

IDENTITY, PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

By Michael J. Roads

My favourite questioner struck again the other day. "Michael, what is the difference between identity, personality, and individuality? When I die, what happens to my identity and personality? Do they die? Do I then continue as an individual? In the bigger picture of identity, personality and individuality, what's it all about?"

Interesting question! Let's do the dictionary versions first and get that out of the way. From Chambers mid-20th century: 1. Identity - state of being the same; sameness. 2. Personality - fact or state of being a person or of being personal; individuality; distinctive character. 3. Individuality - separate and distinct existence; oneness; distinctive character. Wow! I confess, identity as 'sameness' and 'oneness' with individuality really surprised me. Talk about conflicting statements, 'separate and distinct' and 'oneness' side by side! Now I really am curious. Let's see if this has changed in a modern dictionary. 1. Identity - the state of having unique identifying characteristics. 2. Personality - the sum total of all the behavioural and mental characteristics by means of which an individual is recognised as being unique. 3. Individuality - separate or distinct from others of its kind; distinctive character. Hmmmm, very interesting.

It seems that identity has completely changed in meaning over the years, whereas the rest is basically the same, except for that odd reference to oneness. Chambers indicates that for as long as we are attached to identity, so we remain in continuing sameness. This is so true! Okay, now for my version! Soon after we are born we are given a name. The idea and purpose of the name is to identify us. Considering that thousands of people have identical names, this surely indicates the earlier meaning of identity. However, in the process of growing into an adult, we develop our ego personality. Ego personality is not bad, nor should the ego be bashed and subdued by those on a spiritual path. The ego/personality identifies with the identity, meaning that the person identifies with their name, their body, and their growing personality. Over the years our personality develops certain characteristics, some of which become deeply embedded. Long before we die from our physical reality, we have established that self is an identity with a defined personality, all with certain established characteristics. The design of death is to shatter this false representation of Who I Am. False, mark you, not bad! Over many incarnations, the personality impresses these characteristics into the developing soul, so you get children who, literally from birth, express characteristics that are already developed.

The fact is we are not the identity, nor are we the personality. A person who develops a bright open personality has a lot in their favour, while a surly closed personality has a considerable handicap. Be aware, however, no matter what the personality, these are the characteristics of identity self, not the Who I Am, Self. So, we have an identity that people believe is who they are, and a personality that is either conducive or resistant to change. And change is going to happen.

Any expression, any representation, anything that does not represent and express Truth is going to be challenged. This is the purpose of life, the meaning of Self; to express Truth to the highest degree possible. To explain a Truth I need a starting point, so I will create a simple one.

When the developing soul began a human expression, we had a choice, for without choice there is no free will, and free will is essential to the human expression. The choice: oneness and individuality, or separation and identity. Obviously we chose the hard way, separation and identity. Identity looks outside self and, through the eyes, sees a physical world of separation. This in turn became our belief, our reality, and it still is. This is the basis

of consensus reality. For a long time the human experience has been struggling in this illusion, that we are physical Beings with a single short life. Many people are aware that we are spiritual Beings having a physical experience, but few actually live their full spiritual potential. Over many incarnations the soul develops and grows through the alchemy of intelligence and experience; this potent brew creates wisdom. The wise soul learns not to be attached to identity, personality, beliefs, ideas, people, places and material things. The wise soul learns that the identity can never become spiritually Enlightened, the moment of Self Realisation. The realisation of Self takes place the moment self-identity dies, revealing Self. Personality remains, but this is usually an open, more flexible personality. However, this personality still has every remaining attachment to release, and in the releasing, so too, the personality becomes ever more open, ever more transparent.

At the same time, individuality is growing. This is not an individuality of difference, it is an individuality within oneness. This individuality comes about when you 'know' that just as you are 'one in the All,' so also you are the 'All in the One.' When this quantum leap in consciousness takes place, you are the 'All in All.' The paradox is that when you surrender your identity, your precious so-called individuality, you find that in Truth, your journey into individuality is just beginning. To be One in the All and the All in the One is the birth of true individuality. At this point identity is revealed as an impostor, born from separation, while your personality becomes softer, more gentle, more mellow. Personality is no longer the same stamp of difference, yet the irony is, by the very nature of this process, you are more unique than you have ever been. To summarise, the more we are the Self, Who I Am, the less we are a personality. At this stage identity is no more than a label we need in order to survive Awake in the dream of illusion that most people call life. Individuality is now all about living Oneness 'in undivided duality.'

In Love and Light,
Michael