

Alan Watts - The Higher Self

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Because you've got to make a move, which will put yourself out of your own control, into the control of a better. If you don't believe in the Christian kind of a God, you can believe in the Hindu kind of a God, who is your inner self. You see, you've got a lower self, which you can call your ego.

That's that little scoundrelous fellow, that's always out for me. But behind the ego, there is the Atman, the inner self, the inward light, as Quakers would call it, the real self, the spirit, which is substantially identical with God. So you've got to meditate in such a way that you identify with your higher self.

How do you do that? Well, you start by watching all your thoughts, very carefully, watching your feelings, watching your emotions, so that you begin to build up a sense of separation, between the watcher and what is watched. So that you are, as it were, no longer carried away by your own stream of consciousness. You remain the witness, impassively, impartially, suspending judgement, and watching it all go on.

That seems to be something like progress. At least you're taking an objective view of what is going on. You are beginning to be in a position to control it, but just wait a minute! Who is this self behind the self, the watching self? Can you watch that one? It's interesting if you do, because you find out, of course, that this is, just as the problem of grace is nothing more than a transposition of the first problem, how am I to be unselfish by my own power? It becomes, how am I to get grace by my own power? So, in the same way, we find that the watching self, or the observing self, behind all our thoughts and feelings, is itself a thought.

That is to say, when the police enter a house in which there are thieves, the thieves go up from the ground floor to the first floor. When the police arrive on the first floor, the thieves have gone up to the second, and so to the third, and finally out to the roof. And so, when the ego is about to be unmasked, it immediately identifies with the higher self.

It goes up a level.

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