

19 NON-IDENTIFICATION

19.1 What is Identification?

¹When we begin to observe ourselves, we find that most of our functions, and emotional functions in particular, are accompanied by a strange phenomenon: we are too easily captivated by whatever we are observing, we become too absorbed in things, so that we are lost in them. Here “being lost” means that the self-observation that was possibly there before this phenomenon appeared ceases completely. This state of being lost in whatever one is watching, feeling, or thinking of is called identification. A very clear example is when we switch on our TV set, actually without any intention of watching a certain programme, browse through the channels, come right into a drama film that has just begun, and then just sit there for one and a half hours, being quite in the grip of the film. During this time, we do not really exist; we are the film, are identified with it. Another example is when we are discussing something with someone and then become emotionally very committed. If we observe ourselves immediately after this, we shall notice that we were not present, we were not there. We were not anywhere else either. We did not exist – except as unconscious, mechanical functions. When one is deeply identified, one does not exist; only that exists with which one is identified.

²As in everything else, so in identification there are degrees. Identifications can be strong or weak, deep or shallow. In observing yourself you find when you are more identified, less identified, or not identified at all. Sometimes you identify so that you can see nothing else, at other times you can see something. If things were always the same, there would be no chance for us, but they always vary in degree of intensity, and that gives us a possibility of change.

³Being in the grip of something is an extreme case, a deep identification. But there are many small identifications, shallow identifications, which are difficult to observe, and these are more common. They are the most important, because they keep us mechanical. Between deep sleep and wakefulness there are many different stages, and we pass from one stage to another. We are always passing from one identification to another.

⁴When people look at old feature films or old photographs of actors and similar people, it may strike them “how artificial and unnatural” people were in former times. What they notice then is the power that identification wields over mankind. Each epoch has its particular individual and collective identifications, and we look at the expressions of states of identification of former times through our own states of identification. Therefore we think that the old expressions, behaviours, manners of speaking and acting, joking, etc., as “funny and unnatural”, but not those of our times, despite the fact that they are equally conditioned by identifications, only of other kinds. We do not realize that we shall appear as funny to the people of the future as the people of the past now appear to us.

⁵If you are strongly identified with something, you are practically asleep. In states of weak identification, you are not as deeply asleep, you are closer to being awake. If you want to wake up, you must become free from identification. You can become free. Such as we are now we are almost never free, because we are practically always identified.

⁶In his untransformed state, man is identified with all kinds of illusions regarding himself. He believes he has a will of his own and is fully conscious. He may believe that he is near the goal, has only one or two incarnations more to do in the human kingdom. He can believe in such illusions because he has not seen deep enough into himself. And identifications hinder him from doing so.

⁷If you observe yourself immediately after a short time of strong identification, you will notice an inner emptiness. This emptiness depends on the absence of yourself, of your own essence. During the time you are identified it is quite impossible for you to observe yourself

and of course to remember yourself. However, at the moment you observe yourself, it is impossible for you to be identified. Thus identification and self-observation or self-remembering are mutually exclusive states: if the one is present the other is absent.

⁸Identification happens when you are repelled or attracted by something. Study or observation does not necessarily produce identification, but attraction and repulsion always do. Also, we use too strong a language, and this automatically produces identification. We have many automatic appliances of this sort.

⁹Identification always has an emotional element. It is a kind of emotional disturbance. But sometimes identification becomes a habit, so that one does not even notice the emotional element. That is not to say that emotion is bad. In itself, emotion must afford us new energy, new understanding. Emotion is not destructive, but identification is. It is very easy to confuse identification with emotion. We do not have a very wide experience of emotion without identification, so in the beginning we have difficulty in understanding what an emotion free from identification is. People often speak about their emotions when in reality they mean their identifications.

¹⁰Negative emotions cannot exist without identification. Really positive emotions are free from identification. Real love exists in states of non-identification; it is impossible with identification. The same is true of sympathy; there is sympathy without identification and sympathy with identification. When sympathy is mixed with identification, it often ends in anger, hatred or some other negative emotion. Identification eventually kills all emotions, except the negative ones. With identification only the unpleasant side of them remains.

¹¹We all have what should be called “unnecessary emotions”, negative emotions that cannot teach us anything, only cause us trouble. These emotions originate from identification. Each one of us has a hundred and one unnecessary emotions. Each one of us is identified with a hundred and one unnecessary emotions. If identification can be made to cease, these emotions will lose their power and disappear.

¹²It is not so much a question of what one is identified with. Identification is an inner state. Many things that we think are outside us are really in us. Fear, for instance, is independent of things. If you are in a state of fear, you can be afraid of anything, innocent everyday objects, ash-trays and clothes hangers. This often happens in pathological states, and a pathological state is only an intensified ordinary state. “Anger is temporary insanity.” This fact, that identifications are inside in us, not outside of us, makes it possible for us to set ourselves free from them.

¹³Certain desires must be bound up with identification: for instance the desire to harm someone. You cannot do it without identification, and if identification disappears, you do not want it any longer. It is possible not to lose oneself; losing oneself is not a necessary element of desire at all.

¹⁴If one is completely absorbed in one’s work, it will be bad work. If one is identified, one can never get good results. It is one of our illusions to think that we must lose ourselves to get good results, for in this way we only get poor results. It is a wrong idea that one cannot study a person or anything else without losing oneself. If you lose yourself in something, you cannot study it. Identification is always a weakening factor: the more you identify, the worse is your study and the smaller are the results. We can do well whatever we are doing only as much as we are awake. The more we are asleep, the worse we do the thing we are doing – there are no exceptions.

19.2 *Understanding Identification*

¹It takes time to understand what identifying is. It will help you to understand, if you want to remember yourself, find that you cannot, and try to see why you cannot. Then you realize that identification prevents you. Then you will see what it is. All these things – identification, sleep, mechanicalness – are connected.

²If you catch yourself after a state of deep identification, you can compare that moment with other states. In this way you can make it clear to yourself what it means to be identified. When you begin to observe yourself, certain kinds of identification become impossible. The best way to understand identification is to find examples. For instance, you observe how a person is quite in the grip of his views, his arguments, his irritation, his enthusiasm; all of this is identification. Then you find the corresponding states in yourself. You realize that identifications are there all the time – not just at moments when something unusual happens.

³It is important to realize that identifications can never help you. They do not help you understand more or better; they only make things more confused and more difficult. If you realize that, it may help in some cases. Identification gives us no energy that we can use, only destructive energy. In states of identification you cannot feel right, think right, see right, judge right. Identification and imagination are the chief causes of our weakness.

⁴It happens that people who want to work on their consciousness and hear about such terms as “self-remembrance”, “self-observation”, “non-identification” get very identified with those words. This prevents them from understanding what those words mean and also from reaching the corresponding states. You cannot reach a state of non-identification by being identified. Thus if you try to exercise self-observation while being very identified with some anxiety, tension, or fear of failure, of not having understood or not achieving, then nothing will come out of it. You cannot achieve anything qualitative with consciousness in such states, because then you are in lower parts of centres where negativity generally prevails. Then when you fail, this often results in feelings of disappointment and depression, which reinforce identification and negativity. A vicious circle easily ensues.

⁵The only way of recognizing identification is to observe the phenomenon, for it is not always equally strong. We do not notice our body temperature except when it becomes somewhat higher or lower than normal. Similarly we can notice identification when it is stronger or weaker than normal. By comparing such degrees we can discover what identification is.

⁶There are many forms of identification, but the first step is to see it; the second step is to struggle with it in order to become free from it. We spend our energy in the wrong way on identification and negative emotions; they are open taps from which our energy flows out.

19.3 *Reaction and Identification*

¹If we observe carefully how we relate to events that we witness, are involved, or take part in, we must start to realize that there is a basic and crucial difference between mechanically reacting to such events and relating to them more consciously. It is an important aim of our self-observation to arrive at this realization. The difference between mechanical reaction to a happening and a more conscious way of relating to it depends on the degree of identification. If we are in a state of pretty strong identification, we make no difference between the event, our impression of it, our mechanical reaction to this impression, and our sense of self. All four are put together into a chain of identities: the event equals the impression of it, the impression equals the reaction, and “my” reaction – actually the reaction of the machine – equals me: “I am so angry”, “I feel so outraged”, “I am so hurt”, etc. This chain of identities is precisely what is meant by identification. It is because of the mechanical state that the chain is kept whole and unbroken. Only the conscious self can break the chain at the point where

impressions are received.

²Reaction means re-action, responsive action. In this connection it means psychic response, responsive action in the emotional centre. Reaction is part of emotionality. Mentality, the intellectual centre, is free of reaction. An event makes an impression on our senses. Sense impressions are received in the instinct centre, a physical centre. Physical centres function normally in normal people. Therefore, the problem of identification does not arise there, but in the emotional centre, when it is brought into play and reacts mechanically. This is not to say that reaction is a bad thing in itself. Emotional reaction is needed in many cases as a trigger of necessary physical action. The degree of consciousness determines the degree of identification, however, and emotional reactions of different qualities: with strong or faint identification. It is also possible to observe mentally when reacting emotionally, provided your identification is faint. Emotionally negative reactions are accompanied by strong identifications that without exception make mental self-observation impossible. However, it is easy in such cases to deceive yourself so that you believe that you could observe yourself when this “self-observation” actually was added as an afterthought. All of this can be verified through some honest self-observation.

19.4 Non-Identification

¹If we get identified this means that we are not conscious at the point where we receive impressions from without. Then impressions control us rather than we controlling impressions. The expression “controlling impressions” is actually not exact, since what is meant is not the impressions themselves but rather the imaginations and other identifications that arise from them automatically and mechanically when we are in non-conscious states, states of sleep. In themselves, impressions are neutral, and if we are conscious at the point where we receive them, they cannot give rise to identifications. This might be called interposing a “conscious, evaluating pause” between the impression and the ensuing reaction. If such a pause is interposed, the reaction will be different or will be absent altogether. For example, a man is walking in the dark outside his house and then notices some curled-up thing lying on the ground. If he is in a non-conscious state it may happen that this impression is automatically interpreted as “dangerous snake”, so that the man is seized with fear and runs away. In a more conscious state he receives the impression at a point where the observing self rules, and then states: “A curled-up thing – might be a snake, but might also be something else, a piece of rope, for instance.” Instead of reacting with fear and panic, conditions where he can neither see nor think clearly, he observes the object attentively and approaches it carefully. Then he will see clearly that it is indeed a piece of rope.

²Try in your practical work to see what you have been most identified with today or yesterday and try to separate from this particular form of being identified and try for the time being to make an aim to remember yourself in situations where this kind of identification tends to come about. Certainly you will not be able to carry this out for long because your attempts will become mechanical to the extent that you cease to understand what it is you are doing. There is nothing extraordinary in this, on the contrary it is everyone’s experience. There is consequently no reason for pessimism; just try to make a new effort, but this time in some other direction until that becomes mechanical, too. You simply go on in this manner, persistently, unrelentingly. You should have many different ways in working against identifications, like “many irons in the fire”.

³It is a very marvellous thing to experience a moment of not being identified. When you are in such a state you seem to live in a quiet central place in yourself although you are aware that all things outside you are trying to advance on you and seize hold of you. And “all things outside you” are not things of the external world but the multitude of apparent selves in your

own psyche. They are like a crowd now being kept at bay by invisible policemen. In such a state you can see what one of the main objects of self-observation is: to separate yourself from so much that is continually going on in emotions and thoughts and laying hold of yourself and in fact often dragging yourself down to a lower level. Then you will understand the allegory of the “house in disorder”. In a state of non-identification you can establish a certain amount of order in the house, and this precisely because you do not put the feeling of “I” into what you observe – this is exactly what non-identification means: I am not identifying with it. Now, if not before, you understand, through experience and not mere theory, why in all self-observation it is necessary not to say “I” about what you observe, necessary not to think that you are one “I”, necessary not to think as if one single force acted in you as feeling and thought.

⁴As long as you keep this illusion of your inner oneness, you cannot understand what self-control means. If you think that there is only one force acting in you as feeling and thought, then it is impossible for one thing to command and another to obey. The allegory of the “house in disorder” means that all those who really are and should be servants do not wish to obey but only want to rule and command, the one after the other, for brief moments, under no higher control, plan, or aim. In contrast, self-observation means that the observing self commands and the apparent selves obey, however briefly. The observing self cannot be identified with the observed apparent selves. It is a psycho-logical law that one cannot be what one observes. The same truth expressed differently: at the moment you observe something it becomes separate from yourself and your identification with it ceases.

⁵All exercises that aim at creating consciousness must start from states that are relatively free of identification, thus in the highest parts of centres (“kings”), and be continued with the least possible identification. Such exercises are best when done almost unintentionally, without showing them to others and without showing them even to oneself so to speak.

⁶One should not work for definite short-term results, least of all be identified with such things. The only results obtained in such work will be disappointment and depression, and nothing can be based on them. One cannot prescribe anything for the work no more than for the way to be walked in a larger sense. One must have faith in the fact that the work and the way follow their own laws over which no man has any control. Having a little more experience of the way of the work and the work of the way one has come to the realization that there will be results but never such as one expected in one’s ignorance.

19.5 Non-Identification Preserves Force and Supplies Force

¹Each act of non-identification preserves force. And what is meant here by “force” is the force needed for waking up. If we get identified with everything that arises in our psyche or impinges on our senses, then we cannot have the force needed to perform the work for consciousness or even to understand it. The work will then be distant from us.

²One reason why we lose force is that we are not in the right centre for the thing we are doing. This is rather easy to observe in ourselves provided we have some previous knowledge of the centres. If we do a certain work while daydreaming and allowing our attention to wander because we feel bored, then we can only lose force. On the other hand, if we are in the right centres, in the highest part of centres, perhaps this in all centres, then we direct attention properly to what we are doing and do not lose force, on the contrary we gain force or at least keep it because we act more consciously. Then we shall be able to receive good impressions that supply us with more good force; one more example of the truth of the Gnostic saying: “Unto every one that hath shall be given.”

³The sense of boredom is identification. No necessary, useful, and valuable work is boring in itself, but this emotion is exclusively due to the individual, his state of identification. If he

raises his consciousness to less mechanical parts of centres, the sense of boredom ceases. If his attention is directed from within, he may find any observation, any activity interesting. If his attention is wandering, mechanical, everything will be boring.

19.6 Balanced Active Self-Expression

¹Interaction between people, whether in private or professional life, business or public life, is largely determined by what could be called the “war of personalities”. Personalities are worn and torn mechanically between each other, and as mechanically negative emotions such as irritation and aggressiveness arise from these frictions. In moments of lowered self-control there can be fits of rage, harsh words, and innuendo; envy and malicious joy can be expressed for all to see. In some people, the expression of such negative can be habitual, since it has become their “second nature”, which they cannot bridle, for example in such people as are wont to gossip about others and slander them. Anyone who is the target of such aggression and negativity may easily let himself be carried away, get identified so that he “feels injured” and “has to pay them back in the same coin”. Then he proves to be as mechanical as the aggressor. Now the battle is in full swing, brought on and continued, not by any conscious decisions, but solely by mechanical causes outside the control of the individuals themselves.

²Such a “struggle of personalities” inevitably brings to mind the image of wild beasts fighting for domination. This image is apposite for the personalities in mechanical mutual struggle are about as unaware as animals. These transactions between personalities become mechanical and negative because individuals are under the sway of strong identifications.

³People who want to develop consciousness cannot avoid ending up in situations where they will be assailed emotionally. Then it is important to try to maintain the understanding that there is no necessary connection between the event or situation and their negative emotional reaction. A negative emotional reaction can come about only if one sinks down into a state of identification: situation = impression = reaction = myself. But if in that moment I bring about self-consciousness with will and understanding, then it is impossible to get identified with some emotional reaction. Thus the understanding must be: the situation is not the impression of the situation, the impression is not the mechanical emotional reaction to the impression, the mechanical emotional reaction to the impression is not myself. The mechanical emotional reaction cannot be myself, if I am conscious and observe it. I cannot be what I observe. If I am able to observe it as it is coming about, it can never become strong, but only faint, insignificant, banished to the periphery of my internal field of vision (the “inner external world”).

⁴In some expressions of such aggression there is a perverse feature: namely that people who in some respect represent or embody something of superior quality, such as esoteric knowledge, consciousness development, work for the general good, often become the targets of hatred and persecution on the part of spiteful individuals, typically without having done these persecutors the least harm personally, on the contrary they may even have supported and helped them. (Gurdjieff called this unpleasant phenomenon *tzvarnoharno*.) However, they need not let themselves be carried away so as to engender a struggle between personalities. It is important to understand that situations or events do not necessarily entail identification. I myself (the observing self) am the one to decide whether I will be identified.

19.7 Self-Perception and Perception of Others

¹Self-consciousness and self-remembrance are not the same as self-perception. “Self-perception”, “self-sense” or similar words denote a mechanical perception of oneself. It is an emotional or intellectual perception, therefore belongs to the apparent selves of the emotional or intellectual centre and their views. In contrast, self-consciousness and self-remembrance

belong to a higher state of consciousness, exist “above” the centres mentioned. It is important to understand this distinction, not through a theory but through your own experience. It is self-perception, or self-sense, that makes us say “I” about all these mechanical states with which we are identified: “I was so scared”, “I was so angry”, “I feel useless”, “I feel so offended.” The distinction is clear from the fact that it is impossible to say such things in a state of self-remembrance, when you are self-conscious.

²Physical self-perception is identification with the organism. It is particularly dominant in our times when physicalism (in the form of scientism and atheism) is the officially proclaimed world view intent on banishing all remaining ideas of a higher reality to the fringes of public life (marginalizing Christianity, which despite its deficiencies taught that man is not only body, but soul and spirit as well). Defeated by physicalism, man believes he is nothing but body, that some day he will die along with it and then be extinguished for ever. Small wonder then that the cult of the body, of physical appearance, absorbs so many people.

³Emotional self-perception is identification with one’s own mainly emotional personalities; and intellectual self-perception, with one’s intellectual personalities. The one or the other kind of identification can predominate in an individual. The common feature of all these self-perceptions is that they are based on identification and so makes self-observation difficult or impossible altogether. Identification with one’s physical, emotional, or intellectual perception of oneself has the effect that one is restricted to a very small part of oneself. In such a state, no deep understanding of oneself is possible.

⁴This restrictedness of one’s self-perception also entails a reduction, narrowing, of one’s perception of other people. The ground for this is that a man’s psychic qualities are attached to centres consisting of higher and lower parts that are also organs of perception and valuation of the corresponding qualities in other people. Each such limitation of the function of a centre entails a distortion of its perception and valuation. Such distortions are mainly apparent in the fact that a lower part of a centre in an individual cannot perceive and correctly value qualities belonging to a higher part of the same kind of centre in another individual. This explains how individuals who are at lower stages of consciousness development and so have not activated higher parts of centres must underestimate and depreciate expressions of higher emotionality and higher intellectuality in other individuals.

⁵Therefore it is a piece of wise advice in a general human sense and also for the struggle with identifications to leave personalities out of consideration. Criticism should be directed only at principles, facts, erroneous views as such. Those personalities that were the temporary mouthpieces of the erroneous views should be left in peace from mechanical valuation, which almost always is depreciation. Regrettably, those who are most in need of obeying this counsel usually are the ones who least understand its necessity. The necessity of this counsel derives from the reality of the law of reaping, for we shall smart for our evil thoughts, too.

19.8 Struggling with Identification

¹You overcome identification by realizing that you are identified and then turning your attention to something more important. To do so you must learn to distinguish between important things and unimportant things. If you turn your attention away from less important to more important things, this will with time help you to become less identified with unimportant things. If you want to become free from identifying, you must be able to see this state as apart from yourself, separate it from yourself, and you can do that only by trying to become more conscious, trying to remember yourself, to be aware of yourself.

²In a way, struggling with identification is not so difficult, because, if we can see it, it becomes so ridiculous that we cannot remain identified. Other people’s identifications always seem ridiculous and ours may become so too. Laughter may be useful in this respect, if we

can turn it on ourselves.

³The aim of struggle with identification is to awaken. Identifying is a feature of sleep; identified mind is asleep. Freedom from identifying is one of the sides of awakening. A state where identifying does not exist is quite possible, but we do not observe it in life and we do not notice that we are constantly identified. Identifying cannot disappear of itself; effort is necessary. But first one must understand what to identify means.

⁴The expression “struggle with identification” may be misleading if taken literally. It is not about an emotional reaction, least of all aggression, for such things amount to identification, and then it will just be one identification struggling with another. This rather strengthens identification.

⁵The most efficient way of struggling with identification is just observing it. Observation breaks off identification, since the self cannot be what it observes. If the self in addition strengthens the force of observation by realizations such as “I am not this irritation”, etc., the effect may be even stronger. Self-remembrance of course makes the strongest effect. No identification can endure the light of self-remembrance.

⁶Refraining from demanding consideration and instead showing consideration is necessary in all esoteric groups. “Demanding consideration” is mechanical activity in the emotional centre expressing itself as displeasure that other people do not care for you, do not give you the attention or recompense you think you deserve. The observing self can dissolve also such mechanical, emotionally negative states by understanding: “This is grumbling, but I am different from this,” “this constant harping is a machine that sounds like a screeching tumble drier, but now I shut it off,” “I am watching you, identification, and you have no power any more,” or just “stop it!” “Showing consideration” implies that attention is directed mainly in the emotional centre but also in the intellectual centre and the physical centres. This includes a vivid interest in what is best for other people, an effort to make the best possible out of the situation where the work for the common goal is not lost from sight. When no member of the group demands consideration, when they all show consideration, then the group works with the least possible friction, in the greatest possible harmony, concord, and mutual understanding.

⁷The members of the group showing each other consideration does not in the least preclude their keeping a check on each other for order and seriousness in their work on three lines as well as their observance of rules. Quite the contrary: if the group is made up of people who are earnest in their work, then they have a joint agreement on applying this earnest in practice, for this is “to do” in an esoteric sense. For example, one group member says to another: “That looks like an identification.” The one to whom this remark is addressed need not take offence. Because either he was identified, and then he should be grateful for the remark, or he was not, and then he cannot take offense, for this is possible only when you are identified. Whatever is the case he should be grateful since a fellow human being cared for him in his most important work: the work for consciousness. Of course such a practice presupposes that the members exercise discrimination and good will, but these virtues are part of the practice, to be sure. Nothing in the work of the group can be just theory; practice must permeate everything.

⁸It is absolutely necessary for all who want to work “spiritually” or esoterically to make themselves completely independent of other people’s negative emotionality, personal criticism, abuse and insults. Such as mankind is, with its majority still at the lower emotional stage, the aspirants to discipleship must make themselves invulnerable to all the attacks of hatred. To be vulnerable is to be dependent on other people’s lack of appreciation. By this dependence you afford those other people, who do not wish you well, power over you. Anyone who wishes to join the ranks of self-realizers must see that this is a self-inflicted disadvantage, nothing but a weakness, and a hindrance to his own work for consciousness; that it

has nothing to do with wisdom, understanding of reality, and knowledge of man, but is the direct opposite of these values. Vulnerability is identification of a most serious kind. As long as you can become a victim of it, you cannot progress, for you cannot set yourself free from certain identifications and yet keep other and more difficult ones at that. They must all be eliminated.

⁹Often disciples and initiates have voluntarily and intentionally exposed themselves to the censure and blame of their contemporaries, done such things as are not blameworthy from a higher standpoint but have entailed the moral condemnation of public opinion. Such actions have been risky; many of them had to pay for this with their lives. They did so, however, to liberate themselves from the last remnant of dependence on the estimation of others and also to set examples to junior disciples, give them the message: “you too will have to learn this some day.” Not for nothing the last incarnation in the human kingdom is called the “incarnation of crucifixion”.

19.9 Overcoming Confusion of Ideas Regarding Identification

1 Ordinary human languages are poor in words for realities and experiences of higher kinds. This poverty has the effect that often the same words are used for different concepts, or ideas. The word “identification” is an example of such a word having several meanings. Now it is used to denote a non-desirable, worse psychic function that hinders man from being conscious of himself and his inner states; now it is used to denote higher kinds of consciousness than those ordinarily known to man. These two meanings of “identification” thus are direct opposites of one another.

²One example of the first of the two meanings of the word “identification” cited above is given us by Patañjali in his *Yoga Sūtras*, Book 1, sūtras 2, 3, and 4: “Yoga is control of the mechanical and automatic activity of the envelopes. When this control has been achieved, the see-er stands firm in himself. Identification with envelope activity will otherwise be the result.” Also the fourth way teaching uses this word in this first meaning.

³Examples of the second meaning of the word “identification” are given us by 45-self D.K. in his teaching, presented in the books *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* and *The Rays and the Initiations* by Alice A. Bailey. In these books, consciousness in the three worlds of the first self (physical sense perceptions, emotional feelings, and mental thoughts) is called “consciousness”, and consciousness in higher worlds is called “identification”. The intention of this distinction is obvious: The expression of the consciousness aspect is so different in those higher worlds that another word has to be used to highlight that fact. If, as Laurency proposes, you do not use different names for the consciousness aspect in different worlds, but are content to use different numbers only, yet it is indubitably wise to carefully observe that the planetary hierarchy with its terminology obviously considers that there is a radical difference between the lower mental consciousness and the higher, usually called causal consciousness, since the distinction is drawn precisely between these two.

⁴Why is the distinction drawn there? The explanation is that only causal consciousness (47:3) makes self-consciousness possible, for mere mental consciousness (47:4) does not suffice for this, and there is a radical difference between self-conscious states and non-self-conscious states. This difference is immediately evident to all who have experienced both. Self-conscious states are characterized by the perception of one’s own presence, clarity, and control; perception of peace and inner tranquillity where freedom from unnecessary, debasing, negative emotions and babbling thoughts is the most characteristic. Non-self-conscious states are the opposites of all this: no or little presence and control, disquiet, the constant exchange of apparent selves. Self-conscious states are furthermore distinguished by non-identification, whereas non-self-conscious states are states of identification – please note: the word “identi-

fication” is used here in the first meaning.

⁵The apparent paradox here lies in calling causal consciousness and higher states “identification”, when those states are free of identification according to the first meaning of the word “identification”. The paradox is dissolved by the understanding that the word “identification” in itself only means “being made the same” and that higher (superhuman) kinds of self-conscious states actually are states where the individual monad consciousness attains being- made-the-same with higher collective consciousnesses while the monad’s self-identity is preserved; moreover that such states are the direct opposites of human states of mechanical identification with the apparent selves of envelope consciousnesses, states that preclude self-consciousness. Thus it all depends on what identification, being-made-the-same, is about and whether it happens mechanically with apparent selves or is done self-consciously. Identification according to the first meaning of the word “identification” must happen mechanically and cannot be self-conscious. Identification according to the second meaning of the word “identification” cannot happen mechanically but must always be self-conscious. Since mental, emotional, and physical consciousness is *always* accompanied by identification with mechanical apparent selves, always to some degree, and can never be self-conscious in themselves, whereas causal and higher consciousness is *never* accompanied by apparent selves and is always self-conscious, you may in fact use the word “identification” now in the one sense, now in the other sense, provided you indicate clearly which kinds of consciousness you are speaking about.

⁶The following excerpt from an essay by Plotinos (Latinized: Plotinus; lived 204/5–270, first in Egypt and then in Rome where he founded a school) is of especial interest, since the author describes both lower and higher states using words that in either case indicate identification: being made the same, being made similar or like. Plotinos, who was an initiate, had a clear understanding of the radical difference between lower and higher, mechanical and self-conscious, which is evident from the text:

⁷“Since the soul is evil when it is thoroughly mixed with the body and shares its experiences and has all the same opinions, it will be good and possess virtue when it no longer has the same opinions but acts alone – this is intelligence and wisdom – and does not share the body’s experiences – this is self-control – and is not afraid of departing from the body – this is courage – and is ruled by reason and intellect, without opposition – and this is justice. One would not be wrong in calling this state of the soul likeness to God, in which its activity is intellectual, and it is free in this way from bodily affections.” (*Enneads*, 1.2, “On Virtues, Chapter 3)