COMPENDIUM #19

ALAN WATTS: THIS IS IT

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> *On the Myth of Separation, the Cosmic Dance, and the Ultimate Chord of the Present*

Alan Watts had a way of saying things that made the floor drop out from under you 1 . Not with force, not with argument, not with the heavy machinery of philosophy, but with a kind of playful clarity that left you staring at the world as if you had never seen it before. He didn't try to convince you of anything. He simply pointed, gently, as if to say, "Look. You already know." And the strange thing is that he was right. You did already know. You had just forgotten.

Watts understood something most people never grasp: that the sacred is not elsewhere. It is not hidden behind the stars, not waiting in some distant heaven, not locked behind rituals or doctrines or moral tests 2 . It is here. It is now. It is this. The ordinary moment, the breath you are taking, the sensation of being alive in a body you did not choose — this is the thing people spend their entire lives searching for. They look for meaning in the future, in the afterlife, in the next achievement, in the next relationship, in the next spiritual trick. But the truth is embarrassingly simple. There is no next. There is only this.

Watts called it "This Is It," and he meant it literally 3 . Not as a metaphor, not as a slogan, but as the most direct statement of reality a human being can make. This moment — the one you are in right now — is the only moment that has ever existed. The past is memory. The future is imagination. The present is the only place where life actually happens. But humans are experts at missing it. They live in stories about what was or what might be, and they treat the present as an inconvenient corridor between two illusions.

The tragedy is that people think they are chasing life, when in fact they are running from it. They chase goals, identities, beliefs, spiritual experiences, anything that promises to deliver them to some final state of completion. But completion never arrives. It cannot arrive, because the seeker is the thing being sought. The one who is searching is already the thing they hope to find 4 . Watts understood this, and he spent his life trying to remind people of what they already were.

He would say that the universe is not a machine but a dance 5 . Not a problem to be solved but a performance to be experienced. Not a test but a play. And you are not a separate observer watching from the outside. You are part of the dance, part of the performance, part of the universe expressing itself in human form. You are not in the world. You are the world, temporarily appearing as a person. The wave is not separate from the ocean. The wave is the ocean, moving in a particular shape for a brief moment before returning to itself.

This is why Watts laughed so much. He saw the cosmic joke. He saw that humans spend their lives pretending to be separate, pretending to be isolated egos trapped inside fragile bodies, pretending to be strangers in a universe that is, in truth, their own deeper self. He saw that the fear, the anxiety, the guilt, the shame, the endless striving — all of it comes from forgetting what you are. You are not a visitor here. You are not an outsider. You are not a mistake. You are the universe looking at itself through a pair of human eyes 6 .

When Watts said “This Is It,” he was not offering comfort. He was offering liberation. He was saying that nothing is missing. Nothing is elsewhere. Nothing is withheld. The meaning people search for is not hidden. It is simply overlooked. It is in the breath, the heartbeat, the sensation of being aware. It is in the ordinary moment that people dismiss as unimportant. It is in the silence between thoughts. It is in the simple fact of existence.

The Ultimate Chord, the deep vibration beneath everything, is not a secret frequency you must earn. It is the hum of being itself. It is the sound of existence happening. It is the recognition that you are not separate from the universe but an expression of it. Watts understood this chord. He heard it in the laughter of children, in the movement of water, in the rise and fall of breath, in the absurdity of human seriousness. He heard it everywhere because it is everywhere.

And once you hear it, once you truly hear it, the world changes. Not because the world has changed, but because you have stopped looking through the lens of separation. You stop trying to escape the moment. You stop trying to become something else. You stop trying to reach a future that never arrives. You begin to see that the only thing you were ever running from was the present, and the present was the only place you could ever be free.

Watts did not give answers. He removed the need for them. He did not offer salvation. He revealed that there was nothing to be saved from. He did not point to a path. He pointed to the ground beneath your feet. He did not promise enlightenment. He simply reminded you that you are already here.

This is it. It always was. It always will be.

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