

The Realization of Richard Rose

*The following three descriptions illustrate the depth and profundity of Richard Rose's Enlightenment experience, which occurred at the age of 30. Each description is cast in his own words, albeit in different formats and during different time periods in his life. A complete poetic account of his experience can be found in his book **The Albigen Papers**.*

If you like the dynamism and spontaneity of Richard Rose as speaker and teacher, please read his books, which are available which are available at www.rosepublications.net or www.tatfoundation.org.

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*Excerpted from **The Direct-Mind Experience** by Richard Rose, pages 83-84, 1985.*

It occurred in Seattle, Washington -- I was thirty years of age at the time and I had been fed-up several times with what I was doing. I had been into yoga and other things, and several times between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty I had given it up and wished I could go out, get drunk, and forget about it. In fact, I had gone to Seattle to get married and I was going to chuck the whole thing. I said, 'If I get married, I'll throw it out -- forget about it.'

But while I was there I picked up a job, and again I gravitated down toward the library. I'm back down there reading books on yoga, and doing my yoga exercises -- trying to marry the two, the mundane world, and this mental drive that I had. I think that this was the catalytic factor that caused the experience -- trying to bring these two together. I could be wrong.

I had a room in an apartment hotel of sorts, and I would come home every day, sit up on the bed with my feet tucked up under me, meditate and think. So this particular day I sat there -- and I started to get a pain in the top of my head, right in the center of the top. The pain got worse -- in fact it got so bad that I started weeping.

Tears started to come out of my eyes. I couldn't stand it, and I thought, 'Oh boy, three thousand miles from home and I've got to blow my stack. That's what is happening.' I thought that I would have a stroke or possibly go crazy. Because I didn't think that it would just stop on its own.

But I was aware at the peak of this pain of going out the hotel window. I was aware of actually seeing people who were on the street at the time, except that I was above them. This was in daylight, incidentally, it wasn't night. My window looked out toward the Cascade Range of snowcapped mountains. And I watched this just as if I were in an airplane, passing underneath me.

And then there was sort of a time flipover, in which I was no longer over the Cascade Range -- now I could see all of humanity. I knew that all I had to do was look wherever I wanted, and I

could see any man who ever lived or would live. There was no such thing as time. These people were all living now -- all I had to do was to check them out, if I wished.

So I looked and I saw myself. I could see myself struggling down there -- Richard Rose -- I could see his whole life pattern. I'm still in a sort of astral projection form, I'm still much attached to the body, to these people, and I feel a tremendous amount of grief. A tremendous amount of sadness for this seemingly senseless struggle.

Then I realized that I was both humanity and my individual self, and that I was everything. And in an instant I realized that humanity didn't exist and that I didn't exist. But that I did exist in nothingness and everythingness, infinitely. And how long this lasted I had no way of checking, because I was alone and when I came back it was rather traumatic. And I stayed that way for several days, because it is as difficult to come back as it is to go into it.

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*Excerpted from the transcription of Richard Rose's April 28, 1984, lecture titled **Peace of Mind in Spite of Success**, delivered in Akron, Ohio.*

Question: Would you describe your experience?

Rose: What do you think it will do?

Q: I would just like to know.

Rose: I don't mind talking about it -- but it could be fairy tales. It's something I can't validate for you. And I don't know that it's something that somebody should copy.

The bad thing about -- it's just like reincarnation. Many of the teachers of the East, when you approach them about the idea of reincarnation, to them it immediately is an excuse for procrastination. This is one of the dangers of it -- if you become convinced, or if enough people tell you that there is such a thing as reincarnation.

I had a Rosicrucian write to me one time, and he said, "Oh, you're fretting about self-definition. You've got hundreds of lifetimes ahead of you." Now how does he know that? How could he presuppose that there were hundreds of lifetimes? He couldn't remember the last one, perhaps.

Again, I say some people have. But it's more or less -- the ones that have, it's more like a dim scene or like something you'd see in a movie. Not with really specific details.

But what happened was -- at different times, I started on this rather actively -- I started off in a seminary, and I came to the conclusion that the people there were also hypocrites -- running an institution that was not necessarily truth-directed. So I checked out after a while. And I went back to high school and went to a couple years of college and studied chemistry.

Then I decided that a lot of this stuff was nonsense, and it would just be in the road of me putting full time into studying psychology. I didn't know what door to go to, so I started off through the psychological door. Then I ran into some books on raja yoga. And I tried everything. I lived a totally ascetic type of life. I quit eating meat. I didn't smoke, I didn't drink coffee, I stood on my head a bit and sat in poses and that sort of thing.

And after a few years went by, it seemed like utter nonsense. And sometimes I would decide to throw it all over. I would have gotten drunk, but my body wouldn't stand it. So back to the drawing board. Or I'd think the smart thing for me to do before all my hair falls out is to hunt a girl up and get married, because that's the pattern in this rat race, and I might as well at least give some children a chance to do something.

So I'd go out and I'd look for a girl, and she'd tell me off. There was some guiding power there all the time, protecting me, but I didn't have sense enough myself, letting something else get in the road.

But anyhow, I was in a high state of frustration at different times, because I felt I was a real fool. I had no tangibles -- when you deal in this, there is nothing tangible to go by, that you're making any step at all. You're just struggling like a worm underneath somebody's foot, that's all. And the exigencies of time and life are the feet.

But I kept at it. I went out to Seattle, Washington with the idea of getting married. Again, I was going to chuck it all and get married. I'm not going to get into that part of it, because it's a nasty story. I didn't get married. The girl and I fell out. I was staying in a Japanese hotel out there, and I went back to the hotel. I had a job, and I worked every day, and every evening I would come home from work and get into this posture with my feet under me and sit there and think.

The only meditation is what you devise for yourself. The best meditation is just to look at yourself: "Why did I think this?" or "What should I do more dynamically tomorrow?"

And I got a pain in the top of my head. It was unbearable. And I thought, "Oh boy, three thousand miles from West Virginia, and this is where I have a stroke." That is what I thought was coming on. Well, I went unconscious, to a degree, in that I lost the body on the bed. It was daylight yet. Because I worked at night and I was home during the day.

And I went out the window -- out this hotel window -- and I could see the people on the street, just as clearly as if everything were just as it was. But looking out my window, I could also see snow-covered mountains -- I think they're called the Cascade Mountains -- and the next thing you know, I was above the Cascade Mountains. I was gaining altitude. And when I looked down -- I was watching this all the time I was going -- but when I looked down, the whole scene changed. I had lost this whole dimension. And that's when I saw -- the mountain became just piles of humans, millions, struggling, trying to get a little bit of altitude.

And then I experienced nothingness. I found oblivion. And it was really a shock. I thought, "Oh boy, you wanted the answer -- and it's *nothing*." But in the middle of that, while I was doing this, while it was happening, I knew I was watching it. and then I realized the watcher. and in this little book I've written, that's the reason for the words *Psychology of the Observer* [used as the title].

The scene, the view, is not the viewer. That which *is*, is the viewer. If you look at your body, if you look at your progress, that isn't you. The viewer is you. The awareness behind, all the time. That type of awareness, when you contemplate it, it's not really consciousness. You feel -- you don't think. Awareness doesn't imply thought. And, in some respects, the relative thought does disappear. But that awareness always remains.

And I knew, in the middle of this, that I was observing the whole thing. And that's when I knew I was immortal. I was nothing, and I was everything -- simultaneously.

Q: Was this God?

Rose: I felt that if this is God, he'd be lonely.

Q: Was this a death experience?

Rose: It's death, and you don't encourage it. It came to me one other time, and it wasn't as traumatic because I knew what was happening. But it's still -- there's a Zen saying: Before you have the experience, the hills are hills and the valleys are valleys; and during the experience, they are no longer hills and valleys; but once you return, again once more the hills are hills and the valleys are valleys.

In other words, you've got to enter into the play. This is a stage play. You've got to come in and assume the mask of life until you're ready to check out. You have to eat and drink and whatever is necessary. If you're sick, you take pills.

Q: (Inaudible.)

Rose: I didn't have that particular feeling. As I said, I feel that something was -- it may have been an anterior self. Because *I* didn't choose to return.

The only thing was -- you know I said that I was very angry. I had an angry period from the time I was a kid until I was thirty years old about the lack of truth available to people, about the phonies.

And young people just generally quit looking. They say, "To hell with it. There are too many lies to trip over, there are too many books that are phony to read." And they never think of looking inside themselves to find it.

And even looking inside yourself takes help. Just like I'm talking now; if that doesn't inspire somebody to look inside themselves, I'm wasting my time. Hardly anybody does it alone. Even myself, when I was looking, I read books. I read everything I could get my hands on. But I got a surprise. None of the books told me I'd find what I found.

But I found myself back on that bed. And I wasn't too happy about it. It was a very miserable experience coming back.

Q: (Inaudible.)

Rose: Yes, you might call it that. The valleys are once more valleys, but you're never quite the same. That's the reason I hesitate to talk about it. When I first came back from Seattle, I talked with Andy's mother and dad [i.e., Rose's friend Bob Martin and Bob's wife] about this happening.

And the funny thing about this is -- his dad is a very extensive reader in Buddhist philosophy, and he knew a tremendous lot about books on the subject, and he had a hunch about what had happened. But his mother made a remark I'll never forget. She was just a young one at the time -- I don't think she was over twenty years of age. She said, "Dick, I think you lost your ego." I didn't realize this until much later, that was the procedure -- that my egos had collapsed.

Q: (Mentions the head pain.)

Rose: I think I had help. Something worked on my head to kill me, so to speak; to kill the mundane mind. The mind has to die.

Q: What causes the pain?

Rose: I don't know. And I don't know about other cases. I've heard just fragments of stories.

Incidentally, there's a categorization -- after years and years of studying other cases and wondering why they were all so different -- I found out that they *aren't* different. They fall decidedly in certain categories. And if you ever run into a little book by Ramana Maharshi in which he describes *samadhi* -- *kevala samadhi* and *sahaja samadhi*. Kevala samadhi is cosmic consciousness. There's a book written by Richard Bucke, "Cosmic Consciousness," in which he describes that experience -- which is not sahaja samadhi.

I had the cosmic consciousness for about seven years, in my twenties. Everything was beautiful. And I realized that the world was beautiful, but I was getting ugly. I wasn't learning anything. So I knew I had to get away from the intoxication with the mundane harmony.

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The blueprint is harmonious -- if you don't mind the fact of the predators and the victims, the pageantry of eat and be eaten, in the beautiful world. Everything's being eaten and destroyed and killed and slaughtered, etc. Still, it's a very beautiful pattern. The grass is green in the spring because a lot of things die.

But -- I think the pain [Rose is referring to the pain in his head that preceded his self-realization - Ed.] basically comes from physical reaction to the mind being taken out or disconnected from the body, that's all.

Of course, when I tried to find somebody who knew something about it, I looked for years. I found very little mention of it except in St. John of the Cross. I don't know how far John of the Cross went -- he had an illumination when he was in prison. But a lot of people have had the different illuminations. Under stress -- times of death, sometimes before a firing squad -- it will happen. In times of tragedy, thinking is forced; you have to think about it, and the mind is opened up.

But there was physical pain. I got out of the body far enough -- the circulation in the head might have been down, I don't know. And people have asked me this, but I never thought to time it. I don't know how long I was out. I was alone at the time, and --

Questioner: Was there pain when you came back into your body?

Rose: The pain was when I was leaving. The pain got so intense that I left my body.

Q: I have astral-projected and never experienced any pain.

R: See, this is something a little different I think from astral projection. Because I have projected astrally and didn't have too much trouble. But this seemed to be something tremendously different. Most astral projection, if you notice, is limited to the geography here.

Q: About losing your ego -- the ego that you're talking about is your will to survive, or your life. You left your life -- something happened, and you died. That's the difference between astral projection and this.

R: The thing that I faced, number one, was -- I had a lot of little, real lousy, egos that I was trying to put across at the time. But also in the process, when I was sitting there and I knew that death was approaching, I had to face the fact, very quickly, that all of a sudden I was going to be possibly zero.

In a natural death, when a person dies slowly, they go through that change. And I went through it rapidly. I accepted death, knowing that very possibly it could be zero. You have no choice. Any bit of protoplasm -- animals do the same thing when they realize that they're going to be killed. Nature has the sedative.

Q: This was a mental thing that happened to you, and you mentally accepted the fact that you were dying. It felt reasonable to you because this is what life is about.

R: Yes. The total absurdity of one and the inescapability of the other. Everything just like dominoes -- the whole thing went down very rapidly.

Q: You just can't do that on the spur of the moment; certain things have to fall into place.

R: I couldn't bring it about, no. I don't particularly think that I'd care to. I know there's a difference between whether I astrally stepped out of my body and went to see somebody I knew. (That would be a nice little trip, but I would say also that a bus ticket is cheaper.) It's not as traumatic. To go through this -- you can't plan it -- there's no way you can plan it -- because you'd have to put yourself in a state of mind in which you would be beyond relativity, beyond concern.

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*Excerpted from **The Albigen Papers** by Richard Rose, pages 224-227, 1978.*

There is an account of an experience, [titled *The Three Books of the Absolute*] appended to [*The Albigen Papers*]. It was written over twenty years ago. The experience described, -- had all the symptoms of sorrow and despair, which changed as I progressed in the experience. I tried then to convey the unusual conviction that settled upon me, and do not think that it can ever be said better with any other words, by me.

It happened when I was [thirty] years of age. I had reached a sort of culmination of physical desire and spiritual frustration. My spiritual objectives were still bounded by my intellectual ego, and to compound the foolishness, I was indulging a few other personality-voices. That which I am trying to say here may not be clear enough (about my personal life), but one need not advance into morbidity to describe a dead horse.

I was playing the drama of life with one face, and was looking eagerly to heaven with the other. I came apart at the seams very quickly. It was almost as though a chemical catalyst had been dropped into my mind. At the time, I was sure that I was going insane. I should pause here to acknowledge the many psychiatric fingers pointing in my direction ... at that admission. You may even say that I was preparing for this admission when I attacked psychiatry in my previous writings ... Perhaps I was. But, if I have been *there and back*, I should know a little more than the mechanic who has had a more limited confusion of the mental type, -- because of his protected vegetable existence. And I should be more reliable than any inkblot specialists who may have "been there too," but whose professional pose prevents them from admitting it.

I did not do anything rash. I had no reason to. I had no reason to do anything. While the ego is being melted, there is no joy. Sorrow permeated my whole being ... sorrow for myself and for humanity. The distress became almost unbearable, and it came upon me from the field of my mind, not from emotion. Emotion may have triggered it. Or a brick in the pavement may have caused it, or my emotional experiments may have triggered it. However, once the catalyst started the change of mind, absolutely nothing mattered. I had no attachments beyond myself ... once I became ... more deeply.

The initial attachment for myself became the prime source of my sorrow. I met myself face-to-face, and the division shocked me. Everything upon which I looked had a different meaning and aspect from previous comprehension, and was impossible to convey in language. Things in their essence are tangible only to mind-essence, and not tangible to the mind of everyday cognition. Somewhere in the being of man there is an eye that must be open. We open it by closing all eyes or egos.

Many things might qualify a deliberate attempt to arrive at such an experience. This is where a brotherhood or sangha becomes useful. It is like walking a tightrope in the dark. A friend to guide each step saves many a fall or loss of time. The friend needs to have walked the tightrope himself, before, to know what it is all about.

The term "tightrope" is used to signify the precariousness of the position of the mind which adventures into intangibles. This acrobat must be well balanced by intuition and common sense. He must be eager, but his eagerness without some skill may cause much spinning of the wheels. He must keep his attention on the search for Truth for years, and decades, if need be. If he is young, he must look forward to a relentless struggle with no guarantee of immediate success. I remember that when I was twenty years of age, I decided to make this search my life's work. I decided then that I would try to change my being (I thought that it was that simple) within a couple of years. However, I was determined that if it took my entire life, and if at the end of that life I had still failed to pierce the veil, -- I would be nevertheless more satisfied than if I had never tried.

I thought that I had a powerful mind those days. I mistook a healthy body for a dynamic mind. I found myself able to decide on plans and carry them out. I made a few predictions that came true, and I thought that I had a superior computer. It helped a bit, but I was living in a glass house. Now and then emotion would settle on me like a stifling fog, and it would interrupt my meditations or studies. Irritation set in and the respites from it were brief periods of mystical peace or joy. I found yoga to be a wonderful sedative. I thought at that time that I was dialing heaven. Years went by, and with the years, my conceit began to shred away. When I reached thirty years of age, I decided that I had been kidding myself. My intense hunger for Truth was waning. I was not sure of anything except that which I could see in the mirror, and that image was not faring too well in the hands of time. Then came the accident, or the event which is referred to as cosmic consciousness. It is important to remember that this was an accident. I had never met anyone previously who had that type of experience. My previous preconceptions about spiritual awakening were the result of readings of lives of mystics, and their glowing personal accounts. These readings brought me to the expectation that enlightenment was coincidental with overwhelming joy.

The fact that I experienced almost the opposite of that which I expected, convinces me that wish was not a father to the result. In other words, the state spontaneously evolved.

I was on the Pacific Coast at the time. I hurriedly left for Cleveland. I had a friend there. I did not wish to go home in my stunned condition. I remained relatively stunned for several weeks. The world was still a very strange place. The people moved about like robots, but gradually they became people again. Then I found a kind of gentle amusement in the apparent foolishness of their aimless scrambling.

I took a job in Alliance, Ohio, and rented a room there. My friend had moved there from Cleveland, and he managed to get me a job with the company that employed him. I do not think that his recommendation of me added any to his prestige with the company. I did not care for the future of the company, and that is not an attitude conducive to social harmony in a research-laboratory. My objective then, was to write a poetic book. The physical world had now become very beautiful to me. It was as if I had died, and had come back to life, to a drama with new meaning. Actually, I was losing contact with the motionless condition imposed on me by my momentarily becoming part of motionlessness. Motion was once more enchanting. A rose was once more a rose. I came home from work each day and propped myself up in front of a typewriter. I thought that I had a message of joy and beauty for the world.

Then one day I began to write my feelings about the strange experience. Previously I had avoided writing anything down because I felt that there was no use in trying to describe it or account for it. I used an emotional medium to describe that which ultimately was without emotion, -- that which gave way to nothingness. I called this writing, *The Three Books of the Absolute*.

They were written automatically. They were not composed. I just began writing, and my thoughts flowed through the typewriter. I did not realize completely at the time that my experience came under any mystical category, or had any label known to the general public. I read the *Three Books of the Absolute* to my friend, and he was impressed by them. But then he was impressionable, or so I thought.

I filed them away because I did not encounter many people who were interested in the apparently temporary derangement. Between five and ten years later, while working with a psychic-research group in Steubenville, Ohio, a thoughtful lady gave me a book called, *Cosmic Consciousness*, by Bucke. As I read it, I learned for the first time the extent to which it was possible for laymen to experience the same thing that I had. By laymen, I mean, people with no religious affiliation or mystical discipline. The layman, in fact, may be better able to encounter the experiences needed to bring about the grand experience more so than a cloistered monk. And so I became convinced that it was not impossible to communicate the idea to others, if I took enough pains, perhaps.

A writing of this type was planned over ten years ago. I realized that man's thinking apparatus was almost hopelessly programmed to give out rationalization and wishful errors. I realized that man was not only a prisoner of space and time, but also a prisoner cast in an unreal world, -- completely out of touch with his unidentifiable brothers. All of humanity are hopeless robots, even though their egos are as eminent as their skyscrapers. Occasionally and accidentally, a robot

puts to his own computer a question and comes up with an answer about himself, which tells him that he is a robot. And, thus he becomes less of a robot.

And so now, I am trying to contact the other robots ... especially the robots who have progressed to that accidental computerization that makes them aware of their robotic state. I have seen this theme portrayed in science fiction stories, and marveled at the hint of truth in them, -- and wondered about the authors of some of those stories. Could they too, be trying to give the robots a hint?

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