

Geraint ap Iorwerth

PSYCHOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

A response to John Rowan's paper in Self & Society, Nov/Dec '81.

As a Christian priest I encounter many individuals who have nothing but negative, and often extremely hostile, feelings towards not only institutionalized Christianity but also towards the Judeo-Christian traditions in general. Why this should be so is another matter - maybe to be pursued in a future edition of *Self & Society*? What does interest me however, especially if we accept as axiomatic Carl Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, is the possibility that many in the West, need to face up to, and resolve, these 'hang ups', if they are to grow, for example, towards a genuine transpersonal identity.

When suppressed, ignored or perverted in the past, the Judeo-Christian roots have emerged, thank goodness, in some very unexpected places, witness Marx, Nietzsche, Blake, Berdyaev, van Gogh, Kierkegaard and more recently the likes of Buber, Bloch and the incomparable Erich Fromm, to name but a few. There is still great potential to emerge from the Judeo-Christian roots, and modern man's re-appraisal of this heritage, in all the richness, is, I believe, an essential part of his growth towards universal and ultimately cosmic identity. Many who have 'gone East' in search of a new consciousness are now discovering that their Judeo-Christian roots are not that easily severed, and that in many respects they are now more confused than before. The rest of the century may witness a plethora of individuals who suffer psycho-spiritually from being alienated from both Western and Eastern cultures.

Having turned East in the sixties, humanistic psychology urgently needs to look again at the Judeo-Christian heritage, or its growth will continue to be very lop-sided indeed. Apart from a few articles, such as John Rowan's article on Hegel and Self-Actualization (*Self & Society* Dec. '79), humanistic psychology seems very reluctant to come to terms with Western theological, religious and philosophical beliefs and practices. This is unfortunate, since I believe that humanistic psychology has an important part

to play in the development of a Western Yoga. Humanistic psychology does not exist for itself, as Maslow never tired of reminding his followers, and so John Rowan's article at the end of 1981 should not really come as a surprise to any of us. It merely shows that humanistic psychology is being effective in its role as guide and catalyst towards a higher psycho-spiritual identity. Indeed, to hear more and more in the future of transpersonal psycho-spirituality and less of humanistic psychology will be an indication that the latter is being true to its calling.

Left on its own, humanistic psychology will become too introspective and it will eventually die from lack of nourishment, having become nothing more than a conglomeration of psychological techniques, supported by a middle-class elite. A fate akin, in many ways, to institutionalized Christianity, and Psychoanalysis. Humanistic psychology is far too important to go the same way. Granted, compared to the many centuries of the Judeo-Christian heritage, humanistic psychology is but an infant, but an important one nevertheless, since it has an important role to play not only in bringing together many different strands within Judeo-Christianism thought and practice but also in revitalizing that tradition, so that it too can play its part in the growth of Western man.

Vivian Milroy

SPIRITUALITY - THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION

Geraint ap Iorwerth writes of humanistic psychology missing out on the Judeo-Christian traditions. And I am reminded somewhat irreverently of Winston Churchill who, when an elderly admiral protested that something was against the traditions of the Royal Navy, replied "what are the traditions of the Royal Navy? The press gang, sodomy and the lash!"

Thus, my view of the Judeo-Christian tradition is of a patriarchal and vengeful god, mutilation of infants and the torture and burning of those who hold ideas marginally different from those in authority. Some of this may perhaps be put down to the Jewish tradition,