
WHEN DOES PERSONALITY ARRIVE?

George Park
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The concept of personality is one of the most intriguing presented to us by our spiritual teachers in the pages of The URANTIA Book. The fascination aroused by this concept is due to more than man's rather strong tendency towards narcissism. "The more completely man understands himself and appreciates the personality values of his fellows, the more he will crave to know the Original Personality, and the more earnestly such a God-knowing human will strive to become like the Original Personality." (*30:5) "When all is said and done, the Father idea is still the highest human concept of God." (*2097:3)

In addition to its high value, the concept of personality is also the most profound of all concepts presented to us (at least in the opinion of this reader). Nothing is more immediate and simple than the experiential fact of the presence of the value-feeling of our own personality or the personalities of others. But the attempt to grasp the reality of personality as an intellectual concept very quickly reveals the infinite depth beneath this simple surface. Although there is much about the concept of personality which is somewhat difficult of comprehension, nevertheless, the potential spiritual discoveries resulting from the study of this concept recommend the effort. "Effort does not always produce joy, but there is no happiness without intelligent effort." (*556:10)

Methodical Approach

The question "When does personality arrive?" has been very useful to me because it establishes an intellectual focus and a structured channel for the study of the concept of personality. Concepts are always developed more fully when they are approached methodically; and persistent, systematic study is always punctuated by those sudden and surprising illuminations of insight into the more profound levels of meaning and value contained in concepts.

Personality is always the direct bestowal of the Universal Father (cf. 70:5), but we are not directly informed of exactly when the Father chooses to bestow personality upon that material energy system which is the living body. This question of when personality arrives can be placed in its proper perspective by relating personality to the other three cosmic realities which constitute man - spirit, mind, and matter.

Domain of Personal Experience

Personality, spirit, mind, and matter are the four different types of reality which form the whole, which is man. Experientially, matter is that reality which is brought into man's awareness by perceptions and sensations; mind is that reality which is living consciousness and is most easily identified self-consciously in the activities of

language; spirit is that reality which we feelingly experience as quality and value: "Mind knows quantity, reality, meanings. But quality - values - is felt. That which feels is the mutual creation of mind, which knows, and the associated spirit, which reality-izes." (*1219:6) The domain of personal experience is fully defined by the events of feeling, thinking, and doing which make up the component parts of self-conscious experience, and these three categories of experiential events can be correlated with the actualities of spirit, mind, and matter. However, personality is only directly aware of the reality of mind.

Spirit is an objective reality which we feel with the powers of perceptual sensitivity which are present in the soul. This perceptual sensitivity of the soul is the complementary equivalent of the automatic and instinctive perceptual powers present in the lower levels of material mind which enable us to "feel" the material energy disturbances of perceptions and sensations which occur in the central nervous system. (cf. 1435:2) Just as the subconscious levels of material mind respond to material energy and this response is registered in awareness as perception, the superconscious levels of morontia mind respond to the reality of spiritual energies and this response is registered in awareness as the appreciation of qualities and values.

The things, meanings, and values of experience constitute what we are. Spirit, mind, and matter are the parts of the whole, the personality system; but personality is something more than the what of man. Personality is the who of man. It is this "who" which feels values, thinks ideas, and perceives things.

There are two essential characteristics of personality which make it a reality different from the realities of spirit, mind, and matter. Whereas spirit, mind, and matter are uniform realities in their original natures (that is, prior to the influences of time and experience), "Personality is unique, absolutely unique: It is unique in time and space; it is unique in eternity and on Paradise; it is unique when bestowed - there are no duplicates; it is unique during every moment of existence; it is unique in relation to God ... 11 (*1225:12) This absolute uniqueness of who we are is also eternally stable. Unlike spirit, mind, and matter which are transformed in their natures by time and experience, ". . . there is one part of you that remains absolutely unaltered, and that is personality - permanence in the presence of change." (*1225:1) Age and experience have absolutely nothing to do with who we are and everything to do with what we are.

Armed with these few ideas, how can we respond to the question of when this absolutely unique and changeless reality of personality is bestowed by the Universal Father?

Personality is present prior to the arrival of the Thought Adjuster, which usually occurs around five years, ten months, and four days of age. (*1187:1) It is the first moral choice of the personality, as this registers in the first functioning of the adjutant mind-spirit of wisdom, which results in the dispatch of the Thought Adjuster from the shores of Divinington. (*1186:6) Personality is present at the time of the bestowal of the Thought Adjuster, but how soon before this event is personality bestowed?

Identity of Soul

Our teachers make a very clear distinction between the intellectual identity (the so-called ego of psychology) and the morontia identity of the immortal soul. "Human beings possess identity only in the material sense. Such qualities of the self are expressed by the material mind as it functions in the energy system of the intellect. 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." (*1232:6) "Material mind is the arena in which human personalities live, are self-conscious, make decisions, choose God or forsake him, eternalize or destroy themselves." (*1216:5)

The self-consciousness of the intellectual identity is a cosmic reality (cf. 1479:7) because it is the manifestation of the will of the personality, but does self-consciousness exist prior to the activation of the adjutant mind spirit of wisdom and the bestowal of the Thought Adjuster?

"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. This is shown in a purely human manner in man's social life." (*195:10) "The social consciousness is ... a cultural development and is dependent on knowledge, symbols . . ." (*196:1)

The fundamental technique which enables the self to know other selves is personal communication, and language is one of the most potent techniques of personal communication. Children learn to talk around two years of age -almost four years prior to the bestowal of the Thought Adjuster. Not only will a conversation with a two year old provide conclusive proof of the existence of a mind controlled by a sometimes intractable will, but conversations with others many years older sometimes provides conclusive proof that there can be personal communication even in the complete absence of the active functioning of the adjutant of wisdom.

Personality is definitely present, then, at the birth of language, but how much prior to the age of two is personality bestowed?

"A child has been in existence about nine months before it experiences birth." (*1130:7) This statement led me to check back to Gabriel's appearances to both Mary and Elizabeth. Gabriel appeared to Elizabeth about nine months prior to John's birth. When Gabriel appeared to Mary, he said, "To you, Mary, I bring glad tidings when I announce that the conception within you is ordained by heaven . . ." (*1346:5) We are also told that, "Gabriel's announcement to Mary was made the day following the conception of Jesus . . ." (*1347:3)

The Chief of Evening Stars tells us that, "Joshua ben Joseph, the Jewish baby, was conceived and was born into the world just as all other babies before and since except that this particular baby was the incarnation of Michael of Nebadon . . ." (*1317:2) Also, in describing the mortal bestowal careers of Paradise Sons, a Perfector of Wisdom from Uversa tells us that, "The method whereby a Paradise Son becomes ready for mortal incarnation. . . , becomes enmothered on the bestowal planet, is a universal mystery . . ." (*228:6)

From these statements there is no doubt that personality is bestowed by the Universal Father before birth. The personality of a Paradise Son becomes "enmothered" on the bestowal planet just as the personality of every human becomes enmothered, but it is a universal mystery how a local universe Creator Son is able to have his personality so bestowed. But does personality actually arrive at conception, as seems to be implied?

A Marked Pattern

If we look at Michael's six previous bestowals, a marked pattern appears. On each of these six bestowals Michael is accompanied to the bestowal planet by another personality. On the first bestowal an omniaphim accompanies him to the Melchizedek world. On his second bestowal a tertiiaphim accompanies him. A seconaphim accompanies him to the headquarters world of system 87 in constellation 61 on his third bestowal and presents his credentials to the System Sovereign. On the fourth, fifth, and sixth bestowals Gabriel accompanies the incarnation of Michael to the bestowal planet and presents his credentials to the planetary authorities.

The pattern seems to be quite clear. The incarnation of Michael is always accompanied to the bestowal planet by another personality who presents Michael's credentials to the planetary authorities. If this pattern holds true for the seventh bestowal and Gabriel presents Michael's credentials to Mary because the Lucifer Rebellion left Urantia without recognized planetary authorities, then personality must be bestowed by the Universal Father very soon after conception.

This is quite an amazing conclusion and one which stretches our conventional ideas of personality far beyond their limits. Is it truly possible that the reality of personality could be associated with the profoundly primitive material life form of a zygote? that is, with a single celled organism? This question is no more difficult to answer than the question of how personality, an eternal and qualified absolute, is able to enter into association with finite levels of reality.

"Personality, while devoid of identity, can unify the identity of any living energy system." (*1225:7) "The phenomenon of personality is dependent on the persistence of the identity of selfhood reaction to universe environment; and this can only be effected through the medium of mind." (*1235:2)

The distinction between personality and identity is crucial to an understanding of the technique whereby personality is able to associate with finite reality. This distinction is not made anywhere else that I am aware of except in *The URANTIA Book*. If personality is who we are, and spirit, mind, and matter constitute what we are, then identity is where and when we are. Identity is the cosmic focal point in time and space where the personality is able to experience reality. Personality is existential. Identity is experiential. Who we are is an eternal reality. Where and when we are is relative and subject to perpetual change.

Personality and Identity

Personality is an eternal reality, and the only technique whereby personality is able to contact temporal reality is by creating a personal identity upon finite levels of reality;

and such an identity is always created out of the substance of mind and is associated with personality through its inherent power of will. (cf. 1232:6) It is the will of personality which spans the cosmic gulf between the eternal and the temporal, the qualified absolute nature of personality and the relative and finite nature of the identity. This distinction between personality and identity is difficult to grasp, but in experience it amounts to the ability to watch ourselves think from a removed perspective and to judge the value of our many thoughts. "Morality, virtue, is indigenous to human personality." (*192:9)

The zygote, the fertilized seed from which the material body grows, is a living organism which is animated by the pre-adjutant mind circuits of the Master Physical Controllers. (cf. 480:5) Whether or not personality could create an identity in this pre-adjutant mind at this early stage of development is a question. We are told that, "The material self is truly and unqualifiedly personal." (*71:1) Experientially, there is no doubt that the physical body is a personal identity even as the ego is a personal identity. Not only do we think with intention, we also act with intention, which is the proof that we have a personal identity on subconscious levels of mind which is capable of directing certain physical activities.

As this seed of the body grows, it becomes increasingly capable of tuning into progressively higher levels of mind until finally the intellectual identity appears with the evidence of language. Prior to the appearance of language, the personality is wholly identified with the body. The appearance of language enables the personality to see itself in the reality of the intellectual identity. The moral identity, the soul, appears with the personality's identity of the Mystery Monitor. The path of personality progression consists of the transcendence of personal identity from material to spiritual levels of reality. And just as in biological evolution the old is not lost but rather transcended and dominated by the new, so it is in the personal spiritual evolution of the identity.

And throughout all of these transformations in the focal point of personal experience, these inner journeys of the identity, the personality never changes. When we are finaliters at last, we will still be just who we are today. We truly are the children of God in the most profound, precise, and eternal way. Regardless of any deficiencies of character, any limitations of intellect, any handicaps in body, and every other consideration, the actuality of the eternal personality of each individual identifies that individual as a true child of the Universal Father.

-George Park Hampton, Connecticut

THE CREATIVE IMAGINATION IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

George Park

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"The manner in which the Universal Father sojourns with the creatures of time is the most profound of all universe mysteries; the divine presence in the mind of man is the mystery of mysteries." (*26:3) The technique whereby the Thought Adjuster is able to make his eternal presence known to the material mind is a mystery. The method in which the spirit registers the reality of eternity in the material mind as an experience of "the everlasting now" is a philosophic miracle beyond our understanding. (*1295:1) However, the technique used by the material mind in its reach upward and inward for the experience of the presence of God, the psychological behavior of the human mind in fostering its own spiritualization, is not completely beyond our grasp.

Without intention of intruding upon the supremely personal and sacred domain of spiritual experience, this essay will attempt to outline the psychological evolution of religious experience as it is revealed in the progressive development of prayer and worship with a special regard for the role of the creative imagination in the spiritualization of the mind of man. Philosophical discussion and description of spiritual experience reduces such living experience to the levels of psychology with the intention of enlightening thought and with the hope that this enlightenment will contribute to the further growth of spiritual character. "While the mind is not the seat of the spiritual nature, it is indeed the gateway thereto." (*1733:2)

The Alter-ego Concept

"Children, when first learning to make use of language, are prone to think out loud, to express their thoughts in words, even if no one is present to hear them. With the dawn of the creative imagination they evince a tendency to converse with imaginary companions. In this way a budding ego seeks to hold communion with a fictitious alter ego. By this technique the child early learns to convert his monologue conversations into pseudo dialogues in which this alter ego makes replies to his verbal thinking and wish expression. Very much of an adult's thinking is mentally carried on in conversational form." (*996:8)

"In time the alter-ego concept is exalted to a superior status of divine dignity, and prayer as an agency of religion has appeared." (*997:1)

"It is altogether fitting that man, when he prays, should strive to grasp the concept of the Universal Father on Paradise; but the more effective technique for most practical purposes will be to revert to the concept of a near-by alter ego, just as the primitive mind was wont to do, and then to recognize that the idea of this alter ego has evolved

from a mere fiction to the truth of God's indwelling mortal man in the factual presence of the Adjuster. . . " (*997:6)

The conversational form of language is the dominant form of thought: to think reflectively usually means to think in the verbal forms of conversation. With the dawn of the creative imagination the child then begins to converse with an alter ego. And this alter ego, the son of the creative imagination, may evolve toward a status of divine dignity, eventually becoming the experiential fact of the eternal presence of God in the temporal mind of man. The divinely ordained (but not necessarily inevitable) destiny of the alter ego from its moment of conception can only signify the direct intervention of spirit influences, circuits, and entities in the creative imagination and upon the concept of the alter ego.

Adjuster Communication Through the Creative Imagination

It is the action of these spirit forces in the creative imagination which is partially responsible for the mysterious, vital, and dynamic power of the creative imagination. Psychologists are usually prone to declaring that unconscious levels and phases of mind find expression in the self-conscious mind through the imagination. This is the modern explanation for dreams, compulsive behavior, and other psychological behavior. Our spiritual teachers confirm this conclusion, as far as it goes, but make some additional comments regarding the creative imagination.

"Supreme and self-acting Adjusters are often able to contribute factors of spiritual import to the human mind when it flows freely in the liberated but controlled channels of creative imagination." (*1199:3)

"Certain abrupt presentations of thoughts, conclusions, and other pictures of mind are sometimes the direct or indirect work of the Adjuster. . ." (*1207:3)

"The races on some worlds have one gland, on others two, as do Urantians, while on still other spheres the races have three of these unique bodies. The inherent imagination and spiritual receptivity is definitely influenced by this differential chemical endowment." (*566:7)

"The volunteering Adjuster is ... interested in ... Spiritual perception. The prospects of reverential development, the birth and growth of the religious nature. What is the potential of soul, the probable spiritual capacity of receptivity?" (*1186:2)

"We do observe that the more experienced Adjuster is often the indweller of the higher type of human mind; human inheritance must therefore be a considerable factor in determining selection and assignment." (*1185:3)

"True religious worship is not a futile monologue of self-deception. Worship is a personal communion with that which is divinely real, with that which is the very source of reality." (*2095:6)

"Worship is the act of the son's personal communion with the divine Father, the assumption of refreshing, creative, fraternal, and romantic attitudes by the human soul-spirit." (*1616:10)

"The human Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All of these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as the will of the Father in heaven.' " (*2087:2)

The Thought Adjuster does attempt to communicate, however obliquely or subtly, with the material mind through the creative imagination. This, in fact, seems to be the primary channel of communication with the material mind, since one of the mind attributes in which the Adjuster is very interested is the capacity for spiritual receptivity, which is definitely linked to the human imagination, and which, in turn, is directly influenced by the chemical function of genetic endowment. Worship is not a delusion of the imagination, but a communion with a divine alter ego which is actually indwelt by the spirit of God, the loving gift which the Father makes of himself to the least of his children. Although this spirit may be more or less invisible beneath the surface of the various forms of this divine alter ego, nevertheless, ". . the faith-grasp of the God-knowing mortal can achieve the philosophic miracle of the recognition of the Infinite by the finite, the discernment of the eternal God. . . " (*27:3)

Combined Psychologic and Spiritual Techniques

While we do not understand the spirit technique that directs and adjusts the directionization of the growth of the alter ego towards the actuality of the presence of God, we know that this growth does take place in the creative imagination as far as self-conscious experience is concerned, and in the morontia soul as far as superconscious experience is concerned.

"Prayer ever has been and ever will be a twofold human experience: a psychologic procedure interassociated with a spiritual technique. And these two functions of prayer can never be fully separated." (*997:5) The psychologic procedure is the intentional focusing of the creative imagination on the reality of God, which faith identifies as the concept/ideal of the divine alter ego. The spiritual technique results in the gradual and evolutionary exaltation of this ideal alter ego in the creative imagination towards ever-ascending levels of perfection - even to the very presence of God. And these two functions can never be fully separated any more than water can be separated from the cells of a living organism. The psychologic procedure and the spirit technique are unified in the creative imagination, in the inner life, in the heart of man, in a living and growing experience.

This is why Jesus always endeavored to teach others to pray from the heart instead of reciting set prayers. Only reluctantly did he teach his apostles formal prayers. Ritual may stimulate the creative imagination in a religious direction initially, but religious formalizations inevitably stagnate and lose their vitality unless the religionist discovers the factual presence of the Father in

personal experience. "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." (* 1733: 1)

This living and personal conversation /communion between the mind of man and the spirit of God through the channel of the alter ego in the creative imagination is

entirely dependent upon the choosings of the mortal will. And when an individual chooses to enthrone God in the center of his or her inner life, that individual chooses the will of the Father.

"The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God - with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible. Sharing is Godlike - divine." (*1221:3)

To know the idea of God is one thing. To worship the ideal of God is another. And to share the temporal, experiential, finite reality of God with the eternal, existential, and absolute Thought Adjuster is still another thing altogether.

-George L. Park Hampton, Connecticut

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