

JOURNAL



URANTIA®

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NEWS FROM IUA

Improving the availability of *The Urantia Book* in the Asia/Pacific Region

In 1992 a non-profit branch office of Urantia Foundation was opened in Australia to improve the broad availability of *The Urantia Book* in Australia, New Zealand, and the Asia/Pacific region.

Readers in that part of the world believe it is preferable for the Australian office to become self-sustaining if it is to continue to serve the Asia/Pacific region effectively.

Members of the Australian and New Zealand Urantia Association (ANZURA), which is the *Urantia Book* reader group for Australia and New Zealand, have offered to help raise funds for the Australian office through the *UB Endeavour* fundraising initiative to keep *The Urantia Book* readily available and to ensure that the supply of the book remains secure and distribution channels remain open. They also feel that it is about time the readership “down under” released itself from its dependence on the generosity of our American brothers and sisters across the Pacific.

Through this initiative ANZURA is indirectly supporting the Foundation’s other major programs such as translations and the subsidising of the cost of the book in the developing nations, as more funds will be available at head office for these purposes.

New National Association for Colombia

On May 8, 2004 the present national association of Colombia became a local association: Asociación Urantia de Bogotá. Colombia now has four local associations. The other three are Asociación Urantia Local de Medellín, Asociación Urantia San José Eje Cafetero, and Asociación Urantia de Barranquilla. This was done in order to reorganize Colombia, to form a new national association based on the same organizational plan as Urantia Association of the United States and Canada Urantia Association, each of which has multiple local associations. These national associations consist of a governing board and special committees with the purpose of coordinating and assisting the locals. Presidents and Vice Presidents of the local associations are the voting members, representing their members on a national level. The new national association is presently being formed and should be completed in June 2004.

The following governing board was elected: President: Max Carriazo, Vice president: Rosa Alfonso, Treasurer: Marcela Baquero, Secretary: Hector Ayala. We offer our congratulations and good wishes to these willing leaders and express gratitude to Patricia Ramírez for expediting this transition. *The Urantia Book* has indeed taken root in Colombia.

Cathy Jones,
IUA Administrator

The Reality of Religious Experience: How Parental Experiences Enhance Our Knowledge of God

HÉLÈNE BOISVENUE, CANADA

To me, the best religious experience is one that enables us to get closer to God and enhances our understanding of him. It is said in *The Urantia Book: The transcendent goal of the children of time is to find the eternal God, to comprehend the divine nature* [21:3]. Would it be possible to understand divine nature?

Throughout its slow evolution, humanity has tried hard to capture the nature of God. That is what we learn through religious history. It also teaches us that human beings have shown great talent in transmuting a gracious and radiant God into various sombre things. Erroneous concepts of God have allowed many misdeeds for men and women who believed in them. Victor Hugo in his splendid book *Legend of Centuries* understands this particularity of humanity's history when he says:

World, everything bad comes from the shapes of the gods

We make darkness out of light.

For example, in ancient Greece, Aristotle maintained that friendship was not possible between deities and men. Plato's opinion sustained that love did not exist amongst gods. We also witnessed with shudders of horror the terrible depictions of the day of last judgement as described in the Middle Ages where the illustrated tortures resembled the acts of criminal psychopaths. We could argue that these negative images of God are things of the past, but let me tell you, they are not.

To illustrate this, I will relate to you a recent conversation I had with my younger sister. My sister is very sensitive to the spiritual dimension of human beings and her transcendental search has led her to Buddhism. We were discussing prayer and she confided that when she prayed she mentally visualized Buddha because he portrayed solicitude and compassion. She felt unable to pray to God—God as conceived in the Occident—because she perceived him as a stern judge who busied himself by adding up

wrongdoings that displeased him.

You can dismiss my example by saying that the concept of God depicted by my sister is old-fashioned and reflects her age (she is in her fifties), and that younger people do not see God that way anymore. Again, let me tell you, this is not so.

At one of the book fairs, while I was presenting *The Urantia Book*, a young man in his twenties passionately declared to us: "If God exists, I sure have a couple of words for him." I think his vision of God was very negative and rebellious.

Therefore I wish to dedicate this presentation to my sister and this unknown young man I met at that book fair. A mistaken concept about God deteriorates one's relationship with the divine and, consequently, mutilates a fundamental aspect of one's life. The goal of my presentation today is to bring us to a better understanding and knowledge of the radiance of the nature of our Father. How will I do that?

To do this, I chose to relate to a very human experience, since it is said in *The Urantia Book: God can be known only by the realities of experience* [1856:2]. The experience that gives us a certain outlook on the nature of God is the parenting experience, of which is said that it is essential on our pathway to God (516:2, 531:4). This experience will bring us to our first steps in knowing God. Again, here is what *The Urantia Book* tells us:

...[A] true family—a good family—reveals to the parental procreators the attitude of the Creator to his children, while at the same time such true parents portray to their children the first of a long series of ascending disclosures of the love of the Paradise parent of all universe children [942:1].

Can you grasp from this citation that the experience has two sides? It presents the outlook from a child's point of view and from a parent's as well. I will therefore illustrate, in two parts, how the experience of learning to know God better can be accomplished by using parental experience.

The foundation of parental relationship: sentiment comes first

Before elaborating the points of view of child or parent, I will dwell on one essential question relevant to the parent-child relationship. Here is the question: What is the premise of the relationship between parent and child? In other words, what triggers the first impulse of a parent towards his child? And what maintains this impulse with such force as to render the attachment almost indissoluble?

Is it intellectual deductions? Is it through reason? Or, is it emotional impulses? Is it feelings? I assert that it is feelings. They are the forerunners in the parent-child relationship.

To prove this, I invite you to call on your own personal experiences and observations and analyse for example the behaviour of parents when their children are in danger. How many times have we seen mothers or fathers throw themselves in the fire to save their children, and do so against all reason?

This example helps us understand the power of the action produced not by reason but by an impulsive emotion. The intensity of this impulse will determine the strength of the action and will stimulate the courage and tenacity needed to realize it. Sentiments mobilize and incite the person to go beyond in action. I reaffirm to you that sentiment comes first in parent-child relationship.

If sentiments are felt first in parents, we can therefore suppose that they come first too with our celestial Father and that he too is feeling this flood of emotional impulses for his numerous children throughout the universe.

Let's take a look at what *The Urantia Book* says about this subject (emphasis mine):

*And the **whole** of this absolute nature is **subject** to the relationship of the Creator to his universe creature family [59:1].*

In God the Father freewill performances are not ruled by power, nor are they guided by intellect alone [59:2].

*...[I]n all his vast family relationship with the creatures of time the God of universes is **governed by divine sentiment** [59:1].*

*...[A]nd that **tender nature** finds its strongest expression and greatest satisfaction in loving and being loved [59:2].*

After reading this I cannot help myself, with a dash of humor, to address you gentlemen in particular and advise you to cultivate your tender nature even if our civilization has favored the development of these qualities mostly for the feminine gender. Gentlemen,

that is the necessary condition to resemble God. God indicates to us that this emotional attitude, this tenderness of heart must be cultivated by men as much as by women. This tenderness of the heart will draw a vigorous and opinionated action. Don't you all want this vigorous masculine disposition? Be aware that it conjugates with the heart.

The child's point of view

We have just identified the first element that characterizes the parent-child relationship which is sentiment. Let's see now how our experience of having been a child ourselves can help us grasp a first revelation of our celestial Father's nature.

When Jesus draws from the child experience to express the qualities we need to develop in our relationship with the celestial Father, he always refers to the early childhood experience. *Verily, verily, I say to you, whosoever receives not the kingdom of God as a little child shall hardly enter therein to grow up to the full stature of spiritual manhood [1840:0].*

Once more, we need to dwell in our own memories, as far as possible, in order to bring back from those days the very young child we used to be and the dominating sentiment we had for our parents. I remember particularly one day, when I was five years old, taking a walk hand in hand with my father to visit the construction site of my future school.

What an adventure! The school was being built relatively far away from my home, in an undeveloped area. It made me feel excited and worried at the same time. I would never wander by myself to such a remote and unexplored place as this. But with my father, I did walk that kilometre and a half feeling completely secure and confident. To me, my father was like my guardian angel and under his caring surveillance no harm could come to me. In the very young children, an attitude of total abandon when close to the supervision of the parents is observed and comes from the absolute trust that the parents will watch over them and protect them.

It is also from his own experience of having been a child in a relationship with loving terrestrial parents that Jesus received his first revelation of the Universal Father.

To illustrate this, let us remember this moment in the life of Jesus as a child following his visit at the temple. Jesus questioned the rituals proper to the Jewish religion of this era. He was very upset by the explanations of his parents concerning the wrath of

God. Joseph and Mary adhered to the current beliefs of appeasing God's anger through sacrifices. Jesus could not accept his parents' orthodox beliefs and with deep emotions he explained his point of view:

"My father, it cannot be true—the Father in heaven cannot so regard his erring children on earth. The heavenly Father cannot love his children less than you love me. And I well know, no matter what unwise thing I might do, you would never pour out wrath upon me nor vent anger against me. If you, my earthly father, possess such human reflections of the Divine, how much more must the heavenly Father be filled with goodness and overflowing with mercy. I refuse to believe that my Father in heaven loves me less than my father on earth" [1378:1].

It is through contact with loving parents that the child experiences security, goodness, and unconditional love. This way, he may later in life understand what is the nature of God and grasp the quality of the relationship that binds to him. This quality of relationship is saturated with the trust of the child that his parent will lovingly support him until he reaches maturity. This relation of the child for his loving parent is a first revelation of God's nature. If we look back and dwell further on our own childhood, we start to grasp the radiance in the nature of our celestial Father.

The point of view of the parent:

a) In the individual relation with the child

In this part I will attempt to describe the point of view of the individual relationship of the parent with his child, and through this, what factors might reveal the nature of the Universal Father. I will use a personal experience that my husband and I shared in the hours following the birth of our children. I will try to illustrate the multiple and touching emotions felt by parents in regards of their children.

After the birth of our child, my husband and I, while holding the baby in our arms, were overwhelmed by this great emotion filled with growing joy. Already our whole being was dedicated to the welfare of our child. This fragile little child, left to our good care and already mobilizing our life, would become our constant preoccupation. We carried this newborn baby in our arms and already were making plans for his development; we were concentrated on his growth. We could already imagine the well balanced adult he would become.

But this vision of the future did not diminish the pleasure we had in following his development in the

present moment. We had loads of patience. What parent gets impatient with the newborn baby's inability to talk, walk, or solve mathematical equations? When he encourages the first steps of his child and comforts him in the inevitable ensuing falls, is there one parent who gets irritated at this important phase of development?

The parent rejoices with every new stage of development achieved, and this pleasure erases all previous difficulties met on the way. Which parent would remember, while attending his child's graduation from university, the bitterness caused by failing the fifth grade math exam?

A parent knows his child because he accompanies him on his way to adulthood. This knowledge makes it possible to look for the best in the child. Fatherly love has singleness of purpose, and it always looks for the best in man (1574:5). It allows him to love his child in the best way. To a parent, taking a look at his child is deeply moving; it's love. How is it, then, for God?

When I was a child, the almighty power of God was very satisfying for me because this quality was an excellent tool to create a nature that already amazed me. But the all-knowing capability of God frightened me. To realize that God knew everything about me and could keep account of my sins traumatized me, just like it does my sister today. I hadn't understood yet that this perfect knowledge made it possible for God to love me even more deeply (1898:3, 4) and better exercise his compassion towards me.

Through a friend, I recently discovered an interesting definition of compassion. Compassion is this capacity to adjust to the individual needs of a person; therefore it is necessary to get to know the person more intimately. Compassion takes this person by the hand and accompanies him or her for one more step on their own path. This one more step is very important. Past mistakes and foibles become trifled; they become erased and forgotten through the joy of crossing one more distance. Compassion does not dwell on the past; it is dynamic and looking towards the future. It brings an adapted and helpful action. And so does God in his perfect knowledge and compassion. With his well intentioned affection he infallibly adjusts his actions to the immediate needs of all his children.

Relying on my personal experience as a parent, I declare that, because he is also a parent, God finds joy in his children (28:1). The whole of his action is mobilized for them; his plan for universal development is meant for them and we know that this plan is

amazing and infinite. We are his constant preoccupation. Will he remember our shortcomings when we reach Paradise and get our final degree? Absolutely not! My parental experience confirms to me that God does not formalize himself with our present faults, our imperfections; he looks for the best in us; his eyes are already turned to the perfect being we will become. God is a parent who follows the steps of his child, holds his hand and says: I am with you with every step of your growth. We are like young children in the arms of God. He looks down on us, he is moved by us, he is the parent, he is our Father.

b) In his family relationship (studied under a collective angle)

In this last part, we will try to discover the divine sentiment of God looking at his children as a whole that we could describe as family ties. To do this, I will present you different scenarios that permit us the exploration of parental sentiments involved.

Scenario 1

An adult has been saved from certain death—say through drowning, fire, earthquake—by the diligence, the competence, and the courage of a generous person. Let us think of the good Samaritan (1810:1) as an example. How great is the gratitude of the person whose life has just been saved!

Now we will use the same scenes and replace the adult by a child whose life has just been spared by an equally brave person. Imagine the moment when the child is safely put in the arms of his parents. I believe that if we could measure the intensity of the emotions produced in each of these two scenes (the adult being saved and the child being saved) the emotions of the second scene would blow up all measuring equipment.

Scenario 2

This example comes from my own family life.

I have two sons, eight years apart. For a long time our eldest son treated his younger brother as the negligible other, depreciating him day after day—at best, displaying indifference towards him; at worst, attributing him with pejorative names or humiliating him with his pranks, becoming more abusive and harassing. Normal children, will you think? I don't think so. The relationship had become very unhealthy and was never compensated by moments of brotherly complicity. The atmosphere that reigned in the family was contaminated by a lack of joy and relaxation. In the end our younger son projected his rebellion on us, his parents, by repeatedly running away from home

and through fits of anger and violence.

One of the means we used to pull ourselves out of our difficulties was to solicit our oldest son's understanding and collaboration. We explained to him our interpretation of the situation by making him conscious of the power he held in these circumstances. To our greatest surprise, our son cooperated in the suggested actions; he stopped bullying his brother and even started to demonstrate a certain kindness. His attitude, having been negative up to this point, became positive: a surprise for his birthday, an invitation to go to the movie or a bike ride. Our youngest son's difficulties have greatly diminished since then.

This change of attitude from my oldest son towards his younger brother has deeply moved me. I am very grateful. This positive attention he gave to his brother was showing he cared for us, his parents. This was better than any gifts he could have bought. The happiness felt in this moment surpassed any kindness he would have demonstrated towards me only.

These examples portray the feelings of parents facing the relationships of their children amongst themselves. From my point of view, as a parent, I reaffirm to you that whatever you do to one of my children is much more appreciated than if you did it for me.

Scenario 3

I have one last scene to present.

I remember family gatherings such as anniversaries. I chose especially for this example the gatherings in my husband's family, because my father-in-law knew explicitly how to express his contentment in these moments. I can still see him leaning in the doorway between the kitchen and dining room, looking at our emotion and happiness. He would clearly tell us so: "I just love to watch you when you're all together." How deeply hurt he would have been if one of us had been excluded from our group.

And such is the parental relationship with God. God's happiness is grand when he sees his children grow and progress. His emotion is even greater when he watches his children offer support to others whose path and growth are met with difficulties. Do you understand the divine sentiment? Do you understand the pleasure of God when his children help each other?

Jesus taught us the truth when he affirmed: "*And remember that, inasmuch as you minister to one of the least of my brethren, you have done this service to me.*" [1917:1] Jesus is a father for the personalities of the universe and this is

how he expresses the nature of the Universal Father. It is mostly in light of his fatherly feelings that he invites us to care for each other and establish spiritual fraternity.

Conclusion

The concept of Father is the concept that enables us to reach the radiance in God; understanding God as a father makes us banish forever this old picture of a greyish bearded man, sternly looking down and brandishing his judgement from his stormy cloud. Let yourselves be swathed by his light and by the solicitude of a tender-natured God, our Universal Loving Father.

The parental experience, a very human experience, teaches us great truths about God. Human beings can better understand divine nature by dwelling on this twofold experience: having been children in contact

with loving parents on one side, and then being loving parents, responsible for children and sustaining them in their growth. A divine sentiment rules over God's relationship with his creatures and this sentiment resembles those we experience in our parental relations.

In order to find the eternal God and understand his divine nature, it is necessary to let ourselves be swathed in the touching associative relation between creature and Creator, and call God our Father. To conclude my presentation, I wish to borrow on these wonderful words from a Mighty Messenger who presents the five papers on the nature of God in *The Urantia Book*: *I can do nothing more helpful than to reiterate that God is your universe Father, and that you are all his planetary children* [72:1].

Einstein and the Revelation: Inventing the Universe

RICK WARREN, USA

Albert Einstein would have reveled in the Urantia Papers. They offer what he craved to discover: a plausible unifying explanation for all things and beings, a theory that encompassed everything. Alas, he searched only in the material realm for the greater part of his life, but toward the end he did appear to have the glint of God in his seasoned eyes.

If he were again to attempt to uncover the unifying principle of the Universe, this time in the light of the revelation, he might find that he could, in simple terms, define the physical universe as it hangs on three God-created elements: ultimatons, space, and gravity (169:1). Of course he would say it in the language of mathematics and with the metaphor of symbolic equation.

If Albert Einstein agreed with the scientific and spiritual revelations of *The Urantia Book*, he would rejoice in the connectedness of the physical, the mental, and the divine (102:1). Of course the reason he didn't reach philosophic or religious climax is because mathematics is only a minor and impersonal revelation

of the vastly greater whole. But you must admire the quality of his thinking, if not his unremitting persistence. How many of us are able or willing to devote our thinking to one subject for decades? Imagine what thoughts he could have conjured as a result of embracing the Urantia revelation!

The physical universe is elegantly simple on its surface; ultimatons manifest in space and gravity begins its work (465:2). *The ultimaton* "buddling" [478:4] tendency pulls them into masses (eventually with direction from the physical controllers) that gravity faithfully crushes. This creates heat and pressure which breaks down matter (463:12), and that causes light to be released. Light goes out in all directions, and this light fuels plant life which propels animal life, which is needed for spirit life to begin the journey back to where the ultimaton began—Paradise (169:1).

But in between nascent light and eternal life lies a mystery: How can ultimatons, gravity, and space make heat and light which make planets of 100 elements? (541:6) One cannot see the planetary

elements in the original three elements of physical universe construction, but they are inherent. How does God do that? And how can the elements show such blindingly diverse properties? (467:4)

We and old Albert are confronted with a question of quintessential significance regarding the mysteries of the physical universes. How can 100 elements display so many odd, unique and eccentric qualities? If the material universes have only three ingredients, how do the Gods transform ultimatons, space, and gravity into star-stuff, light, and planets so that beings may take up bodies to experience life and soul growth in the presence of these 100 elements? (399:7) How can copper come from the same ultimatons that hydrogen comes from?

Mysteries aside, the universal machine does create a magnificent variety of materials by forcing ultimatons to go through different processes. Subject an ultimatons to space, let gravity pull it together with other ultimatons, let the nuclear fire be lit, and *voilà*, implanted vegiforms consume the fire's light, and pre-planned people eat the plants to evolve, and souls use the bodies to act and grow, and the three great Gods enjoy the show (most of the time) (468:2).

Instead of three inanimate elements, we now have five: matter, space, gravity, heat, and light. Add the crowning two, planets and life, and that makes seven. It's a model that's served Father for eternity. But the story of the "Invention of the Universe" (1276:2) is a little more complex where personal will is distributed (53:5) *carte blanche*, willy-nilly, and apparently, helter-skelter. Underneath lies serenity, however.

In the beginning, there you are in utter harmony, the I AM (6:3); you are infinitely wise and limitlessly capable. You decide to create a Universe where there are beings like yourself, who have free will (71:7). You want them to be sovereign in their world, as are you in infinity. First you divide yourself, becoming a team of three (108:2). You three build a permanent residence (7:10) and work to hardwire all creation with the basics for independent free will (70:5). You'll need material, Mind, Spirit, and Personality circuits (1286:5).

After you create a personal family and a proper home for you and your perfect helpers, you call it Paradise (7:10). (I wonder what symbol Einstein would use for Paradise? Zero?) Then you send ultimatons out in a wide circle (473:1). And with the help of your "children", you start the vortices that pull the ultimatons into aggregations. These clumps of matter are acted on by your gravity, which pulls them into

definable masses, and then heat, caused by gravity working on ultimatons, begins to make suns (465:1). The solar process then gives rise to the 100 elements through the variable use of more heat, then cold and sometimes pressure, which form the diverse planets from cooling solar matter (473:5).

The stage is now set for life. Life is the greatest mystery in the universe aside from the appearance of the I AM. No one can essay to pontificate on life, whence it came, how it came to be (399:6) or where it will take us in ultimate Eternity, save for God (347:5).

The I AM divides himself so that by the time he manifests at our level (638:4), he has forgotten his origin. He has accomplished self-forgetfulness; he has differentiated his consciousness into trillions upon trillions of relatively freewill beings scattered over vast fields of ultimatonic constructs (2018:4).

God weaves the physical universe on three irrepressible threads: ultimatons, gravity, and space. What a simple concept! It is not so hard to accept that matter, when gathered into a star's intense gravity pull, should begin to heat and then radiate light for billions of years as solar engines on which hang the lives and experiences of man and beast (125:4).

What is hard to understand, and maybe Albert would have trouble with this too, is how ultimatons, after becoming grist for the mill of divine creation, develop such diverse properties and amazing powers of cohesion (169:1). Metals are bound in well-nigh indissoluble links and can withstand enormous forces. Gases are compressible, yet water, made of two gasses, is not compressible, unless it is in the form of steam. The oddities, idiosyncrasies, and the outright diversity of chemical properties are far more than astonishing, they are stupefying!

Water, a compound of two common elements, has within it several odd properties that can be used as a material suggestion for spirit (1795:5), since spirit can flow in any direction, can freeze, and can expand. Spirit is used but nothing is used up (76:1). Spirit sustains all living beings (1155:4), and without it there is only the barren desert. But without a desert, there will be no place for spirit to flow and no oases of creativity. No oases, no Alberts, no you or me. It all started "relatively" simply. Einstein would have genuinely enjoyed knowing of the simplicity and elegance of the unified theory of everything, as complex as it finally is. It is simple complexity, mixed with a mystery and driven by a dream.

Albert would have embraced it.

The Way of Simplicity and the Paths of Thoroughness

JEFF WATTLES, USA

This article is a segment from Chapter One of a book about the philosophy of living. It is intended to illustrate a way of speaking about Urantia Book ideas with a broad audience.

If you've ever been on a trip, asked for directions, and gotten bad directions, you wish the person had said, "I don't know." Directions for the journey into truth, beauty, and goodness are different. You can estimate as you hear them, since you are not a stranger in this land. You already begin with some familiarity, some knowledge and wisdom. You can see whether the directions make sense of what you already know and whether they take you closer to your goal. You are free to reject or modify any of the directions offered. If I tell you how to get to the bakery, your nose can confirm that you are getting closer. It's the same with this journey. We start with facts and then go on to meanings and values. The aroma should get stronger every step of the way.

Truth, beauty, and goodness touch our entire existence as beings who think and feel and act. Whenever the mind begins to realize anything, it engages truth. This can happen by taking time to really learn from a magazine article on science and technology or by stopping to ponder an insight coming from a mouth of a child or by getting a realization in the course of a spiritual practice. Whenever we feelingly enjoy anything, we experience beauty, whether in a garden or a poem. Our actions enter the domain of goodness, touching our relationships and the groups we belong to. Truth, beauty, and goodness are the values that quietly govern these regions of our lives.

These are values to be lived. When we are at our best, our spirit of inquiry is awake; we are guided by down-to-earth wisdom; we are spiritually alive. Sensitive to natural and artistic beauty, we are vigorous but not rushed. Generally cheerful, we maintain a hearty sense of humor. Alert to the needs of those around us, we are morally active. Neither prideful nor obsessed with our own growth, we have superb respect for self and others. A spontaneous beauty of character begins to emerge, and love motivates our relationships. Even amid the staggering problems of

today's world, we exhibit health, sanity, and happiness. We each taste this level of living at times, but how can we cultivate it more fully? For that, we need a philosophy of living.

The way of simplicity

To cultivate the better way of living there are two approaches. The first is the way of simplicity. Start living in truth, beauty, and goodness right now. Don't make a resolution for the coming year; don't wait to finish this chapter. The wisdom is already available to you, and your present intuition is enough to begin with. Be true to the best you know. Walk in beauty. Above all, let goodness prevail in everything you do.

There are times when the way of simplicity is the only honest teaching, and any other approach would be evasive. Don't dodge the issue by asking, "How?" Don't ask for a method, a list of easy steps that reduces the noble ascent to something that the mind can breeze through, promising wonders without effort. Dare to come into Presence right now. Let go of creeds and dogmas and books. Truth is here. Wake up. Beauty is at hand. Let yourself feel it. Goodness beckons. Follow and be free.

The way of simplicity is the altar call, the Zen gesture, the revelatory proclamation, the decisive act of service, the enthusiastic hug. It intimidates the cautious, those who fear presumption, and those who doubt that which is genuine.

Paths of thoroughness

Simplicity unfolds. A path opens up. We can survey the path in the degree of thoroughness that fits our purpose. We can explore details, handle difficulties, spend years in further research and discussion and silence, receiving and giving. Did we really think we could climb the Mt. Everest of knowledge, wisdom, and truth without decades of devoted living? To pursue paths of thoroughness is the second approach to cultivating the quality of living we seek.

Our concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness develop through experience and effort, study and struggle. In a moment of illumination, insight arrives. A synthesis crystallizes. Then life takes a new turn, and

we must add to yesterday's triumphs and struggle to find the insight all over again, this time with a new twist. The changed context prompts a fresh interpretation and an expanded synthesis. In this process our concepts acquire clarity, depth, and power. They become useful tools for putting us in touch with the energy and movement of reality. In order to acquire that usefulness concepts must be more than static ideas. Concepts go beyond definitions and even beyond the intellect itself. The word "concept" comes from Latin, and it combines two words, "grasp" and "together". We must grasp together the full spectrum of human experience, material, intellectual, and spiritual, in order to form worthy concepts. Thus concepts have a transcendent dimension. Facts of the immediate environment are critical, but we dare to envision a cosmic perspective. Earthly beauties delight, but we contemplate beauty on a universal scale. Human goodness merits respect, but it only reaches its height by linking with divine goodness.

Reality is neither chaotic nor rigid. Therefore our path, our sequence of chapters and series of steps, can be neither arbitrary nor dogmatic. The basic distinctions we use—truth, beauty, goodness; material, intellectual, spiritual—are not watertight boxes. Life blends what the intellect distinguishes. Nevertheless, we can map the territory and chart a course to touch a satisfying range of essentials. Shifting from one to many, singular to plural, truth is articulated into the truths of science, philosophy, and spiritual experience; beauty into natural and artistic varieties; goodness into morality and character. Each of these topics is further differentiated into principles and exercises that make key concepts easy of approach. So, yes, there are steps that anyone can grasp.

Though you can explore these topics in any order, there is a reason for the sequence of the coming chapters. They lead through an ascending and descending path, a journey inward and a journey

outward. A truth seeker aspiring to cosmic flight must first prepare the spacecraft with scientific care before philosophic ignition and spiritual liftoff. Once the truth venture is aloft, the time to enjoy beauty is optimal, and the mission of goodness gains its required orbit, a mission to be completed only upon return to earth.

Combining the two approaches

Can we combine the way of simplicity with the paths of thoroughness? We must. This is done by bringing a wholehearted grasp of simplicity to the paths of thoroughness. Such wholeheartedness opens up discovery and creativity. The way of simplicity and the paths of thoroughness complement each other. The long path to mature love takes patience and pondering, and it is designed to complement the short path—the immediate availability of love found in communion. The long path depends at all times on the short path, and the short path is enriched by each forward step on the long path.

In daily life, we normally rely on the simplicity of intuition, only occasionally having the time to do our best thinking in thoroughness, but study and reflection sharpen intuition. Great spontaneous responses are the fruit of great decisions, and great decisions come from our best thinking. The depth of genuine simplicity comes only from laboring in the fields of thoroughness. Simple concepts become meaningful through experience with complexities, while ventures into thoroughness are kept on track by commitments expressed in simple terms. Thus we move back and forth between simple affirmations of major concepts and more thorough paths of structured exploration, between intuitive, right-brain simplicity and methodical, left-brain complexity. This movement is the life of our very concepts of truth, beauty, and goodness.

A note to Seppo Kanerva and all the Trustees

On behalf of IUA, I wish to congratulate you on the election of a new president in the person of Seppo Kanerva, and the reelection of remaining trustees to their respective positions. I want to thank Richard Keeler for his long years of leadership during a period of unrest, conflict, and confusion. May the guidance of the spirit accompany all of you in the challenging tasks ahead, and be assured of our daily prayers that all of you grow in divine wisdom and strength.

Loving service changes the world.

Gaétan Charland. IUA President

Personality: Identity, Self, and Selfhood

JEAN ROYER, FRANCE

In total, this essay is a comprehensive collection of subject material from *The Urantia Book*.

It is presented in three sections. This is the first of the three sections.

The other sections will be published in successive issues of the IUA Journal.

This essay adds practically no personal contribution to what can be found about personality in *The Urantia Book*. Its main advantage lies in a different perspective which brings together concepts which are found in separate places in the book. Some readers may regret the way some sentences have been cut, but they always can complete them and thus find new interpretations. This essay also shows that any study of the book is sure to raise more questions than it solves.

A study of personality is an impossible undertaking since *personality is one of the unsolved mysteries of the universes* [70:3].

Nevertheless the word is so important. It is found 1425 times in *The Urantia Book*, whereas “identity” is only found 138 times, “self” 160 times—that does not include compounds such as self-conscious, self-realization, etc.—and “selfhood” 40 times. Even if we do not fully comprehend the real nature of the personality itself, we may hope to form adequate concepts of the factors entering into the make up of various orders and levels of personality (70:3).

As usual, *The Urantia Book* uses the words in several meanings, sometimes in conformity with the traditional connotations to be found in dictionaries and sometimes with an entirely new meaning.

Before examining what the book can tell us about those words it may be useful to revise our traditional knowledge by looking at what the Webster offers us.

Our reference is Webster’s *New Twentieth Century Dictionary* unabridged (1975).

For personality, out of the seven senses we can probably eliminate entries 4, 6 and 7. Thus we have:

1. the quality or fact of being a person,
2. the quality or fact of being a particular person; personal identity; individuality,
3. habitual patterns and qualities of behaviour of any individual as expressed by physical and mental activities and attitudes; distinctive individual qualities

of a person, considered collectively,

4. a person; especially, a notable person; a personage.

For identity:

1. The condition or fact of being the same in all qualities under consideration; sameness; oneness,
2. a) the condition or fact of being some specific person or thing; individuality;
b) the condition of being the same as something or someone assumed, described, or claimed.

N.B. It’s worth noting that the word “individuality” is, in one instance, used as a synonym for both personality and identity.

For self we can probably eliminate sense 3 and we have:

1. the identity, character, or essential qualities of any person or thing,
2. the identity, personality, individuality etc. of a given person; one’s own person as distinct from all others,
4. one’s own welfare, interest or advantage; selfishness; as, people concerned only with thought of self.

N.B. Sense 2 does not make distinctions very easy for us.

For selfhood:

1. all the things that make a person what he is; personality; individuality,
2. the condition of being self-centered; selfishness.

We have wilfully eliminated the word “ego” which belongs to the same series in traditional language, as can be seen by the Webster’s definition:

For ego:

1. the self; the individual as aware of himself,
2. egotism; conceit,
3. in philosophy the self, variously conceived...
4. in psychoanalysis...

N.B. In *The Urantia Book*, the word **ego** is used for the lower self, or material self; *[T]he material self, the ego-entity of human identity* [1229:7].

Let us now look at what *The Urantia Book* can tell us of these words.

Personality Is

...a level of deified reality [8:1].

...the gift of the Paradise Father [8:4].

...the unique bestowal which the Universal Father makes upon the living and associated energies of matter, mind, and spirit, and which survives with the survival of the morontial soul [9:1].

...that quality and value in cosmic reality which is exclusively bestowed by God the Father upon these living systems of the associated and co-ordinated energies of matter, mind, and spirit [70:4]. *But ... all personality reality is proportional to its divinity relationships* [613:6].

...that quality in reality which is bestowed by the Universal Father himself or by the Conjoint Actor, acting for the Father [1225:3].

...the exclusive gift of the Universal Father [77:6].

...a direct bestowal of the Universal Father [89:3].

...designed and bestowed by the Universal Father [236:4].

...the sole bestowal of the Father [367:4].

...the sovereign freewill bestowal of the Universal Father [1201:2].

...bestowed by the Universal Father upon his creatures as a potentially eternal endowment [1226:5].

...one of the unsolved mysteries of the universes [70:3].

...superimposed upon energy, and it is associated only with living energy systems [8:4].

...contactable [106:7]. *That is why: Since animals cannot communicate ideas to each other, they cannot develop personality* [1775:3].

...basic to all progressing experience with spiritual reality [141:2].

...diverse, original, and exclusive [194:3].

*...that feature of an individual which we **know**, and which enables us to identify such a being at some future time regardless of the nature and extent of changes in form, mind, or spirit status* [194:4].

...that part of any individual which enables us to recognize and positively identify that person as the one we have previously known, no matter how much he may have changed because of the modification of the vehicle of expression and manifestation of his personality [194:4].

...the one changeless reality in an otherwise ever-changing creature experience; and it unifies all other associated factors of individuality [9:1].

...changeless in the presence of change [1225:9].

...that cosmic endowment, that phase of universal reality, which can coexist with unlimited change and at the same time retain its identity in the very presence of all such changes, and forever afterward [1434:5].

...basically changeless; that which changes—grows—is the moral character [1572:7].

...a unique endowment of original nature whose existence is independent of, and antecedent to, the bestowal of the Thought Adjuster [194:3].

...unique [1129:8].

...unique, absolutely unique: It is unique in time and space; it is unique in eternity and on Paradise; it is unique when bestowed—there are no duplicates; it is unique during every moment of existence; it is unique in relation to God [1225:12].

...uniquely conscious of time [1226:4].

...inherently creative, but it thus functions only in the inner life of the individual [1220:4].

...responsive to gravity—to the Father's exclusive circuit [131:4].

It discloses only qualitative response to the personality circuit in contradistinction to the three energies which show both qualitative and quantitative response to gravity [1225:8].

...one thing which can be added to spirit [1226:2].

...characterized by morality—awareness of relativity of relationship with other persons [1225:11].

...craving to be like God [24:4].

...in the supreme sense is the revelation of God to the universe of universes [29:3].

one of the great manifestations of the acts of the First Source and Center [1148:14].

...self-conscious...(relatively) self-determinative and self-creative [71:1].

1st Conclusion: With a possible relative restriction for the last item all the preceding qualifications concern the original gift of the Father, and the meaning of personality is to be taken in that specific Urantian sense, which is not found in Webster or any other traditional dictionary. Since it is a level of deified reality it is no wonder, we material, finite men can't satisfactorily comprehend it.

If, at this stage, we wanted to give a global definition, in dictionary form, we could say: Personality is a gift from the Father of a unique quality of deified reality; it is associated with life; it is changeless, self-conscious, and relatively self-creative.

Question: Does that really help us understand

what personality is?

Most of these characteristics have a restrictive value, in that they help us eliminate rather than choose. It is somewhat as if you were trying to explain what a mobile home is to a primitive who does not even know what a wheel is.

Personality Is Not

...body, mind, nor spirit; neither is it the soul [9:1].

...simply an attribute of God [29:3].

...necessarily a concomitant of mind [325:6].

Nevertheless, one can understand that when personality is associated with mind the general tendency of that individuality is toward unity since: *Mind, in its essence, is functional unity* [1217:5]. But we may also remember that:...*there are no personalities of "pure mind"; no entity has personality unless he is endowed with it by God who is spirit. Any mind entity that is not associated with either spiritual or physical energy is not a personality* [334:7].

the presence phenomenon of a personality is not a manifestation of energy, either physical, mindal, or spiritual [483:9].

...wholly subject to the fetters of antecedent causation [1225:5].

is never spontaneous [8:4].

2nd Conclusion: Of course, the negative clauses reinforce that impression of elimination and mystery. We are getting close to the Principle of Elusiveness.

Personality Has

...a goal: *The goal of personality existence is spiritual* [189:7].

...a perfected range of cosmic dimensional performance [1226:9].

The dimensions of finite personality are three, and they are roughly functional as follows: [1226:9] length, vertical depth, and breadth (1226:10-12).

...the prerogative of exercising volitional choice of reality identification [1301:4].

...insight in advance of experience [193:2].

...its seat of identity in the material-intellect system (1233:0).

...its seat of identity transferred to the morontia-soul system (1233:0).

...decision-determining powers [757:0].

...an inherent cosmic quality which may be called "the evolution of dominance", the expansion of the control of both itself and its environment [1229:2].

...increased safety in narrowing the limits of... choice [1301:5].

Personality Can

...unify the identity of any living energy system [1225:7].

*The concept of personality...means much more than the integration of relationships; it signifies the **unification** of all factors of reality as well as co-ordination of relationships* [1227:7].

...know what it is doing before it does it [193:2].

...look before it leaps and can therefore learn from looking as well as from leaping [193:2].

...experience the universe [30:6].

...act as the cosmic cause of time-space events (135:10).

...examine the goal itself and pass judgment on its worthwhileness, its value [193:3].

...arbitrate the multiform contentions of the ego cravings and the budding social consciousness [1134:2], but only if it is fairly well unified.

...be experientially realized in the progressive realms of the material, the morontial, and the spiritual [1226:8].

...truly destroy individuality of creaturehood [1283:6].

...knowingly resist cosmic reality [754:5], that is, sin. *Iniquity is indicative of vanishing personality control* [755:1].

...be adjusted to the will of Deity [1001:6].

...manifest will, volition, choice, and love [1183:7].

3rd Conclusion: We can feel that somewhere the meaning of "personality" has changed from the pure original divine gift to the material side. Here, sense 3 of Webster could perhaps be applied or at least be included as part of the meaning. This could be the second level and in some cases the third level of personality manifestation in Jacques Dupont's classification. (See **Hypothesis**, below.)

NB: In one instance at least, the word "personality" seems devoid of the Urantian sense, and to refer only to sense 2 of Webster. This is because: *Animals do, in a crude way, communicate with each other, but there is little or no personality in such primitive contact* [1198:5].

Sense 4 of the word "personality" is also present in the following quotation, but it does not preclude other senses: *Jesus decided that he would **not** utilize a single personality of this vast assemblage...* [1516:2].

What It Does

It responds to the personality circuit of the Father (9:3).

Personality responds directly to other-personality presence [1226:1]. *Every true relationship of mortal man with other persons—human or divine—is an end in itself* [1228:3].

Personality functions equally efficiently in the local universe, in the superuniverse, and in the central universe [1226:6]. The

personality unification of the energy-controlling mind with the spirit-co-ordinated intellect is responsible for the total evolution of the entire grand universe [1274:5]. The goal of the evolutionary universes is the subjugation of energy-matter by mind, the co-ordination of mind with spirit, and all of this by virtue of the creative and unifying presence of personality [1275:1].

Personality performs effectively on the levels of the finite, the absonite, and even as impinging upon the absolute [1226:7].

[I]t unifies all other associated factors of individuality [9:1].

[M]atter, mind, and spirit are unified by creature personality [136:3].

Personality inherently reaches out to unify all constituent realities [640:1].

[M]ortal personality unifies the human experience with matter, mind, and spirit [647:6].

In the human system it is the personality which unifies all activities and in turn imparts the qualities of identity and creativity [1227:9].

The personality imparts value of identity and meanings of continuity to this organismal-environmental association [1227:3].

It possesses the power of transferring its seat of identity from the passing material-intellect system to the higher morontia-soul system [1233:0].

Personality creates a unique time sense out of insight into Reality plus a consciousness of presence and an awareness of duration [135:8].

4th Conclusion: Since the main action of personality seems to be unification, it is no wonder that it creates a unique sense of time and an awareness of duration. We normally perceive time by analysis and personality produces a sort of synthesis which gives us a time-space perceptibility.

How It Is Manifested?

It is manifested in forms which are patterns resultant from energy (physical, spiritual, or mindal). But it is not inherent therein. (10:4). For example: *To a certain extent, the appearance of the material body-form is responsive to the character of the personality identity; the physical body does, to a limited degree, reflect something of the inherent nature of the personality* [1236:1]. Another example is the reassembling of the hundred Jerusemites, members of Caligastia's staff: *[T]hey were held enseraphimed until they could be provided with personality forms of the dual nature of*

special planetary service, literal bodies consisting of flesh and blood but also attuned to the life circuits of the system [742:5].

The personality of the spirit Son is the master pattern for all personality throughout all universes [1263:1].

The personality form is the pattern aspect of a living being; it connotes the arrangement of energies, and this, plus life and motion, is the mechanism of creature existence [483:9].

Even the highest type of spirit personalities have form—personality presences in every sense analogous to Urantia mortal bodies [483:10].

Personality may be material or spiritual, but there either is personality or there is no personality. The other-than-personal never attains the level of the personal except by the direct act of the Paradise Father [70:4].

In a new vehicle [1233:0], *the morontia-soul system* [1233:0], which is created in association with the Thought Adjuster [1233:0].

...self-consciousness and free will in creature personality; and the manifestation of personality is further conditioned and qualified by the nature and qualities of the associated energies of a material, mindal, and spiritual nature which constitute the organismal vehicle for personality manifestation [194:3].

5th Conclusion: The difference between what personality can do and what it does is the change from potential to actual. To us, the potential can be identified with the Son, whom we know to be the pattern personality. As for the actual, we can only grasp it by means of the mind or by mind interpretation of physical manifestations, whence the confusion, so easily made between identity and personality.

Hypothesis: The following hypothesis was developed by Jacques Dupont in his essay on personality: There are three different uses of the word personality in *The Urantia Book*.

1. the one which he calls "P" is the changeless personality bestowed by the Father,

2. the one which he calls "B" is the varying level of manifestation of P on an individual who is not yet born of the spirit, and

3. the one which he calls "p" is the varying level of manifestation of P on an individual who is born of the spirit.

In the next installment of this series on Personality, the author presents quotations from *The Urantia Book* that define types of personality, as well as the nature, attributes, and dimensions of personality.

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