

Mental Development

As a revelation of truth, The Urantia Papers can and ought to be engaged in the synthetic mode of your mind, not merely the analytic mode. There are vast discoveries possible when one recognizes all of the indirect disclosures in the revelation. For example, consider the following indirect approach to some of the details of human mental development.

The revelators refer to various phases of mental abnormality, including hysteria, depression, and paranoia. They do not psychiatrically use the word "dementia" for "organic mental deficiency", in contrast to "amentia" for "congenital mental deficiency"; however, they do use the word "demented" in the original sense of "dementia" being the Latin word for "insanity", including the periodic insanity of "lunacy". They use the words "madness" and "mania" in their etymological equivalency, even referring to psychiatric mania as "mental madness" (TUB 133:7.9). In contrast to the mental derangement of "insanity", the revelators use the word "feeble-mindedness" for the mental deficiency (mental retardation) that is psychiatrically denominated "amentia". Of specific interest to the issue of normal mental development is the obsolete spectrum of this mental deficiency--divided into "idiot", then "imbecile", then "moron".

The revelators use only the first of these three terms--and only twice: "An idiot does not have much chance of survival in a primitive and warring tribal social organization." (TUB 52:2.11) "Primitive man could not distinguish between genius and insanity; idiots were either beaten to death or revered as fetish personalities." (TUB 88:1.9) Nonetheless, the so-called "mental age" ranges for the two other categories are well correlated with many statements in the revelation. The age ranges are as follows: idiots (< 3 years old), imbeciles (>= 3 and < 8 years old), morons (>= 8 and < 12 years old). Consider the following six passages:

"These first human beings (and their descendants) reached full maturity at twelve years of age and possessed a potential life span of about seventy-five years." (TUB 62:5.3) "These first two humans--the twins--were a great trial to their Primates parents. They were so curious and adventurous that they nearly lost their lives on numerous occasions before they were eight years old. As it was, they were rather well scarred up by the time they were twelve." (TUB 62:5.6) "Less than two years after Cain's birth, Abel was born, the first child of Adam and Eve to be born in the second garden. When Abel grew up to the age of twelve years, he elected to be a herder; Cain had chosen to follow agriculture." (TUB 76:2.1) "During his last year at school, when he was

twelve years old, Jesus remonstrated with his father about the Jewish custom of touching the bit of parchment nailed upon the doorpost each time on going into, or coming out of, the house and then kissing the finger that touched the parchment." (TUB 124:4.7) "Your whole afterlife will be more happy and dependable because you spent your first eight years in a normal and well-regulated home." (TUB 177:2.4) "... These stages of progressive self-realization were marked off by the following extraordinary events in the Master's bestowal experience: 1. The arrival of the Thought Adjuster 2. The messenger of Immanuel who appeared to him at Jerusalem when he was about twelve years old ..." (TUB 196:1.6)

Notice the definitive references to "full maturity" (i.e., no mental deficiency) when one is twelve years old. A basic indicator of idiocy is that one cannot guard oneself against common physical dangers, with this issue being merely less extreme for imbecility--precisely as the revelators disclose in the second of the six quotations above. In other words, we are very dependent on parents and other guardians during the first eight years of our lives. And the reciprocal fact of being very subjectively impressionable during the first eight years of our lives is precisely stated in the fifth quotation. Note that, on the average, our Adjusters arrive "five years, ten months, and four days" (TUB 108:2.1) after our births; and Jesus' Thought Adjuster arrived after four years, five months, and twenty-two days (see TUB 123:2.1). Therefore, nearly all humans have their Adjusters before they are eight years old.

Regarding the cause of the transitional progress in one's mental development at approximately three years of age, this may be when the fifth adjutant is able to encircuit in a child's mindal self. Consider the following disclosure by the revelators: "Jesus was about three years and two months old at the time of their return to Nazareth. He had stood all these travels very well and was in excellent health and full of childish glee and excitement at having premises of his own to run about in and to enjoy. But he greatly missed the association of his Alexandrian playmates." (TUB 123:1.2) The use of the word "association" suggests that Jesus was relating to his playmates in the mental context of the functioning of the fifth adjutant--the social urge, the mindal energy of socialization. Also, the other statements about his mental state are suggestive of the functioning of the fourth adjutant--"the curiosity-mother of adventure and discovery" (TUB 36:5.9).

Such are the fruits of synthetic reflection in the context of truth.

(reflections by Chris Halvorson)