffers us from existential terror at the unknowing and become aware that time is running out. Are we anything more than automatic meat, racing on a treadmill to oblivion? We must begin to define the real issues that define what we are.

Following is a series of questions posed by Rose in various writings and talks (Rose, 1979a, p. 3945; 1988, p. 211225; lectures 1979, 1986). It outlines some of the major themes in his teaching. The questions can be seen to form a pattern. They have a direction. They are pointing at something. His approach to teaching is evident in the way these questions negate our common bluff of relying upon unexamined convention, and discriminate between shades of meaning relevant to the central topic of final selfdefinition. The range of questions delineate the territory that must be covered in the search and bring into sharp focus all the specific factors that must be understood in order for one to truly know the self and have comprehension of our experience of life. Each question contains a hundred other questions. Answering the questions is not the whole path, but Rose would certainly say that one is not on a mature path if one is not working to answer them.

The questions confront the seeker headon, and one must resist the reflex to blink and turn away, or lazily rationalize in trust that "God" knows and "that's good enough for me." These questions define an approach to validity. Rose wishes to back the seeker into objective knowledge and discovery. These questions are actually some of the real, living koans that will lead to such knowledge.

What is wisdom?

Why are we here?

Does a man enjoy, or is he consumed?

Are we the highest link in the food chain? Why should we assume that we are? Could anything be eating us?

Does a man really reason...or is it all a complex rationalization?

Does a man rationalize...or is he so programmed?

Can a man become?

How shall he know what he should become?

Is there a God?

What is the nature of God? What are His dimensions?

Why does God need man?

Is there a heaven?

Is it important to know first about heaven, or first, about God?

Or is it not better to know first about man?

What is equality?

Is a baby equal to a dying man?

Was Samson equal to Delilah?

Who or what are you?

What is life? What is death?

Is all religion and philosophy merely rationalization emanating from the mind, to answer constant cellular awareness of death?

Is evil the child of Good...or is it a twin?

Is Satan God's adversary or employee?

Does God approve the sin game?

Why do we presume that God is good according to our standards?

If a man drives a horse through a plate glass window, should the man be prosecuted...or is it the horse that should be prosecuted?

What is valid? Is a rock valid?

Unless we know that which a rock is to itself, how can we know its validity?

If the rock is only our projection, does it have any validity?

What is real?

Is a mirage real?

How much of life is a mirage?

Is a dream real? If not why not?

Is wakefulness a dream? Is it an undefined state qualified by erratic or inferior senses? Is an idea more real than a planet?

How reliable is the mind?

Do we witness the material world through or with the senses?

Is there a pure, or direct sense?

Is all of our Reality merely a collective belief?

How can we have an accurate worldview if we are prone to the projection of a paradigm?

If we can fool ourselves repeatedly about other people, how can we know for certain about subjective matters?

If we cannot see the many instances in everyday life whereby we are fooled how can we pierce the infinite with this exceedingly finite mind?

Is mind a faculty through which we observe God...as through a glass darkly?

Is God a personal being, or will He forever remain impersonal and nondimensional?

Is it possible to know God before knowing the Self?

Is it possible to know anything?

What must truth constitute?

Are there gradations of truth (small t and capital T)?

Do desires and prejudices do your thinking for you?

*Do you lie to yourself?* If so, how can you know the truth?

Is virtue established by psychological edict? ...by ecclesiastical vote...or by the requisites of our ultimate essence?

Is truth decided by that which most people think (or want)...or by that which is?

Is truth learned...or is it only experienced?

Is there really a divine essence available to those who seek and are sincere?

What does behaviorism prove? What do the tracks made by an animal prove? Do they tell you about the essence or purpose of that animal?

What is the correct definition of sanity or sane thinking? Is it thinking that promotes or sustains survival (including ultimate survival)?

Are we not running great risks regarding spiritual survival in accepting the evaluation of sanity that presumes average behavior is normal and without price? ("Average means mediocre.")

Can all behavior, merely because of its high rate of incidence, be considered sane, or are there not some actions performed by the majority that are not logically excusable?

Can sanity be determined by logic? Is sanity that state that most accurately approaches the knowledge of things as they really are and the knowledge of the true nature of oneself?

Could sanity ever mean that state of mind with perfect understanding of all problems? A state of mind in which the altering lens of ego has been removed from our mental vision or perception? ("We see a lot of things through our ego. Do we incorporate ego into sanity? Is the egotistical person insane to a degree, in that his ego somewhat colors his mental processes?")

Could a state of sanity ever be approached?

Is direct mind cognition in relation to true sanity possible?

What is the relation between sanity and reality?

What is reality and how do we find it? How do we determine it?

Can we identify ourselves?

Are we that which we think we are? ("We all look in the mirror and say, 'Oh, you're a good looking rascal. I know who you are. You're the one who's going to get me all the things I want'")

Who are we? An animated body and a suppressed, stagnated soul? What is the self? The body, with a somatic mind? The mind? Is there a self beyond the mind?

When a person asks himself a question, are there then two people or selves involved one who speaks and one who hears? (Who is aware of this dialogue occurring?)

What sees, what remembers, what reacts to perception and memory?

Is there a soul? What is a soul?

Did it exist before the body, or must it be developed, grown, or evolved?

Do we have a soul? If so, who is it then who "has" this soul? Are we a soul? Are we the awareness of a soul?

Is not identification of the self necessarily the isolation of the self from its environment?

If this is true, where is the boundaryline?

Is the body a part of the environment or is it you?

Have all the prenatal factors for behavior been explained? How far back should you go? Only 9 months? Where do you draw the line between the consciousness of one entity and that of another? (Does the sperm/egg that creates the new person belong to the baby or to the parents?)

Are you a distinct, individual entity or a multiplicity of drives and voices? If there is such a conglomerate, how is the Real Self isolated?

Are we selves having many facets or are we a unique self, artfully invaded?

Is the body part of the Self or a garment of the spirit?

Is the mind part of the Self?

When a man loses his mind, where does his self go? Where did the mind go?

Is our ulterior self in our heads or in our groins?

What is power?

Who possesses?

When you describe bouncing...do you describe the striking object or that which is struck? ("This will tell us something about karma.")

When a tree bends over, does it create wind by waving its branches?

What are we? Are we merely a compound of chemicals and corruption? Are we cast here for a reason or are we a complicated accident?

What is real meaning? (Not your purpose in life; THE purpose of Life.)

Is it not vain to presume that man caused man? Or that man knows why man is here?

Why build ant hills before knowing what an ant is?

Why do we build conceptual towers of Babel about human thinking...before we know that which thought is?

How many full hours do we spend analyzing our thought processes?

Does a robot have any meaning or purpose beyond the intentions of the designer?

Can a robot program itself in any degree?

Can an individual decide on something outside the scope of that which is his limited perspective?

When does a man begin to think, and how can he continue to be the thinker and not a puppet? What is serious thought; genuine thought?

Is there only one dimension? Does not the possibility of multiple dimensions weaken our significance and our pretended potential for controlling our environment?

If we wish to plan our lives, do we not need to consider while planning that it may be all planned, and that we have no choice? How do we plan around that possibility?

What is the mind? What are its limits, its dimensions?

What is thought? Where does thought occur?

Thought ends and the soul begins where?

Is thought a faculty of the body; does the body create them?

Or does the body receive thoughts, poorly, from the mind dimension, and even transmit them?

Does the brain generate thought like a radio generates the message coming from its speaker?

Is thought something received or something projected?

Is thought limited to the brain?

What is the relation between thought and mind? Are they the same? Is thought a mindextrusion?

What are we implying when we say, "I think"?

Do we willfully think, or are we caused to think?

Is thought a possession or an obsession?

Do you think or are you a thought?

If we cannot willfully think, do we ever really make decisions?

What is experience?

Do we experience, or are we experienced?

Are we the view or the viewer?

Do we create the idea of creation? Or are we the created idea?

Is time only a relative conceptualization? What is the reality of time?

What is duration? Does time pass or is it only you who passes?

Is time an illusion that prevents us from experiencing a Self that has no motion?

Is thought synaptic or spiritual?

What is the relation between a synapse (or a reaction, meaning: thought) and awareness?

Do we identify the self with that which thinks? Or is the self identified as that which is conscious...even conscious of thinking?

Is consciousness the same as awareness?

What is awareness? Where is it located?

What is the difference between awareness and the thought of awareness?

Who is aware (of being aware, etc.)?

Is "your" awareness in you...or *of you*?

Who then are you?

Can a man watch himself?

Are there two people in such an act, or is one only the view?

Is thought the viewing of our own projections, and nothing more?

If we can observe our thoughts, who is looking?

If we think about thought, is thought then objective and separate from the thinking self?

Is there a thinking self, or only an awareness that witnesses reactions and may possibly witness a pseudoself or ego?

Is such a thinker someone who dreams of yesterday, thinking that he watches a dreamer or is he a detached watcher of past and present thoughts who is awake and aware of the mechanical man?

Does the body manufacture subtle little essences called thoughts?

Or does the body develop receiving mechanisms or chemicals so that it will be aware of possible external essences?

Would such an external essence be called the mind? If so, would that mind be external to the body?

Are we then a body being influenced by an external mind?

Or are we the external mind?

Does a man's soul or essence make contact with the body of the man in energy generated by the gap of the synapses?

Is the inner man any more than conscious energy?

What is the relation between thought and the glands?

Does gland energy increase or decrease the thought process? ("This is the whole idea behind transmission.")

Is it possible that man can, with energy transmuted upward, produce thoughts with volition, rather than just submit to reacting?

Will you ever be free and at the same time be aware?

Is the photon an intelligent messenger of God?

Is the photon a distraction being that dazzles the human eye so that he cannot see the realities found in introspection?

Is real knowing, not knowing?

Shall the finite mind ever perceive the infinite?

Is it possible to attain spiritual realization by any means?

Is it true that the only question worth answering is whether or not we should commit suicide?