

Universe Romancing
Thoughts Concerning Soul Consciousness

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Evolutionary religions are characterized by periodic reformations, revivals, and spontaneous upheavals of faith. The Urantia Movement is no exception. As readers find themselves freed from creedal authority, personal religious experience increasingly determines the direction of religious socialization. *The Urantia Book* actively promotes *soul growth*, a mysterious relationship between the material mind and real spirit forces. Soul consciousness on a "grass roots" and study group level is further challenging the vestiges of religious authority within the old hierarchies, testing readers in the areas of tolerance, belief, faith, and religious socialization.

Dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals are engaging in some form of active soul awareness that many believe is contact with spiritual beings. It is so subjective that the factuality of the claim is difficult to substantiate to the material mind, but I am convinced that something totally new and wonderful is happening within the Urantia Movement. I can accept it and interact with these and other groups with no conflict with my other beliefs. I am convinced that a new manifestation of religious education is taking place, and that it is alive, soulful, worshipful, and fostering compassion and deeper relationships. I don't know whether actual spirit beings are speaking with any of the contactees, but it wouldn't surprise me if it were fact. After the past ten years with the Urantia Movement, nothing would surprise me now.

What is significant is that a new type of study group is emerging: A group that poses questions within the context of the Supreme Mind for insight greater than the human mind. I find this exciting for the prospect of soul growth and heartily support those seeking a new way to make their religion more experiential.

An "hands on" religion has appeared without any official group planning or creation. It is arising spontaneously, independently, and joyously all around us. There is no doubt in my mind that active meditation groups will become a permanent part of the Urantia Movement, and that these groups will grow, divide, and come and go like regular study groups. Some individuals will never feel comfortable with the phenomenon; others will come forward saying that this is what they have been waiting for all along. It is clear that *Urantia Book* study will never be the same, and that this new way of reacting with the teachings will be there for those who desire to comprehend within the conscious spirit context.

If you will, let me use the imperfect words of the realm to expand the debate, perhaps to shed some light, even with the understanding that with light inevitably comes shadows. I ask more questions that provide answers, but with a 2097 page *Book* of unquestioned answers, perhaps it is time to ask hard questions. Others are invited to enter into the dialogue and hopefully the serious questers within the *Book* reading community should be able to flesh out the truth of the matter. It only requires an open mind. The phenomenon is not going to go away in response to ridicule and scorn.

Ultimately, each of us must discover the reality of soul consciousness for ourselves. I am convinced that the conscious spirit can contact the material mind, and that this contact can accelerate the growth of the soul. I know this is true because I experience it. Whether my experience is believable or a similar experience can be had by someone else is another question. This paper is written not to convince anyone of anything in particular, but to share some pathways of reasoning so that others might be aided in coming to their own understanding. These are not simple matters to be easily resolved. My hope is that the dialogue leads to increased religious tolerance and acceptance of a variety of religious experiences.

Faith and Belief, Facts and Truth

"In the realm of religious experience, spiritual possibility is potential reality. Man's forward spiritual urge is not a psychic illusion. All of man's universe romancing may not be fact, but much, very much, is truth." 2096

Questions of faith and belief often start with debates over the evidence of things unseen, striking at the heart of our quest for authoritative sources. Why do we believe *The Urantia Book* is true? Does this belief differ from an assent that epochal revelation is a fact? Does the fact of epochal revelation differ from the fact of autorevelation? We are told that much of the Book's cosmology is not inspired, that its facts will stand in need of revision over time. Is the revelation realized only in our own minds, or does it exist as an external fact outside from human experience? What within us tells us that it is true?

Questions and answers. Belief and faith. Facts and truth. Knowledge and action. Mind and spirit. We have read the Book. We claim to believe it is true. Have we begun our morontia soul careers yet? What is our relationship with God once the decision to survive, the experience of salvation, is behind us? Are we to live out our natural lives in passive acceptance of religious facts or can we begin our experiential quest for cosmic or soul consciousness while still on earth?

The Revelation begins with the words, "In the minds of the mortals of Urantia, that being the name of your world, there exists great confusion respecting the meaning of such terms as God, Divinity, and Deity." Who among us, after reading the Book even a dozen times, can speak with certainty on the differences between matter, mind, soul, spirit, and personality? Has the "great confusion" gone away as a result of downloading the text of the Book onto the hard drives of our mental computers? What do we actually *know* versus *believe*?

With such confusion of mind and spirit, how is a person to distinguish their own thoughts from contact with the Adjuster, a universe spirit, the Supreme, the Cosmic Mind, or the Conjoint Actor? How can we tell when our psychic experiences are real versus those that are purely psychologic in origin? If a trusted friend tells us that they are in communication with a spirit being, should we believe them at face value?

Perhaps it will be helpful to start by separating the *process* of autorevelation from the *content* of the experience. The experience of visualizing may be of value while the image visualized may not. Autorevelation is experiential, and is often the participant's first or only conscious encounter with the soul. Autorevelation, channelling, and psychic phenomenon are, in my understanding, various symbolic manifestations of soul consciousness. The experiences reveal much that is truth and of survival value. They reveal little

of fact or of material value.

Was the Book merely the experience of one or more individual spirit channels during the 1930's, from which we are now trying to make sense of the transcripts? Are we certain we know where autorevelation starts and ends in the writing and understanding of *The Urantia Book*? To what extent did the practical adaption of epochal revelation to local conditions in time and space date the text? How much of what we read was filtered by the questions and mind-set of a group of individuals reflecting the decade of the thirties?

To add to the mystery, on page 7 we further read that the endeavor of the authors of *The Urantia Book* is "to expand cosmic consciousness and enhance spiritual perception." It does not say that their mission is to provide absolute facts in an encyclopedic association such that humans be compelled to believe these facts in proper progression without question. They bemoan their task of presenting enlarged concepts and advanced truth "when we are restricted to the use of a circumscribed language of the realm." Perhaps we can assist them in expanding our spiritual perception by practicing non-verbal, imaging, or symbolic contact. Could this be what the so called "channeling" experience is; verbal translation of non-verbal experiential contact?

The Relativity of Religious Experience

Sincere truth seekers and long time Book readers are exhibiting behaviors that appear to be contact with spirit beings. An individual enters a peculiar state of awareness and speaks as if from the voice of a spirit being of some sort. The believer's model postulates that the spirit contact is a fact, truth is resulting, and that the facts expressed are also truth. Some observers claim that the phenomenon is merely the individual speaking out loud, paraphrasing words from *The Urantia Book*. Another interpretation asserts that spirit contact is not a fact, but believing that it is fact is resulting in truth realizations, but the facts are not truth. There is still another theory which states that the phenomenon is not fact and that no truth or facts are resulting. Still others may assert that the behavior is actually deliberate deception and that evil is resulting.

I suggest a reading of the seven conceivable types and forms of perfection outlined on page 3 and the seven manifestations of the nature of Divinity on page 1294. These categorizations should assist us in accepting the potential of many levels of awareness and perfection in ourselves and others. Relativity and the ability to adjust are important considerations in becoming comfortable with our emerging transcendental soul, even though multi-dimensional thinking may lead to seemingly perpetual uncertainty. We are told that "no revelation short of the attainment of the Universal Father can ever be complete. All other celestial ministrations are no more than partial, transient, and practically adapted to local conditions in time and space." P.1008

Should the average person ignore the spirit contact phenomenon under the pretext that the risk of it being evil is greater than the potential good that might result should it be true? Given varying degrees of truth and fact, is it possible to derive truth from soul contact, even if the source is the imagination? Surely the sincere religionist does not believe that all truth must be derived from material and sensory input. Readers of *The Urantia Book* readers have already suspended some level of disbelief to allow its facts and truths to become a part of their religious model. Still, there is always a matter of discretion whereby individuals choose their form of religious input. People do

not accept new religious forms without some sort of verification. The *claim* of spirit contact does not make it so, simply because the individual *believes* it to be true.

Must the source of truth be valid for the truth to be of value? Can truth stand on its own, regardless of origin? If some information is fact, do we conclude that all associated information is also fact? If much is truth, but none is fact, do we deny the truth? Consider the words of Jesus from page 1732, "Those who are born of the spirit of God shall henceforth discern the word of God regardless of whence it appears to take origin. Divine truth must not be discounted because the channel of its bestowal is apparently human. Many of your brethren have minds which accept the theory of God while they spiritually fail to realize the presence of God. It is not so important that you should know about the fact of God as that you should increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God.*"

Can we judge whether the "contactee" is feeling the presence of God or not? How do we know that they do not know? When do we conclude that someone's autorevelation has bearing on our own relationship with God? Even the time between the expression and recall of autorevelation may make it's serviceability obsolete, especially if the counsel and its symbology was phrased to be of value to the recipient of the message only at the time of its expression. Autorevelation must therefore be, by its very nature, highly personal and difficult of communication to others. By its nature it is of the *soul*, and thus highly experiential. Its symbolism is archetypal, elusive, and difficult to translate, especially into words.

If we start to believe in the possibility of morontia consciousness, does it automatically imply that we affirm the beliefs of other soul travelers, associates in other "classes" or on other "levels"? Did Jesus believe and follow the teachings of John when he consented to baptism? Did Jesus teach equally to the multitudes and the disciples? Of course not. Even among the apostles were multiple levels of teaching, not to be shared with others. We often labor under the illusion that "heaven" is a magical place where all souls are equal, forgetting that the Father's house is full of "many mansions" and that the next life picks up exactly where we left off from this life.

Could it be that we are in an epochal revelatory age, with the current blue book just *one form* resulting from the twenty years of questions and night sessions of a group referred to as the Forum? Perhaps a new contact begins as any individual becomes receptive, a group forms, and questions are asked. As the nature of the questions evolve, is the revelation continually updated to deal with local conditions in time and space?

We are told of the Reserve Corps of Destiny and Cosmic Conscious Citizens who interact with actual spiritual beings or have insight far transcending that of the terrestrial abode. It is through the Reserve Corps that civilization is safeguarded and the Most Highs rule in the affairs of men. These individuals are contacted by Midwayers, trained in some essential skill or understanding, and perform courageous or quiet acts that make the world a better place. Readers believe these groups to be a fact, even though we are uncertain of their organization. Must these groups be entirely secret? Is there a recruitment office?

The potential for spirit contact is not isolated to the Reserve Corps. We read on page 1317 about "Certain wise men of earth knew of Michael's impending arrival. Through the contacts of one world with another, these wise men of spiritual insight learned of the forthcoming bestowal of Michael on Urantia."

Just what are these contacts of "one world with another" and are they still occurring today? Certainly we don't believe for a minute that a commission from the center of the galaxy would drop a book of revelation in our laps and return home with no follow through plan!

Melchizedek had a special relationship with the Hebrew prophets as well as Lao Tse and Godad, a teacher of Guatama. Angels reported that they admired Abner, but helped Paul, even arranging a supernatural release from prison. Are these contacts the same as those of the trance prophets and mediums? Simon's response to the teachings of Kermith, the trance prophet of Baghdad was a dunking in the lake. Who is to say that no angel or Midwayer is helping someone spread the gospel of God-consciousness today? I doubt that spirit helpers are very enthusiastic about fostering the spread of our mundane intellectual lecture sessions. How about picking up the pace folks? How about a little *soul*?

What if Michael were to decree that the Reserve Corps was to be more like the military draft than West Point? What if he gave the word that he wanted *millions* of volunteers, rather than an elite corps that Christy used to refer to as "mortal selectmen"? Must we envision the Reserve Corps as only a few thousand obscure and selfless individuals, rather than the "human guild of earth workers"? Do we deny a commission of living faith because we fear the possibly of being wrong as to facts, or even worse, correct in the facts but wrong in the truth? Can we step cautiously into soul consciousness without becoming eccentric new age trance channelers?

What if Steven were convinced by Peter that the followers of Jesus were to be only a low profile subsect of Judaism? What if Paul had not been transformed by the death of Steven and hadn't turned the world on its ear? Would we be still dealing with Roman legions today in an ultra-militaristic feudal humanistic state, fraught with barbarism and slavery? What oppression might we be inflicting upon subsequent generations as a result of spirit paralysis and intellectual conformity? Haven't we, as a group, rejected the creed of "preserve the text" as our sole rallying cry? It is time for a lot less thinking and a lot more realizing.

Despite repeated warnings about the dangers of psychic phenomenon, the autorevelation experience is recognized as a reality in *The Urantia Book*. "By opening the human end of the channel of the God-man communication, mortals make immediately available the ever-flowing stream of divine ministry to the creatures of the worlds." P 1638 "Truth is always a revelation: autorevelation when it emerges as a result of the work of the indwelling adjuster; epochal revelation when it is presented by the function of some other celestial agency, group, or personality." P 1109 In light of the omnipresence of God... "Hence must the concept of the divine presence allow for a wide range of both mode and channel of manifestation embracing the Presence circuits of the eternal son, the Infinite Spirit, and the Isle of Paradise." P 45

If we take Jesus' admonition at face value, "ask and you shall receive", we encounter one means of accessing soul consciousness. But the mind finds it difficult to ask questions without an alter ego to ask the questions to. People do not ask questions to the "void" or inanimate objects. Questions are asked only of *persons*. Without living faith, even the person of Jesus is difficult to imagine as a conscious presence without some sort of perceptual validation. Most importantly, the experience of soul dialogue, since the Thought Adjuster is an invisible spirit, requires a willing suspension of disbelief. Many individuals find this uncertainty frightening without a corresponding affirmation that there is a divine or spiritual being on the other side of the dialogue

process.

The process of giving identity to the Thought Adjuster, to Jesus, or a spirit visitor, or other symbolic representation of the alter ego, is an essential stage in developing the technique of soul dialogue. What starts out as "projection" or "imagination" gradually becomes familiar with practice. It is my belief that the Adjuster uses these mind symbols to train the childlike soul in awareness techniques until the soul is sufficiently mature to receive an actual spirit contact in the form of autorevelation.

How is it then that some persons fuse with their Adjusters while still in the flesh? How do humans on earth progress through the psychic circles, the equivalent of the corresponding mansion worlds, if our soul were not growing even as we live and breathe? What does it mean that "few mortals live up to the faith they actually have?" It is much easier to deny the reality of soul consciousness and delay its emergence than it is to aggressively cooperate with our Adjusters and unseen helpers. Perhaps if we put and close our spirit eyes, the nagging angels and spirit forces will just GO AWAY! Of course when they get to the mansion worlds, these same individuals may wish to boast of their origin on an isolated sphere, agondonters who "believed without seeing".

If we accept the notion that the Father responds to all reaches of faith, and that no symbolic representation is abhorrent to Him, then it is easier to understand how childlike persons or adolescent souls can receive such deeply gratifying responses to their inquiries. Their sincere *desire to know* is being reciprocated to the extent of their capability to comprehend at the time. The sincerity and humility of the petitioner can become so profound as to border upon worship. How can a loving Father deny the sincere desire of such a faith child?

The long term goal of the active meditation technique is to attain a passive "I AM" conscious state whereby the individual is able to receive or initiate contact with *real* spiritual resources. The process may begin with an imaginary dialogue with an alter ego, but can evolve into true spirit communication. This evolved stage of active meditation can lead to actual contact with the Adjuster, planetary citizens, space visitors, the Supreme Being, the Cosmic Mind, the spirit gravity circuit of the Conjoint Actor, and other spirit realities. "The Spirit Gravity Circuit is the basic channel for transmitting the genuine prayers of the believing human heart from the level of human consciousness to the actual consciousness of Deity." P 84

A Challenge of Religious Tolerance

Is the Urantia Movement going to react to this new wave of religious experientialism with intolerance, derision, and separation? Never before has the brotherhood of believers been tested as to its position on the reality of soul consciousness. Could it be that an overly intellectual and ecclesiastical hierarchy is being threatened by a new group that is daring to rely solely on their internal interpretation of the teachings of Jesus? Is there a fear that these groups may actually be contacting real spirit forces or is the fear actually of living faith free from creedal conformity? Do those feeling threatened worry about personal ridicule, loss of mind control, or the suspension of religious authority?

To say that the Fifth Epochal Revelation is complete and not to be changed or added to, or that no other contacts are forthcoming sounds like the myth from the old and new testaments that should "anyone take away or add to these words, their name will be stricken from the Book of Life." Are we expecting too much

of divinity and our spiritually receptive associates that every word, every fact, every step be measured against an absolute standard of perfection? Could it be that the authenticity of messages from spirit beings is at the heart of the Brotherhood and Foundation schism, tracing back through the "Vern" messages back to Christy and the "contact commission" itself?

I read Earnest Moyer's supposed "expose" of channeling in the Urantia Community and wonder why he feels so threatened so as to label these new study groups as the work of Caligastia. I wonder what he is afraid of that he would attack his fellows so cruelly. I am also disappointed in the tone of the Executive Committee's admonition to the Wood's Cross group not to disrupt the General Council meeting. Their letter seemed much like the Foundation's old "It has come to our attention..." pronouncements of prohibition. Friends are calling me asking how it is that I could be falling for that "psychic nonsense"

To some individuals, it is apparently safe to talk to God, but it is not OK to listen. Perhaps it is not even OK to ask questions, especially out loud! Autorevelation, even though we are told is "continuous", is apparently not to be spoken of in the social context of the organized Urantia Book readership. I am glad to hear that there has been no action on the motion to ask Lucile Faw to resign from the Executive Committee and for area coordinators to resign their commission for believing in spirit contact. To a few "defenders of the faith", those who claim to be listening to messengers of God must be isolated and exposed as frauds as soon as the slightest imperfection in character or message is uncovered. I hope that the Executive Committee maintains its neutrality.

Criteria that would never be applied to the Fifth Epochal Revelation is being used to judge these faltering initial attempts at auditory soul consciousness. Should we also denounce *The Urantia Book* just because the first printing claimed that the red man migrated "west" from Asia over the Bering Strait? The cosmology (facts) of the Book are not inspired and already stand in need of update. Do we deny the truth of autorevelation because of its odd manner and uncertain facts as well?

It seems that nothing or no one is perfect enough for some people. Many of us would have denied Abraham's supposed contacts with Melchizedek because they were associated with a man who would go out after a teaching session and slaughter thousands of his enemies or offered sacrifices to a golden calf. We continually deny God's ability to meet humans where we are, as ordinary men, full of shortcomings and failings. We dismiss His potential to reveal truth that is practically adapted to local conditions in time and space, assuming that only dead and glorious saints were worthy of such honor.

Why do we assume that we must follow the Foundation, the Brotherhood, the Executive Committee, the Teacher, or the Guide without question? It seems that some people crave authority while others seek their own inner experience without external sanctions. Is it too difficult accept the fact that some people are comfortable with certain forms or mechanics of faith and belief and that others are not? Churchification is a bad word only to the extent that it represents dogmatism and intolerance. If bringing a mindal and otherwise intellectual revelation to an experiential and more personal level is churchification, than I am all in favor of churchifying.

Most Book readers are fairly rational people seeking harmony between religion, philosophy, and science. Skepticism is not only healthy, it is essential to the maintenance of a balanced personality. What criteria can separate truth from fiction? Do we dismiss all channeling as subconscious phenomenon-on-an-anon ready for debunking or is it wise to keep the mind open

in case one of these individuals is actually in touch with true spirit beings? How do we determine if someone is talking with a Lanonadek or playing with a half-a-deck?

There is no denying that most examples of spirit contact in past years have been less than enlightening. The Vern Grimsley messages rocked the readership for years with raunchy tales and messages of doom. The supposed "protect the name" messages of Christy during the 1960's are now the subject of a copyright and trademark lawsuit. Martin Myers spilled the cosmic beans with allusions to Midwayer and pre-1955 "Contact Commission" messages in his apocryphal 1973 paper, "Unity, Not Uniformity."

How many times in the past have we been told by Foundation Trustees and their puppet Urantia Brotherhood Executive Committee that "we were told" this and that or the "Midwayers said such and such?" The heir to the throne of the contact commission may have been at the heart of the split between the Brotherhood and the Foundation. The concept of divine succession from the early contact group to an established institution is a disturbing trend. These "keepers of the sacred circles" must, because of their delusions of grandeur, oppose any movement that claims soul consciousness or spirit contact that is not under their direct control. Witness the tragic isolation of the Foundation.

The concept of a decentralized and inner directed hoard of self-directed enlightened mortals must be terrifying for self proclaimed leaders who are convinced of their special or secret spirit connections. The Foundation is convinced that it must not allow "official" societies or study groups to "spiritize". According to Martin Myers, Vern Grimsley had to be stopped for claiming spirit contact, and the Brotherhood had to be disbanded for failing to excommunicate him and his followers. I pity future members of Martin's Brotherhood Association.

When FEF was formed, one of the desires was to protect the right of members to believe and worship God as they pleased. To many, the dictates of the Foundation were nothing short of ecclesiastical autocracy. The right of members of the former Brotherhood to belong to any other church seemed inalienable, a tenant of a religious "bill of rights". The battleground with the Foundation focused on whether not only members, but whether Area Co-ordinators could practice any religion they pleased without being subject to central control. Based on debates at the last two meetings, the Executive Committee and General Council were dangerously close to repeating the mistakes of the Foundation as FEF seeks to distance itself from the new channeling phenomenon.

Soul Consciousness, the Art of Asking Questions

For the more advanced soul, the challenge is to perfect the art of formulating questions of value. If we engage in trickery in order to conduct inquisitions over facts, we are certain to be disappointed, for facts are not of survival value unless they are found within a spirit context. Likewise are purely self-seeking inquiries destined to crash on the harbor rocks, never to reach the ocean of soul consciousness. Many who doubt the reality of soul consciousness would, if they looked deep into their heart, realize that they actually have *very few* questions of value and in fact *do not care* to know any spiritual answers even if resources were available.

Questions become increasingly of value as the individual is of service to the Supreme. If we visualize this world as a place where everyone is out for themselves, that our life is of value only to the extent that we achieve our own

personal salvation, then we are not ready for the Supreme or soul consciousness. The Supreme deals not with the individual, but the group and the whole. Questions, the need to know, the desire to know, the love of adventure, curiosity, and the willingness to believe are the power sources that enable and sustain the soul consciousness, and this desire is driven by our love for and the desire to serve our fellows.

Channeling, or as I call it, active meditation, is dynamic soul realiz- ing, full of questions, more questions, and hopefully profound questions. Most other meditation techniques are silent and receptive, a process whereby the material mind sits back and waits for something to happen to it. The autorevela- tion technique is outgoing in its satisfaction seeking, continually changing, challenging, symbolic, creative, imaginative, archetypal, moving, and exciting. Soul consciousness is a meditation whereby the individual reaches out and makes things happen.

Some have referred to the spontaneous questioning process of active meditation as "running". Without this dynamic motion, the autorevelation technique regresses back to relaxation and passive meditation, even putting the material mind to sleep. We read on page 290 that "Ability to comprehend is the mortal passport to Paradise. Willingness to believe is the key to Havona." "But man does not passively, slavishly, surrender his will to the Adjuster. Rather does he actively, positively, and co-operatively choose to follow the Adjuster's leading." P. 1217

To effectively "run", a desire to know and a "willingness to believe" originating in the soul is essential. The energy necessary to navigate within the cosmic consciousness comes from questions and more questions. For most novices, the only questioning energy available is mere curiosity, hardly enough fuel to launch a serious cosmic inquiry. Curiosity is sufficient motivation to "prime" the pump of soul awareness at least once. With the low grade spirit fuel of curiosity, the individual often needs repeated stimulation and questions from a friend or an advanced soul who facilitates the soul experience. Auto- revelation is not something that only happens to others. It is the right and first duty of every evolving soul to establish a communication link with actual spirit forces.

A key issue is how to improve our ability to ask questions. How do we move from curiosity to the desire to know to the need to know? I believe that the need to know is enhanced by the quality of our human service. To the extent that we mobilize our lives to benefit others, to serve the Supreme, to aid in the promulgation of truth, beauty, and goodness on earth, we have a greater need for information. The greater the service, the greater the need to know and the greater the desire for soul communication.

Obviously those complacent individuals that are beneficiaries of the fruits of modern civilization are not going to be motivated on very deep levels. Those who have dedicated their lives to serving and loving their fellow man, not just being served by others, are the individuals who can ask the mighty questions. Their value to the Supreme, to the "total", is greater and these persons are eligible become the beneficiaries of providence. Spirit guides assist us not so much for our benefit but to the extent that we are committed to benefit others.

Questions from the material mind carried into the cosmic mind are like arrows in the darkness lacking direction and range, catching answers like a cosmic shish-ka-bob pulled back to the human mind for ingestion. We get what we ask for. Most questions of the material mind are irrelevant when translated into

soul terminology. Soul desire and the need to know are essential if autorevelation is to go beyond parlor room curiosity. It is difficult for the material mind to understand what is of survival value, to seek out those values and insights that transcend material existence. To increase our value as individuals is the surest means to spiritize our thinking and our lives. Natural soul growth and higher levels of understanding are certain to follow.

The problem with most human questions is that they are seated in self-centeredness. Typical questions revolve around the material ego, "what is in it for me?" As I listen to the Woods Cross tapes, I notice as the months pass, there has been an evolution within the group toward more spiritual questions, and hence greater spiritual insight. I listen to the tapes much as I listen to my own soul ramblings, with a gentle suspension of belief. I ignore the facts and details and try to hear only the truth. The symbolism of the manifestation is not important to me. I care little whether an actual spirit named "Ham" is contacting. What I hear is the truth of a group quest for enlightenment, and the joy they have in finding a symbolism that is facilitating their ability to formulate and ask increasingly spiritized questions.

In other soul contact sessions I have observed, especially when the participants are new to the technique and are struggling in the dark, the experience usually originates as a group phenomenon. Soul questioning is markedly different than passive and reflective meditation, which is largely a quiet and highly personal dialogue between the self and God. It is difficult to both enter into the active meditative state and to ask the inner self questions generated by the material self. The alter-ego dialogue is difficult to sustain alone and may be facilitated by speaking out loud. The questioning dialogue process is often initiated by having one individual entering the active meditation state and responding to questions asked by friends in the room with them.

The experience of the questioner is often as insightful as the person reflecting the soul level. The passive soul intellect has less of a conscious link with the material mind than the friend providing the question stimulus. The assistant's job is mainly to keep the dialogue flowing, to encourage, to ask more questions, to move the process along, and to seek a higher insight or level. The process of consciousnessing soul experience takes practice, but becomes increasingly non-verbal and comfortable over time. With familiarity and increasing desire, individuals can readily enter into the soul state, adopt a soul persona (spirit entity if need be), and become what is called a channel without the need of a human guide/ facilitator.

Observation of the autorevelation phenomenon indicates that most common questions and desires of the material mind melt away once the individual enters into soul consciousness. Frankly, most of us are not very deep thinkers, and our questions are usually quite shallow. The spirit answers reflect our questions, and thus is revelation always metered out in proportion to our level of receptivity. This helps explain why much autorevelation is of value only in its local sphere of influence. Many meanings and values are not readily translated to others operating on different levels. The classes on Mansion World Seven are quite different from the teachings on World Three. The nature of the questions keeps the morontia class in touch with the level of growth attainment of the students.

Autorevelation, or Time for a New "Ka"

The debate over spirit contact is actually a discussion concerning the reality of the soul. It seems that many seemingly advanced readers are actually denying the possibility of conscious soul contact! In the paper, "The Adjuster and the Soul" we read on page 1216 that one Egyptian ruler, speaking of the "Ka" (soul) within his heart said: "I did not disregard its speech; I feared to transgress its guidance. I prospered thereby greatly; I was thus successful by reason of that which it caused me to do; I was distinguished by its guidance. Many believed that the soul was an oracle from God in everybody...and that they were to spend an eternity in gladness of heart in the favor of the God that is in you."

Simply stated, the self intervening between our material self and the fusion with our spirit self is the soul. The morontia soul is the transition vehicle linking our origin with our destiny. Repeatedly we are told that the material mind is incapable of understanding spirit realities. Our son of God self, our soul, however, *IS* capable of spirit understanding. Active meditation is the art of *becoming* the soul through the technique of transferring our identity from a material body/mind to a morontia body/mind, a body that is seemingly unreal to the material self.

All too often we lull ourselves into thinking that soul growth begins after death. We pretend to wait until we "know" have a morontia form, spirit teachers we can "see", and have the verification of morontia reality that comes from surviving death. Morontia teaching while on earth?! Never, we say. God is in heaven. This is the earth, and that's the way it is. Spirit is spirit, matter is matter and never the twain shall meet. If we practice due process, perform the motions and rituals properly, then we are rewarded with a soul "on the next world".

The experience of soul consciousness represents the first time many of its practitioners become objective to their own mind; the first time that the person becomes aware of their experience of spirit as separate from ordinary thinking. Most material minded humans believe they are their bodies and that their mind and consciousness are limited to sensory input. In the passive and relaxing field of meditation, input comes not from the material senses but from within; sometimes from the mind, sometimes from the indwelling spirit. There is no law which states that this input can not also come from a spirit visitor.

Autorevelation and advanced meditation were supposed to have been taught over the centuries by the Staff of the Planetary Prince as a normal part of human existence. The ability of the individual to engage in communica with the Adjuster and to use free associative symbolism in prayer was not intended to be a practice of the specially trained, the supernormal, or the chosen ones. The planetary rebellion succeeded in convincing humans that other-than-material reality was abnormal, out of the ordinary, and limited to priests, mystics, and shamans.

Despite their potential for abuse and evil, autorevelation and meditation are healthy human practices like breathing, eating, and making love. Even with its odd manifestations, autorevelation is spreading like a benign virus throughout modern culture, inoculating civilization with the advanced idea that religion is personal and experiential. Many are learning for the first time that God is within and that the inner life contains a door filled with mansions of spiritual insights. Autorevelation frees the individual from the hold of priests and institutions, effectively eliminating the middleman in the prayer life. The

previously kept secret of creative visualization has encouraged new millions of individuals to practice active meditation upon a relaxed mind with amazing results.

I am convinced that whole cultures will soon learn the techniques of active meditation and the practice of creative visualization will become commonplace. This will gradually weaken the authority of shamans and mediums who thrive on ignorance and hide behind the notion of secret teachings. Autorevelation is the equivalent of computer access to cosmic bulletin boards, the password to the Cosmic Mind, the symbol of the opening of the Universe communication circuits leading the eventual reception of the Universe Broadcasts. Autorevelation is to religion what the power to vote is to democracy. It takes religion out of the hands of a small group of supposedly spiritual intermediaries and places it in the hands of the individual where it belongs.

I define autorevelation as the insight that occurs subsequent to the voluntary transfer of the seat of identity from the material self to the soul, the conscious acknowledgement of the self as a child of God. Once the individual meets God half way, so to speak, sharing the I AM self with him, then can God help foster soul growth and spiritual understanding on a more conscious level. This reality "consciousizing" must be consented to. The Father respects our human will. In fact, it is our will that provides the energy and the motivation which enables soul growth.

The Danger of Self-Deification

For those with an immature intellectual understanding of the soul and the cosmology of the universe, the powerful autorevelatory phenomenon can lead to all sorts of bizarre conclusions. The initial encounter with the personality, the I AM within, can lead to identity disorientation, even self-deification. A characteristic of many channelers when they first encounter the Supreme, the collective consciousness of all finite creatures, is the notion that they and every one else is "God".

They fail to recognize the individuality of the Father, much less the other levels of Deity, as separate personalities from their own identity and the personality of the Supreme. After a brief encounter with soul consciousness, they attempt to bypass the ascension career, assuming that they and their Adjuster are already one simply because they at last learned to make contact the gift of the Father's name, the I AM within.

The Urantia Book is clear on this point. The I AM within is a gift of the Father. It is our unique personality. It is potentially divine in destiny ONLY to the extent that it becomes fused with the other gift of God, the pre-personal Thought Adjuster - the I WAS. Until fusion, our I AM is not the same as the eternal I AM within, the Father Fragment. The two are separate and to equate the one with the other without the growth and experience that is the ascension plan is the great lie taught by Lucifer.

"The courage required to effect the conquest of nature and transcend one's self is a courage that might succumb to the temptations of self-pride. The mortal who can transcend self might yield to the temptation to deify his own self consciousness." P 1222 The error of self-deification comes from equating the human I AM with the eternal I AM without earning it through identification with the Supreme, the WE ARE I AM.

Salvation from self is achieved by recognizing our sonship with God. The relationship with God is not inherent and automatic without truth, beauty, and

goodness. The life and teachings of Jesus reveal the character of the Father, and Michael demonstrates that it is through living love and unselfish service that we are freed from the limitations of self. Our eternal purpose, and our Adjuster's great longing, is for that day of fusion where our personality and the Adjuster become one. Until that time, our emerging soul may be referred to as the I WILL BE.

No human on earth is a fused mortal. No man is to be called "God". Only Jesus was exempted from fusion at his baptism because of his special sovereign status as a Creator Son. According to the Bible and *The Urantia Book*, only Jesus can be called God. Only a Creator Son can claim, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" or "The Father and I are One" or "Before Abraham was, I AM".

Aside from the single experience of Jesus, fusion of the mortal soul with the Divine Adjuster disincorporates the body into "chariots of fire". There are no living masters on earth who are one with the Father as was Jesus. Anyone claiming divine status should be subject to question. Even those who are in fact contacting advanced spiritual teachers should not be seeking to "lord" it over their fellows, to compel loyalty, or act against the character and nature of the Father. If they are, their supposed contact would be called into question.

New agers who claim self-divinity should not be overly chastised, however. It requires epochal revelation to sort and censor the evolutionary and autorevelatory religions of man. The individual's first encounter with the Supreme, the collective consciousness, requires some sort of symbolic representation. Without the gospel of Jesus that we are the children of God coupled with *The Urantia Book's* restatement of Jesus' life revealing the nature of God, it may be easy to conclude that the mortal personality is the Father himself. All the more reason to spread *The Urantia Book* and all the more likely that its readers might be less subject to distortion than those who have not read the Book.

The Adjuster and the Soul

Soul identification is the secret to personality stability, even despite the pronouncements of a secular and materialistic world that would have us slavishly conform to the rituals of mechanistic determinism. Within the mind of man is an inner longing for ideals, values, community, love, association, and group worship that can not be satisfied through material mindedness alone. The repeated acknowledgement of the self as a child of God, the wholehearted commitment to doing the Father's will, and the growth urges prompted by material difficulties and Adjuster leadings conspire, sooner or later, to bring the soul into a conscious state. If we don't initiate the conscious soul experience while on this world, it will certainly be one of our first lessons on the next. Why wait?

We are born as egocentric human animals with a divine potential. Revealed cosmology teaches us that God is actually at the center of the universe, and this process of religious education leads us to understand the ascension plan and the means whereby the Father is seeking to bring into existence legions of perfected souls who willingly choose to unite their personality with their indwelling Adjuster. The material mind is merely the host for the personality that may choose to become an eternal soul. The soul evolves at a rate and only to the extent of our willing participation. Autorevelation is a means of accelerating the process and making soul growth more conscious.

The Adjuster is patient with us and does not judge or chastise. Any

flicker of faith, even if it is subconscious rambling, will be capitalized upon to evolve a healthy soul dialogue over time. It is important to understand that God is stepping down to meet us where and as we are. Our agreement is like the original Melchizedek covenant. We agree to believe, God takes care of everything else. Our constant battle is against doubt. Not doubt in the intellectual sense, for it takes little courage to agree that there is a God and that we believe that *The Urantia Book* is a gift of revelation. The doubt we must overcome is whether we believe we can actually experience soul growth here and now through spirit guidance. We are actually doubting the reality of our own soul experience.

Indifference to soul growth on earth presumes upon divine mercy. Spiritual laziness is the nature of the human mind that rebels at the effort required to comprehend cosmic meanings and increase the service abilities of the personality. Without spiritual desire, love of adventure, or a cosmic quest for the truth, the soul state reverts to passive meditation, often resulting in selfish praying for personal salvation or supposed status. On the mansion worlds, we will not be granted excuses or time delays to postpone our morontia training. Revelation is the only substitute for mota on earth, and practicing auto-revelation is the conscious effort to begin soul training here and now. Soul contact is not something that "happens" to us. It must be actively pursued and practiced.

Timid souls fear the consequences of leaving the shelter of the material mind circuits. They are afraid of losing control, confusing the normal human identity, and perhaps entering into a state of mental disruption. Ultimately, however, even the most skeptical mind consents to some form of spirit leading, for in the final analysis, the soul is our eternal identity, more real than the human identity. The desire to survive eventually causes the material mind to consent to shift its residence from the brain to the soul. The question is not a matter of *if*, but *when*.

It is not our place to judge the form of another's soul imaging. It is enough for us to open our hearts and mind to our own Adjuster and the symbolism that is being prepared to suit our particular personality. For the serious student of cosmology and spirit reality, there is no limit to soul growth, no symbolic boundaries, and no growth inhibitors artificially placed upon us. When the human mind consciously moves beyond its body identity and occupies the invisible soul body, when the personality begins the process of sharing the consciousness of the eternal I AM, it impinges upon the Supreme. The collective consciousness of all finite experience, the Supreme I AM is ready to cooperate with our angelic guides and Thought Adjuster, to utilize our voluntary entrance into "spiritual school" to accelerate cosmic understanding.

What Do You Know? Not Much, You?

Perhaps a new means of liaison between humans and our neighborly cosmic citizens is being established and that the halting first steps of contact are unfolding before us. Perhaps the spirit friends, like Ann Sullivan reaching out to deaf and blind Helen Keller, are having as hard a time reaching us as we are in contacting them.

What does it mean to believe in the Wood's Cross messages? Does it mean that we follow Rebecca and her group, a fellowship with obvious Mormon or biblical characteristics? Or does it mean we follow the Florida, or California, or other group? Can we listen, find the truth, and ignore the facts? Many readers also follow the Course in Miracles, a self-proclaimed channeled work.

Each person should seek an answer to these questions themselves. Are these persons in touch with the unseen friends of the Book? Is the phenomenon the misinterpretation of autorevelatory soul consciousness? Is the whole ruckus a mass delusion? My opinion is that the images are soul projections that serve to aid the individual's spiritual growth, but what I think is irrelevant. Even if these voices are actual spirit beings representing the planetary government, I would react no differently or modify my lifestyle just because of their status.

I take "spirit counsel" under advisement just as I would any other voice of wisdom. Michael and his spirit legions does not compel loyalty because of their spirit nature. His words have value because we *know in our heart* that they are true. The important consideration is that the Father reveals to us that Jesus is the Son of God. At this time, I don't need a material manifestation or contact confirmation for faith assurance.

Who doesn't admit to a need and a desire for greater insight than what is provided by mere intellectual understanding? I actively consent to spirit guidance beyond my mortal comprehension. But this I choose for myself and do not wish to proselytize my decision upon others. For those who are making similar decisions, I offer my hand and do not judge the form of their symbolism as I ask them not to pass judgement upon mine. Frankly, I find this world quite perplexing without the eye of the spirit for guidance.

I have practiced active meditation for nearly thirty years and believe in the efficacy of guided meditation as a means of soul growth. I had the fortune of being introduced as a teenager to Jungian archetypal symbolic visualization as a meditative practice. I have attended many New Age group meetings and seek out and am seemingly "coincidentally" bumping into questers and fellow soul travelers wherever I go. My inclination is to automatically accept all supposed spirit messages as truth, but none of it as fact. The extent of the current phenomenon, however, warrants further study, if only because of the qualitative difference many readers are reporting in their prayer and meditation life over the past months. I too am experiencing new levels of insight that I can not explain as arising from my own imagination. Why not go into active meditation, ask questions, and see what happens for yourself?

I often refer to *The Urantia Book* as a work of "unquestioned answers". So much of it is merely comprehended in the mind, similar to the person taken suddenly to Paradise being as oblivious to its light as they are at present. After over twenty years of mindal study, I am ready to do less thinking and practice more realizing.

No longer will I wait for approval to act upon the potential of the soul. No longer will I escape in the false shelter of an unworthy complacency, shamed by those who would judge for daring to act without first being perfect. The creative, humorous, dynamic, and joyous individuals are too often intimidated by the mediocrity of intolerant intellectual hierarchies. I *know* that I am a member of the invisible and universal brotherhood of soul conscious citizens. Those who limit their loyalty and commitment to human institutions are the ones who should be committed to institutions. Ultimate loyalty is to the truth, not to facts or beliefs.