

Center of Study and Reflexion
on Human Destiny

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LETTER N° 24

1990 AUGUST

AUTO PORTRAIT

Here are a few general observations concerning the behaviour of the URANTIA Book student in the different stages of his life. This behaviour which roughly follows the development of a human being, i.e. beginning of life, transitional period, and maturity - invariably evolves toward a relative stability. As in nature all feverishness finally calms down. Experience leaves his/her face seamed with wrinkles but it also destroys illusions and placing stone upon stone he/she builds up a strong assurance. A kind of detachment, the beginning of self-control and unshakable certitudes are the marks of time.

CHILDHOOD - physical time, gesture time

The youth of the studying person is characterized by a behaviour bubbling with enthusiasm. He/she is superactive, superdynamic and puts all his/her energy on the project. The Book becomes his/her main center of interest. He/she keeps talking about it to any and every person around. He/she enthusiastically quotes whole sentences from the Book. He/she feels as if he/she knew everything, as if he/she had ready made answers to all his/her questions.

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** C.E.R.D.H. a non profit society, getting together readers of the URANTIA Book.

He/she plunges in all sorts of works which are left half-ended. He/she sometimes think that his/her head is going to blow up like a fragile windbag which has been too quickly inflated with energetic thoughts, spirits he/she did not know before. His/her eyes plunging into the heavens, he/she talks to the angels - at least he/she so believes - measures the cosmos and makes a census of the personalities.

The student plays and juggles with words and ideas, his/her head spins round for lack of understanding. He/she dances, swirls round, hurls the furniture and finally gets hurt. But he/she laughs, exults for he/she holds the whole world in the palm of his/her hand.

ADOLESCENCE - intellectual time, word time

A few years later, the storm has calmed down. Half-child, half-man the student is beginning to assimilate. Then comes the time of sermons, of advice, of fiery panegyrics. For the student absolutely wants to share his/her new knowledge, his/her new experience. He/she even "goes to far" trying to impress his audience. Proud of his/her new knowledge the student declaims (in the plural, being still shy to use "I".)

We must..., the Book says this..., The Book declares that..., pieces of well-intentioned advice come forth, following like hailstones on other adolescents who in turn, reacting all good faith. It is the time of oppositions, of controversies, of hasty judgements. Quick decisions, as quickly forgotten, childish works, the words are there but the creative acts are still lagging behind.

The student constantly refers to documents unable to divert his/her look from the Book. He/she has no personal conduct yet for the Book thinks for him/her. All is so simple, everything is there, everything is written down. Have we got a problem? no trouble, let's look at such and such a page to find out how to behave, what to think...

As a perfection model the image of Jesus haunts the secret dreams of the adolescent. He/she tries to identify with HIM, with the magnificent Son of MAN, and he/she quotes his words... True, but the Master is far away and the pupil must manage alone. O irony of fate, and yet an exquisite experience, the student will now have to leave the Book aside, will have to listen and take his/her own decisions. The student will have to act, to leave the smug comfort of school and home. All alone, without any props, he/she will have to take his first steps, will have to image, dare and go on and on.

The nature of the tests are changing. All sorts of traps and pitfalls are awaiting him/her, sneakily. He/she manages to escape and sometimes gets lost in a jungle of switches leading to a siding, or, is next to sinking into the quicksands of comparisons.

Nevertheless, indefatigably, the faint inner light guides him/her steering our student through these perillous paths towards better days.

MAN - spirit time

Standing up the new man comes out of the chrysalid of time. He has not failed in his work, he asserts his personality. Now, the Book has become something more than a tool or a source for references. He nearly has forgotten the text but he remembers the spiritual fragrance of it.

That man has learnt to listen to other people, he has become enriched by experience and gives fewer and fewer pieces of advice. Most of the time he is satisfied with answering questions, but then, he does it with all his might. He knows, when he deems it necessary, how to shake up the half-hearted ones, how to sweep aside the generally accepted ideas and when looking at his recent past to laugh at his mistakes.

Sure of himself he asserts his decisions. He is filled with great joy; the joy of having seen right, of not having fallen into some traps or pitfalls; the joy of perceiving the profound harmony between the music of his " little " self and the symphony of the cosmos, the joy of being lucid, the joy of a son.

If you slightly displace the mirror used for this autoportrait, you, reader-spectator, will be able to have a glimpse of your own reflection.

SEXUALITY

Sexuality is manifested through its components in each of the phases of reality: material reality, intellectual reality, and spiritual reality.

MATERIAL COMPONENT OF SEXUALITY

The purpose of the material component of sexuality is the perpetuation of life, which explains the power and the violence of the sex urge.

This sex urge is instinctive, being common to both animal and man. In his " Studies in animal and human behaviour ", Konrad LORENZ makes it clear that each species of animals is endowed with triggering schemes which are activated by signs, thus causing in the fellow creature chains of well-defined acts. That is why each sex will try to activate the triggering schemes of the other sex.

The betterment of animal races is obtained by the ritual mock combat of the males for the possession of the females. The betterment of the human stocks and races depends on man's free will, i.e. on the cultural quality of the society he has developed. The role of children's education is to give each sex a pattern behaviour, according to whether the child is a girl or a boy. This more or less stereotyped behaviour will meet with the approval of the parents, the teachers, or the social environment, if it is in conformity with the " norm " , and will meet with their disapproval if it isn't. This conditioning is meant primarily to serve the sex instinct and therefore to provide for the reproduction of the human race.

Thus, a man must show he is intelligent, determined, logical; and he must prove his superiority in all circumstances, he must, all the time, make sure of his virility, he must be valourous, have a taste for danger etc... A Woman is expecting him to be all that! She has been brought up in the expectation of the strong and virile man.

A woman will have to show she is sensitive, gentle, modest, charming, interested in her appearance, weak, capricious, emotive, maternal etc... She will subtly play with all these attributes she has acquired in her early youth to seduce a man, for, he as well is expecting all that from her. He is attracted by her femininity as by a magnet, he wants to conquer her at all costs; He may become violent if she resists or somebody else steals her. So the dice are thrown in early childhood; the game gets on the way during adolescence. The boy is now with his back to the wall, he must find a partner to prove that it works!

As for the girl, she is waiting for love, a love that will give her a feeling of security. She gets prepared for the battle of seduction.

Girls' and boys' motivations differ - they have become, on the sexual level, two different beings; man is more sensitive than woman to visual stimuli, and to the stimuli of the imagination, his desire is pressing !

A woman has more of an inner and restrained sexuality, she is less sensitive to visual stimuli and to the stimuli of the imagination. For a man, sexual climax is something more mechanical, it is also reached more quickly. For a woman, sexuality is first linked with emotional or affective values, moreover, she is simultaneously submitted to the fear, of and the desire for motherhood.

In short, these two beings, man and woman do not react in the same way. They would, a priori, have difficulty getting on together on a purely material level.

Sex urges are instinctive and maintained by educational conditioning; but man frees himself from animal instinct thanks to his reflective consciousness, he sees himself acting and the reasons out. And as man progresses towards God - towards perfection - his instinctive responses diminish to give way to reason.

" Material intuitive instinct precedes the appearance of reasoned knowledge" (103.7.2) and " from the third circle onward the influence of the Adjutants diminishes progressively ", (110.6.20)

so man must then progressively compensate for this influence by a conscious self-mastery.

One of the fundamental goals of our earthly existence is the acquirement of self-mastery which in each stage of our life puts us in the best conditions to face the next stage. And it is about sex that a human being best exerts his self-mastery for:

" No human emotion or impulse, when unbridled and overindulged, can produce so much harm and sorrow as this powerful sex urge." (82.1.10)

With animals mating is limited by instinct to a short period of the year. This limitation is suppressed in man to leave room for a severe self-mastery.

Jesus, teaching at Tyre, tells us how to enhance our self-mastery:

" You know that men are all too often led into temptation by the urge of their own selfishness and by the impulses of their animal natures. When you are in this way tempted, I admonish you that, while you recognize temptation honestly and sincerely for just what it is, you intelligently redirect the energies of spirit, mind, and body, which are seeking expression, into higher channels and toward more idealistic goals. In this way may you transform your temptations into the highest types of uplifting mortal ministry while you almost wholly avoid these wasteful and weakening conflicts between the animal and spiritual natures. "

" But let me warn you against the folly of undertaking to surmount temptation by the effort of supplanting one desire by another and supposedly superior desire through the mere force of the human will. If you would be truly triumphant over the temptations of the lesser and lower nature, you must come to that place of spiritual advantage where you have really and truly developed an actual interest in, and love for, those higher and more idealistic forms of conduct which your mind is desirous of substituting for these lower and less idealistic habits of behavior that you recognize as temptation. You will in this way be delivered through spiritual transformation rather than be increasingly overburdened with the deceptive

suppression of mortal desires. The old and the inferior will be forgotten in the love for the new and the superior. Beauty is always triumphant over ugliness in the hearts of all who are illuminated by the love of truth. There is mighty power in the expulsive energy of a new and sincere spiritual affection. And again I say to you, be not overcome by evil but rather overcome evil with good."

(156-5-4)

" Faith sons work on intellectual levels and live on spiritual planes far above the conflicts produced by unrestrained or unnatural physical desires. The normal urges of animal beings and the natural appetites and impulses of the physical nature are not in conflict with even the highest spiritual attainment except in the minds of ignorant, mistaught, or unfortunately overconscientious persons."

(34.7.7)

INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL COMPONENT OF SEXUALITY

" While the sexes never can hopefully to understand each other, they are effectively complementary, and though co-operation is often more or less personally antagonistic, it is capable of maintaining and reproducing society."

(84.6.7)

" Male and female are, practically regarded, two distinct varieties of the same species living in close and intimate association. Their viewpoints and entire life reactions are essentially different; they are wholly incapable of full and real comprehension of each other. Complete understanding between the sexes is not attainable.

Women seem to have more intuition than men, but they also appear to be somewhat less logical. Woman, however, has always been the moral standard-bearer and the spiritual leader of mankind. The hand that rocks the cradle still fraternizes with destiny.

The differences of nature, reaction, viewpoint, and thinking between men and women, far from occasioning concern, should be regarded as highly beneficial to mankind, both individually and collectively."

(84.6.3)

" Sex equality prevails on all advanced worlds; male and female are equal in mind endowment and spiritual status. We do not regard a planet as having emerged from barbarism so long as one sex seeks to tyrannize over the other."

" Woman is man's equal partner in race reproduction, hence just as important in the unfolding of racial evolution; therefore has evolution increasingly worked toward the realization of women's rights. But women's rights are by no means men's rights. Woman cannot thrive on man's rights any more than man can prosper on woman's rights.

Each sex has its own distinctive sphere of existence, together with its own rights within that sphere. If woman aspires literally to enjoy all of man's rights, then, sooner or later, pitiless and emotionless competition will certainly replace that chivalry and special consideration which many women now enjoy, and which they have so recently won from men.

Civilization never can obliterate the behavior gulf between the sexes. From age to age the mores change, but instinct never. Innate maternal affection will never permit emancipated woman to become man's serious rival in industry. Forever each sex will remain supreme in its own domain, domains determined by biologic differentiation and by mental dissimilarity.

Each sex will always have its own special sphere, albeit they will ever and anon overlap. Only socially will men and women compete on equal terms."

(84.5.9)

" A man and a woman, co-operating, even aside from family and offspring, are vastly superior in most ways to either two men or two women."

(84.1.9)

" Marriage which culminates in the home is indeed man's most exalted institution, but it is essentially human; it should never have been called a sacrament."

(83.8.1)

" Truly, it is not good for man to be alone. Some degree of recognition and a certain amount of appreciation are essential to the development of human character. "

" Of all social relations calculated to develop character, the most effective and ideal is the affectionate and understanding friendship of man and woman in the mutual embrace of intelligent wedlock. Marriage with its manifold relations, is best designed to draw forth those precious impulses and those higher motives which are indispensable to the development of a strong character."

" I do not hesitate thus to glorify family life, for your Master has wisely chosen the father-child relationship as the very cornerstone of this new gospel of the kingdom."

" And such a matchless community of relationship, man and woman in the fond embrace of the highest ideals of time, is so valuable and satisfying an experience that it is worth any price, any sacrifice, requisite for its possession."

(160.2.5)

Man and woman in their progression, instead of aggressing each other because of their differences will try to be it in their couple or in a friendly relationship to communicate i.e. to let the other one express what he or she really feels and make him or her feel that he or she has understood. Thus, will they learn to accept their differences and get richer by the consciousness of their complementarity.

We shall conclude by noting that sexuality holds a major position in evolution, and it must be harmoniously expressed on the three levels of its material, intellectual, and spiritual components for:

" The real influence which forever safeguards marriage and the resultant family is the simple and innate biologic fact that men and women positively will not live without each other, be they the most primitive savages or the most cultured mortals.

It is because of the sex urge that selfish man is lured into making something better than an animal out of himself. The self-regarding and self-gratifying sex relationship entails the certain consequences of self-denial and insures the assumption of altruistic duties and numerous race-benefiting home responsibilities. Herein has sex been the unrecognized and

unsuspected civilizer of the savage; for this same sex impulse automatically and unerringly compels man to think and eventually leads him to love."
(83.0.2)

The urge for mating may hide the range of sexuality over its two other components, the intellectual and the spiritual components, just like you can't see the wood for the trees; and then insatisfaction in mating may degenerate with the individual into shere negation of the existence of these other phases of sexuality to its material component is refusing to participate in evolution; when the reproductive act is over it gives way to mutual indifference and the two selfish natures confront each other once more. This is the animal level of existence.

Let us therefore, develop our sexuality with its three components - material, intellectual and spiritual. Agreeing on the material component breeds satisfaction and joy, but agreeing on the intellectual and spiritual components breeds happiness. This happiness is felt on the level of the soul, therefore it goes beyond the portals of death, and it is on this level that, on high, our life begins anew, precisely where we had left it.

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With the participation of several readers.