

## Introducing the TAT Foundation

**R**ichard Rose believed that progress on a spiritual path was linked to one's efforts at helping others. He coined the terms "Law of the Ladder" and "Ladder Work" to describe the levels he observed among those seeking the Truth, or ultimate answers to the source of life and what lies beyond death. He also believed that one could only effectively help, or be helped by, others who were on the same or adjacent rungs of the ladder. To that end, he encouraged seekers to become members of the TAT Foundation—or for that matter, *any* group of genuine, sincere seekers.

While he disliked organizational structures, he also recognized the potential value that such a structure had as a vehicle for magnifying the matrix of the ladder. He coined the term "Contractor's Law" to describe the "extra-proportional returns" realized when a group of people combined efforts in a common cause.

On these twin ideas, the TAT Foundation—often referred to as the "TAT Society" in earlier years—was created in 1973 to serve as a vehicle for ladder work that would survive any one person or group of students. Richard Rose believed strongly in "giving back" and "passing it on," and the existence today of the TAT Foundation is a living testimony to the vector he established, to the collective vector of his students, past and current, and to the power of the ladder itself.

Ultimately, it was Richard Rose's dream to form an organization grounded in what he found so little of in his years of searching—sincerity. Circa 1978, he wrote about the principles, benefits and difficulties involved in forming and maintaining a spiritual group. His treatise, called *The Grand Work of the TAT Society*, still serves as the bedrock of today's TAT Foundation.



### **The Grand Work of the TAT Society** by Richard Rose

**I**t has been my privilege to know, at different times in my life, three enlightened people. Besides those three, I know of several more whom I did not meet, but became aware of their depth of Spiritual awareness or their claim to have reached enlightenment, by writing to them.

I found a common denominator in my association with all of these people, and that was that we could not work together. I considered Spiritual Work to be the most important human function, and I am sure they did also. But privately all of them knew that we could not find a common language, nor could each find a common ground for working together in what appeared to be necessarily highly individualized systems or paths of teaching, and sometimes we could not even find a good method of just keeping in contact and exchanging ideas.

This knowledge made me feel very desperate and determined to do something about it. After all, are we not all working for the same goal, which is Truth, which is God if God is found through the search for Truth, or for the Absolute, if the Absolute is found through a search for Truth?

There are millions of people looking for the Truth through established religions, and they profess that they are equating Truth with God. And the world is continually dismayed to find religious wars by millions who profess to be killing for the “true God.” They do not KNOW that they are killing for the “true God,” they merely believe or have faith. And we can probably write off their isms, noting that they will not get anywhere until they quit believing and start seeking.

But there are hundreds of thousands who have turned away from blind faith, and have joined some esoteric, metaphysical or occult group in hopes that this group will be recognized (by its fruits) as a bona fide method of searching and seeking. And in this smaller group of people we find that it is really a loose conglomerate of many cults, smaller still, each of which has a language and method peculiar to itself. Divisiveness is the chief denominator of these groups also. Some of this divisiveness is caused by financial competition, or the campaign for membership that sometimes involves one movement stating its claims in such superlatives that any future demonstrations for tolerance by its leaders or writers for other movements would imply the other movements might be worthwhile.

We go on to the highest form of Spiritual Work, the Realization of the Essence of Man. The final definition of man. And with this definition,--the realization of ultimate and absolute definitions of the nature of everything visible. This last sentence is included in this level of work because of the testimony of those who claim to have reached self-definition. The claim is that self-definition brings with it the definition of all things, and a realization of the Nature, or Absolute, or God, behind all things.

And in this third category, whose membership involves no more than one in a million, if we are to believe Richard M. Bucke (author of the book, *Cosmic Consciousness*), there is likewise no harmony between its members. The Tower of Babel casts its shadow on all levels. We are dissembled and mute.

Over a period of many years I tried to do something about this Spiritual Babel. I traveled back and forth across the country visiting people, temples, ashrams, and prelates of established churches. Everywhere I met the same smiles of patient condescension that indicated that I had just not reached their level of understanding yet. I received this attitude regardless of the level from which the person came. They did not bother to ask me about my level,--each felt that there was only one church,--one spiritual path,--and one level, and that was the one with which they identified themselves.

I did not give up. In 1956 I placed an ad in a magazine that was published for people of occult interests. I received hundreds of answers, and almost each represented a different tangent from the others. It was discouraging, but I still learned a lot from those letters.

For instance, I have just named the three major categories of seekers. The first might be called the Believers. The second group, which numbers in the hundreds of thousands, might be called the Investigators. This second group is really trying to use their heads. They are very sincere, usually, but they spend entire individual lives in a single investigative search, such as Magic, Astrology, Trance Work, Yoga, astral projection, or in the examination of any or all of the gimmicks that come out of the East packaged as holy merchandise.

The third category we might call the Becomers. These people go in for ways to find the Truth by processes which usually involve a change of state of mind and this in turn leads to a change of being. Those who have reached enlightenment (the word being synonymous with Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi, an attainment of an Absolute state or ultimate trip) all equate that acquisition or realization with a necessary change of being. Man does not discover the Truth. He becomes the Truth.

I learned that you cannot just put people into these categories and pigeon-hole them securely. They infiltrate different levels and tend to convey naïveté if they are reaching upward into a group beyond their complete understanding, and they convey unwarranted encouragement if they reach down to a group that may use their name and reputation to further the aims of a lesser group.

But the most unfortunate thing that I learned was that truly enlightened people are still confused about the proper communication with those on lower levels, and this communication uses such poor systems or vehicles for conveying their instruction as to proper methods for attaining the higher consciousness,—that the general inquirer often winds up doubting that the person is enlightened at all because of the latter's preoccupation with what is often a waste of time.

Paul Wood was one of the men who I met that convinced me that he was truly enlightened. However, his system was discouraging to almost everyone he met. He insisted upon having people repeat and study the Lord's Prayer. Now the Lord's Prayer is basically part of the structure of organized Christianity, which is identified as being in the group called the Believers. Now the strange truth is that Paul himself came upon his Realization while clinging to the Lord's Prayer for counsel and guidance. He had an opening of the mind as a result. It seems only fair to assume that if Paul is going to transmit, it will be done by the same leverage that was used upon him. But this is not true; *each man blooms from a different catalyst*. The only thing that the enlightened men have in common is that which they find. So that it is better to encourage an inward search, without demanding to find for the student an exact formula or discipline. Likewise, we are saying that we should pursue the search, which process may be helped by creating conditions that will help anyone regardless of their unique catalysts. These conditions include the conscious effort to bring people together, and to provide retreats or ashrams for meditative purposes.

Katherine B., a lady who experienced Cosmic Consciousness, approached me twenty years ago, inquiring as to that which she could do with her Realization. We have another case of genuine Realization, but accompanied by no direction or method. She was overwhelmed with the urge to now become a healer. She knew that no one would listen to her advice unless she met them on some sort of sensational basis, and exuded some sort of dynamic purpose and compelling

language. She argued that she would attract attention with her healing, as Christ did, and then give out her advice in the form of a devotional message. I could not find myself in that type of picture and our correspondence ended. She was a living, walking example of a person who has experienced all of life and death, and who is now walking amongst us. But this person cannot make herself properly understood. Nor can she work with people on the Becomers level. She too is back in the Believers section, because she is talking of healing through faith.

We can see where the highest of levels can become once more entangled with lower levels and lose their importance. There are also many individuals who have reached the highest experience but who despaired all their lives about communication, and did not ever communicate. I was one of these people until I accidentally met some energetic young people who pledged themselves to work at the grand task.

We can add more confusion to the problem when we realize that enlightenment is not the property of any particular level alone. Some Believers, like St. Theresa, and John of the Cross, penetrated their level and transcended it. The Kabbalists are investigators whose literature gives evidence that some of them may have reached an ultimate formula. And on the other hand, many of those who join a cult aimed at Becoming often get sidetracked in preconceptions of what they think becoming should be for them rather than allowing themselves to change in response to the inevitable refinements of Truthfulness, and the parallel labor of constantly retreating from untruth.

And so we, as a group, set ourselves a task. We realized that we must make available, if possible, more advantage than that which brought us forth from ignorance and uncertainty. The task lies in attempting to find better and better ways to reach into all levels or groups for the purpose of bringing fellows together. The aim is not gregariousness, but the sharing of many experiences that took many lives in the gathering. The aim is also the making available of the function of transmission for those who might recognize the usefulness of such.

The TAT Society undertook this in 1973, to bring together, in a sort of Chautauqua, people from all levels and experiences, so that people could meet other people of like and also of different interests. The Albigen System has seemed to many to be a monolithic and inflexible system. However this appraisal came about as a result of not completely understanding the system, or not reading the book [*The Albigen Papers*] comprehensively. We speak of a Spiritual Ladder, and a Law regarding it. How can there be a ladder without rungs? While we know that we cannot function expeditiously on all rungs, and also know we can function at best on three (the one we are on, the one above to which we look for advice and teaching, and the one below where we can help others without too much risk), we can still help someone on the rung below who in turn needs to work on still a more basic rung to help still more people. To provide people for all these opportunities needed to fulfill the Law of the Ladder we must be prepared to bring together people of all those many levels.

Of course you cannot go out into the crossroads and drag in, or allow in, everyone who wants to mingle. There must be some fundamental purpose in each besides being involved socially. And each must abide by certain simple rules. No one should make a pest of himself, and no one should bring alcohol or narcotics to the meetings, in their body or on their body.

We must distinguish between the function of the TAT Society and the <sup>1</sup>Pyramid Zen Society. The TAT Society is the parent, and the PZS is a function of it. While the PZS group should not be assailed or irritated by non-agreeing other members of TAT, no one should deny the opportunity for the formation of a unique group within the TAT Society, provided the TAT Society gives it permission [to claim association].

If this above information is explained to new people coming into the weekly group meetings, they may find a comfortable place to work, even if they do not agree with the Albigen System. I feel that the TAT Society is strong enough at this point to withstand any attempts by newcomers to undermine or take over our work.

I know that many people who know of this effort of ours will minimize its importance, saying that things like this should be left to chance or gravity, or indicating that we can easily contact fellows of like interest through the media whenever we wish.

It is true that we can advertise and get large responses. But it is another thing when we try to communicate with hundreds of people for the purpose of sorting out two or three that we can work with. I have been honestly trying to bring these various esoteric factions together for forty years, and in the first thirty-four years was able to meet only about a dozen people who appeared to be in agreement with the idea of cooperation.

In the last six years I have been fortunate in meeting at least a hundred people who are in agreement. Part of this success has occurred because of a miraculous decade that began around 1965 and is now ending. The pendulum is swinging back into another long era marked by dormant, established religions, pressing against anything that appears less than that which is currently defined as being conventional. Esotericism has already been assailed as being the pastime of sinners, atheists and degenerates. And many of the cults that herded together under the banner of transcendentalism and Esotericism have rightly earned for themselves, and for the whole field of esoteric investigation, the criticism and disdain of the public.

We are returning to the dark days of forty years ago. The alchemist, Kabbalist and mystic must once more become inconspicuous. And this is going to make it harder for mystic to find mystic, or for sage to find students of worth.

The job is upon us, and it is worthwhile. The job is to encourage membership in the TAT Society, and to prepare at the [TAT Retreat Center] a better place for them to meet.



---

<sup>1</sup> The Pyramid Zen Society was the name of the early esoteric group that worked with the Albigen System. During the early 1970's, several different groups met weekly, primarily on college campuses in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

## TAT Membership Benefits

**T**AT was founded on the belief that your investigation of life's mysteries is expedited by working with others who are exploring, perhaps down a different road, so that you may share your discoveries, exchange ideas, and "compare notes" in order to come to a better understanding of yourself and others. Richard Rose described TAT as having the following purpose:

*To encourage, coordinate and disseminate the study of Christian and other systems of religion, philosophy and mysticism for the purpose of education...and to promote the implementation of methods of spiritual attainment.*

TAT is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 100%-volunteer organization established in 1973 to provide a forum for philosophical and spiritual inquiry. We are committed to keeping the teaching of Richard Rose alive and available to the public. His unique, common sense approach to the spiritual path is of value to all. We gather four times each year, and there are study groups in various cities where the philosophic, the spiritual, and the scientific can meet on equal ground. TAT members also meet informally and spend time in solitude at the rustic, mountain retreat.

TAT membership provides an opportunity for finding and sharing the inspiration to continue our searches through discussion of our successes and setbacks with fellow-seekers. Active membership of \$40 per person per calendar year includes lodging during the four TAT meetings each year. One membership covers husband and wife. Those who would like to come to a TAT meeting but are not sure if they want to become members may attend one meeting other than the Spring Conference as a guest. Associate membership for those unable to come to the retreat center will be given for any donation of \$20 or more.

Your donations directly support the services that TAT provides. TAT is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational organization and qualifies to receive tax-deductible contributions.

TAT's services to members and fellow seekers are numerous. The TAT Foundation was created as a focal point for a circle of friends who could each give and receive help in the spiritual quest. Our interest in improving TAT as an organization is to provide the following services and assistance:

- Maintain a Community Building as a hospitable meeting and retreat center for TAT members who wish to hold events.
- Sponsor four meetings a year, which allow seekers the opportunity to discuss ideas and spark thought-provoking insights and personal realizations.
- Promote the books and recordings of Richard Rose, offer rare book titles, and support related websites so that hard-to-find information is easily available to the public.
- Maintain the TAT website and publish the monthly *Forum*, which houses a valuable collection of fresh essays, poetry, opinions and insights.

- Maintain cabin facilities for periods of isolation at our retreat center, where members take time for personal reflection ranging in length from long weekends to multi-week stretches.
- Offer workshops and retreats around the country where members work more intensely on self-observation so they gain additional insights into their selves.
- Provide quarterly e-newsletters and an annual retrospective covering news about TAT members, organizational activities, internal business, groups in other cities, and the agenda for the upcoming TAT meetings.
- Support members who have established groups in other cities to provide a non-dogmatic environment where people work together to discover a true understanding of their selves.



### **For More Information...**

**T**AT welcomes your questions! If you would like to learn about the TAT Foundation or Richard Rose and his philosophy, please visit [www.tatfoundation.org](http://www.tatfoundation.org) or email us at [tatsociety@tatfoundation.org](mailto:tatsociety@tatfoundation.org). We'll also let you know if there are any TAT members in your area, in case you'd like to contact them.