

Commentaries on Living Series 1 , Chapter 2

'Identification'

WHY do you identify yourself with another, with a group, with a country? Why do you call yourself a Christian, a Hindu, a Buddhist, or why do you belong to one of the innumerable sects? Religiously and politically one identifies oneself with this or with that group through tradition or habit, through impulse, prejudice, imitation and laziness. This identification puts an end to all creative understanding, and then one becomes a mere tool in the hands of the party boss, the priest or the favoured leader.

The other day someone said that he was a "Krishnamurti-ite," whereas so-and-so belonged to another group. As he was saying it, he was utterly unconscious of the implications of this identification. He was not by any means a foolish person; he was well read, cultured and all the rest of it. Nor was he sentimental or emotional over the matter; on the contrary, he was clear and definite.

Why had he become a "Krishnamurti-ite"? He had followed others, belonged to many wearisome groups and organizations, and at last found himself identified with this particular person. From what he said, it appeared that the journey was over. He had taken a stand and that was the end of the matter; he had chosen, and nothing could shake him. He would now comfortably settle down and follow eagerly all that had been said and was going to be said.

When we identify ourselves with another, is that an indication of love? Does identification imply experimentation? Does not identification put an end to love and to experiment? Identification, surely, is possession, the assertion of ownership; and ownership denies love, does it not? To own is to be secure; possession is defence, making oneself invulnerable. In identification there is resistance, whether gross or subtle; and is love a form of self-protective resistance? Is there love when there is defence?

Love is vulnerable, pliable, receptive; it is the highest form of sensitivity, and identification makes for insensitivity. Identification and love do not go together, for the one destroys the other. Identification is essentially a thought process by which the mind safeguards and expands itself; and in becoming something it must resist and defend, it must own and discard. In this process of becoming, the mind or the self grows tougher and more capable; but this is not love. Identification destroys freedom, and only in freedom can there be the highest form of sensitivity.

To experiment, need there be identification? Does not the very act of identification put an end to inquiry, to discovery? The happiness that truth brings cannot be if there is no experimentation in self-discovery. Identification puts an end to discovery; it is another form of laziness. Identification is vicarious experience, and hence utterly false.

To experience, all identification must cease. To experiment, there must be no fear. Fear prevents experience. It is fear that makes for identification - identification with another, with a group, with an ideology, and so on. Fear must resist, suppress; and in a state of self-defence, how can there be venturing on the uncharted sea? Truth or happiness cannot come without undertaking the journey into the ways of the self. You cannot travel far if you are anchored. Identification is a refuge. A refuge needs protection, and that which is protected is soon destroyed. Identification brings destruction upon itself, and hence the constant conflict between various identifications.

The more we struggle for or against identification, the greater is the resistance to understanding. If one is aware of the whole process of identification, outward as well as inner, if one sees that its outward expression projected by the inner demand, then there is a possibility of discovery and happiness. He who has identified himself can never know freedom, in which alone all truth comes into being.