

# Omnicentricism

## Part One

### Higher Individualism, Authentic Spirituality and the Omnicentric Mind

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#### Individualism vs. Collectivism

Notwithstanding the recent resurgence of racism as a political issue, the United States has the potential to be the least racist country in the world. For, the idea of collectivism, of which racism is one manifestation, is the very antithesis of the idea and ideal of individualism that underlies this nation's founding philosophy and spirit.

The individualist does not evaluate people on the basis of such collective traits as race, gender, ethnicity, or nationality but entirely on the basis of their individual merit or "the content of their character," as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said. Individualism, if universally practiced, dissolves most issues related to race, gender or nationality by turning collectivist issues into individualist non-issue. The reason that individualism is not universally practiced or accepted is because it requires that the person be totally self-responsible, which it is in the nature of human psycho-mechanics to avoid at this stage of general human development.

The English word "individual" comes from the Latin root *indivīduus*, which means "indivisible (*in-*, not + *divīduus*, divisible)." Thus, "individuality" denotes the person's indivisible inner wholeness, integrity, or unity of being, while "individualism" signifies the doctrine of the primacy and the supremacy of value of the individual over the collective.

Individuality does not grow naturally nor of its own accord but is developed consciously and intentionally by an individual through his or her volitional effort. Thus, individuality is not given by virtue of being born human but must be self-earned, self-bestowed and self-developed. Authentic individuality is for this reason rare.

James M. Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* (1901 - 1902) defines "individualism" in terms of political philosophy (in contrast to collectivism): "The doctrine that the pursuit of self-interest and the exercise of individual initiative should be little or not at all restrained by the state, and that the functions of government should be reduced to the lowest possible terms."

Implicit in this definition are the trust in the universal goodness of humanity and the assumption that people's real self-interests are fundamentally aligned. However, the fact of human existence does not bear either that trust or this assumption. Humanity has not lived up to the ideal of universal goodness or fundamental alignment. People are not always rational and there exist morally deviant and mentally aberrant persons who are more evil than good. Further, that which different individuals and peoples consider their self-interests often conflict and sometimes violently clash with one another.

Yet, it is evident that the alternative to individualism—collectivism (socialism or communism or other variations)—does not and will not work. Collectivism is the doctrine that claims the primacy and the supremacy of value of the collective over the individual. “The collective,” however, is an abstraction which does not exist in actuality wherein the human individual exists. Thus collectivism places higher value on an abstraction that does not actually exist over actually existing men and women. Therefore collectivism is the doctrine of the subjugation of the individual, an actuality, to the collective, an abstraction.

Collectivism almost inevitably ends up in some form of domination hierarchy because the only way by which the abstraction “collective (country, society, etc.)” can subjugate the actual human individuals is if there is a structural bifurcation into two basic classes of people. One is the “ruler-dominator-controller-leader” that exploits collectivist ideas to rule, dominate, control, and lead. The other is the “ruled-dominated-controlled-led” that follows and is ruled, dominated, controlled, and led by the *actually existent human symbol* of the collective, the “leader.”

Individualism provides the philosophical foundation for that which Natan Sharansky in *The Case for Democracy* describes as the Free Society, while collectivism leads to that which he describes as the Fear Society.

The failure of individualism and the persistence of collectivism (despite the evidence of its dismal and often devastating failures) have the same cause—the relative absence of true individuality and authentic selfhood. Where there is no true individuality or authentic selfhood, there is no genuine self-initiative or self-interest. Because consciousness, as does nature, abhors a vacuum, there enters, in the absence of true individuality or authentic selfhood, false individuality or inauthentic selfhood with its multitudinous personalities or self-identities masquerading as a whole individual or an authentic self.

A person who has not developed authentic individuality or selfhood is literally a ‘society of personalities’ with multitudinous identities that are for the most part mutually unknown to and contradictory with one another. He is possessed by multiple personalities (albeit not clinically diagnosed as such), which appear to him to be different aspects of his one single personality because they all call themselves “I” and appear to share the same body-space seemingly existing in the same time-continuum. But in reality they are not the same personality. He possesses no single, whole, authentic “I” but mistakenly identifies himself with a myriad of personalities each calling itself “me” and existentially substituting for his authentic self.

We can observe the absence of an authentic self in a person when we notice that he cannot sustain the same commitment too long. One personality or “self” starts a diet program to lose weight, for example, but within a few hours, a few days, or at the most a few weeks, another personality—say, the indulgent personality—takes over and undoes everything that the former personality has done. Then, the guilty personality comes to the fore and punishes itself and feels miserable. Thus constructed is the average human being’s psycho-mechanics.

Those who have tried meditation know that there flow in their “head” continuous streams of thoughts which they cannot stop or observe for any length of time without identifying with them. The thoughts that flow in your “head” are not *your* thoughts; otherwise you can stop them at will. Your personalities are precisely the same. Your personalities are the aggregates of thoughts flowing through the space of your consciousness that coagulate around self-identifying “I-my-me” sentences. Your personalities are the floating froths of an “I-my-me-ness” which appear and disappear in the chaotic streams of thoughts incessantly flowing through the meandering runnel of your mind.

In the absence of true individuality and authentic selfhood there can be no real self-initiative or true self-interest. Each personality inside a person has a different self-interest and he has no authentic self that has the real power of self-initiation. If we expand this picture into the whole world, we can understand why authentic self-initiatives are rare while conflicts of interest abound. Where there is no true individuality no true individualism is possible, no matter how great the ideal of individualism may be. Thus we are compelled to bear witness to the tragic shambles of collectivism with millions upon millions of casualties throughout history and all around the world.

How can we develop authentic individuality and selfhood so that individualism can become the source of not only individual self-actualization and fulfillment but also worldwide harmony, alignment, and prosperity? All of my transformational seminars and courses are designed to experientially answer this question. Yet it requires a lengthy essay or a book to thoroughly answer it in writing. Here in this brief article I will only state some of the basic conclusions.

### **Individuality, Spirituality and the Omnicentric Mind**

The development of individuality is tantamount to and therefore inseparable from the development of spirituality. Unlike the collective, which is a mere abstraction, the individual exists in actuality, but the *individuality* of the individual does not have a material existence as does his or her physical body. The individuality of the individual resides in reality wherein the spirituality of the individual abides.

Whereas the collective is an abstraction based on the belief in the separate existence of individuals, the individual is an *existential actuality* while individuality is a *spiritual reality* based on the spiritual apperception of the fundamental cosmic unity of seemingly separate individuals.

The failure of individualism stems from its secular philosophic orientation. The failure occurs when the philosophy of individualism becomes enframed within the secular philosophic context and orientation. Secularism is the belief in the existence of the visible or the material and the non-existence of the invisible or the spiritual. The secularist only accepts the reality of that which is given to and through the senses ("the evidence of the senses"), while granting no reality to that which is unverifiable through the senses.

Yet, individuality is a spiritual reality, spiritually formed and spiritually apperceived. Therefore, as long as we deny and fail to apperceive and appreciate the reality of the spiritual, we deny ourselves the place for and the possibility of authentically developing individuality.

Spirituality is the state of consciousness and the quality of being in which you are aware of the Presence of Spirit. Spirit is the primeval ground of your being and the prime mover of your life. Spirit is eternally present but its presence becomes known only when you attain to the level of spirituality in the evolution of your consciousness. Spirit is constantly *actually* present in its *function* as the prime mover but remains *potential* in its *fact* of being the primeval ground until you become aware of its Presence.

The Spirit within is the Life within that is endowed with Consciousness. The Spirit within is what we call the soul. The soul is the cosmic locus of the creative individuation of Spirit wherein the Transcendent is eternally being born now as the Immanent and the Innermost. When you become awakened to the Spirit within, your soul also awakens to itself. Spirit, which is wholly cosmic, realizes itself in and as your soul. You at the level of the soul individually experience the "I AM" of Spirit. The soul awakened is the Spirit

immanent as your authentic self endowed with true individuality—the indivisible wholeness, integrity, and unity of being.

Thus, true individuality is the individuality of the soul as the cosmic locus of Spirit's individuation. In mathematical terminology, Spirit can be expressed as Infinity to the infinite power; a soul as an infinite whole. As in mathematics wherein there are an infinite number of infinities so in reality there are potentially an infinite number of whole infinite souls, each reflexively holding within all the other souls. While your soul and my soul are distinct infinite wholes we are not two because each holds the Whole or the Spirit within even as, in a similar manner, a hologram contains the whole.

Therefore, at the level of the soul, where we are distinct but not separate, our self-interests are entirely aligned and unified. Our self-interests are different facets and distinct expressions of one interest, one intention and one vision. The soul is the Life that infuses the Universe with its evolutionary passion and creative vision. Inside the soul there is an evolutionary passion, even as the subterranean water longs to spring forth from the wellspring of the earth. The soul is that wellspring through which Life issues forth its essence and transforms evolutionary passion and inspiration into creative vision and aspiration.

The basic passion of all souls is to creatively evolve, unfold and actualize their illimitable evolutionary potential. The life force of the soul is the evolutionary thrust for self-optimization. Because every soul holds all other souls in its infinite wholeness, the individual soul is also the 'inter-soul' *in*-formed by the Over-Soul or the Spirit. In its "inter-soul-ness" the "I" is simultaneously the "We," not in the collective sense of separate individuals coming together to form a collective, but in the *omnicentric* sense of mutual inclusivity, interpenetrative independence, and evolutionary complementarity.

Whereas in the collectivist community individuality is minimized and the individuals are put in service of the collective, in the omnicentric world individuality is maximized and the individuals co-generate a synergetic co-evolutionary movement of the whole (the omnicentric world), which in turn contributes to the evolution of each individual.

In the process of developing higher individuality or individuality-*qua*-spirituality with the awareness of the possibility of omnicentricism, the individual develops an omnicentric mind. The omnicentric mind evolves with the understanding of the spiritual nature of individuality in the awareness of the identity of the soul and the inter-soul—of the I-ness and the We-ness.

The omnicentric mind is a higher integral mind that does not "integrate" different models or paradigms of reality in terms of its own model but understands them trans-paradigmatically. The omnicentric mind understands different modes of thought and different models of reality not by interpreting them through its own "integral" model but in terms of each mode and model itself. The omnicentric mind can enter the minds of others, because it draws its own thoughts and ideas from the Cosmic Field of Ideation shared by all souls/inter-souls wherein all possible modalities of thought and models of reality are present, actually or potentially.

Therefore, the omnicentric mind can also freely create new models of reality without any attachment to its own creation. The omnicentric mind is a free and trans-paradigmatic mind, essentially "out of box," any box, always. The omnicentric mind is the next step in the evolution of the human mind beyond the monological and single-paradigmatic mind and is co-evolutionary with the higher individuality that is spirituality-*qua*-individuality.

## Development of Individuality

True individuality is not possible without reaching the level of spirituality. In order to develop true individuality and selfhood beyond personalities and false identities one must be able to authentically think and one must be able to authentically know who one really is. One must be able to decisively answer the Socratic injunction "Know thyself" through one's own authentic thinking, knowing and understanding.

Who am I? This is not only the fundamental question of philosophy but also the existential foundation upon which authentic spirituality, authentic individuality, and authentic life can be built and developed. No philosophic system that fails to answer or spiritual teaching that fails to provide a way to answer this question is complete.

The knowing of one's authentic self that is distinct from one's multitudinous personalities and false self-identities begins with *being* the passive observing self that is conscious of floating personalities and self-identities and culminates in *being* the Spiritual Presence that *knows by thinking into being* the authentic self as the active observing self that not only can observe but also can creatively act and evolve. Through this process, one's individuality or selfhood becomes crystallized and one comes to realize who one truly is—the Spiritual Presence that presences itself as one's soul.

This famous line from the Bible provides us with a great hint in the development of higher individuality:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him was nothing made which was made. (John, i: 1)

What was the Word that was in the beginning? It was "I" or "I-AM." If we substitute the word "God" with the words "Spiritual Presence," then we have the core secret of how to develop the authentic self and higher individuality.

In the beginning was the Word "I-AM," and the Word was with the Spiritual Presence, and the Word was the Spiritual Presence. The same was in the beginning with the Spiritual Presence (for the Word and the Spiritual Presence are one and selfsame). Selfhood and Individuality were made through the Word-*qua*-Spiritual Presence and without the Word-*qua*-Spiritual Presence no Selfhood or Individuality was made which was made.

We mistakenly identify and falsely predicate the subject "I" with our multitudinous personalities none of which is in truth the real "I." When we begin to crystallize our selfhood and individuality upon the core of the real "I"—the authentic "I" which is the observing self that acts, creates and evolves, then we will be able to develop authentic selfhood and true individuality.

The Buddhist notion of *anātman*, which is usually metaphrased as "non-self," has been misinterpreted to mean that Buddhism denies the existence of the self as such. If that were the case, the enlightened being, the Buddha, would have no self and no individuality. However, *anātman* does not mean the denial of the existence of the self.

What *anātman* implies is that the ontological nature of existence is such that existence has no permanently persisting structural essence. *Anātman* means that nothing that exists is ever a static thing but a dynamic process. When the concept of *anātman* is applied to selfhood or individuality, it indicates that selfhood or individuality exists not as a static entity but as a dynamic creative process. Buddhism thus does not deny the existence of the self or the possibility of individuality but denies our cognitive habit of “thingifying” that which cannot be reduced to a thing.

Therefore, one’s authentic self and true individuality is a dynamical process, always self-creating and self-evolving. We are not self-made souls but self-making souls.

(To be continued to the next issue of VIA online newsletter)