

Individual and Collective

Today, communities have a bad reputation. It is believed that they are not compatible with a developed individuality. It is one of the core beliefs of the whole Western world, that individuality and collective are two irreconcilable opposites. In reality the situation is much more complex. Nature does create collectivist communities, in which the individual hardly plays any role at all (herds of animals, etc.) But it also creates communities, in which the development of a highly specific individual is a prerequisite for the functioning of the community (biotope, etc.). I call them “communitarian” communities. If people today resist communities, then they are thinking of collectivistic, not communitarian, forms of community. In reality, in human history to date, only collectivistic communities have existed. In the past, the development of the individual and the historical process of individuation had not progressed far enough to make communitarian communities possible.

The universal community is a communitarian community. It can be likened to an organism in which the individual people are its organs. The organs of a healthy organism have different tasks and functions; the liver acts differently from the kidney. The organism is a unified system, and the organs are characterized by their individuality and their differences. The unity of the organism is achieved by the individuality and difference of the organs. In other words, it is only when the full individuality of the members is developed that a healthy community can emerge. Community and individual are not opposites; they are prerequisites for each other. The prerequisite for a universal community is an autonomous individual, and the prerequisite for an autonomous individual is a community. That is the natural order in the building plan of Creation.

The structure of future survival-adaptive communities is always connected to the self-development of the individuals involved. The more they develop their individuality and the less they let themselves be ruled by preconceived dogmas and false authorities, the easier it is for them to recognize their chances of development in the community. At some point a deep process of individuation leads all human beings to not see themselves as private persons, but as organic elements of a human community. For it is through individuation that human beings experience not only what separates them from others, but also what connects them at a much deeper level. They dare to rediscover and accept this. It is as individuals that they find their universal dimension, and it is as individual human beings that they experience their connection to the universe.

Without individuation a healthy organism cannot develop. Instead we get conforming collectivism in which individual differences are not promoted but instead suppressed. Collectivistic systems do not tolerate individual autonomy. Instead, both toward the inside and the outside, they fight everything that does not fit into their ideology. The process of individuation must be suppressed, because it would disturb the prescribed uniformity. The inner cohesion is achieved by dissociating from others and through the fight against so-called “enemies”. This is how the cruel collectivistic systems in history up to today have operated, be it the Christian church, Islamic fundamentalism, orthodox communism, national socialism, or every form of racism, but even such things as “party lines”, “common sense” and bourgeois sexual morals. Today, the collective human being has been trained to react to other symbols – the symbols of fashion, lifestyle, consumerism, and commerce – but the principle remains the same.

Today, we are facing a historical turning point when it comes to the creation of communities. The old structures no longer function and the new ones need to be found. To what extent such structures can be developed determines if the human being can regain the basic values of living together: truth, trust, solidarity, and mutual support. Functioning communities of autonomous individuals are the basis for a humane world. In them, love, both emotional-spiritual love and sensual love, will be able to develop in a new way, for personal

love begins to blossom wherever we begin to recognize each other in our specificity and individuality. A mature community will always protect this love.