

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

A word about Alan Watts

Dear Editors,

I found the special Alan Watts issue (43[4], 2015) very enlivening and interesting, particularly the material on Paganism, which I had not known about before. I was actually a contributor to 'Green Egg' at one point! However, I think Alan Watts was not clear about the actual process of development, which we are more aware of today.

Ken Wilber makes the point very clearly, and all of us I think need to take note of this, that the process of self-development takes three very different forms at different stages within the journey. The first stage is to move from the Mental Ego (the self-image, the conventional wisdom, the consensus trance) to the Centaur (the real self, the authentic self, the existential self), and this is best achieved through counselling or psychotherapy.

The second stage is to move from the Centaur to the Subtle level (the soul, the daimon, the dreamweaver, the inner teacher, the higher self, the collective unconscious), and this is best achieved through ritual, ceremony, guided fantasy, psychedelic drugs, study of symbols and images, prayer and the like.

And the third stage is to move on from the Subtle level to the Causal level (where everything is One, whether understood as the All, the Nothing, the Ultimate, the Absolute, God and the like), and this is best achieved through meditation.

Many of us think that there is a stage beyond this, called the Nondual, but this is not fully agreed or understood by all those involved. In any case, there is no path to this – you just get it, or you don't.

These distinctions and differences seem both very important and very obvious to me, once they have been pointed out, and it helps no one to ignore them. In the days of Alan Watts, this was not at all clear, and it took some years and a great deal of work for them to be understood.

I hope this letter is useful to those who are still struggling with such matters.

John Rowan

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