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Does a mathematical/scientific world-view lead to a clearer or more distorted view of reality-purposive musings inspired from readings in *The URANTIA Book, The Cosmic Family, Volume I, and elsewhere.*

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“Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves”

~ Adrienne Rich

Has science, in its earnest endeavor to free itself from the shackles of oppressive medieval thought, unwittingly shackled itself from a truer perception of reality? Has science, in its haste to distinguish itself from superstition and free itself from restrictive religious thinking, embraced postulates it would not have, had there not been a justifiably strong reaction against medieval religious mores?

The URANTIA Book offers this discernment on the subject:

The mother of modern secularism was the totalitarian medieval Christian church. Secularism had its inception as a rising protest against the almost complete domination of Western civilization by the institutionalized Christian church. (p. 2081 - §2)

One example, in my view, of the scientific community's illogical embrace of a postulate is the generally accepted theory that early life formed as the result of the spontaneous coming together of amino acids to form proteins. As you may know, this theory came about as a result of the following hypothesis and experiment summarized below:

In 1952, Harold Urey, a Nobel Prize winner, then of the University of Chicago, suggested that the first living cell may have come into existence as the result of a lightning flash searing its way through a smoggy primeval atmosphere

composed of hydrogen, ammonia, water vapor and methane. Not that the lightning could have alchemized a living cell at a single stroke; but it might, Dr. Urey proposed, have combined the gases into a number of different amino acids, and these, in turn, might have combined into proteins, and these, in their turn, might have combined themselves into the first living cell.

*In 1955, only three years later, one of Dr. Urey's students, Stanley Miller, mixed the four suggested ingredients in a bottle, discharged an electric spark through them for a week, and discovered on analyzing the result that he had indeed brought about the formation of a number of different amino acids. (Martin Cecil, *On Eagles Wings* p.39)*

What is of interest here is that the scientific community as a whole has, apparently, accepted this finding as a valid hypothesis regarding the origin of life despite the statistical remoteness of this possibility. How remote? Consider the following analysis regarding the chance amalgamation of proteins from amino acids below:

*In 1964 Malcolm Dixon and Edwin Webb, on page 667 of their standard reference work *Enzymes*, point out that depending on the laws of chance arrangement alone—in order to get the needed amino acids close enough to form a given protein molecule there would be required a total volume of amino acid solution equal to 10 to the power of 50 times the volume of the earth.*

But here we are dealing with the chance origin of a very simple protein. What are the odds in favor of the formation of a larger protein molecule such as hemoglobin?

*S.W. Fox and J.F. Foster have worked this out for us in their *Introduction to Protein Chemistry*, page 279. They have shown that only after the necessary amino acids had*

come together to form random protein molecules by the process described above, and only after these protein molecules had been formed in such a quantity that they filled a volume 10 to the power of 512 times our entire known universe ...could we reasonably expect that just one hemoglobin molecule might form itself by luck alone. (Martin Cecil, *On Eagles Wings* p.39-40)

Clearly from the standpoint of statistical analysis the idea of life forming spontaneously is absurd. Yet, this idea is pervasively held throughout the scientific community. I suggest we have accepted this incongruous notion rather than submit ourselves to the remotest possibility of returning to the horrendously oppressive conditions of medieval times. That is to say, there is, I believe, an unspoken fear that should the idea of a personal god be accepted in mainstream scientific thought that this would then lead inexorably to a return of the oppressive mores of medieval times where scientists would find themselves beholden to and persecuted by the church, as were Copernicus and Galileo. Thus, I submit, the animus within the scientific community towards considering the existence of a personal god has more to do with fear and human prejudice than with honest scientific analysis.

What has thus apparently evolved over recent centuries is the development of an existent paradigm of a godless science.

As we know, paradigms are sets of rules (filters if you will) for viewing the world. Regarding the classic, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, by Thomas Kuhn, Ronald C. Tobey in *A Beginner's Guide to Research in the History of Science* offers these insights:

Kuhn distinguished between two kinds of science - normal science and crisis (or revolutionary) science. Normal science is science pursued by a community of scientists who share a paradigm. Revolutionary science is not. A paradigm is a consensus among a community of practicing scientists about certain concrete solutions—called “exemplars”—to central problems of their field. Their consensus is based on commitment to the paradigm. The commitment is derived from their training and their values; it is not the result of critical testing of the paradigm. Normal science is intellectually isolated from “outside” influences, including the paradigms of other scientific fields and nonscientific events and values. Commitment to their paradigm gives a powerful “normality” to the paradigm, enabling scien-

tists to disregard phenomena that appear to contradict it—“anomalies.” (<http://www.horuspublications.com/guide/cm106.html>)

One may wonder then, to what extent the scientific community is willing to promote this paradigm of a godless science. Is the scientific community's investment in a godless science so deeply entrenched that it collectively disregards possibilities to the contrary? Consider Werner Heisenberg's comments on his own uncertainty theory. (The uncertainty theory simply stated is that, regarding sub-atomic particles, it is impossible to know with certainty both the momentum and position of a particle at the same time, the greater the certainty of one quantity the less the certainty of the other, in contrast, this is not the case with larger (Newtonian) size objects, such as billiard balls where the position and momentum can be known with certainty and at the same time.)

In view of the intimate connection between the statistical character of the quantum theory and the imprecision of all perception, it may be suggested that behind the statistical universe of perception there lies hidden a “real” world ruled by causality. Such speculation seems to us—and this we stress with emphasis—useless and meaningless. For physics has to confine itself to the formal description of the relations among perceptions. (W. Heisenberg, *Zeitschrift für Physik*, 43 {1927} p.197)

What is this ‘hidden “real” world ruled by causality’?...apparently Heisenberg was unwilling to consider it. Why? Perhaps it was because an honest examination of this phenomenon could lead one to conceive of a personal god present amongst the particles. A possibility apparently at odds with prevailing scientific thought then and now.

In the realm of sub-atomic particles, the observer indeed has a cause-and-effect impact upon the observed. How could this be unless there was indeed a causality connected to the presence of the observer? Stated otherwise, there exists a relationship between the human observer and the physical matter being observed....a relationship. Here then is a clue that the universe is not static but that in fact our actions have a discernible affect upon it.

Because our actions are intimately connected to our thoughts and attitudes, we may thus expand the ma-

trix of reality being considered to include the attitude and thought-life of the observer as well as the discernible matter being observed. From this point of view, reality becomes more fluid than perhaps we have previously conceived. Accepting for the moment an omnipresent personal creator we can also envisage the presence of a divine or cosmologic vibration pattern whose very presence is revealed to us in direct measure of our spirituality.

This phenomenon is hinted at in *The Cosmic Family, Volume I* where our relation to cosmologic vibration pattern is revealed.

As you incorporate patterns of thinking within yourself, these energy patterns create messages within your physical body that either respond to a cosmologic vibration pattern within the divine mind or to confusion, non-divine pattern, disharmony and self-assertion. (p. 155)

From this vantage point the relation of observer to the observed may be expanded from merely a consideration of the study of sub-atomic particles to one's relation to spirituality generally.

Again drawing from *The URANTIA Book*:

Moral convictions based on spiritual enlightenment and rooted in human experience are just as real and certain as mathematical deductions based on physical observations, but on another and higher level. (p.2077 - §8)

This higher level apparently functions with remarkably elastic properties as is again revealed in *The Cosmic Family, Volume I*:

As you become honest, the gift of honesty is given. As you become patient, the gift of patience is given. As you become giving, the gift of things are given to you. As you seek wisdom over pride, wisdom is given. (p. 119)

The above discussion, in and of itself, I doubt will convince many materialistically minded thinkers to embrace the reality of a living personal god but it is, nonetheless, worth considering; albeit many will likely yield to the temptation of embracing a mechanistic view of reality rather than to consider the presence of an intelligent creator behind the scenes.

Unfortunately, this mechanistic view taken to its logi-

cal conclusion:

...reduces man to a soulless automaton and constitutes him merely an arithmetical symbol finding a helpless place in the mathematical formula of an unromantic and mechanistic universe. (The URANTIA Book p.2077 - §4)

Challenging the mechanistic view-point generally The URANTIA Book points out:

The inconsistency of the modern mechanist is: If this were merely a material universe and man only a machine, such a man would be wholly unable to recognize himself as such a machine, and likewise would such a machine-man be wholly unconscious of the fact of the existence of such a material universe. (p.2078 - §6)

Clearly, however, not all scientists have embraced this paradigm of a godless science. Many have, in fact, contributed to what has become known as the Design Argument. (Stated simply the Design Argument promotes the idea that because there is so much evidence for design in nature, both biologically and cosmically, that this therefore can be taken as evidence of the existence of a designer.) Chief proponents of this view include Isaac Newton who in his addendum to the Principia book three (the General Scholium) reasoned:

The planets and comets will constantly pursue their revolutions in orbits given in kind and position, according to the laws above explained; but though these bodies may, indeed, continue in their orbits by mere laws of gravity, they could by no means have at first derived the regular position of the orbits themselves from those laws.

Another proponent of this Design Argument was William Paley, author of *Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity collected from the Appearances of Nature*. Frederick Ferre in his classic essay *Design Argument* summarizes Paley's work in this way:

In that work Paley argued explicitly for the presence of intelligently designed features in nature. The marks of design, he said, are what we observe in contrasting a watch with a stone. The stone, for all we can tell, might just have "happened"; but the watch is clearly put together out of parts that work together in an arrangement that is essential to their function, and the function of the whole has a discernible and beneficial use. Wherever we find such a constellation of characteristics, Paley said, we must admit

that we are in the presence of “contrivance” and design and since in our experience the only known source of such contrivance is the intelligence of some designer, we are entitled—obliged—to infer an intelligent designer somewhere behind anything possessing the above mentioned marks of design. (Design Argument, Frederick Ferre, Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Vol. I, p. 674)

Apparently then, we have arrived at two competing world views; a mechanistic godless universe versus an omnipresent intelligent designer, with the human scientist cast adrift somewhere in between.

Again, *The URANTIA Book* offers these insights:

The universe is not like the laws, mechanisms, and the uniformities which the scientist discovers, and which he comes to regard as science, but rather like the curious, thinking, choosing, creative, combining, and discriminating scientist who thus observes universe phenomena and classifies the mathematical facts inherent in the mechanistic phases of the material side of creation. Neither is the universe like the art of the artist, but rather like the striving, dreaming, aspiring, and advancing artist who seeks to transcend the world of material things in an effort to achieve a spiritual goal. (p.2080 - §7)

Thus it appears it is the pursuit of science, rather than the science itself, which may offer us the most meaningful approach to reality.

Along this line of reasoning Cardinal Nicholas Cusanus of the fifteenth century observed:

Mathematics induces the mind to withdraw somewhat from physical immediacy into the sphere of reflective meanings, thus preparing for our further move toward God’s invisible reality. (Idea of God 1400-1800, James Collins, Dictionary of the History of Ideas, Vol. II p. 346)

If one will allow the supposition that mathematics is the product of the human mind then the field, taken as a whole, reflects the breadth, width and height of humanity’s ideational habitat; offering at the same time an expansive as well as conditioned conceptual framework.

In this regard *The URANTIA Book* offers this insight:

While the domain of mathematics is beset with qualitative

limitations, it does provide the finite mind with a conceptual basis of contemplating infinity. There is no quantitative limitation to numbers, even in the comprehension of the finite mind. No matter how large the number conceived, you can always envisage one more being added. And also, you can comprehend that that is short of infinity, for no matter how many times you repeat this addition to number, still always one more can be added. (p.1294 - §11)

Returning to our original proposition: Does a mathematical/scientific world-view lead to a clearer or more distorted view of reality? *The URANTIA Book* again offer us these clarifying insights:

Mathematics, material science, is indispensable to the intelligent discussion of the material aspects of the universe, but such knowledge is not necessarily a part of the higher realization of truth or of the personal appreciation of spiritual realities. Not only in the realms of life but even in the world of physical energy, the sum of two or more things is very often something more than, or something different from, the predictable additive consequences of such unions. The entire science of mathematics, the whole domain of philosophy, the highest physics or chemistry, could not predict or know that the union of two gaseous hydrogen atoms with one gaseous oxygen atom would result in a new and qualitatively superadditive substance—liquid water. The understanding knowledge of this one physiochemical phenomenon should have prevented the development of materialistic philosophy and mechanistic cosmology. (p.141 - §4)

In conclusion, on the subject of mathematical reasoning, the universe, reality and whether or not there is an omnipresent personal god, perhaps the most stimulating close to this essay would be the query, so eloquently posited in *The URANTIA Book*, “...whence comes all this vast universe of mathematics without a Master Mathematician?” (p.2077 - §4).

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