

Meditation in *The Urantia Book*

(Jesus-style meditation)

By Peter Holley

*[All **bold** words throughout indicate emphasis added by the author.]*

Words Change Their Meaning

The URANTIA Book tells us that Jesus meditated – a lot! What it doesn't say is that the word “meditation” has evolved away from its original meaning during the years following the revelation's final inditing in the mid 1930s. Such evolution of words was, of course, anticipated by the revelators, who tell us that the expression of religion “must be restated every time the dictionary of human language is revised” (1). Likewise the meaning of each affected teaching needs to be renewed when necessary.

The problem with changed words is that they can give us an altered picture if we aren't careful. The fact that Jesus used and taught meditation as a means to communicate with one's Thought Adjuster makes it vitally important for us to understand what is meant, if as *The URANTIA Book* states on the last page, the “great challenge for modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Monitor that dwells within the human mind.”

A dictionary contemporary with the reception of the finalized Urantia Papers (as later originally published in *The URANTIA Book*) provides the following definition of the word “meditation”:

“... close or continued thought, the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind, serious contemplation; mental reflection; often specifically, thought devoted to religious subjects.” (2)

The type of “meditation” often associated with Eastern religions which requires an altered state of consciousness had not yet at that time migrated into the dictionary. It became a secondary definition of “meditation” sometime after Yogi Paramhansa Yogananda came to the West and brought about what has been called a religious revolution with the publication of his book *Autobiography of a Yogi* in 1946. Yet a look at a 1955 desk dictionary shows that the more intellectually passive type of meditation had not even appeared by *The URANTIA Book’s* publication date. Neither is it included in my 1982 “College” dictionary. Some modern dictionaries, however, now place it as the *preferred* definition. The following definition of the intransitive use of the verb is from an online dictionary (3):

meditate:

1. A. Buddhism & Hinduism. To train, calm, or empty the mind, often by achieving an altered state, as by focusing on a single object.
B. To engage in devotional contemplation, especially prayer.
2. To think or reflect, especially in a calm and deliberate manner.

This is not to say, however, that the Buddhism and Hinduism style of meditation was unknown in the middle thirties in the West, or that the word “meditation” was never used to denote it. It was, but it appears to have needed qualification. Apparently the Buddhism and Hinduism type is what the revelators meant when they referred to “mystic meditation” (see also “mystic trances,” “mystic communications,” “mystic experiences,” “mystic

phenomena,” “mystic communion,” “mystic status,” and “mystical state”). The root of “mystic” is a Greek term meaning “belonging to secret rites” or “priest of mysteries,” and the word itself in the middle of the 1930s referred to things which were secret or obscure. The fact is that Buddhist and Hindu meditators at that time still kept their traditional techniques as highly guarded secrets, passing them on only to followers whom they considered to be qualified to receive them. And their meditative-techniques seemed even more “mystical” because they revolved around altered consciousness and brought about – to the Western way of thinking – extraordinary experiences. Some few Europeans living in the East had, however, submitted to yogis or to Buddhist masters and applied themselves to their esoteric teachings, and then, later, brought the practices back home with them.

One instance of such early, non-dictionary-defined use is found in a then-contemporary publication that is believed to have furnished the source for much of the Rodan material in *The URANTIA Book* (4). This example which is found in the book, *Issues of Life*, by Henry Nelson Wieman (5), demonstrates a need for the word “meditation” to be modified in order to indicate something akin to the Buddhism- and Hinduism-style technique. Wieman speaks of “a kind of worshipful, meditative waiting, in which one quietly hearkens until the call of the world and the deepest desire of his own heart merge into a single demand. Waiting before the Highest,” he writes, “fosters inarticulate aspiration.” (6) Rather than simply calling it “meditation,” as many might today, Wieman had to coin the term “inarticulate aspiration” and link it to “a **kind of** worshipful, meditative waiting.”

But what is most illustrative by this example, however, is the fact that the revelators took Wieman's passive "kind of worshipful, meditative waiting" and turned it into the dynamically active, reflective type of meditation in the above definitions, that is, the style of meditation that Jesus used and taught. The midwayer author of Part IV compared such *deep-thinking* meditators with "high-climbing souls" who reach a "mountaintop of intellectual thought" where they can "attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication." (7). Elsewhere *The URANTIA Book* laments, however, that it is "sad to record that so few persons on Urantia take delight in cultivating these qualities of courageous and independent cosmic thinking." (8)

Rodan

Rodan gives us what is perhaps the best view in *The URANTIA Book* of the type of meditation that Jesus both taught and practiced himself. Rodan had "become a disciple of Jesus through the teaching of one of Abner's associates who had conducted a mission at Alexandria" (9). And Abner, of all of Jesus' disciples, apparently had the best grasp on Jesus' teachings. At least we are told that "during the later years of Abner and for some time thereafter, the believers at Philadelphia held more strictly to the **religion of Jesus, as he lived and taught**, than any other group on earth." (10) In any event the Rodan material certainly was not placed in *The URANTIA Book* to mislead us.

Rodan spoke of what Jesus "so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught . . . the isolation of worshipful meditation . . . this habit of Jesus' going off so frequently by himself to commune with the Father in

heaven.” Jesus was, Rodan said, even as he spoke “out in the hills taking in power. . . .” (11)

Rodan went on to say that the “secret of all this problem is wrapped up in spiritual communion, in worship. From the human standpoint it is a question of combined meditation and relaxation. Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit; relaxation determines the capacity for spiritual receptivity. And this interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship.” (12) He observed that on “every mountaintop of intellectual thought are to be found relaxation for the mind, strength for the soul, and communion for the spirit.” And he indicated how the lower, egoistic thinking is to be overcome by higher thoughts:

“From such vantage points of high living, man is able to transcend the material irritations of the lower levels of thinking – worry, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the pride of immature personality. These high-climbing souls deliver themselves from a multitude of the crosscurrent conflicts of the trifles of living, thus becoming free to attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.” (13)

The Greek philosopher-turned-disciple added:

“When these experiences are frequently repeated, they crystallize into habits, strength-giving and worshipful habits, and such habits eventually formulate themselves into a spiritual character, and such a character is finally recognized by one’s fellows as a mature personality. These practices are difficult and time-consuming at first, but when they become habitual, they are at once restful and timesaving.” (14)

Notice that for Rodan the relaxation associated with Jesus' dynamic, thinking type of meditation is a *result* of having reached the "mountaintop of intellectual thought" and "spiritual communion" rather than being part of the *means* to attain it – that is, a more or less stand-alone part of the *technique* – as it is in Hinduism and Buddhism (and in *auto-hypnosis*).

Rodan's most profound statement is, "***Meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit.***" In other words, spirit is contacted by the actively thinking mind. And this is entirely consistent with what we are taught elsewhere in *The URANTIA Book* about the nature of the Thought Adjusters *vis a vis* the mortal mind.

Thought Adjuster

We are told quite clearly and in a number of ways that the Thought Adjusters dwell and interact within "the **thinking centers** of the individual's mind" (15):

"If one is disposed to recognize a theoretical subconscious mind as a practical working hypothesis in the otherwise unified intellectual life, then, to be consistent, one should postulate a similar and corresponding **realm of ascending intellectual activity** as the superconscious level, the zone of immediate contact with the indwelling spirit entity, the Thought Adjuster."(16)

"Human consciousness rests gently upon the electrochemical mechanism below and delicately touches the spirit-morontia energy system above. Of neither of these two systems is the human being ever completely conscious in his mortal life; therefore must he work in mind, of which he is conscious."(17)

Notice how closely this idea of “ascending intellectual activity” parallels Rodan’s image of meditation being intellectual mountain climbing. Notice also that it is not the lower area of consciousness which is involved, but the upper “spirit-morontia energy system.”

“The chief difficulty you experience in contacting with your Adjusters consists in [your] very inherent material nature. *So few mortals are real thinkers*; you do not spiritually develop and discipline your minds to the point of favorable liaison with the divine Adjusters. The ear of the human mind is almost deaf to the spiritual pleas which the Adjuster translates from the manifold messages of the universal broadcasts of love proceeding from the Father of mercies. The Adjuster finds it almost impossible to register these inspiring spirit leadings in an animal mind so completely dominated by the chemical and electrical forces inherent in your physical natures”(18)

Here the assumption is that *thinking* both contacts and “hears” the Thought Adjuster, since nothing is being said about passive “listening.” The Thought Adjusters do not speak *to* our minds but must use our minds to speak for them. They do this with our own thinking processes:

“The Thought Adjuster has no special mechanism through which to gain self-expression; there is no mystic religious faculty for the reception or expression of religious emotions. These experiences are made available through the naturally ordained mechanism of mortal mind. And therein lies one explanation of the Adjuster’s difficulty in engaging in direct communication with the material mind of its constant indwelling.

“The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by feelings or emotions, but in the realm of the **highest and most spiritualized thinking.**”
(19)

[The Thought Adjuster] “is the higher and truly internal spiritual **stimulus of thought**” (20)

“The Adjuster is not trying to control your thinking, as such, but rather to spiritualize it, to eternalize it. Neither angels nor Adjusters are devoted directly to influencing human thought; that is your exclusive personality prerogative. The Adjusters are dedicated to improving, modifying, adjusting, and co-ordinating your **thinking processes**” (21)

The divine indwellers adjust our thinking until it speaks for them, until the content of our thoughts coincides with higher truth and their translations of the universal broadcasts from the Paradise Father. What we experience in the perfecting of Jesus-style meditation is at the same time their thinking and our own! Also, Rodan likewise spoke of the need for the mental discipline found in the frequent repetition of the practice of worshipful, dynamic-thinking-coupled-with-relaxation, that is, Jesus-style meditation, in order to *develop* the mind for spiritual communication.

It is plain to see that in Jesus-style meditation the “worry, jealousy, envy, revenge, and the pride of immature personality” of which Rodan spoke are to be to be **harnessed and used by us rather than being emptied from the mind at the start** as both the yogis and the Buddhists do. It is we who must take our thoughts – as we find them – and aim them Godward. Jesus said:

“Be not constantly overanxious about your common needs. Be not apprehensive concerning the problems of your earthly existence, but in all these things by prayer and supplication, with the spirit of sincere thanksgiving, let your needs be spread out before your Father who is in heaven.” (22)

At the same time Jesus exhorted “his believers to employ prayer as a means of leading up through thanksgiving to true worship” (23). And Rodan speaking of these same things wrapped up meditation, relaxation, and spiritual communion into the same ball of wax as constituting “worship” or “worshipful meditation.” So from this we see that there is really only a difference in degree between all of this God-directed thought: prayer, cosmic thinking, thanksgiving, meditation, and worship. They are like different members of a family rather than different species. For instance, in some of its aspects meditation differs little from prayer, and in others it is the same as worship. It may, likewise, be productive of great outpourings of thanksgiving.

Prayer, *The URANTIA Book* reveals, is the only “technique whereby every man, regardless of all other mortal accomplishments, can so effectively and immediately approach the threshold of that realm wherein he can communicate with his Maker, where the creature contacts with the reality of the Creator, with the indwelling Thought Adjuster.” (24) Also, “Prayer will lead the mortals of earth up to the communion of true worship.” (25) But “meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit,” and the “moment the element of self-interest intrudes upon worship, that instant devotion translates from worship to prayer” (26) – the same is no doubt true concerning the higher and lower aspects of Jesus-style meditation. Its lower aspect is commonly a quest for knowledge and understanding of a subject or problem, a factual elucidation. The higher aspect – transcendent, worshipful meditation – is a type of self-forgetful cosmic thinking, and it is here that knowledge and understanding, or spiritual elucidation, is likely to be found.

“Thinking surrenders to wisdom, and wisdom is lost in enlightened and reflective worship.” (27) – “wisdom [is] meditative and experiential thinking” (28); “worship is self-forgetting – superthinking.” (29)

Or restated:

“Ordinary thinking ascends to meditative and experiential thinking, and it, in turn, transcends into enlightened and reflective worship.”

And again:

“Why do you not aid the Adjuster in the task of showing you the spiritual counterpart of all these strenuous material efforts? Why do you not allow the Adjuster to strengthen you with the spiritual truths of cosmic power while you wrestle with the temporal difficulties of creature existence? Why do you not encourage the heavenly helper to cheer you with the clear vision of the eternal outlook of universal life as you gaze in perplexity at the problems of the passing hour? Why do you refuse to be enlightened and inspired by the universe viewpoint while you toil amidst the handicaps of time and flounder in the maze of uncertainties which beset your mortal life journey? Why not allow the Adjuster to **spiritualize your thinking**, even though your feet must tread the material paths of earthly endeavor?” (30)

It was in this sense that Jesus told Peter:

“Let experience teach you the value of **meditation** and the power of intelligent reflection.” (31).

Also Jesus-style spiritual meditation is an essential factor of spiritual growth:

“Habits which favor religious growth embrace cultivated sensitivity to divine values, recognition of religious living in others, **reflective meditation**

on cosmic meanings, worshipful problem solving, sharing one's spiritual life with one's fellows, avoidance of selfishness, refusal to presume on divine mercy, living as in the presence of God" (32)

Jesus Meditating

In almost every instance of examples in *The URANTIA Book* wherein Jesus meditated, the context clearly shows that he was engaged in thought (see list below). In those few in which it is not abundantly apparent it may be assumed that he was since nowhere is any contrary notion maintained. In fact in *The URANTIA Book* the meditative doctrine of "thinking nothing" (along with "seeing" and "doing" nothing), which was derived from the teaching by Lao T'su on "nonresistance and the distinction which he made between action and coercion" (and which can still be found in the teachings of Buddhism) is called "perverted" by the revelators (33). And cultivation of the "mystical state" (or "trancelike state of visionary consciousness") which is described of consisting in part of a "comparatively passive intellect" – we are warned – should be in all circumstances shunned as a means of religious experience because it "gravitates consciousness toward the subconscious rather than in the direction of the zone of spiritual contact" (34), that is, toward the lower, animal level rather than the upper, morontia-spiritual level of consciousness. Whether or not this warning speaks directly to the meditation practices of Hindus and Buddhists is problematical (but see below). In the final analysis it is up to the devotees of the more passive intellect styles of meditation to make such discernments for themselves. Personally, as a follower of Jesus, I prefer to align my meditation practices with those of my Master and Elder Brother, Jesus of Nazareth:

1. As early as his eleventh year Jesus engaged in “**profound meditation** and serious contemplation.” The content of this mental discipline, we are told, was his “**thinking** about how he was to carry out his obligations to his family and at the same time be obedient to the call of his mission to the world.” (35)

2. When Jesus was thirteen he visited the temple in Jerusalem for the first time. When he first saw the throngs gathered together for Passover, he “**meditated deeply** on how these Jews had assembled here from the uttermost parts of the known world.” (36) During this visit his family stayed at Bethany and he spent “much of the time alone in the garden **meditating.**” (37) And we are told that at least some of this meditation in the garden “was concerned with the **contemplation of weighty problems.**” (38)

3. In Jesus fourteenth year “he made frequent trips to the top of the hill to the northwest of Nazareth for prayer and **meditation.**” During this time he “would gaze upon Megiddo and **recall the story** (thought) of the Egyptian army winning its first great victory in Asia; and how, later on, another such army defeated the Judean king Josiah. Not far away he could look upon Taanach, where Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera. In the distance he could view the hills of Dothan, where he had been taught Joseph’s brethren sold him into Egyptian slavery. He then would shift his gaze over to Ebal and Gerizim and **recount to himself** (thought) the traditions of Abraham, Jacob, and Abimelech. And thus he recalled and **turned over in his mind** (thought) the historic and traditional events of his father Joseph’s people.” (39) Notice that the revelators used almost the *precise mid-1930s definition of “meditation”*: “the turning or revolving of a subject in the mind”!

4. When Jesus was fifteen, we are told that his “**profound periods of meditation**, his frequent journeys to the hilltop for prayer, and the many strange ideas which Jesus advanced from time to time, thoroughly alarmed his mother.” (40) And again this is directly related to his thinking, although this is not quite as clear as in some other examples:

“Jesus was learning not to speak of all his **thoughts**, not to present all his **ideas** to the world, not even to his own mother. From this year on, Jesus’ disclosures about **what was going on in his mind** steadily diminished; that is, he talked less about those things which an average person could not grasp, and which would lead to his being regarded as peculiar or different from ordinary folks.” (41)

5. At the age of twenty-five, Jesus’ “**seasons of deep meditation** were often broken into by Ruth and her playmates.” And we are informed that the content of this deep meditation was, again, the “contemplation of his future work for the world and the universe” (42)

6. Immediately after Jesus’ baptism he went into the hills for forty days because “he desired to be away for a season of quiet **meditation so that he could think** out the plans and decide upon the procedures for the prosecution of his public labors in behalf of this world and for all other worlds in his local universe.” (43) During this period of meditation he went without food for two days because “he was so engrossed with his **thinking** that he forgot all about eating” (44). And the “results of this momentous season of **meditation** demonstrated conclusively that the divine mind has triumphantly and spiritually dominated the human intellect.” (45). And it should likewise be the goal of our own Jesus-style meditation to identify ourselves more and more with our “divine mind,” the mind of our Thought

Adjuster, accepting its spiritualized version of our thoughts as being our own!

7. Sometime later Jesus spent a whole “night of **meditation**” on the shore of the Sea of Galilee “**thinking, thinking** until the dawn of the next day” (46).

8. Whether Jesus’ season of meditation was over a month in length, overnight, or compressed into a fleeting moment, he was engaged in thinking: “And when Jesus had bowed his head a moment in silent **meditation**, he suddenly spoke, ‘Return to your home; your son will live.’ . . . this was not a miracle of curing physical disease. It was merely a case of **preknowledge** concerning the course of natural law, just such **knowledge** as Jesus frequently resorted to subsequent to his baptism.” (47) Knowledge, of course, is indivisible from the thoughts and concepts which contain and express it.

9. And later we see Jesus sitting in an old boat where he “**meditated** on the next move to be made in the work of extending the kingdom.” (48) Again, look at the content of his “meditation.” It clearly implies thought.

We can be assured that in all of these instances of meditation (at least after he was grown) Jesus was engaged in transcendent thinking in his higher mind and/or with direct or indirect communication with his Thought Adjuster, or as Rodan put it, his “consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.” Jesus meditated and came away with knowledge of the Father’s will. And so can we all! That is Jesus-style meditation’s most obvious purpose.

Hearing God

I have pointed out that it must not be assumed that thoughtful meditation is a one-way street. We “hear” our Thought Adjuster’s communication within our minds by the very higher-level thoughts with which we access the area of mind in which the Monitor indwells. God speaks to us with what to all intents and purposes are our own thoughts:

“You are quite incapable of distinguishing the product of your own material intellect from that of the conjoint activities of your soul and the Adjuster.” (49)

Here is the way that Jesus’ Thought Adjuster communicated with him when he was thirteen:

“It was about the middle of February that Jesus became humanly assured that he was destined to perform a mission on earth for the enlightenment of man and the revelation of God. Momentous decisions, coupled with far-reaching plans, were formulating in the mind of this youth, who was, to outward appearances, an average Jewish lad of Nazareth. The intelligent life of all Nebadon looked on with fascination and amazement as **all this began to unfold in the thinking** and acting of the now adolescent carpenter’s son.” (50)

We are also told that “worship may be compared to the act of tuning in the soul to catch the universe broadcasts of the infinite spirit of the Universal Father” (51), and worship, as we have seen from Rodan, is part of the same ball of wax as meditation. Worship is defined in one place in *The URANTIA Book* as “superthinking,” that is, egoless or “self forgetful” thought. And again reflecting what happens on Rodan’s “mountaintop of intellectual thought,” it is “effortless attention, true and ideal soul rest, a form of restful spiritual exertion.” (52)

What happens is that somewhere along the line during worshipful meditation (after sufficient practice and personal growth – the need for this cannot be stressed enough) our own thought-producing effort more or less ceases and that of the Adjuster mind takes over and directs our thinking, providing a spiritualized counterpart. But as we have seen above, what we perceive in our mind cannot be in any way distinguished from our own thinking. It is in fact our own thinking! There is no real difference in this sense between what happens in worshipful meditation and what takes place during worship:

“The worship experience consists in the sublime attempt of the betrothed Adjuster to communicate to the divine Father **the inexpressible longings and the unutterable aspirations of the human soul** – the conjoint creation of the God-seeking mortal mind and the God-revealing immortal Adjuster. Worship is, therefore, the act of the material mind’s assenting to the attempt of its spiritualizing self, under the guidance of the associated spirit, to communicate with God as a faith son of the Universal Father. The mortal mind consents to worship; the immortal soul craves and initiates worship; the **divine Adjuster presence conducts such worship** in behalf of the mortal mind and the evolving immortal soul. True worship, in the last analysis, becomes an experience realized on four cosmic levels: the **intellectual**, the morontial, the spiritual, and the personal – the consciousness of mind, soul, and spirit, and their unification in personality.”

(53)

The distinction between prayer, worship, and Jesus-style meditation seems to be quite fine:

“Subsequent to the baptism of Jesus and the forty days in the Perea hills, it is hardly proper to speak of these seasons of communion with his Father as prayer, nor is it consistent to speak of Jesus as worshiping, but it is altogether correct to allude to these seasons as personal **communion with his Father.**” (54)

And that was precisely how Rodan defined the meditation which Jesus “so consistently practices, and which he has so faithfully taught . . . the isolation of **worshipful meditation** . . . this habit of Jesus’ going off so frequently by himself to **commune with the Father** in heaven.”

“**Silent Receptivity**”

It is true indeed that “Jesus taught his followers that, when they had made their prayers to the Father, they should remain for a time in **silent receptivity** to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul.” (55) But in determining its relationship to meditation we should first of all note that this concerns a communication to the *soul* rather than to the conscious mind; the latter which is, of course, the goal of meditation.

Next, we should look at the broader context wherein Jesus taught this to his followers. At that time they hardly knew how to pray, let alone worship or meditate. And at that time Jesus also “deplored that **so little of the spirit of thanksgiving** was to be found in the prayers and worship of his followers.” (56) A year earlier, in January of A.D. 27, Jesus had ordained his apostles. Six months later, in June, after Jesus teachings to them on the nature of prayer and worship, we are told that ‘the apostles grasped only a few of his teachings’ (57). And around September of that same year, his

apostles were still asking him for “a model prayer which they could teach the new disciples” (58).

Three months later, in January of A.D. 28 – one year after their apostleship had begun – the group which by this time also contained twelve of John the Baptist’s former disciples, set out on their first preaching tour of Galilee. When they got to Jotapata, we are told that Nathaniel expressed confusion “in his mind about the Master’s teachings about prayer” (59). In response to his confusion Jesus gave the long and involved teaching in which the time of silent receptivity is to be found.

Jesus’ “followers” to whom these teachings were directed were comprised of both his own apostles as well as those who had been with John The Baptist, plus a number of “disciples” who had attached themselves to the group and who were being instructed at least partially by the various apostles, who, themselves, for the first time Jesus permitted “to preach without restraint” (60). The unavoidable conclusion, when looked at in its full context, is that this time of silent receptivity which was to follow prayer was strictly meant for people who did not really understand what prayer and worship (or thanksgiving) should actually be. We are told that not many of his *apostles* “could fully encompass his teaching” on prayer and worship at Jotapata (61), so likely the whole body of “*followers*” to whom the silent receptivity teaching had been directed, understood even less!

The statement in *The URANTIA Book* which says .” ... they should remain for a time in **silent receptivity** to afford the indwelling spirit the better opportunity to speak to the listening soul,” is followed immediately by:

“The spirit of the Father speaks best to man when the human mind is in an attitude of true worship. We worship God by the aid of the Father’s indwelling spirit and by the illumination of the human mind through the ministry of truth.” (62)

Thus the statement does not stand alone but must be viewed in its relationship to worship, and by extension, to worshipful, Jesus-style meditation. And since such instruction requiring silent receptivity is given nowhere else in the entirety of *The URANTIA Book’s* teachings, it most reasonably represents merely a stop-gap measure which Jesus designed to hold his followers in place after they had either *recited* their prayers or made totally inadequate ones. By allowing time for the Thought Adjuster to make some sort of registration on their soul – if only of their sincere motive to pray – unconscious growth would follow and they would in this manner move forward toward the actual techniques of “ethical prayer” (63), thanksgiving, worship and worshipful meditation whereby contact with their Thought Adjuster might eventually be made. In any event there is nothing to indicate that “silent receptivity” was meant to be either a type of or a part of meditation.

Dangers

The “great challenge” to communicate with one’s Thought Adjuster, which I referred to at the beginning, demands a “**well balanced and sane** effort to advance the borders of self-consciousness out through the dim realms of embryonic soul consciousness in a wholehearted effort to reach the borderland of spirit consciousness – contact with the divine presence.” Such balance and sanity is of primary importance:

“When the development of the intellectual nature proceeds faster than that of the spiritual, such a situation renders communication with the Thought Adjuster both difficult and dangerous. Likewise, overspiritual development tends to produce a fanatical and perverted interpretation of the spirit leadings of the divine indweller. Lack of spiritual capacity makes it very difficult to transmit to such a material intellect the spiritual truths resident in the higher superconsciousness. It is to the mind of perfect poise, housed in a body of clean habits, stabilized neural energies, and balanced chemical function – **when the physical, mental, and spiritual powers are in triune harmony of development** – that a maximum of light and truth can be imparted with a minimum of temporal danger or risk to the real welfare of such a being.” (64)

“Even when they do find it possible to flash a gleam of new truth to the evolving mortal soul, this spiritual revelation often so blinds the creature as to precipitate a **convulsion of fanaticism** or to initiate some other intellectual upheaval which results disastrously. Many a new religion and strange “ism” has arisen from the **aborted, imperfect, misunderstood, and garbled communications** of the Thought Adjusters.” (65)

Speaking of the “high-climbing souls” who are able by Jesus-style meditation to “attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication,” Rodan adds:

“But the life purpose must be jealously guarded from the temptation to seek for **easy and transient attainment**; likewise must it be so fostered as to become immune to the **disastrous threats of fanaticism.**”

Mainly the dangers to be encountered during all attempts to achieve contact with the Thought Adjuster fall into one or both of two distinct

categories: “subconscious delusions or superconscious illusions” (66). And this is because the unspiritualized or partially-spiritualized creative imagination is such a powerful force in the mind of individuals. Compare the following:

“Since this inner life of man is truly creative, there rests upon each person the responsibility of choosing as to whether this creativity shall be **spontaneous and wholly haphazard or controlled, directed, and constructive**. How can a creative imagination produce worthy children when the stage whereon it functions is already preoccupied by prejudice, hate, fears, resentments, revenge, and bigotries?” (67)

“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**.” (68)

“Most of the spectacular phenomena associated with so-called religious conversions are entirely psychologic in nature, but now and then there do occur experiences which are also spiritual in origin. When the mental mobilization is absolutely total on any level of the psychic upreach toward spirit attainment, when there exists perfection of the human motivation of loyalties to the divine idea, then there very often occurs a sudden down-grasp of the indwelling spirit to synchronize with the concentrated and consecrated purpose of the superconscious mind of the believing mortal. . . . To the extent that such psychic mobilization is partial, and in so far as such human-loyalty motivation is incomplete, to that extent will the experience of conversion be a **blended intellectual, emotional, and spiritual reality**.” (69)

“While their mortal hosts are asleep, the Adjusters try to register their creations in the higher levels of the material mind, and some of your **grotesque dreams** indicate their failure to make efficient contact. The absurdities of dream life not only testify to pressure of unexpressed emotions but also bear witness to the **horrible distortion** of the representations of the spiritual concepts presented by the Adjusters. Your own **passions, urges, and other innate tendencies translate themselves into the picture and substitute their unexpressed desires for the divine messages** which the indwellers are endeavoring to put into the psychic records during unconscious sleep.” (70)

“The **great danger** in all these psychic speculations is that visions and other so-called mystic experiences, along with extraordinary dreams, may be regarded as divine communications to the human mind.” (71)

As an illustration of the power of the creative imagination; children at their “dawn of creative imagination . . . evince a tendency to converse with imaginary companions” (72), and in adults this same creative imagination has been responsible for the projection of gods which “are figments of the imagination, illusions of mortal mind, distortions of false logic, and the self-deceptive idols of those who create them.” (73) This applies not only to cultural gods, but to our private perceptions of the divine as well.

“The philosophic elimination of religious fear and the steady progress of science add greatly to the mortality of false gods; and even though these casualties of man-made deities may momentarily befog the spiritual vision, they eventually destroy that ignorance and superstition which so long obscured the living God of eternal love.” (74)

Unfortunately *The URANTIA Book* readers' private perception of the divine is seen in terms not only of the Paradise Father, but as one's Thought Adjuster. That is, the mind can easily create, as it were, a *false* thought Adjuster:

“But a human being would do better to err in rejecting an Adjuster's expression through believing it to be a purely human experience than to **blunder into exalting a reaction of the mortal mind to the sphere of divine dignity**. . . . In varying degrees and increasingly as you ascend the psychic circles, sometimes directly, but more often indirectly, you do communicate with your Adjusters. But it is dangerous to entertain the idea that every new concept originating in the human mind is the dictation of the Adjuster. More often, in beings of your order, **that which you accept as the Adjuster's voice is in reality the emanation of your own intellect**. This is **dangerous ground**, and every human being must settle these problems for himself in accordance with his natural human wisdom and superhuman insight.” (75)

“Mortal man has a spirit nucleus. The mind is a personal-energy system existing around a divine spirit nucleus and functioning in a material environment. Such a living relationship of personal mind and spirit constitutes the universe potential of eternal personality. Real trouble, lasting disappointment, serious defeat, or inescapable death can come only after **self-concepts presume fully to displace the governing power of the central spirit nucleus**, thereby disrupting the cosmic scheme of personality identity.” (76)

Whatever material that has been stored in the unconscious memory – including the teachings of *The URANTIA Book* – can become the costume

wherein the creative imagination dresses up its hallucinatory subconscious delusions and superconscious illusions:

“Altogether too much of the uprush of the **memories of the unconscious levels** of the human mind has been mistaken for divine revelations and spirit leadings,” (77)

“Certain abrupt presentations of thoughts, conclusions, and other pictures of mind are sometimes the direct or indirect work of the Adjuster; but far more often they are the **sudden emergence into consciousness of ideas which have been grouping themselves together in the submerged mental levels**, natural and everyday occurrences of normal and ordinary psychic function inherent in the circuits of the evolving animal mind.” (78)

“The human mind may perform in response to so-called inspiration when it is sensitive either to the **uprisings of the subconscious** or to the stimulus of the superconscious. In either case it appears to the individual that such augmentations of the content of consciousness are **more or less foreign.**” (79)

If these communications with the false gods created by our minds contain the highest truths which we have ever encountered (for instance the teachings in the Urantia Papers) they may prove to be altogether too believable. When subconscious delusions or superconscious illusions displace truth and are raised to the sphere of divine dignity and are believed to be genuine spiritual communications, fanaticism – or worse – is the likely outcome. It appears that it was for these reasons that the warnings in *The URANTIA Book* were given to us.

In apparent response to these very same illusionary/delusionary dangers, internationally recognized expert on herbal healing, reciprocal mind-body influence, and “Integrative Medicine,” physician-author Andrew T. Weil, writes: “Zen masters warn their meditating students to ignore makyo-sensory distortions that often take the form of visions seen by mystics in rapturous states or hallucinations similar to those of schizophrenics” (80). And the Hindu *Upanishads* “prescribe external and internal purity, continence, non-stealing, truthfulness, not injuring any being either by words or deeds, [and] similar moral-ethical basic values to achieve the state of samadhi (e.g., “a state of altered consciousness, the state to which a person reaches or is expected to reach through spiritual disciplines of meditation and Yoga.”) (81).”

Questioned privately, senior-certified Iyengar yoga instructor Sam Dworkis, told me (82):

“After due deliberation, my general response to your second email has to be simply based upon one sentence, to wit: ‘Under no circumstances should the trancelike state of visionary consciousness be cultivated as a religious experience.’

“When I was younger and when I was living a much more protected lifestyle, I did experiment with the more esoteric concepts of yoga. However now that I am older and living more conventionally, I do not enter into esoteric practices either in personal practice or teaching. Because my “work” is now predicated upon “maximizing potential and minimizing liability,” and as a Westerner living in a Western body, I must reject using yoga to push into potentially dangerous territory.

“That is not to say I believe using yoga to alter consciousness is *per se* wrong, but I instead look at its implications as a normal westerner living a relatively normal western existence.

“That being said, if I were again living within the environs of in a “protected ashram,” eating strictly vegetarian, and limiting the amount of external stimulation entering my nervous system, I might be inclined to push the boundaries of “visionary consciousness.” However, since I am not living in such a protected environment, it is my considered opinion that it is dangerous to push such edges. Not wrong, but dangerous.”

The URANTIA Book appears to warn us away from this particular altered state of consciousness altogether:

“**Under no circumstances** should the trancelike state of visionary consciousness be cultivated as a religious experience.

“The characteristics of the mystical state are diffusion of consciousness with vivid islands of focal attention operating on a comparatively passive intellect. All of this gravitates consciousness toward the subconscious rather than in the direction of the zone of spiritual contact, the superconscious. Many mystics have carried their mental dissociation to the level of abnormal mental manifestations.” (83)

And it immediately follows that negative warning with positive instruction on what we *should do* instead:

“The more healthful attitude of spiritual **meditation** is to be found in reflective worship and in the prayer of thanksgiving.” (84)

That is, the more healthful attitude is to be found in *Jesus-style meditation!*

Mysticism

For many readers, meditation in *The URANTIA Book* cannot be considered apart from mysticism. In spite of the many places that variations of the word “mystical” show up in its teachings in a less than favorable light, the revelators clearly tell us that mysticism, “as the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God, is altogether praiseworthy” (85). How is this apparent contradiction to be reconciled?

Notice that the passage speaks of only one special form of mysticism, that is, “the technique of the cultivation of the consciousness of the presence of God.” That is entirely different from what this article has been discussing, which is primarily meditation as a technique of *communicating* with one’s Thought Adjuster (one’s indwelling fragment of God). It is quite possible to communicate with God without a “consciousness of the presence of God,” and the act of experiencing that presence may be outside of the realm of communication *per se*. God communicates with us in our thinking processes, but we *feel* or *sense* God’s presence.

Jesus taught that “God is love” (86), and we are told that a “human being can actually feel – literally experience – the full and undiminished impact of such an infinite Father’s LOVE.” (87) In fact we are informed that such an experience may encompass the acme of religious evolution:

“Evolutionary religion is born of a simple and all-powerful fear, the fear which surges through the human mind when confronted with the unknown, the inexplicable, and the incomprehensible. **Religion eventually achieves the profoundly simple realization of an all-powerful love, the love which sweeps irresistibly through the human soul when awakened to the conception of the limitless affection of the Universal Father for the sons**

of the universe. But in between the beginning and the consummation of religious evolution, there intervene the long ages of the shamans, who presume to stand between man and God as intermediaries, interpreters, and intercessors.” (88)

And if *The URANTIA Book* gives us a technique for attaining to this divine, experiential love, it is likely to be compressed in the following:

“When men search for God, they are searching for everything. When they find God, they have found everything. The search for God is the unstinted bestowal of love attended by amazing discoveries of new and greater love to be bestowed.

“All true love is from God, and man receives the divine affection as he himself bestows this love upon his fellows. Love is dynamic. It can never be captured; it is alive, free, thrilling, and always moving. Man can never take the love of the Father and imprison it within his heart. 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.” (89.)

There may be other ways of experiencing a consciousness of the presence of God, but we should not – again – in attempting to cultivate this experience mistake what is human for that which is divine. The scientific investigations of Michael Persinger have demonstrated that when magnetic “fields are applied to the right hemisphere (particularly the parietal/temporal regions) the most typical experience is that of a sensed presence, or entity.” Persinger remarks that the subjective “details of the experience are strongly determined by the person’s beliefs which are supplied by the culture,” that is, a Buddhist will experience the presence of Buddha, and a Christian will experience the presence of Jesus or God, and so forth. Persinger adds, there

“are also likely to be many different stimuli that can evoke the same or [a] similar electromagnetic pattern and hence experience. Our experimental procedure is one method.” (90) In all likelihood this experience is entirely a “reaction of the mortal mind,” or more particularly of the brain, to various stimuli, and we would do well either to ignore it or to believe it to be of human origin. Thus, “the steady progress of science add[s] greatly to the mortality of false gods.”

Neither, in attempting the praiseworthy cultivation of this mystical experience, should we forget the warning against employing the “trancelike state of visionary consciousness.” That prohibition applies in *every* circumstance, not just in “meditation” *per se*. Likewise we are to avoid “such things as: physical fatigue, fasting, psychic dissociation [apparently the primary factor in initiating yogic and Buddhist meditation], profound aesthetic experiences, vivid sex impulses, fear, anxiety, rage, and wild dancing,” (91) which are said to initiate the “mystic” state, some of which are used by religionists to attain an altered consciousness, and all of which *The URANTIA Book* implies are dangerous to some degree.

Altogether praiseworthy or not, *The URANTIA Book* adds that “when such practices lead to social isolation [such as, perhaps, living in an ashram or monastery] and culminate in religious fanaticism, they are all but reprehensible.” And elsewhere:

“There is great danger associated with the habitual practice of religious daydreaming; mysticism may become a technique of reality avoidance, albeit it has sometimes been a means of genuine spiritual communion. Short seasons of retreat from the busy scenes of life may not be seriously dangerous, but prolonged isolation of personality is most undesirable.” (92)

But the word “mysticism” itself, as defined circa 1934, included “a view or tendency in religion which implies a direct communication between God and man through the inward perception of the mind,” and that is almost a definition of Jesus-style meditation. And according to Rodan it is “a means of genuine spiritual communion”:

“These high-climbing souls deliver themselves from a multitude of the crosscurrent conflicts of the trifles of living, thus becoming free to attain consciousness of the higher currents of spirit concept and celestial communication.”

Growth and Service

Jesus-style meditation in conjunction with prayer, thanksgiving and worship seems to be the *safest* technique for achieving the goal of Thought Adjuster communication. First of all it does NOT require an altered state of consciousness. And, next, it is in no way a short-cut method, – or as Rodan put it, an “easy and transient attainment” – depending as it does first and foremost upon growth. Not only does habitual Jesus-style meditation “favor religious growth” (see above), but “genuine prayer adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes, and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity.” (93) It appears to be only with Jesus-style meditation (including prayer and worship), operating in a circular (more accurately, an upwardly-directed spiral-like), hand-in-hand, feedback relationship with spiritual growth, that Thought Adjuster communication can be achieved in a healthful, sane and well-balanced manner:

“The Adjusters are always near you and of you, but rarely can they speak directly, as another being, to you. Circle by circle your intellectual decisions, moral choosings, and spiritual development add to the ability of

the Adjuster to function in your mind; **circle by circle you thereby ascend** from the lower stages of Adjuster association and mind attunement, so that the Adjuster is increasingly enabled to register his **picturizations** of destiny with augmenting vividness and conviction upon the evolving consciousness of this God-seeking mind-soul.” (94)

But there is an additional factor which is equally necessary that must be added to meditation and growth (or without which balanced growth is impossible). **And that is service:**

“The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by **devoted meditation**, is more frequently facilitated by **wholehearted and loving service** in unselfish ministry to one’s fellow creatures. . . . Jesus often took his apostles away by themselves for short periods to **engage in meditation** and prayer, but for the most part he kept them in **service-contact** with the multitudes. The soul of man requires spiritual exercise as well as spiritual nourishment.” (95.)

In Conclusion

Although the meaning of the word “meditation” has changed in the decades since *The URANTIA Book* was indited, a study of the context in which the word appears keeps the meaning clear and unmistakable. Jesus used active, dynamic thought to contact and communicate with his Thought Adjuster, and he taught this method to his followers. This form of meditation is not without its dangers and disciplines, and those of us who follow Jesus today will do well to take heed of both the instructions and warnings given in *The URANTIA Book* concerning Jesus-style meditation, and for all other forms of meditation or mysticism which we may choose to practice as well.

In this matter, as in most, we cannot go too wrong if we keep our eyes on Jesus:

“To “follow Jesus” means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master’s life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it.” (96.)