



THE URANTIAN®

Journal of URANTIA® Brotherhood

EDITOR'S NOTE

The following article represents a new approach for the Journal, and grows out of an opportunity to expand our awareness of multi-cultural perspectives on *The URANTIA Book*. Probal Dasgupta is originally from Calcutta and has lived in the United States on two separate occasions. He has now returned to India and teaches linguistics at the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute in Pune. Dr. Dasgupta was introduced to *The URANTIA Book* in the late 1970's while attending New York University. He has read the book in its entirety and brings to it a scholarly and piercingly analytical point of view, as well as a perspective which is decidedly non-Western. The book review presented here is a prelude to a future article in which he promises to share with us his reactions to *The URANTIA Book*. The reasons for this anticipatory review are perhaps best expressed in an excerpt from his correspondence — "This offer of a book review is not a substitute for an article expressing my views about *The URANTIA Book* or my experience of reading it. But such an article, coming from someone like me, would have more meaning if the readers had access to a comprehensive and sophisticated statement of a coherent Hindu view of religious and secular matters. . . Now that the book is out, I can see one of the (previously intangible) factors that was preventing me from sitting down and writing for you: this factor was the feeling, 'I cannot, in a short compass and with my fragmentary and immature grasp of Hindu theology and philosophy, say anything about *The URANTIA Book* from my standpoint without making very partial statements and then appealing to more comprehensive formulations for the all-important background; and, for the relevant readership, there simply are no truly appropriate formulations to refer to.' Well, now there is such a book, and I can gradually start thinking about writing a book review, first, and then my own remarks, which can now afford to be secondary and partial, since they can refer to something by an obviously inspired and enlightened author."

—Peter Laurence
Armonk, New York

REVIEW

I am thou: meditations on the truth of India. By Ramchandra Gandhi. Pune: Indian Philosophical Quarterly Publications (Department of Philosophy, University of Poona). 1984. xii + 311 pages. \$15.

Let me begin by quoting from page 51: "Man does not live by bread alone, Christ reminds us, *but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God*, i.e. by the totality of God's revelation to mankind, i.e. at least by the truth in all the religions of the world." This book is an attempt by Ramchandra Gandhi, an Oxford-trained philosopher who is also a grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, to provide a partial exposition of the truth of the Indian spiritual tradition in a form that invites the attention of all thinking people. One of his main points is that the one God, whose self-multiplication — before eternity — is unthinkable in human thought and yet real, is accessible to us through a necessary plurality of revelations. We have to assimilate and reconcile the truths we learn from different traditions.

Readers of *The URANTIA Book* will perhaps be especially interested in points at which the formulations in this book converge with ideas familiar to them. Let us look at some such points.

Gandhi develops (99-101) a view of evil as self-contradiction. His idea rests on his technical philosophical work, but can be understood without grasping the technicalities. When we do wrong, we imply in the very act that it is okay to do it, and yet we know that it is not okay to do it; such self-contradiction involves losing touch with the center, the self, and ultimately is literally self-destructive.

Gandhi questions (41-2) the idea of the resurrection of what we think of as the body. In terms reminiscent of the concept of morontia, he says that "the materiality of the human body on earth in normal circumstances is a very inadequate materiality, it is not that alchemical omnipresent materiality of which we get a glimpse in the accounts of the resurrected body of Christ, or in the vast literature of bhakti [devotion] which celebrates the omnipresence and substantiality of the divine body of Sri Krsna or Sri Rama. True materiality and substantial-

ity, true hardness and indubitability of existence, can only be gained by mukti [release, liberation], by an explosion of love for all things and identity with all things."

This last turn of phrase points up a significant difference of accent: the Indian view stresses identity, a-dvaita (non-duality, non-separateness). Perhaps the section (101-5) on "What is it like to be God?" is the clearest statement of this tenet. One might think that the notion that individual people are brothers (and sisters) and remain so after death contradicts the Indian idea of advaita. But consider this: the primordial Father-Son relationship emerging from the one God is a pre-eternal mystery. Likewise, the Indian view postulates a mysterious appearance of separateness which the individual seeker must go beyond, through seeking in eternity, to be able to reunite with God, to reattain the identity that had been mysteriously veiled. It is the same mystery, approached differently.

Gandhi attaches importance to the need for religious renewals in history: "Nostalgia deceives and debilitates even while it comforts" (54). In his section on Sikhism, he speaks of "the unfolding of a new scripture form: a non-classical scriptural corpus of writing and orally transmitted memory whose vehicle and medium is not Sanskrit [the Sanskrit word for Sanskrit] but modern languages" (54). He sees this unfolding as "the incarnation of the ethereal classical as the flesh and blood colloquial in spiritual history" (56).

Here and elsewhere Gandhi recognizes the crucial role of "the mysterious uplifting assistance which the evolution of man has received, an anti-entropic assistance which has made man not merely a living and conscious being but a self-conscious being launched on the road to self-realization as Atman-Brahman [Person-Spirit]" (67). Again, the theme should sound familiar and congenial to a reader of *The URANTIA Book*.

Such a reader will also be familiar with the point (123) that the "coerciveness of Christian civilization" is "a departure from the style of sacrifice of Christ," from the emphatically non-coercive teachings of Jesus. Gandhi goes so far as to say (83): "When exclusivist Christianity scornfully turns its back upon Hinduism and even seeks uprooting conversion of Hindus to its own exclusivism, [...] Hindus find themselves forgetting the divine love of Christ which Christianity even in its arrogant forms often communicates, and suspect Christianity of being the hardest cross that Christ bears." Harsh language, perhaps, but surely mitigated by even harsher criticism of Hinduism elsewhere ("degeneration [...] into caste arrogance and the blot of untouchability", 26), and put into perspective by repeated (105, 173, and *passim*) attempts to show that different civilizations and approaches complement each other in specific ways and that therefore we should all strike a balance between pride in our achievements and humility about our inevitable limitations. This is not to say that all strands of life and thought in the world are supposed to remain distinct, unassimilated. Anyone who has thought about the notion of God the Supreme emerging through the multiple experience of aspiring mortals will see the validity of Gandhi's observation that "The heights of our spiritual history are not all those of synthesis and absorption and assimilation, they are also the achievements of non-violent contacting and coexistence, the mutual illumination of distinctive items and peoples and modes of life and thought which by their unintercourse-juxtaposition dramatise the Vedic vision of oneness in diversity" (59). He concludes that "perhaps Indian uniqueness is not coexistence as such but the coexistence

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of coexistence and synthesis" (59). "At its self-confident and self-conscious best, Indian civilization is describable as a dynamic far-flung sourcewardness, a powerful and distinctive stance of being and becoming which is, however, capable of tragic caricature, and this has occurred often enough in our turbulent history. But even in our failure we must be mindful of our truth" (60). This truth involves synthesizing and assimilating where appropriate, and keeping apparently incompatible ideas side by side, unreconciled, when it is appropriate to wait and see how their apparently divergent truths are supposed to work out.

—Probal Dasgupta
Pune, India

REVELATION AND RECEPTIVITY

Revelation is as old as man. In fact, it defines him. When the adjutants of worship and wisdom became fully active in the minds of Andon and Fonta, the Life Carrier tells us that "mind of will dignity" (*710:3) had arrived on Urantia. Aborigines had become men. And here we have the clear message that revelation is not necessarily an experience of the conscious mind.

In *The URANTIA Book*, we are told a great deal about revelation, its nature and function. There are two forms, epochal and auto. (*1109:5) So far on Urantia, there have been five epochal revelations: the Planetary Prince, Caligastia; the Material Son and Daughter, Adam and Eve; the Emergency Son, Machiventa Melchizedek; the Creator Son, Jesus of Nazareth; and the URANTIA Papers. Epochal revelation is the function of a celestial agency, personality, or group. The second form is auto revelation; this is the conscious and unconscious communication between supermortal and mortal. Auto revelation comes from the Thought Adjuster and other spirit beings or circuits to the individual mortal mind. "Truth is always a revelation," (*1109:5), and for us on Urantia, revelation is the substitute for morontia mota, our missing insight. In the paper on *Foundations of Religious Faith*, we learn that revelation, "liberates men and leads them out on the eternal adventure...discloses his capacity for partnership with God...is the assurance of personality survival...hunger for truth is a revelation...revelation tends to make men

Godlike," (*1122:2-10) Bear in mind the verb, "tends."

In the same paper, the Melchizedek tells us, "Revealed religion is the unifying element of human existence." (*1123:7) He also states that revelation, "...answers in human experience those questionings of the mortal mind which craves to know how the Infinite works out his will and plans in matter, with minds, and on spirit." (*1106:1) And how thrilling to read, in Paper 142, that "...the revelation of the nature and ministry of these Paradise Deities will continue to enlarge and brighten throughout the endless ages of the eternal spiritual progression of the ascending sons of God." (*1598:10)

So we see that auto revelation is continuous and no epochal revelation is discriminatory. "The rain falls on the just and the unjust." A Solitary Messenger makes abundantly clear the imperative of revelation for us when he says, "If the Adjusters indwelling the minds of the inhabitants of Urantia were to be withdrawn, the world would slowly return to many of the scenes and practices of the men of primitive times..." (*1198:7) In the paper, *After Pentecost*, we are told, "...times of great testing and threatened defeat are always times of great revelation." (*2082:9) Here we are left to ponder our growing capacity for physical destruction and the timing of the arrival of *The URANTIA Book*.

Revelation is a gift. Like all gifts it is composed of two processes. A gift is not a gift if it is not received; it remains a gesture. The difference is unequivocal. In the first paper, the Divine Counselor "who knows whereof he speaks" states, "The God of universal love unfailingly manifests himself to every one of his creatures up to the fullness of that creature's capacity to spiritually grasp the qualities of divine truth, beauty and goodness." (*27:1)

On our troubled planet, with its irregular history, and in the course of the pains and triumphs of social and spiritual evolution, what particularly retards receptivity to revelation? Annas was told! You recall that Annas was the former high priest at the temple in Jerusalem, and a distant relative of Salome, mother of James, David, and John Zebedee. When he was living with the Zebedees, Jesus was given a letter of introduction to Annas by Salome. The priest was so impressed with the young man that he urged him to attend the school of the rabbis in Jerusalem. So they were not strangers when Jesus, in the early months of his public work, called on Annas, who had been getting disturbing reports of the little group and their teachings. In the doorway of his palace on Olivet Annas was cool and reserved, so that Jesus left at once, saying, "Fear is man's chief enslaver and pride his greatest weakness." (*1596:2)

Fear and pride. While distorted ego and damaging anxiety may be reciprocals, they are best considered separately. One would not wish for another that he have no ego; therapy would be in order. The goal is a balance, aspiring even to that superb balance of Jesus' personality. Where self-respect is well established, one can effortlessly be humble, gracious, concerned for others, and forgiving. To reach out and serve is a tried and true antidote for an exaggerated concept of one's importance, as well as for stress and depression. But twists in human ego are tricky; they may hide in the guise of service.

Rarely is fear separate from anger, and blessed is the child whose emotional needs have been met so that he finds constructive channels for his anger. The book clarifies that both fear and anger have been essential to survival, and that in the evolutionary process, they are positive precursors: fear leads to awe, reverence, and religious awareness; anger leads to indignation at wrong doing, action, and the forward thrust. Stored and festering in a human psyche, they disrupt personality integration and subvert auto revelation.

We are fragile, electro-chemical beings; Jesus lovingly called his apostles "earthen vessels." (*1578:2) We are subject to "fundamental chemical overcontrol." (*1229:1) We are at this time and place being reared in a culture which puts essentially no stock in training for parenthood, and when very young we are conditioned by unintended emotional impacts and social pressures which for many are not softened by a climate of religious faith. Is it any wonder that many of us waver between courage and fear, between a healthy self-image and behavior which attempts to compensate for haunting feelings of inadequacy?

The loving and patient God-fragment waits and watches within the human mind. We're told in the Adjuster papers that, "In executing those decisions which deliver you from the fetters of fear, you literally supply the psychic fulcrum on which the Adjuster may subsequently apply a spiritual lever of uplifting and advancing illumination." (*1192:4) Auto revelation! Could we each ask, "What releasing decisions about the stressors in my life can I execute?"

Is it a mix of fear and self-importance which is demonstrated in a closed mind? Consider the Pharisees. We're told in Paper 109, The Adjuster's ministry is "... greatly retarded by your own preconceived opinions, settled ideas, and long-standing prejudices." (*1199:5). We should have some understanding of this: How successful are our efforts to share truth with a clos-

ed mind?

It would not be fair to turn our consideration of deterrents to receptivity into a guilt trip. There are conditions outside our control which interfere. We are an experimental planet. Don't you look forward to your course in Planetary History 101 on some mansion world when you will be informed of all the effects of this status? Urantia has been torn and retarded by the conflict of rebellion and the deprivations of default. Our several evolutions — scientific, social, intellectual, spiritual — stand in such a relation to each other that we have been led to a marvelous material civilization, but one in which many consider the bellwether to be making and spending money and wielding power, and where all-encompassing decisions, such as the management of enormous physical energy, have little or no religious component, by contention are impossible to make, or by default are somebody else's. With barely emerging cosmic consciousness, many Urantia mortals are thin on patience and serenity; they are enmeshed in a pleasure mania and, in order to pack much into what they call "life," they are inclined to feel entitled to instant everything. "One of the great troubles with modern life is that man thinks he is too busy to find time for spiritual meditation and religious devotion." (*2077:3)

In an earlier reference, I asked you to bear in mind the verb, "tends." "...revelation tends to make men Godlike." (*1122:10) To me this implies possibility and denies fiat. Certain outcomes of previous revelations may not make it easy for us to develop receptivity to revelation, but we are free-will creatures. We can make the choice to *strive* for spiritual outgrowth. And we have the priceless model of Jesus of Nazareth who brought together in a short 35-year life span the matchless doing of the Father's will with the demands of a strenuous and humble human existence.

Jesus was practical! I'll offer you several fuses to ignite your practical thinking, but lists like these are not more than launching pads and are never complete. We must function in the realm of personal experience and listen to the midwayers when they point out that "... mind is not the seat of the spiritual nature, but it is indeed the gateway thereto." (*1733:2) Perhaps in your own meditations, or better, in discussion groups, some of these items will bear examination; the book tells us that several minds coming together are effective beyond their simple sum.

The question is: What are some ways to cultivate a healthy, balanced, spirit-oriented receptivity to revelation, both epochal and auto?

First, epochal revelation, for us *The URANTIA Book*:

- 1) Study the book! Immerse our minds in the facts of Jesus' life and our souls in the truth he has given us;
- 2) With modesty and discretion, help others to do this, which helps oneself;
- 3) Develop the long view, cosmic consciousness, sense of the person and planet in the vast universe and each being forever enshrouded in the Father's love;
- 4) Take into established human institutions — education, family, business and industry, law, health, government, the arts — the advanced concepts of the URANTIA revelation;
- 5) Be sensitive to the interface of evolutionary and revelatory religious thought; become knowledgeable and be considerate of current established religions;
- 6) Encourage Brotherhood unity; truly be brothers; set aside animosities and decline ego trips;
- 7) Do some of the work required to "run a revelation."

While there are similarities between the two forms of revelation, among ways to enhance receptivity to auto-revelation we might consider:

- 1) The same as 1) above — continuous study of the teachings;
- 2) Cultivate the *search* attitude; set aside complacency and indifference; maintain an open mind; allow time in your days;
- 3) Deliberately and overtly build channels
 - to the Father and his spirit beings and forces around and within us through meditation, prayer, thanksgiving, worship, and service;
 - to the people in our lives, whether the relationship is of major significance or casual and passing; a Mighty Messenger tells us, "Love is the desire to do good to others" and "God is love." (*648:5,4) In the Supreme Papers, we read, "The Father's love can become real to mortal man only by passing through that man's personality as he in turn bestows this love upon his fellows...The love of the Father appears in the moral personality by the ministry of the indwelling Adjuster." (*1289:4)
- 4) Remain alert to the ongoing tug of war within each mortal between distorted ego and self-respect, between animal fear and immature pride on the one hand and spiritual faith and grateful humility on the other.

To enhance receptivity of revelation, readers of *The URANTIA Book* come together to share the startling fact, astonishment, and wonder that we are among those who can, if we choose, be true receivers on *both levels*. On the last page of the book, the midwayers tell us, "The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind. Man's greatest adventure in the flesh consists in the well-balanced and sane effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul-consciousness in a whole-hearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit-consciousness—contact with the divine presence." (*2097:2)

Salute the Revelator within you!

—Helena Sprague
Farmington, Connecticut

EVOLUTION OF THE GOSPEL

Religion helps people deal with the spiritual difficulties of their times. Primitive people needed to be liberated from bondage to tradition, to recognize one supreme God of nature and the spiritual world, to be delivered from fear and to gain the assurance that faith alone is required in order to receive the gift of eternal life. That original gospel of faith and trust in the one God is always relevant, and Jesus came expanding the truth. The people of his day needed especially to experience the personal character of God's relationship with the individual. Jesus revealed the personality of the Father, and taught that we are the faith sons and daughters of God. He demonstrated the joy and liberty of sonship with God and the spontaneous fruits of living truth in wholehearted worship of God and loving service of humankind. Today we urgently need to realize that God's relation with the individual entails a profound spiritual consequence: the brotherhood of all humankind.

By the supreme decisions of living faith, we can assist in the dawn of a new age. New insights will harmonize scientific facts, philosophic meanings, and spiritual truth; appreciation of the beauties of nature and art will thrive; and morality — the practice of the golden rule — will become the personal philosophy of growing men and women. The great teachers of the coming age will be able to set forth their enlightening and comforting

message without succumbing to the temptation to adulterate their spiritual proclamation with efforts to give timely advice on social, economic, or political matters. A rebirth of genuine religion, a spiritual renaissance, is destined to transform wastelands of secularism into gardens of a plant blossoming in faith.

*—Jeffrey Wattles
Concord, California*

FROM THE EDITORS

Our editorial timetable is such that this issue of *The Journal* has been in the works far too early to include any responses to the first question we submitted to our readers. Hopefully that question will have inspired some thinking which we can share with you in forthcoming issues. Meanwhile we'll try to help keep the mental juices flowing with another question, based on the following quote from Paper 2 of *The URANTIA Book*:

"The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual

insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness." (*43:4)

Question

What is your vision of this new and appealing philosophy?

As we stated in our last issue, while our intent is to stimulate the submittal of finished articles for publication, we will also welcome, edit (if necessary), and publish in summary form *any* responses to this question you care to send us. In fact, if this approach generates the level of interest we hope it will, we plan to use it on a regular basis to provide a way for our readers to share their thoughts, observations, and responses to questions many of us struggle with on a regular basis, alone, or in our study groups, as we seek to understand our Father better through the mechanism of *The URANTIA Book*. Thanks in advance for your willingness to participate with us in a more active way of using *The URANTIAN Journal* to cross-fertilize our thinking.

—The Editors

"A philosophy of religion evolves out of a basic growth of ideas plus experimental living as both are modified by the tendency to imitate associates. The soundness of philosophic conclusions depends on keen, honest, and discriminating thinking in connection with sensitivity to meanings and accuracy of evaluation. Moral cowards never achieve high planes of philosophic thinking; it requires courage to invade new levels of experience and to attempt the exploration of unknown realms of intellectual living." (*1113:8-1114:1)