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URANTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON PERSONALITY:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHOTHERAPY

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In beginning this effort to extrapolate data on human personality functions from the vast holdings of The Urantia Book, I am reminded of the oft-told story of the five blind men and the elephant: each perceived that the part of the elephant he could touch was a genuine representation of the whole beast. So it has been with many of our personality theorists, each school holding to its own limited point of view as a total explanation of the whole picture of the nature of man. Practically everybody, from the religionists with their fragmentized dogmas, to the behaviorists with their Skinner boxes, seems to be holding another part of the elephant and smugly telling themselves and anybody else who'll listen, "This is IT! We've got the ANSWER!"

Well, the same danger exists for those who would attempt to interpret The Urantia Book, that epochal volume of cosmogony, cosmography, and cosmology. For contained within its two thousand ninety seven pages is such a wealth of information, such an abundance of knowledge about mankind and our relation to the rest of creation, that it is altogether possible to grab hold of a part of it and think "Aha! This is really IT!", all the while missing the point that IT is actually much, much larger than the meager portion within our mortal grasp.

So with this in mind, and with a sense of insufficiency for the task, I shall attempt an interpretation of Urantian teachings

regarding the nature of human personality and what this portends for us as mental health treatment professionals in the service of humanity.

In psychiatric jargon, personality is the "habitual configuration of behavior of a person, reflecting his physical and mental activities, attitudes, and interests, and corresponding to the sum total of his adjustment to life." (Freedman and Kaplan, p 1321) It is "that which constitutes a person; also that which distinguishes and characterizes a person; personal existence." (Encyclopedia Britannica Dictionary, p 942)

Urantian concepts of personality begin with the declaration that "personality is a level of deified reality..." (p. 8) "It is the one changeless reality in an otherwise ever-changing creature experience; and it unifies all other associated factors of individuality. The personality is the unique bestowal which the Universal Father makes upon the living and associated energies of matter, mind, and spirit, and which survives with the survival of the morontia soul." (p.9) This point, survival, is pivotal, for upon it hinges the entire ensuing contents of the Book. Human beings, while physical organisms of evolutionary animal origins, have a limitless future of eternal proportions, awaiting only the exercise of free will choice to participate in the adventure which is described with such repletion in the pages of The Urantia Book.



The authors go on to say "Personality is one of the unsolved mysteries of the universes...There is no personality apart from God the Father, and no personality exists except for God the Father." (p. 70) Personality is ineffable, indescribable, yet real, more real perhaps than any other aspect of universe reality which we have within our perceptual field. The authors are persistent in pointing out that while they may make no definitive statements about personality, they are able to observe its function on many universe levels, always associated with the dynamic forces of living systems. It is, they say, the unifying aspect of life itself, and while there can be life without personality, there can never be personality without life; it is that which gives form and purpose and direction to the various energies which combine to result in a living system.

Because "life is a process which takes place between the organism and the environment" (p. 1227), personality, as an expression of quality and values, is the potentially unifying aspect of Selfhood within the metamorphic ebb and flow of the dynamic and reciprocal interplay of organismic and environmental forces. For this reason, it can be explained only in interactional terms, i.e. in terms of relationship, which is, in essence the fundamental personal unit of reality in the cosmos. "Relationships exist between two objects, but three or more objects eventuate a system, and such a system is much more than

just an enlarged or complex relationship. This distinction is vital, for in a cosmic system the individual members are not connected with each other except in relation to the whole and through the individuality of the whole." (p. 1227) It is this relationship of parts to wholes which differentiates systems from mere aggregates--"Systems are important because of organization, positional values. In a good system all parts are in cosmic position. In a bad system something is either missing or displaced--deranged." (p. 1227) Diagnostically, in terms of human systems, it is a mistake to speak of a "personality disorder" or of any form of pathology of the personality, for it is personality, whole and perfect in itself, which organizes and unifies the various aspects of the human system, the Self. Should parts of that system be missing, as for instance in the case of integrative failure or in developmental fixations at stages of incomplete object relatedness, then even the unifying potentials of personality are insufficient to prevent systemic malfunction. "In the human organism the summation of parts constitutes selfhood--individuality--but such a process has nothing whatever to do with personality, which is the unifier of all these factors... In the human system it is the personality which unifies all activities and in turn imparts the qualities of identity and creativity." (p. 1227) Identity is, however, only temporary and transient, totally dependent on individual choice, which is in



itself a factor of will, the strength of which is determined by the extent to which mind is unified by personality.

"Mortal identity is a transient time-life condition in the universe; it is real only in so far as the personality elects to become a continuing universe phenomenon. This is the essential difference between man and an energy system: the energy system must continue, it has no choice; but man has everything to do with determining his own destiny...When it is said that man has identity, it is recognized that he is in possession of a mind circuit which has been placed in subordination to the acts and choosing of the will of the human personality." (p. 1232)

Over and over the authors stress the temporary nature of material existence, and of the speciousness of investing one's identity in corporeality; and just as redundantly they reinforce the message regarding personal responsibility for transferring the seat of identity from the physical body/mind system to the enduring and eternal repository offered by the soul: "Mortal personality, through its own choosing, possesses the power of transferring...identity from the passing material-intellect system to the higher morontia-soul system...And it is this very power of choice, the universe insignia of free-will creaturehood, that constitutes man's greatest opportunity and his supreme cosmic responsibility." (1233)

Choice is a function of the will, and the will is an aspect of mind, "a temporary intellect system loaned to human beings

for use during a material lifetime...Mind is about all you have of universe reality which is subject to your will." We develop mind and will much in the same way that we develop the body, through use and exercise. When an infant, through haphazard activity, slowly learns that his hand can bring objects to him (usually to be put in his mouth,) he is learning control of his body by his mind. The Urantia Book informs us that the purpose of all this gradual accumulation of mindal control is eventually to bring the entire organism under the control of mind, which is organized and directed by personality, a deified form of reality. In essence, the process involves the universal chain of command: spirit to mind, mind to body; a time/space reflection of the Father's eternal unification of the triune universe levels of spirit, mind, and matter. "The purpose of cosmic evolution is to achieve unity of personality through increasing spirit dominance, volitional response to the teaching and leading of the Thought Adjuster. Personality, both human and super-human, is characterized by an inherent cosmic quality which may be called 'the evolution of dominance,' the expansion of the control of both itself and its environment." (p. 1229)

(A logical question at this point concerns the nature of the entity referred to above, the Thought Adjuster. This will be dealt with in greater detail later, but for now suffice to say that the Adjuster is an infinite pre-personal fragment of God the Father sent to indwell the minds of the children of space, therein to serve the dual purpose of assisting us to eter-



nalize through elevating our mental activities, while at the same time gaining the potential for personality status in its own right through eventual unification with the mortal of its indwelling.)

To return now to a consideration of mind and its function within the human system; in regard to the primary obligation we have to choose, "Mind is the cosmic instrument on which the human will can play the discords of destruction, or...the exquisite melodies of God-identification and consequent eternal survival." (p. 1217) Mind rests on the material energies of the physical organism below, and reaches up to touch the spiritual levels of the superconscious realms. Human minds take origin in the Cosmic Mind much as physical energy systems such as galaxies and nebulae have their origins in the energy potentials of the physical levels of universe reality. Consciousness itself is a product of mind: "Human self-consciousness implies the recognition of the reality of selves other than the conscious self and further implies that such awareness is mutual; that the self is known as it knows. Self-consciousness is in essence a communal consciousness: God and man, Father and son, Creator and creature." (p. 196)

We move now briefly to a consideration of the concept of Self. The material self is the ego-entity of human identity, the origin of the sense of "I". It, too, is temporary and dependent



during physical life on the continuation of its vehicle, the body. Survival Self, on the other hand, or "selfhood that can transcend the experience of death," is acquired through "the sincerity, persistence, and steadfastness of the God-seeking decisions of the human creature." (p. 1229) The self is fragmented in nature, composed of parts which function in many ways and on many levels, and it is functionally unified through the organizing action of the personality. The self is not terribly highly regarded in The Urantia Book:

You will learn that you increase your burdens and decrease the likelihood of success by taking yourself too seriously. Nothing can take precedence over the work of your status sphere--this world or the next. Very important is the work of preparation for the next higher sphere, but nothing equals the importance of the work of the world in which you are actually living. But though the work is important, the self is not. When you feel important, you lose energy to the wear and tear of ego dignity so that there is little energy left to do the work. Self-importance, not work-importance, exhausts immature creatures; it is the self element which exhausts, not the effort to achieve. You can do important work if you do not become self-important; you can do several things as easily as one if you leave yourself out. (p. 555)

As mentioned previously, the Thought Adjuster is a part of the eternal God which is sent to dwell in the minds of intelligent universe will creatures of the evolutionary planets of time and space. It is one of the means whereby the Father is present in his children, and while they are not personalities, they have a broad range of activities. However, in all things they are always subservient to the will of the mind of their residence. In essence they are guides: "Mind is your ship,

the Adjuster is your pilot, the human will is captain. The master of the mortal vessel should have the wisdom to trust the divine pilot to guide the ascending soul into the safe harbors of eternal survival". (p. 1217) The adjuster has been known on our planet throughout the ages. The Egyptians knew of the existence of the Ba, the individual soul, and the Ka, which served to transport the soul across the great river into eternity.

"By and with the consent of your will, the Adjuster has the power to subject the creature trends of the material mind to the transforming actions of the motivations and purposes of the emerging morontia soul...Their mission chiefly concerns the future life, not this life...They are not interested in making the mortal careers easy; rather are they concerned in making your life reasonably difficult and rugged, so that decisions will be stimulated and multiplied...It is the business of the Adjuster to prepare you for the eternal adventure..." (p. 1192)

We can actively cooperate with or impede the Adjuster in its work of helping to eternalize us through the quality of our thoughts and in terms of the purity of our energy resources (including food and drugs--"All physical poisons greatly retard the efforts of the Adjuster to exalt the material mind; while the mental poisons of fear, anger, envy, jealousy, suspicion, and intolerance likewise tremendously interfere with the spiritual progress of the evolving soul." (p. 1204) Likewise, coopera-



tion involves "movements of personality growth--decisions, determinations, and steadfast faith." (p. 1205) The theories or dogmas of our intellectual lives are not as important as what we actually do; action is more important in terms of the progressive evolution of the soul, which is essentially the Adjuster's first concern. We can consciously augment their work by "choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then coordinating these qualities through wisdom, worship, faith, and love." (p. 1205) An erroneous concept of the Adjuster's guidance is to equate it with the conscience, which is a purely human and purely psychic reaction, the criticism of one's self by one's own value habits and personal ideals. (p. 1095)

Progress along the path to personality unification is measured in terms of one's position on the scale called the Seven Psychic Circles of mortal potentiality. The Circles are measures of "personality status, mind attainment, soul growth, and adjuster attunement. The successful traversal of these levels demands the harmonious functioning of the entire personality, not merely of some one phase thereof. The growth of the parts does not equal the maturation of the whole; the parts really grow in proportion to the expansion of the entire self--the whole self--material, intellectual, and spiritual." (p. 1209)

These Circles are like levels, and represent the actual

grasp of relationships of facts, values, and meanings. Their successful completion assures one of entrance upon the stage of immortality. "It is to the mind of perfect poise, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical function--when the physical, mental, and spiritual powers are in triune harmony of development--that a maximum of light and truth can be imparted...By such a balanced growth does man ascend the circles of planetary progression one by one, from the seventh to the first." (p. 1209)

Implications of the forgoing description of concepts from The Urantia Book for the work of psychotherapy are enormous. Just from this brief and superficial discussion, we can already begin to imagine a treatment designed toward unification of the entire personality structure, instead of merely a single aspect thereof. A Urantian Psychotherapy would involve recognition of the tripartite whole which must be approached from a basis of balanced and harmonious growth of mind, body, and spirit. Exercise, yoga, psychocalisthenics, jogging, weight lifting, participation in team sports, along with other forms of physical activity; meditation, discipline, traditional therapies such as Freudian or Jungian analysis, study, techniques such as Proggoff's Intensive Journal or Assagioli's will training; and spirit work such as prayer, worship, fellowship with like minds, and conscious attempts to facilitate Adjuster contact, all would



be synthesized into a single cogent and consistent approach to treatment involving the entire personality structure of the client. It would be particularly well suited to group work, as the systemic involvement and interaction would stimulate relationships and provide energy for mutual exchange, and clients would be assisted to reach a point of recognition of their true relationship, not only with themselves and with each other, but with the Source and Destiny of all of us, our eternal Father.

Our direction is ever inward  
toward the one great source  
and center  
away from entropy  
toward truth.  
We begin within ourselves.

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