

Science, Philosophy, Religion and Revelation -- A Course of Study in the Urantia Book

Or: To Have a Cosmic Consciousness and Discrimination of Reality

(10+ weeks)

Introduction: Interpreting Life From a Religion of the Spirit

- What did Jesus mean by a religion of the spirit, one which he always contrasted with religions of authority?

Reading: (our cite pattern is page number of original edition; Paper 155: section 5, par. 1-11): In Jesus' Discourses on True Religion, true religion is, "discovered by the progressive human mind and... evolving human soul."

His teaching here encouraged us to develop what the book also calls in Paper 16, "courageous and independent cosmic thinking ..."

In this course module on the Urantia Book (UB) we will examine the effort to achieve personal growth through a broadening and unifying of our own point of view which the UB describes as developing a cosmic discrimination on three reality levels.

Reading: from *The Cosmic Mind*, (192; 16.6.4-9), "There exists...a quality which might be denominated the 'reality response.'..." to the end of the section.

"These levels of reality are 1. *Causation*--the reality domain of the physical senses...2. *Duty*--the reality domain of morals in the philosophic realm...3. *Worship*--the spiritual domain of the reality of religious experience...), the mathematical /scientific, the judicial/moral, and the worshipful/spiritual forms of cosmic response."

Reading: The Faith of Jesus, (2094; 196.3.1-3). The Urantia Book states that the goal of these three pursuits is, "the experiencing of self-completion ... the full realization of God."

It might be said in a simpler way that this undertaking is about developing a balanced character, achieving the balance we seek between body (matter-energy), mind, and spirit, one of the triunities (defined p. 1147; 104.3.7. "a threefold... unanimity") with which we are already familiar. The exception in the UB is that this balanced character is ultimately spirit-directed.

What is different about this method of perceiving reality? Carl Sagan describes science as, "a self-correcting enterprise. To be accepted, all new ideas must survive rigorous standards of evidence," including being, "consistent with the facts." (*Cosmos*, p. 91)

One study group member restated the UB's cognitive model in the common sense terminology of developing "a scientific mental attitude." But this is only one aspect of the process. This step in the evolution of our perception of reality moves mankind from out of the shadow of authoritarian ruling dogmas into a realm of personal revelation that qualifies us for the next step: becoming universe citizens.

- A book like the Urantia Book has many new (or untried) ideas, including some which it claims are revealed. Is the book recommending that we apply such a scientific method to what is revealed by faith or epochal revelation--to itself?

That is a question this study module will attempt to answer over the ensuing weeks. Many new revelations collapse and disappear under the scrutiny of science and philosophy. We will end the course with a look at revelation and what it means within the non-authoritarian religion of the spirit that the book encourages us to develop as, for example, in Jesus's Discourses on True Religion.

Most people are used to seeing science, religion, and philosophy carry out their operations in separate camps. Now in the UB we are asked to think scientifically, philosophically, and religiously at the same time--to blend factual, meaningful and valuing approaches in forming our engagement with life and truth. No wonder then that we encounter various reactions to the UB's thesis ranging from exhaustion, boredom to suspicion. Most of us are just not used to the challenge of functioning in the world with all three levels of discrimination working together towards harmonious insights.

Readings, (42; 2.7.7) "The eternal quest is for ... divine coherence."

(1120; 102.2.5-7), *Religion and Reality*. The important idea here is the need for the "unification of the diversity of reality" if we are to keep pace in our life experience; "growing religious experience means incessant activity in spiritual growth, intellectual expansion, factual enlargement and social service."

"I am certainly convinced that it is one of the greatest impulses of mankind to arrive at something higher than a natural state." (James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*)

- Q. Why is this important? What is at stake?

Reading: under *True Values*, (1456; 132.1.3):

Jesus' teaching on the importance of this balanced discrimination says, "Unless the moral insight and the spiritual attainment of mankind are proportionately augmented" along with scientific advancement, we face "the

ultimate collapse of a civilization which has ... repudiated its spiritual goal.”

He was in Rome when he spoke these words to Angamon, the leader of the Stoics. They may have been intended as a prophetic warning. Although the decline of our civilization might be of secondary concern to a spiritual believer, it would still be ideal to prevent such a collapse if with our teachings we could help to do so in our time.

(end week one)

A Brief Consideration of Facts, Meanings and Values:

Reading (1110; 101.5.2) “... the mind endeavors to unite the meanings of both facts and values, thereby arriving at a concept of complete reality.”

And Fact and Truth: (1125; 102.6.9) “The facts of evolution must not be arrayed against the truth of ... spiritual experience.” (Ibid, par.10) “Organic evolution is a fact; purposive or progressive evolution is a truth ...”

(555; 48.6.23) “One can be technically right as to fact and everlastingly wrong in the truth..”

Module 1: Building Bridges between Science and Religion

Why is there so much science in a book of religious and philosophical teachings like the Urantia Book?

1. Evolution vs. Creation?

The August/September 1998 issue of *Public Perspective* reported University of Cincinnati political science professor George Bishop’s findings that 45 percent of Americans believe that God created man, “pretty much in his present form at one time within the last 10,000 years.” Also, “Nearly a third of college graduates in recent Gallup polls still believe in the biblical account of creation.”

Another 40% of Americans believe that God guided man’s slow evolution from simpler forms of life, a concept called theistic evolution. Only 10% accept the Darwinian view that man evolved solely by natural means over millions of years. (Quoted in Dec. ‘98 issue of *Bible Review*.)

The UB fully supports the principle of theistic evolution mentioned in Bishop’s survey. Readings: (664; 58.1.3) The Life Carriers, “projected a sodium chloride pattern of life,” and, (667; 58.4.2) “In cooperation with spiritual powers and superphysical forces [they] organized and initiated the original life patterns of this world and planted them in the hospitable waters of the realm.” (1272; 116.4.8) “In the local universes, even the Creators evolve.”

(Also ref. 708; 62.5.9, for the assistance given to Andon and Fonta.)

The inclusion of science makes it more reasonable to have faith (cf. 1104; 101.1.1), coordinating our faith with the scientific facts discovered in modern times. There is, for example, so much factual evidence to refute in justifying the idea that humankind has existed for only 10,000 years that it might be unreasonable to continue in the belief. In this study group, we will also try to answer the question: How is the science of the Urantia Book different than the kind that has helped destroy much of humanity's faith since the Enlightenment?

In this study session, we will introduce some of the UB's scientific concepts and deal with the big questions raised by where they conflict with human science and how they engender opposition to a philosophical/spiritual work like the UB. This learning module will address less often the smaller details of how UB science disagrees or correlates with the facts of our modern science or why there are discrepancies.

The physicist, Stephen Hawking, understands that science can answer how the universe works but can't answer the question why it exists at all – to what purpose. He threw out a challenge to the philosophers. They “whose business it is to ask why [the universe is the way it is]...have not been able to keep up with ...scientific theories. What a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy,” when, as Wittgenstein said, “the sole remaining task ... is the analysis of language,” (*A Brief History of Time*, pg. 174).

He might also have asked the philosophers to answer these questions:

- Why is the universe evolutionary at all? Why is it not a static, finished, perfect creation? If the idea of “theistic evolution” is correct, why is God using evolution as a technique in his created universe, and to what end?

(Optional supplemental study session: God in the UB has delegated the tasks of creation to over 700,000 Michael Sons. As science expands our picture of the universe with the discovery of other planets and systems, more and more we accept the likely existence of other human-like societies. The question begins to come up: do the other planets get a Jesus, or the same Jesus, as well? For a discussion of *The Paradise Creator Sons*, read 234; 21.1-2.all.)

2. The Physical Nature of the Universe in Modern Science

“...even the stars in their courses are now doing battle for them.” (1117; 101.10.9)

Science has a lot to say about our origins and history, but how does science interpret universe destiny? Where is the universe going, in the scientific point of view, if it is going somewhere at all?

One account of the future of the universe based on thermodynamic laws predicts an expansion of the universe followed by an inevitable contraction of the universe sometimes known as “the big crunch” caused by forces of gravity which overpower the expansion to compress the universe into a final singularity (a massive black hole), ending with the death of the universe. (One of many sources: Davies, *God and the New Physics*, 201-213)

Other thinkers have observed that the laws of evolutionary theory (from biology) contradict the laws of physics and predict a different future—an upward “arrow of time” with an increase in levels of complexity, organization and even energy. (Ervin Lazslo, *Evolution: the Grand Synthesis*, esp. pgs. 19-20)

Readings: (134;12.4.6-10), “The present relationship... alternate directions of ... the universes (up to) ... equilibrant of gravity.”
(125; 11.7.7-9), “This alternate zoning...acts as a brake upon otherwise dangerous velocities.”

Such space zones and patterns of motion have not been discovered by Urantia scientists. The Hubble equation (a universe expanding in *one* direction) upon which so much of our modern picture of the universe is based, would be giving completely erroneous results if the UB model of the universe is correct.

(172; 15.6.4, and 464; 41.7.7) For an account of suns as power-control stations in the space circuits, “Only those suns...in the...streams of universe energy can shine on forever...”

(176; 15.8.6) “Eventually the larger physical systems...are swung into the balanced and established circuits of the superuniverses.”

The UB’s expanded concept of gravity is not found in science. Gravity originates in a zone where time and space doesn’t exist (the nether side of Paradise) and thus crosses the border from the central and eternal universe to enter the evolving superuniverses. Read pg. 131; 12.3.1-2, ... Universal Gravity.

All the physical factors of the UB cosmology show a correlation with spiritual forces, all working together to draw ascending humanity into a greater unity with God.

Cross-references: To find more on other gravity circuits: Spirit-Gravity Circuit, read 81;1, and on the Mind-Gravity Circuit, read pg. 103; 9.6.

Discussion/Commentary

The pessimistic views of those scientists who foresee destruction of the universe in the “big crunch” assume that if there is a God he does not care about his creatures and is indifferent to the natural outworking of evolution. At the same

time, the unreasoned views of some religionists depict a God who cares so much he would rescue his children from every disaster and be personally involved in, and responsible for, every good or evil that comes to pass. The Creator depicted in the Urantia Book intervenes but never in a way that would contradict the free expression of human will. Yet some of the ideas presented as unknown or undiscovered facts in the UB's science sections, i.e., stars that can be recharged when their energy levels die down, bespeaks a universe that is physically nurturing to human life and progress. Even "energy is eternal," (468; 42.1.8) and "evidence of energy depletion" is not found per the author of Paper 42. These statements contradict our laws of thermodynamics which predict a dissipation of energy and the final stage of entropy.

The Urantia Book asks individual scientists, just as it encourages all individuals, to go back to the times before the scientific revolution and reacquaint themselves personally with their Creator—a God who does not live outside of his physical creation (removed, transcendent), a God who is not dead but is still evolving and developing (immanent). This relationship can only be "viewed from within," discovered through faith, "the assurance or religion" (1104; 101.intro/1).

Reading, Discourse on Science, (1477; 133.5.all) Jesus on the friendly universe: "There is unity in the cosmic universe... The real universe is friendly to every child of the eternal God."

- Will spiritual laws, i.e., the "great law of the conservation of ... goodness" (552; 48.6.7) begin to override, or rule over the laws of the conservation of energy, or do they already? For further discussion, read *Functions of Providence* (1306; 118.10. esp. 12 to end).

(end week 2 and 3)

3. Pattern: Innate to the Universe? Or a Product--a Result of Evolution?

Science is debating the question whether mind is the result of a long evolution up from matter. Or if mind preceded the universe and laid the foundation upon which its patterns are based. Writer Paul Davies shows how both views are possible but neither position is proven. Are we dealing with a philosophical, or religious issue that can only be answered by faith or revelation?

"The conventional position is that intelligence only arises as the end product of a long sequence of evolutionary changes which successively increase the degree of organization of matter. In short, matter first, mind later. But is this inevitably so? Could mind be the more primitive entity? ...it is possible to imagine a supermind existing since the creation ... taking upon itself the task of converting an incoherent big bang into the complex and orderly cosmos we now observe...This would not be a God

who created everything by supernatural means, but a directing, controlling, universal mind pervading the cosmos and operating the laws of nature to achieve some specific purpose.” (*God and the New Physics*, Paul Davies, Pg. 210)

In a related argument, some scientists and philosophers still debate whether mathematics was already pre-existent in the universe...or whether it is a mental projection, a product of our own mental evolution, the functioning of our own cerebral cortex, “a psychic illusion” (2095; 196.3.18). If they happen to agree that mathematical patterns are innate, then the debate rekindles with the question:

- How have humans evolved a mind that can recognize abstract patterns that are (divinely) ordained--could evolution alone accomplish that?

Readings: (10; Foreword.VI. 13) “The Universal Father is the direct ancestor of pattern.” And reference “premathematics of force, energy, and power” (on 1146; 104.3.2).
(360; 32.3.3) Even farther out/inwards in space are the patterns of the eternal central universe: “In the central creation we have a pattern of perfection...”

Human inquiry already crosses the borders between science, philosophy, art, and religion to get a more complete picture of reality. Even science does not always use only rational, objective language to describe what it sees. It needs an artistic device like metaphor, or a model, to make sense out of what logic and reason fail to explain. Newtonian physics saw the universe as a machine. In the Enlightenment the universe was a clock that God had wound up before retiring from his creation, a belief known as Deism.

Relativity saw it as a more flexible universe, but still a mechanistic one. But is it more appropriate to describe it as a living organism as the UB suggests? Echoing the UB, the Gaii model was first proposed by James Lovelock in 1979.

Readings: (1276; 116. 7.all), “*The Living Organism of the Grand Universe.*”
(1232; 112.5.1) “To say that a being is personal is to recognize the relative individuation of such a being within the cosmic organism...”

- Discussion Question: how is the difference between the organism model and the human “dominion over the earth” model in Genesis 1:26 significant?

Consider the environmentalist position of David Suzuki, “At the root of [environmental horrors] lies the modern belief—the poisoned gift of three centuries of western science—that people are somehow outside nature, not subject to the constraints that bind all other life,” (fr. Maclean’s magazine interview, Jan. 10, 2000), a belief that is also based on Christian philosophy.

Discuss how an idea of our place in the universe (a philosophical concept) may have possibly influenced science to distort value systems and unwittingly throw the world out of ecological balance. Now some observers see a change occurring. Sam Keen thinks the new “myth of the interdependence of all life forms... is emerging from quantum physics,” among other factors (Fire in the Belly, pg. 118).

Reading: (1275; 116.6.1-4) “In the evolutionary superuniverses energy-matter is dominant...that spirit itself...can strive through mind for the mastery of energy-matter discloses the potential unity of all finite creation.”

In this passage, the UB connects the co-ordinating activities of mind and personality with “the goal of the evolutionary universes.”

Is there any difference between the UB’s ideal goal of the spirit gaining mastery over matter (which we are encouraged to aspire towards in our individual lives) and the old biblical model of “dominion over nature” ? Such a model, our partnership with spirit (so far largely untried on this planet), needs to be tested in day-to-day life to see if the new theory bears fruit and achieves growth and progress.

4. Time and Eternity

Hawking tells us (TV show/1998) that the first debate in cosmology was between philosophers who held to the idea that the universe had always been there--no beginning, and religious teachers who believed in a moment of creation. Hawking himself supports the theoretical possibility of a universe with no beginning (A B.H. of T., pg. 116).

This debate can be seen as one over time and eternity. Both a time-space universe and a perfect eternal central universe co-exist in The Urantia Book. It supports those early philosophers who saw there was no beginning; the central universe wherein God dwells has always been there -- eternal. But the local universe creations have definite beginnings and were set into motion by the “Sons of God.”

When God left his “high and holy place in eternity,” (Isaiah 57:15) and entered time and space, he began a project of evolution, the unfolding of the Supreme (per the UB model), that will occupy many more centuries of time before we enter the next new phase of God’s self-revelation.

Readings: (6; Foreword.III.13) The creation of Havona, “As a time-space creature would view the origin ... (up to) of the Spirit.”

(129; 12.1.4) Consider the fact that the 7 superuniverses are time-space creations; “Havona, the central universe, is not a time creation...,” separated from the outer universes by “dark matter.”

(169; 15.4.2) *Nebulae - The Ancestors of Universes*, There is no “Big Bang” in the Urantia Book. Havona springs into existence (time-space terms) at the same moment as God personalizes from Deity. The closest thing to a big bang event, “tremendous cyclones of force,” occurred at the creation of the 7 superuniverses.

(123; 11.5.9) The connection between eternity and the time-space realm is even depicted as a physical one: “All force-energy originally proceeded from nether Paradise and will eventually return thereto following the completion of its space circuit.” It is distinct from the local or linear gravity of our materialized local universes (125; 11.8) which “pertains to the electrical stage of energy or matter.” Cosmic Force passes through three stages to reach the level of our universe.

A clue that indicates our science might still be limited to forming conceptions of the local universe is given in the discrepancy between the UB and conventional science regarding the age of the universe. The current accepted age of the universe in modern science ranges between 13.5 and 18 billion years (b.y.) depending on the methods of calculation (which usually use equations derived from Hubble’s rate of expansion of the universes). The UB states that “the oldest inhabited planets of Nebadon date from 200 b.y.a.” (654; 57.3.10)

We started out in earlier phases of Western civilization believing the earth was at the center of the universe. Then science showed us we were a minor planet at the edge of a common galaxy in a universe whose center is everywhere (or cannot be found) and thus reduced our significance. Now, the UB reintroduces a concept that includes a central perfected universe and an evolving time-space universe separated from it by dark gravity bodies (152-3; 14.1), Yet they are connected physically and spiritually. How do science and the UB answer the conundrum of such a connection?

- How do eternity and time/space conditions coexist? (15; Foreword XI.13)
- As you read through papers 11, 12, or 42, think about whether the answers given in the UB are philosophical ones or do they qualify as scientific?

(end week 4)

When Spiritual/Material Conflict escalates...

“Scientists have unintentionally precipitated mankind into a materialistic panic; they have started an unthinking run on the moral bank of the ages, but this bank of human experience has vast spiritual resources...” (Reading 2076; 195:6:1-4)

A Somewhat Idiosyncratic/Personalized Time Line on the Decline of Faith/Belief...My Voyage Through the World of Ideas:

- 1610: Galileo announces discoveries made with his new telescope confirming Copernicus' theory: the earth orbits the sun. Church opposition culminated in Galileo's forced recantation in 1616.
- 1752 - 1772: The Encyclopedists: Holbach, "ignorance and fear created the gods." Diderot, "men will never be free till the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest."... a philosophical movement eventuating in...
- 1789: The French Revolution
- 1830: Auguste Comte, *Positive Philosophy*, the abandonment of theology & metaphysics in favor of positive science (empirical observation of reality), a Religion of Humanity.
- 1858: Darwin's *The Origin of Species*
- 1867: Marx: *Das Kapital/ The Communist Manifesto*: "Religion is the opiate of the people."
- 1883: Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra* "God is dead..."
- 1913: Freud: *Totem and Taboo*, his transfer of the fatherhood of Yahweh to the totemic ancestor god of the tribe after the murder of the father by his sons.
- 1919: The Russian Revolution sets up a society based on Marxism
- 1925: *The Manifesto of Surrealism* in the arts, Andre Breton promoted, "the actual functioning of thought...exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern."
- 1945: The building of the atomic bomb: a turning point for many scientists, most notably, Alfred Einstein.
- 1967: A large percentage of "baby boomers" become dropouts from formal and conventional Western religions, turning on to yoga, eastern religions, and other new age alternatives.
Student revolutionaries of this same era used slogans from Diderot and Breton in their protests against conventional authority.

...all leading to our present spiritual crisis.

- What is "the moral bank of the ages?" Do you think religion functions as a "moral bank?" [UB refers to religions as the nurturer and conservator of morals (1006; 92.3.6 & 1092; 99.6.2).]

Reading: (1727; 155.3. 5-6): Jesus makes a two-fold prophetic statement about the loss of faith that has occurred in our century. Religionists themselves play a part in the loss of the best in their religions, allowing science to displace divine values.

“No civilization could long survive the loss of the best in its religion.”

In a sense, the Urantia Book calls us to go back and reconstruct what was dismantled from the Enlightenment onwards. There has been an emphasis on the positivist form of knowing truth, an extreme reliance on reason and empirical observation. The physicist Neils Bohr, believed physics tells only what we can know about the universe, not what its nature really might be, and he is being realistic because religion and philosophy provide answers to the latter question. Positivism in science has been accompanied by a corresponding de-emphasis on knowing realities by faith/personal experience. (1141; 103.9.6 to end)

Neils Bohr himself supported the principle of emergence in 1953 when it was a very suspect idea. The concept was that every time you have a more complex system new qualities appear that could not have been predicted from the components. Bohr gave the famous example of water (from Ernst Mayr interview, *Natural History* magazine, May '97), also echoed in the UB:

Reading: (141; 12.9.3)--sciences “could not predict or know that the union of two gaseous hydrogen atoms with one gaseous oxygen atom would result in a new...substance—liquid water. The understanding knowledge of this one physiochemical phenomenon should have prevented the development of materialistic philosophy.” Bohr recognized the reality beyond the factual, or beyond “technical analysis.” Even the physical facts can produce unpredictable transformations.

Bringing Values into Science

Jonas Salk’s Model: Fr. *Anatomy of Reality - Merging of Intuition and Reason*

“The most fundamental phenomenon in the universe is relationship,” and, “evolution has proceeded along the course of optimizing relationships.” (pg. 44-45)

“It is my conviction that when good triumphs over evil, it is not for moral reasons alone but as part of the evolutionary phenomenon of the error-correcting process of evolution ... there appears to be a direction in evolution, an orientation toward fulfillment of an evolutionary potential ... a sense of value ... a basis for choice,” (Pg. 57).

Abraham Maslow sees the process of evolution in terms of discovering values, “evolution [is] selecting and therefore choosing and deciding, and this means valuing ... we now are responsible for our own evolution,” (*The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*, p. 11). “The classical philosophy of science as morally neutral, value free, value neutral [value-avoiding] is not only wrong, but is extremely dangerous as well...not only amoral... antimoral as well... science can seek values...growth values.” (Ibid, p. 21)

(1306; 118.10.14[#2]): “Man’s increasing control—the gradual accumulation of the knowledge of the laws of the material world, the purposes of spiritual existence, and the possibilities of the philosophic co-ordination of these two realities.”

Some Scientists Speak of God

“The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.” (Albert Einstein)

“Happy is he who bears a god within, and who obeys it. The ideals of art, of science, are lighted by reflection from the infinite.” (microbiologist Louis Pasteur)

“I have reached the conscious conclusion that somehow it’s a matter of faith and trust in God that discovering the laws of nature is kind of an act of worship, provided it reveals a bit more of what the Creator put there. It’s an act of worship to discover the wonders that God has put in the universe for us to contemplate. It’s just so marvelous to know the things we never suspected were there. As someone says, the world is not only more wonderful than we know, it’s more wonderful than we can imagine.” (Arthur Schawlow, co-inventor of the laser, winner of the 1981 Nobel Prize in physics.)

“Higher” science leads us to the discovery of “the dominance of the Supreme Mind” behind creation (1125; 102.6.10). But it cannot help us confirm the existence of a personal God, a Supreme Being. In our next section of study we will try to answer the question: can philosophy do that? Or is that strictly the province of religious experience, of faith?

Even Carl Jung, a pioneer researcher into consciousness, did not accept the literal reality of God. He was an empiricist (of scientific mind) who treated the products of the unconscious for just what they were, sometimes designating them myths, symbols, archetypes etc., but not necessarily representative of any concrete realities that lie behind them. Discoveries made in the “mind arena” bring us to a point of decision, a point where we need “cosmic discrimination.” Do we accept our mental discoveries as real in the objective world? Or do we regard them as mental projections fabricated by our mind to make it easier to live day to day, useful mythologies but not necessarily valid in an ultimate sense?

We will return to this question again, especially when we discuss religion and revelation.

(end week 5)

From Urantia Book Class, Walnut Creek Unity Center, 4/15-22, 1997)

Module 2: Building a Philosophy of Life

“Real philosophy is born in a mind in search of itself, within the actual environment of day-to-day choice. It concerns itself equally with ordinary action and with the mysterious configuration of existence. It aims to guide us in the art of living, which was once called wisdom... It addresses itself to the whole person, galvanized by philosophical activity, aware both of his conflicting desires and of the unity given by his calling, his sense of purpose.” (*Real Philosophy*, Jacob Needleman)

“The domains of philosophy and art intervene between the nonreligious and the religious activities of the human self. Through art and philosophy the material-minded man is inveigled into the contemplation of the spiritual realities and universe values of eternal meanings.” (67; 5.4.4)

A philosophy of life, as distinct from contemplative philosophy such as that of Descartes, in which knowing the self or understanding the cosmos is the object. *Lebensphilosophie* or philosophy of life is not so passive as that. Instead of metaphysical theory, it implies action, decision, experiment; it labors in the fields of ethics and morals.

It is largely through philosophy, with our own philosophy of life, and our own blend of intuition and reason that we can build bridges between the rational and the miraculous.

Readings: (1089; 99.3.9) the need for a “critically corrective philosophy.”

(42; 2.7.5) “Philosophers commit their gravest error when they are misled into the fallacy of abstraction...” (read up to ... “unified in God who is love.”)

(1113-1114; 101.7.all) *A Personal Philosophy of Religion*.

- **How much do we really need a philosophy of life when we have religion?**

(1080; 98.2.12) “Religions have long endured without philosophical support...”

(43; 2.7.10), “The religious challenge of this age...to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living...”

(1098; 100.5.1) “The world is filled with lost souls...lost in the directional meaning...”

(69; 5.5.5-9) “religious experience...must be willing to subject itself to intelligent criticism and reasonable philosophic interpretation...”

(1120; 102.2.6) “Unity is best found in human experience through philosophy..”
(1 par, then read the one previous)

(577; 50.5.8-9) In the developmental epochs which are not always linear and sequential, the epoch of philosophy is the scaffolding for the subsequent epoch of spiritual striving. This is the master pattern for the progress of civilization, “though the progress of civilization is hardly alike on any two planets.”

(end week 6)

Building a Philosophy of Life, Week 2:

The difficulties and challenges of the task: Read *Problems of Growth*, (1097; 100.4.1-3) “The organization of a philosophic standard of living ...”

-also potentially divisive: Abner “parted company with Paul over differences of philosophy and theology.” (read 1831; 166.5. 4-5) He called Paul a “clever corrupter” of Jesus’ teachings yet Paul’s compromises led to a broader dissemination of the gospel; the UB seems to be recognizing the greater value of practical application over and above the philosophic purity of the message.

What is the objective of a philosophy of life?

When we are “philosophical” about life, we are adopting an attitude of adjusting our ideals to the real world. The objectives of a philosophy of life include the task of correcting out of balance perspectives, unifying reality, linking “the visible” with “the invisible” (Plato)... in other words, the charting of a true and steady course falls largely to the philosophy that we form for ourselves to live by, (although we should also note in passing that art also has a role in “the unification of the vastness of the cosmic extremes of Creator and creature ...” (646; 56.10.2-5).

In the UB, the recommended philosophy of life becomes a philosophy of religion involving the ideal of “sharing your inner life with God” (1221; 111.5.1) -- intimately sharing your material life circumstances with the spiritual presence that lives within you, in “the birth of another eternal partnership.”

Reading: (1135; 103.6.1-6 & 1137 par. 13-16), *Philosophic Co-ordination*.

Some of Jesus's teachings on philosophy: (1572; 140.4.8-9) from the ordination discourse, “experiential faith...not [dependence] on mere intellectual assent...” (1950; 180.5.9-12) “neither the golden rule nor...nonresistance can ever be

properly understood as dogmas ...only ...by living them.”

(end week 7)

Module 3: The Contributions of Religion

Readings: (1105; 101.1.all) “Religion ... is ever more or less mysterious and always indefinable and inexplicable in terms of purely intellectual reason and philosophic logic.”

(1641; 146.3.1) The Stop at Ramah, Jesus teaches a Greek. “Where you leave off, we begin ... Intellectual strivings may reveal the facts of life, but the gospel of the kingdom unfolds the *truths* of being.”

(43; 2.7.9) “The great mistake of the Hebrew religion was its failure to associate the goodness of God with the factual truths of science... (up to)...God, who is love.”

We will encounter the book asking us to have faith in miracles, for example, the episode of Jesus healing the epileptic boy (Read 1757; 158.5). And it seeks to revive in our culture those former medieval beliefs in the power of faith in the divine which we began to lose from the Renaissance on.

However, the UB also asks us to continue walking along the path our culture has taken ever since the Age of Reason (or the Enlightenment). “You must go forward from where you find yourselves,” (2084; 195.10.1). And to recognize some fairy tales, legends and myths for just what they are, metaphorical, symbolic, or just plain human exaggerations--to be able to critique religion with a more scientific perspective, making it more factual and meaningful.

Reading: (1628; 145.1.2-3) In the story about when Jesus directed the apostles to fish a certain spot in the Sea of Galilee, the UB shows us how Jesus, possessing the knowledge of a marine biologist, used it to make his determinations. But the apostles and his followers mixed superstition into it and passed along a portrait of another miraculous occurrence performed by their master.

Recall the question we considered in the Science module, how is religion the “moral bank of the ages?” Read (2096; 196.3.21-23) on morality.

- The existentialist movement in philosophy is an example of “morality without religion.” What are some others?

Readings: (1086; 99.1) “Religion...a forceful influence for moral stability.”
Discourse on Job (1662; 148.6.all) The incomplete results of philosophy

Read *The Talk With Nathaniel*, (1767; 159.4) where Jesus discusses the temporary nature of revelations/Scriptures. Think about how the “potential evil” of incomplete concepts was becoming actual evil in their experience as Jesus’ enemies prepared to persecute him.

Read 1757; 158.5.1-3) for the example of “living faith” in the partially believing father of the epileptic boy. Jesus responded positively to the honest expression of doubt from the boy’s father.

(end week 9)

Week II:

“Revelation proves itself to be revelation of reality by its ability to guide us to many other truths.” (H.R. Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation*)

“Enthusiasm, laying by reason, would set up revelation without it; whereby in effect it takes away both reason and revelation ... revelation must be judged of by reason.” (John Locke, 1632-1704)

“Sometimes we regard revelation as though it had equipped us with truth in such measure that no further labor in historical and psychological searching is necessary. Fundamentalism in its thousand historic forms escapes in one way. Modernism escapes by applying to life the short and narrow ideas of some present moment...But true revelation is not the source of such irrationality and absurdity. We become fools because we refuse to use revelation as the foundation of a rational moral life.” (Niebuhr, *Ibid*)

Revelation can be experienced by others seeing it in the lives we live. (1467; 132. 7.6). Jesus to Ganid, “the revelations of God flash upon earth in the lives of the men who reveal God to their fellows.”

The power of a personal revelation: (1745; 157.3.3-7 and 4.1-5) Peter’s confession, “You are...the Son of the living God,” was “a revelation of the Spirit of my Father to your inmost souls,” said Jesus. It was only after his human apostles had this revelation that Jesus changed the course of his ministry and openly announced his divinity.

- Why didn’t Jesus make an “epochal revelation” and declare it himself?

Urantia Book speaks of the Thought Adjuster itself as a "divine revelation" (p. 2094-5, Paper 196, Sec. 3) Read fr. "Thus it appears...to end of par. on pg 2095)

A Brief Consideration of Epochal Revelation

“Religious revelation is essential” to attain the brotherhood on Urantia, (597; 52. all of 6). Revelation is also described as “spiritual pressure from above.”

But it must submit to “the graduated control of evolution,” (984; 89.9.3).

Readings: *The Limitations of Revelation*, (pg. 1109; 101.4.all)

What other “trouble for the future” has revelation made? (1012; 92.7.2) “Only with revealed religion did autocratic and intolerant theologic egotism appear.”

An example of #3, a “restoration of important bits of lost knowledge” is the teaching of the Trinity concept taught by the Planetary Prince, again by Adam, restated by Melchizedek, and carried into India by his Salem missionaries. (1143-44; 104.1.1-5.)

(1154; 105.2.1-4) Now, the Urantia Book, an epochal revelation, is extending the Trinity (“the I AM as triune”) to encompass God the Seven-Fold.

(end week 10)

(Special thanks to David Kantor whose previous work on this topic was incorporated into this presentation.)

Over the years, I have considered many possible purposes at work that have emerged out of the pages of the Urantia Book as I read it. But one in particular has especially fascinated me: that it seeks to fashion a new type of human being, one who undertakes the more arduous path of spiritual growth and yet takes this difficult path in stride with a greater sense of humor, with good cheer, and an optimism about the future that most people do not presently possess. It’s when we begin to feel the possibilities of that future, that the optimism comes more naturally. I view this study series as an attempt to consciously take the next step in evolution that will ensure that brighter future, the possibility of which we have only glimpsed in fleeting moments. May the gods bless all your efforts toward growth and learning.

Dave Holt, February 2000, Concord, Ca.

and theology, “then was there granted him the salvation of a vision of God.” The need for revelation.

From Unity Church Study of the Urantia Book, July 22-29/97

(end week 8)

Module 4: Revelation as Ongoing Process

Keep in mind as we read: the two basic types of revelation, epochal (which are listed on pg. 1007; 92.4) and personal revelations, which are “continuous” and ongoing. In this lesson, the concentration is primarily on the personal type.

“Revelation means an intelligible event which makes all other events intelligible. It is the discovery of rational pattern in the events of our lives,” (from theologian, H. R. Niebuhr's book, The Meaning of Revelation.)

“The reason of the heart...does not really know what is in the revelation, in the illuminating moment, except as it proceeds from revelation to experience and back again from experience to revelation. In this process the meaning of the revelation, its richness and power, grow progressively clearer.” (Ibid)

- How does the above quote compare with Carl Sagan's statement about the scientific method that we discussed in the first class?

(1105; 101.2) *The Fact of Religion*. “Your only assurance of a personal God consists in your own insight as to...things spiritual.”

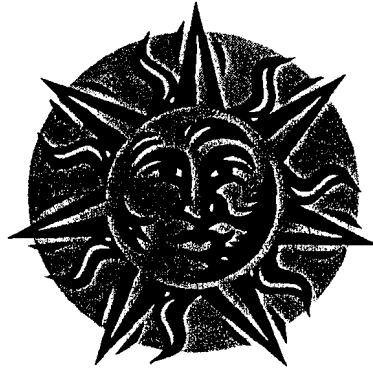
(40; 2.6.1) *The Goodness of God*, “its full revelation appears only in the personal religious experience...”

Revelation compensates the failures of Philosophy: (1136; 103.6) “Revelation is the only technique for atoning for this deficiency ...and to arrive at a ...settled place in this universe.”

...and of Religion, (2084; 195.10.1) “Religion is only an exalted humanism until it is made divine by the discovery...of God in personal experience.”

Review ideas of what truth is from Jesus' Farewell Discourse, (1949; 180.5.1-2) the “new teacher.”

(1435; 130.4. last 3 pars.) “All static, dead, concepts are potentially evil...living truth is continually moving.”



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