

The Urantia Religion

The Religion of Personal Spiritual Experience

The Power of Symbolism

With Robert Sarmast

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Welcome. My name is Robert Sarmast.

I've been studying the Urantia Book for about 20 years now.

And I'm here today to discuss a very interesting topic which is the actual religion of the Urantia Book.

For the past, let us say, about 7 years I've been working on a very interesting topic which is trying to understand why this revelation isn't really getting any traction, or at least relative to what it should be getting when we think about what this document really is and what it means to this world.

And I've discussed it for years and years with great many people, and I've come to certain conclusions, I think I found the reason why we're kind of stuck in the mud when it comes to spreading these news.

I'm going to start this by telling you a story. It is said that when God first created humanity and the human soul, He called all the angels to come and see it. And to the angels' surprise they saw that the human soul was actually wrapped in a body of flesh and blood.

They were kind of surprised and they asked God: "You know, You asked us to take care of this soul but why have You wrapped it in this flesh and blood body? This is something that can be damaged, can cause damage, they can even be killed, it smells funny, they can get diseases, they can sin, and they can even disregard all of our advice, all of Your commandments, and just dive head-first into spiritual oblivion. So, why is this body necessary for something that otherwise is very pure?"

And God's answer was very interesting. He said that "You know, what you say about the body is true. It can do all these things, and it can cause a lot of problems, and it surely will. But you have to consider the reality of the situation. The human soul can't move without a body, it needs a skeleton structure; it needs the flesh and blood to feel, taste and so forth, the senses. And therefore without a body the soul can't experience, and without experience nothing can grow. So, you see, the soul can't hope to grow without a body, and growth is the watchword of my creation. So, the soul must be invested to the body despite any and all dangers."

Now, how that relates to the topic today is something that I will be here discussing over the next few minutes.

You see, I think that the Urantia movement is a lot like those angels. They see the religion itself as this very pure teaching that cannot be given form. Otherwise it can cause harm.

What really started me on this topic is a very interesting section in the Urantia Book called "The Nature of Cultism".

It's only about half a page, but... I'm a writer, and as a writer, this particular half a page seemed very different from the rest of the book in that the wording, the way the words were structured – and you know, us writers we like to play with words, play with sentences, paragraphs – and it just seemed like they were trying to say something but were not able to. Or were dancing around the subject, they were tiptoeing around it. Which was very interesting to me, so I sat at it and read it, I don't know how many hundred times, and I just couldn't get my mind around it.

Why were they tiptoeing around the subject? Why wouldn't they just come out and say what they clearly were trying to say? Now, I'm going to be showing you a little review of some of this section called "the Nature of Cultism".

So, let us start with the beginning so you can see what I mean. It says:

<sup>87:7.2</sup> From the dawn of civilization every appealing movement in social culture or religious advancement has developed a ritual, a symbolic ceremonial. [...] The cult preserved sentiment and satisfied emotion, but it has always been the greatest obstacle to social reconstruction and spiritual progress.

So, the cult – as you know the Urantia book uses that interchangeably with various organized religions around the world, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, all of them. And there's really no shortage of, shall we say, derogatory terms in the way it discusses the problems within these organized religions and the chaos that they created throughout time.

Of course, it also talks about all the good things that have come from them, but there is enough of, I would say, kind of alarming information in there about these organized religions that it has caused this problem within the Urantia community where even bringing out the word religion kind of scares a lot of people.

Now, as you can see, it says "The cult preserved sentiment and satisfied emotion, but it has always been the greatest obstacle to social reconstruction and spiritual progress".

Well, that doesn't sound very good. It sounds like the organized religion is not something they would recommend.

But then the very next paragraph it contradicts itself in the most amazing way:

<sup>87:7.3</sup> Notwithstanding that the cult has always retarded social progress, it is regrettable that so many modern believers in moral standards and spiritual ideals have no adequate symbolism—no cult of mutual support—nothing to *belong* to.

So, wait a minute! First it says it's really "the greatest obstacle to social reconstruction and spiritual progress", and then, in the very next paragraph, it says it's too bad you all don't have one.

So, what are they trying to say? This is one of the reasons that it became so fascinating to me this section, and why I've dwelled so deeply into it.

So, let's go to the next part.

It says:

<sup>160:5.1</sup> [...] religion SYMBOLIZES our supreme devotion to that which represents our highest concept of the ideals of reality and the farthest reach of our minds toward eternal possibilities of spiritual attainment.

<sup>87:7.4</sup> The early Christian cult was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any RITUAL ever conceived or devised, but much of its value has been destroyed in a scientific age by the destruction of so many of its original underlying tenets.

Now, these are not in that "Nature of Cultism" section but I brought them to your attention, because, for instance, in this section "The early Christian cult" – they call Christianity commonly a cult again – "was the most effective, appealing, and enduring of any RITUAL".

I want you to pay attention to the wording that's used here: a religion has been called a ritual. And this is seen throughout the whole book, where it seems like symbolism, religion, religious symbolism, rituals, are all interchangeably used in these sentences. So, apparently, the celestial see them all as one.

Let us go to the next section. This is going back into the "Nature of Cultism" section.

<sup>87:7.6</sup> Regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps, every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus MUST develop a new and appropriate symbolism. Modern man MUST find some adequate symbolism for his new and expanding ideas, ideals, and loyalties. This enhanced symbol must arise out of religious living, spiritual experience. And this higher symbolism of a higher civilization MUST be predicated on the concept of the Fatherhood of God and be pregnant with the mighty ideal of the brotherhood of man.

Now again, "regardless of the drawbacks and handicaps" of organized religion, "every new revelation of truth has given rise to a new cult, and even the restatement of the religion of Jesus" – which is of course the Urantia Book itself – "MUST develop a new and appropriate symbolism".

Now, symbolism was the word that they used earlier when they referred to religion. And why don't they just come out and say... I mean, they're clearly saying that "even the restatement of the religion of Jesus MUST develop a new and appropriate symbolism".

What they're really saying is that even the Urantia revelation MUST develop a new religion. This is enough to scare the wits out of some people who are out there but there it is. It's pretty clear.

And here is where this starts to get interesting as it begins to describe what this new religion should look like. First they said it must be developed. And then they start to lay down the groundwork for what this new religion is supposed to be, how it's

supposed to behave, what we're supposed to stay away from, and what we should adopt.

87:7.7 The old cults were too egocentric; the new must be the outgrowth of applied love. The new cult must, like the old, foster sentiment, satisfy emotion, and promote loyalty; but it must do more: It must facilitate spiritual progress, enhance cosmic meanings, augment moral values, encourage social development, and stimulate a high type of personal religious living. The new cult must provide supreme goals of living which are both temporal and eternal—social and spiritual.

<sup>87:7.10</sup> But a cult—a symbolism of rituals, slogans, or goals—will not function if it is too complex. “And there must be the demand for devotion, the response of loyalty. Every effective religion unerringly develops a worthy symbolism, and its devotees would do well to prevent the crystallization of such a ritual into cramping, deforming, and stifling stereotyped ceremonials which can only handicap and retard all social, moral, and spiritual progress. No cult can survive if it retards moral growth and fails to foster spiritual progress.”

I want you to pay attention to this last sentence here:

“The cult is the skeletal structure around which grows the living and dynamic body of personal spiritual experience—true religion.”

What is true religion to us?

True religion is the religion of personal spiritual experience, is the inner relationship that we have with our Creator, with the Universal Father.

So, what I'm going to bring your attention to here are these two different facets:

One is the outer form, which we call an organized religion. One is the true religion, which is the inner relationship: “personal spiritual experience—true religion.”

A lot of people really have a problem with the Urantia Book developing a church or a religion or whatever, but not the celestial themselves.

Pay attention:

<sup>103:5.11</sup> [...] Man develops best when the pressures of home, community, church, and state are least. But this must not be construed as meaning that there is no place in a progressive society for home, social institutions, church, and state.

<sup>103:5.12</sup> [...] There is great hope for any church that worships the living God, validates the brotherhood of man, and dares to remove all creedal pressure from its members.

“There's great hope...”

So, on one hand they're telling us about the dangers; and on the other hand they're saying that if we do it right there's great hope for what we can achieve.

You see, it's a double edged sword, and I'll go on that later.

<sup>2:7.10</sup> “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. Such a new and righteous vision of morality will attract all that is good in the mind of man and challenge that which is best in the human soul.”

“DARE TO CONSTRUCT a new and appealing philosophy of living” of truth, beauty, and goodness.” What is that? What is a “philosophy of living” that is focused on spirituality of true meaning? That’s called a religion, and they’re DARING US TO CONSTRUCT IT.  
Well, let us keep going.

Why is this organization, this form, this dreaded organized religion based on the Urantia Papers so necessary?  
Here we get into it:

<sup>97:10.7</sup> “It is difficult for religion to survive as the private practice of isolated individuals. This has ever been the error of the religious leaders: Seeing the evils of institutionalized religion, they seek to destroy the technique of group functioning. In place of destroying all ritual, they would do better to reform it.”

And isn’t this the case with our movement? Hasn’t this been the case since the very beginning?

“It is difficult for religion to survive as the private practice of isolated individuals.”

Isn’t that what we have, “the private practice of isolated individuals”? That’s exactly what we have.

<sup>98:6.1</sup> [...] “While it is true that the institutionalization of religion has usually detracted from its spiritual quality, it is also a fact that no religion has thus far succeeded in surviving without the aid of institutional organization of some degree, greater or lesser.”

Here we go again. Isn’t that clear?

While it sort of detracted from that because it has become organized, become molded with the works of men and women who have other motives, “it is also a fact that no religion has thus far succeeded in surviving without” it.

It’s necessary!

It’s not a “this would a good thing!”

It’s absolutely essential for survival.

This is a very interesting quote from the beginning of the book:

<sup>0:2.1</sup> “Evolving mortal creatures experience an irresistible urge to symbolize their finite concepts of God.”

Remember, symbolism in The Urantia Book, when we talk about symbolism is religion. They see religion as a sort of symbolism.

They say that they “experience an irresistible urge” toward it, they need it.

And in another section:

<sup>92:1.3</sup> “Religion arises as a biologic reaction of mind to spiritual beliefs and the environment; it is the last thing to perish or change in a race.”

“A biologic reaction”! It’s hard-wired into our system.

It’s a biological reaction!

With “an irresistible urge”!

People need the symbolism, they need the religion.

Not just what you and I personally experience with our Father.

They need it symbolized.

Let us keep going.

Now this is where we start seeing the difference between the true religion, which is the inner experience, and the outer form:

<sup>195:10.11</sup> [...] “The true church—the Jesus brotherhood—is invisible, spiritual, and is characterized by *unity*, not necessarily by *uniformity*. [...] And this brotherhood is destined to become a *living organism* in contrast to an institutionalized social organization. It may well utilize such social organizations, but it must not be supplanted by them.”

Again, they’re telling us the same thing, over and over.

The true religion is “invisible, spiritual, and is characterized by *unity*”, and “is destined to become a *living organism* in contrast to an institutionalized social organization. It may well utilize such social organizations, but it must not be supplanted by them”.

Again, they go with the same thing. They’re both needed.

<sup>85:3.5</sup> “In religion, symbolism may be either good or bad just to the extent that the symbol does or does not displace the original worshipful idea.”

Again, the same thing.

<sup>155:3.8</sup> [...] (Jesus) “never grew weary of pointing out to the twelve the great danger of accepting religious symbols and ceremonies in the place of religious experience.”

So, what has happened? What happened is we’re taught by the prophets, by the revelations, about what’s true religion, which is the personal spiritual experience.

And that, because they don’t know what to do with it, because they are men of pre-historic times, you know, relative to where we are today, they symbolize it to an extent where the symbol becomes more important than what’s really important, which is the inner spiritual experience.

And eventually the inner spiritual experience is completely brushed under the rug. You don’t even need it!

All you have to do is come to the church once a day, you know, once a week, do your rosaries, pray, come and talk to this priest here who is going to be an intermediate between you and God.

You don’t have to personally go into spiritual experiences. They become over-institutionalized.

Let us keep going.

<sup>91:5.7</sup> [...] Those who are God-conscious without symbolism...

That will be all the Urantia Book readers I know...

“must not deny the grace-ministry of the symbol...”

Here’s the symbol again, they call it the symbol, which is just the form, the skeleton of structure, the organized socialized religion...

“must not deny the grace-ministry of the symbol to those who find it difficult to worship Deity and to revere truth, beauty, and goodness without form and ritual. In prayerful worship, most mortals envision some symbol of the object-goal of their devotions.”

So, those of us who don't need the symbolism, must not deny it to those who do.  
And who are those people? “Most mortals”! Most mortals need it.  
They don't want just to be able to have an inner religion, without any symbols, without a church, without anything, just, you know, you seat home by yourself and you talk with God, and that's it.

That's not going to work. That's not what they want, that's not what they demand.  
Remember, there is an “irresistible urge”, a “biological reaction” hardwired into their system.  
And if we are not tapping into that, it's not their fault, it's not the world's fault that this revelation isn't growing.  
It's our fault.

Let us keep moving.

I'm picking these two quotes to show you again how the celestials view in an allegorical way the difference between true religion – which is spiritual experience – and a form.

<sup>87:7.10</sup> [...] “The cult is the skeletal structure around which grows the living and dynamic body of personal spiritual experience—true religion.”

What I want you to pay attention is the analogy that's used here. They've called it “the skeletal structure”, the cult, or the organized religion, or the socialized religion are better words. These days “organized religion” has become a dirty word.

Let us call it socialized religion.

What did they call it a “skeletal structure”? Why using that analogy?

The skeleton is important to a body because without a skeleton the body cannot move.

And unless it moves, it cannot experience, and if it can't experience it can't grow up.

It is this skeletal structure that allows movement.

Now let us see it used in another manner:

<sup>100:5.1</sup> [...] “The symbols of socialized religion are not to be despised as channels of growth, albeit the river bed is not the river.”

Could they be any more direct?

“Socialized religion”, organized religion, is “not to be despised as channel of growth, albeit the river bed is not the river.”

The “river bed” would be the socialized religion, and the “river” is the religion of personal experience.

So, again they're using an analogy that socialized religion is something that allows the movement of the true religion – personal experience.

The “skeletal structure” allows movement. The “river bed” allows movement for the “river”.

Without a skeleton, true religion can't move, can't grow.

Without the river bed the river can't flow, can't do what it needs to do, go to where it needs to go.

So, we have this book that talks constantly about the problems of organized religions and all the problems this caused.

On the other hand, it talks about all the good things that are coming ahead, all the great things they're contributing to society and where we would be without them. Now, this is a very touchy subject because it's very dangerous, isn't it? What we're talking about is socializing this religion, is creating a religion that can be distributed to people that may not even understand the book, or may not really be able to or have the time to or want to read the entire book. And that's all we've done so far, isn't it? Just handing out books.

What about creating a religion of it? Isn't that what is being asked for: *must* create a new symbolism? How many times do they have to tell us? The reason they don't just come out and say it, in my humble opinion, is that if they just come out and said it in blatant, obvious form, just "hey, every revelation has created a religion, and this one too must create a religion".

Why? Because eighty years ago, when this thing came out, as soon as somebody read that everyone would run out and saying: oh, we need to create a religion. And that would have been too early.

The Urantia Book had not spread throughout the world, these people had not really had time to absorb it, the world had not been exposed to it, and it would have created a situation where everybody would have created a religion of their own, which would have been a disaster. So, the reason they tiptoed around it is because they don't want that to happen.

But it's our generation, and it's our understanding that has to come to a place where we see that this is something that is needed and that this is something that has to happen. If "most mortals" need it, if they demand it, if they're biologically hardwired for it and we don't provide it, whose fault is that? Who has failed here? We have!

The first instinct to the most people is: "Hey, this is too dangerous. Organizing this as a religion is just way too dangerous. Who knows where this is going to go. You're going to get some cult leader, you're going to get some crazy person, you're going to have suicides, you're going to have nut-jobs, who knows what you're going to have? It's better just to lay low. And that has been the prevailing attitude in this community for a very long time.

But here is where it gets interesting. It's not like it doesn't unnerve me a bit, but we have two choices here: either you do that, or you just lay low and do nothing. Now, the book clearly, as I showed you throughout the course of this presentation, is calling for it very obviously, very clearly for those who have ears to hear. Even if our reaction is not doing anything, to avoid it, to ignore what we've been called to do as a way of staying safe, which is understandable, there is also a danger for not doing anything. And the danger in not doing anything is worse than the danger of creating this or socializing this religion. Why? Here we go:

<sup>176:3.7</sup> [...] "You are not given truth to crystallize into settled, safe, and honored forms. [...]"

This comes immediately after the parable about the talents, about how God, the owner of the field gives five talents to one servant, two talents to another, and one talent to the last. One of them multiplied the money that he has been given, gives it back to the owner with interests. He says: "Well done!" The other one multiplied what he's been given.

The last one says "Here's the talent you gave me. I was afraid of what you might do if I did something incorrectly. So I hid it under the earth. So I now dug it out and here it is, the same money that you gave me I'm giving it back to you.

This is what follows:

"What a sorry sight for successive generations of the professed followers of Jesus to say, regarding their stewardship of divine truth: 'Here, Master, is the truth you committed to us a hundred or a thousand years ago. We have lost nothing; we have faithfully preserved all you gave us; we have allowed no changes to be made in that which you taught us; here is the truth you gave us.' But such a plea concerning spiritual indolence will not justify the barren steward of truth in the presence of the Master. In accordance with the truth committed to your hands will the Master of truth require a reckoning."

That should scare you a lot more than creating a socialized religion.

Who are they talking about in this quote? "Successive generations of the professed followers of Jesus". They are talking about us!

This revelation came out, what, sixty years ago? Sixty five years ago?

"Professed followers", that's exactly what we've been doing. Here it is, we kept the book, we've allowed no changes to be made, we haven't done anything, we haven't created anything with it. Here it is, just as you gave it to us, God, this holy book.

That's not what they want. They want us to do something with it.

You have to take that one talent and make it grow. And they are telling us how to do it.

They are telling us what these mortal beings are hardwired to want, to accept.

You can't blind them with the blinding light of an epochal revelation and just dropping this book on their lap.

It needs to come through a human being that is going to teach it to them.

Ministers, teachers that work together in this socialized religion, with a distinct religion, a ceremony that can be adopted, where you're initiated into this religion.

All the things that any human being on this planet would expect. A religion to have.

They are hardwired for it. We're not going to be able to change that.

If all we want is to teach this book to the other people that can understand it, to shout it to the world. Well, that's all we have done. Great work.

But if we want this to grow, if we want this to make a change in this world, it's going to happen through the masses, not just a few shepherds isolated on this planet.

And the way those masses will adopt this, the only way, is that we give them the way they expect it. They need something they can be initiated into. A baptism or whatever.

They need a distinct religion. They need ministers that will take this giant epochal revelation, that is more difficult than 99% of this world can understand, and it needs to be described to them, needs to be taught to them by ministers.

Now, we won't have to go the same routes as all the other socialized religions. We don't have to make the mistakes that they made.

We have this amazing revelation that spells out every possible mistake. And it's because of all that spelling out of mistakes that it has made all these people so frightened to death of socializing this religion.

But what is actually doing, the Urantia Book in essence is a manual for creating this religion.

I believe that is exactly why it has been given to us, to create this religion.

It tells you everything that can go wrong, and it tells you everything that can go right.

It's a doubled-edged sword, like I said before.

If you use it the wrong way, the socialized religion can become a source of problem. If you use it correctly it can cut through ignorance and become a source of amazing light, drastic change in our world.

When people that just want the basics - that evolution is part of God's design, that there is no hell, that God is pure love, that this place is a school.

Just the basics. That's all they need, that's all they want.

They're demanding it, and we're not giving it.

We've been told that that's exactly what the celestials want.

Now, these people, these people that won't do anything are happy with not doing anything - supposed religious leaders who are against group functioning. Those of you who get it, listen:

These people, they are there, they are not going away. Some people are going to be that way, and that's ok.

They are the brakes, we are the acceleration.

They're needed this just as we're needed.

But they are a permanent fixture. They are a force of nature. We cannot allow them to stop what needs to be done, what the Urantia Bok itself is calling for. What our Universal Father is commanding us to do.

Come over to [www.urantiareligion.com](http://www.urantiareligion.com), stay tuned, it's time.

I feel it, I know a whole bunch of other people feel it.

This world needs us, and we need to do a hell of a lot more than just throwing the book on their laps.

I'll see you soon.

God bless you.

This world is in a horrible place right now.

There are people starving to death.

There are people committing suicide left and right.

I cannot accept that we will not rise to the occasion.

I will not do it, and I'm asking you, those of you who can see, to stand up and be counted.

IT IS THE UNIVERSAL FATHER'S WILL,  
AND THE SON'S DESIRE, THAT WE  
CREATE THE GREATEST RELIGION  
THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN.

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