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### THE SPIRIT LEVEL OF REALITY

This little essay is written in the hope that I may take advantage of the notion expressed in *The URANTIA Book* which suggests somewhat gently that universe romancing in the search for truth is often characterized more by insight than fact.

Probably, you have heard of the idea (however phrased) that, although "love" is real, it is impossible to "hold" it as it is possible to hold a baseball or fountain pen in your hand. Since our life vehicle is a material body, we can relate easily to physical reality. The super-universe of Orvonton in which we live contains both physical and spiritual realities, but these dimensions do not contact each other anywhere in this time-space segment of the grand universe. Even though our body and brain consists of energy-matter, we humans possess mind capacities that enable us to bridge the reality difference between physical and spiritual realities. This is the creature function of human mind.

If we turn to the marvelous statement, "God is love," we can conjecture reasonably that love—that value which in physical reality we cannot hold—is, in spirit reality, a phenomenon which is literally living, one that is touchable and seeable. In other words, on the spirit level of reality spirit personalities can touch, hold, and embrace love with their very nature as spirits. Although such wording is as a mortal would describe the spirit composition of love by using the language of a material realm, the intent herein is not meant to be a figure of speech. Spirit beings are able to respond to love (or truth, beauty, and goodness) in a manner that seems analogous to the way we respond to things in physical reality.

We sex creatures procreate in a biological manner; the Universal Father and the Eternal Son create with *living* ideas. For example, when they share an identical thought or concept on the spirit-character of a beautiful Creator Son, he is! To our creature minds, such an accomplishment is all but imaginary. Love to us is real, but since it is not material it has many of the characteristics (seemingly so) of fantasy.

Love has its origins on a level of absolute undifferentiated reality. But in order to make love real and com-

prehensible to mortal time-space creatures, Deity apparently had to effect a gradual transmutation of love from the highest level of reality to the lowest planetary level of material existence. This was accomplished, I think, by a qualitative, transmutative diminution of love from God's undifferentiated nature, then to spirit at the higher levels, on down to a morontial level of love, and finally to the low plane of mindal-material creatures who *conceive* of love as an idea or ideal, and who also feel it as a human emotion. The same generalization would apply equally to truth, beauty, and goodness. While mortal creatures employ mind and human emotion to grasp the reality of love, spirit beings by their very natures are able to function with their spiritedness in a spirit milieu. Since all spirit is intrinsically minded, it would seem that spirit beings do not need mind *per se* to contact spiritual reality (however, they may use mind to contact matter).

#### Spirit Love Identifiable

Inherent luminosity and power to attract seem to be two very important features of all spirit. Love is the greatest spiritual reality in the universe, even the universe of universes. Undoubtedly, love on a spirit plane has a distinctive, identifiable luminosity (and perhaps, color and tone). It is literally seeable with spirit-vision. Its drawing power is no doubt due to a *visible* moral aura intrinsic to spirit-love. If this is correct, then it would follow that love is literally touchable by a spirit gravity-embrace between fellow spirit beings or in their relationship with God, the beloved Universal Father to us all. On this level, love can be measured probably by the degree of its brilliance and the intensity of its compelling attractiveness. Paradoxically, love is best held by sharing (service) or worshipping (pleasure), under the guiding hand of the Father and eventuating in the fellowship of spirit beings. Indeed, in one form or another this observation is true for all of God's children.

What has been observed about the nature of love in spirit reality can be generalized to other



aspects of spirit existence. Truth, beauty, and goodness are no doubt literally knowable as actual entities by spirit persons. Music must exist as living harmony, not merely as sound to be heard. Spirit art is alive, not inert as material art must be. Poetry and philosophy wax with the light of their living voices and ideas, rather than be expressed only as word-symbols as is true necessarily of human constructions. Consider the following descriptions of some spirit beings: Universal Censors are the divine judgment of the Paradise Trinity; Perfectors of Wisdom are literally living wisdom; Divine Counselors constitute the actual counsel of the Trinity; and the Custodians of Knowledge are living ideas, actual living knowledge! Spirit beings must utilize dozens, perhaps hundreds, of spirit-senses unimaginable to us which enable them to interact with the multifarious, spirit-creations of Deity.

In conclusion, let me say that I now conceive of love, truth, beauty, and goodness on the spirit level of reality as literally living phenomena, which are analogous in function to physical objects on the

energy-matter level. Furthermore, spirit personalities are constitutively capable of interacting with realities—such as spirit-values, spirit-ideas, and spirit-emotions—that are actual, living entities. But, most important, let us always remember what was said by the apostle, John Zebedee, about the greatest of spirit realities,

Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God, Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. We are sure that we live in union with God and that he lives in union with us, because he has given us his Spirit. And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us. God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him. There is no fear in love, perfect love drives out all fear. The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love his brother also.

(1 John 4:7, 8, 13, 16, 18, 21)

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL

Through the ages mortal man has sensed something vital growing within him destined to endure beyond the short span of his earthly life. Thus the concept of the soul has found its way into many of the planetary systems of religious thought. Early man associated the soul with blood, breath, shadows, and reflections in the water; and later it was thought to indwell various physical organs—the eye, kidney, liver, heart, and finally the brain.

With a growing awareness of man's rich spiritual heritage, the concept of the soul began to take on various meanings as he reached out in his desire to know God. The Egyptians evolved the clearest picture with their belief in the *ka* and the *ba*, the spirit and the soul respectively. Lao-tse taught the ascension of man to spiritual union with Tao, the Eternal Deity and Absolute Creator. Despite his lofty teachings, failure along the true path to God-consciousness among the Chinese precluded a clearer picture of the evolving immortal soul. Gautama Siddhartha did not perceive the *personality* of the One Universal and thus did not believe in the existence of individual human souls.

According to Islam, the righteous man by his virtue and obedience is resurrected in the same bodily form to



dwell in Paradise. Apart from the mysticism of the Sufis, the unilateral simplicity in the Moslem's relationship with Allah has left little room for an appreciation of the evolving immortal soul.

Throughout the Old Testament reference is made to the soul but not in the context of an entity capable of surviving the death of the individual. Moses challenged his people to obey the laws and commandments "with all your heart and with all your soul." At this point the soul represents a higher nature in man to be called into action. Psalms 23:3, "He restoreth my soul." The word, soul, is a Christian replacement for a Hebrew word meaning breath. Here the soul is likened to a higher energy source in need of periodic replenishment. The first mention of the soul as an entity capable of surviving death is in the New Testament, Matthew 10:28. In sending out the Twelve, Christ is quoted, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." Thus the Holy Bible chronicles a key transition in man's understanding of the soul.

As Judaic monotheism was the vehicle for the message of Christ Michael, likewise Pauline Christianity served as the framework for man's further appreciation of the evolving soul. With the revelation of God as a loving Father, man could then ponder the meaning of sonship. Paul of Tarsus enlarged upon this meaning with the idea that virtually every human soul is sacred. This in turn gave rise to an enhanced belief in individual cosmic worth. Coupled with a growing notion of human free will choice and a knowledge of the evolutionary growth process, a suitable background has been completed for the subsequent understanding of the morontia soul as revealed in *The URANTIA Book*.

To summarize thus far, through evolved and revealed thought man has grown in his understanding of the human soul. He first thought the soul to indwell various bodily organs, next as part of man's higher nature separate from the spirit, and finally, as his potentially spirit nature capable of surviving death. Religions portraying God as a loving Father cultivate a belief in the sonship of man. The gulf between God and man is bridged by the tension of spirit gravity. Along this path to the Father, the surviving mortal must first know the nature of his cosmic identity, the immortal soul - child of the universe.

Christ Michael described the soul as the self-reflective, truth-discerning, and spirit-perceiving part of man forever elevating him above the animal world. And the ability to know God and the urge to be like him are its characteristics. The soul is morontia substance, a mixture of matter and spirit; it evolves over the lifetime

by moral choice and spiritual activity, and survives the death of the physical individual.

Factors leading to the growth of the soul are conscious and intentional; but the growth itself is other than conscious and transcendental. This growth is one of the mysteries of the universe occurring in each one of us, and although outside the conscious mind, can be felt. The inaccessibility of the morontia existence with ordinary human senses makes it no less real for every morally conscious mortal *knows* the existence of his soul.

Our conceptions require a sense content for understanding, and the words *soul*, *God*, and *immortality*, cover no distinctive sense content. But they have meaning for our lives. For we act *as if* there were a God and lay plans *as if* we were to be immortal. A classic example is the bar of iron and its inner capacity for magnetic feeling. Such a bar could never give one an outward description of the magnetic agencies stirring it so strongly. But their presence is acknowledged with an intensity permeating its entire molecular structure. Similar are the feelings of convincingness in man relative to his spiritual milieu.

Knowing the soul, a feel for the reality of the unseen, is a part of religious living arising from the heart. Considering the totality of man's psychic life, the feelings for which pure reason and logic can account are relatively superficial. Our impulsive belief serves to set up an original body of truth and is glorified by beauty and goodness. Subsequent ideas and imagination form the background for all our facts. Instinct leads, and intelligence must follow.

"Can mind overcome matter using spirit as its tool?" We have been taught that is the challenge of time and space. As we begin the transformation in our earthly life from animal to angel, surely the evolution of the human soul is a microcosm of the Supreme Adventure.

Three factors are necessary for the creation of the soul and are antecedent to its birth. These are human mind, divine spirit, and the mystery of their interrelationship. Mankind seeks symbols in nature to help him understand higher forms of reality. In medicine I have sensed an archetype in the endocrine system to represent these factors. The hormone is powerful even when taken in amounts near weightlessness (*potential spirit direction*.) Its action (*God seeking man*) is on a cell specifically nurtured for its reception, the effector cell (*man reaching out to God*.) The hormone combines with a protein near the cell surface (*mind spirit interaction*) causing a biologic response (*morontia soul*). Taken apart, the hormone and effector cell have no meaning, but when joined



they are activated, resulting in a new and amplified biologic pattern. And so the mind and spirit work together in man to produce qualities of a transcendental nature which are permanent and indestructible.

Historical descriptions of the soul are static in nature. By our observation of psychodynamics, knowledge of evolution, and revelation in *The URANTIA Book*, we can discuss the soul as a dynamic, evolving morontia form. Therefore I should like to discuss some ideas concerning the ontogeny of the soul as its growth unfolds over the individual ego-space-time. As I have observed the response of the human psyche in the practice of medicine, the developmental phases as described by Erikson seem most meaningful. These he has described as the "Eight Ages of Man." The achievement goal of infancy and early childhood is *trust* as opposed to *mistrust*. Later childhood includes three more phases with goals of *autonomy* vs *doubt*, *initiative* vs *guilt*, and *industry* vs *inferiority*. I have grouped these three together under the single topic of *exploration*. Adolescence is characterized by acquiring a healthy sense of *identity* vs *role confusion*. Adulthood includes the sequential phases of maturity; *intimacy* vs *isolation*, *generativity* vs *stagnation*, and *ego integrity* vs *despair*. With this background, soul growth can be studied as a morontia reflection alongside each of these development phases of ego strength.

Childhood experiences the spiritual imprinting of the morontia pattern. As the young child learns trust, into the morontia pattern is woven faith and love. Faith will stimulate the child's journey through a friendly universe. Love s/he will learn as the basis for all relationships. Through exploration in later childhood, a sense of humor and play is acquired. Coming from childhood with these qualities, universe challenges can only be refreshing.

Adolescence is characterized by the actualizing of spiritual ideals. In search for identity, the soul is stirred by a spiritual awakening and potential realization. For many, this is the watershed experience and is ritualized as the conversion. But at some point, the ascending mortal comes face to face with his potential destiny and simply says "yes."

Adulthood is completed by the unifying of Supreme Reality. The morontia counterparts to these phases of maturity reflect an increasing awareness of universe citizenship. In pursuing intimacy, the young adult learns affiliation. A belief in the Fatherhood of God continually enlarges the ego boundary towards a feeling for the Brotherhood of Man.

Mature adulthood is marked by generativity, which is concerned with establishing and guiding the next generation. But in learning to care, cosmic consciousness stimulates a sense a universe responsibility. Outwardly these individuals would resemble Maslow's self-actualization with qualities of ego transcendence, obedience to higher loyalties, and the peak experience.

With a sense of integrity in the fulfilled life, the older adult gains wisdom. Then there are those challenged to the level of saintliness, the finest example of individual worth. By their extravagance of human tenderness and divine virtue, they have changed our being. Their lives clearly stand outside psychological definition. Through the mystic experience they dip their hands back into reality forever altering man's understanding of science, philosophy, and religion.

In summing up, let us remember the evolving soul is not made divine by what it does but by what it strives to do. The conscious mind is the workshop from which is crafted our evolving soul. This key to the door of universe reality is the only true acquisition of treasure in the mortal experience.

As the life of a family revolves around the children, much of the universe centers on the ascending will creature, since it is through the integrity of human volition that the eventual evolution of the Supreme depends.

I do not seek to make man more than he is, but to bring into focus the nature of the challenge. For it is no small task the Father has entrusted to us. Of all the magnificent creatures in his realm, he has chosen mortal man to stand at the crossroads between time and eternity.

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*"Truth is a spiritual reality value experienced only by spirit-endowed beings who function upon supermaterial levels of universe consciousness, and who, after the realization of truth, permit its spirit of activation to live and reign within their souls." (\*1949:5)*

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