

"...the world of BRIAHA was not that in which anything material was formed, emanated or otherwise brought into being; it was rather the Elohist World, that of Panurgic forces and intelligence, which became formative in YETZIRAH, but did not produce matter except in the Fourth World."

-THE HOLY KABBALAH
(Waite no date:612)

13. PRE-EXISTENCE: PRELUDE OR PRACTICUM?

CHAPTER CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	231
INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE HANDICAP	232
SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM	233
NAVAJO RUG	234
HOPIOID LANGUAGES	236
HOW LONG, OH LORD?	238
PRE-EXISTENT TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS	240
OPPOSITION CONDITION	242
SPIRIT RESISTANCE	243
SATAN AND THE BLACK PARTY	245
TIMETABLE FOR THE COUNCIL AND WAR	247
FAITH IN THE PREEXISTENCE	248
MORTAL ASSIGNMENTS	249
CONCLUSION	250

INTRODUCTION:

Was the PE a time during which all embryonic or new born spirits -not necessarily the same thing- participated in the so-called "War in Heaven" and then sat back to await their turn on earth?^{1} SMD might lead one to that conclusion, because the scanty scriptures about the PE do not indicate otherwise. There is little discussion of the Council in Heaven or of the War in Heaven, and there less information about our individual roles in those heroic sagas. We do have clear outlines of the general roles of the protagonist and the antagonist and of their respective 'plans'.^{2} The common conception of 'heaven' being a place where we had wings and sat around playing harps might fit with some people's concept of what we did in the PE. However, as already noted, we claim as part of our theory that the PE was the first of the three testing phases that constitute the metamorphosis for our spirits. We also claim that each/all three phases are characterized by equally important tests, equally complex challenges and equally profound consequences to our spirits.^{3} So we really don't buy into the ornithological model of any heavens.

Back up a minute. The leading sentence of this article is misleading: it refers to the PE as a "time". In fact, the PE is more properly described as a state, a phase or a condition because time as mortals comprehend it, is not a true descriptor of the thing termed eternity. The simplest description of eternity that we will use is to refer to that 'condition', for lack of a better

¹ This assumption, that the full complement of spirits was created before the council entails a curious problem: When was the world created, before or after the Council?

The Christian creation stories suggest that the creation of earth was done after the council had been held and the war fought, but that would not preclude the existence of the rest of the universe.

And an equally interesting and related issue involves the possibility of other inhabited worlds in this universe. By "inhabited" we refer to humans only. If there are such, then one would be led to believe that the universe was created in response to decisions that were not related to the Council of this world. This is because those other worlds could have been in existence at the previous time.

Sagan discusses the latter possibility at length in "The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence" (in Gingrich 1977:94-103). He offers different methodologies that would facilitate a search for such, the most ambitious of them being an array 1,500 radio telescopes, each being 100 meters in diameter. However, given the constraints on pure research monies, such experiments won't be undertaken in the foreseeable future. However, he believes that the chances are good that there are intelligent life forms "out there."

² Non-canonical books also provide some insight into the PE, though not much.

³ Regarding the SMD belief in a pre-existence it is interesting to note one of the actions of the Second Council of Constantinople, in A.D. 553, a fine post-Christian (of course, some of you will argue that it was a Christian meeting. You are right in a sense, so we will amend the term and refer to "a fine post-apostasy") conference, convened after the primitive church was dead. It decreed that:

"Whosoever shall support the mythical doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul and the consequent wonderful opinion of its return, let him be anathema." (Evans-Wentz 1960:234)

The problem for us non-specialists in knowing how to interpret this decree, vis a vis the present discussion, is to determine whether the abomination involved only the doctrine of reincarnation, or whether it was intended to deny the reality of the pre-existence of our spirits. Or both. Evans-Wentz emphasized reincarnation since it is fundamental to Buddhism, but we don't, though we discuss reincarnation in Chapter 35. REINCARNATION AGAIN.

word, that has no beginning and no end. {⁴} That certainly isn't something most of us can grasp. Note also that the word 'pre-existence' entails the notion of time, specifically a period of time that precedes some other time. Why are we forced to refer to time in this manner? {⁵}

INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGE HANDICAP:

Indo-European (I-E) languages, {⁶} of which English is a member, are syntactically, i.e. grammatically, obligated to place all experiences on a continuum of time. They do this primarily by requiring that (almost) all utterances have verbs, and that tense be expressed by attaching special endings or creating special forms of the verbs. Time-reference is obligatory and cannot be deleted from discourse, whether written or oral {⁷}. This notion of time is actually expressed by the combination of a language's syntax, morphology, and semantics, and all three of these are tied up with,

⁴ The PE is one 'part' of eternity, and there are many characteristics and conditions that we are not even aware of that can be used to measure and describe it. Rucker's books, GEOMETRY, RELATIVITY AND THE FOURTH DIMENSION and THE FOURTH DIMENSION - A GUIDED TOUR OF THE HIGHER UNIVERSES, present fascinating information about forward and back light cones, lines of simultaneity, world lines, Minkowski diagrams, etc. On one level these might be taken as descriptors and/or characteristics of eternity. But closer examination shows that this does not seem to be true for some of these concepts. The problem is that some of them actually describe limitations on what is perceivable by an observer, who lives in a universe, looking outward, restricted by the speed of light. But other concepts may apply to eternity. For example, Minkowski diagrams seem to capture something about the nature of eternity, but light cones are limited to the region of an observer, so seem like minor characteristics or even non-characteristics of eternity.

Much later: we wonder whether or not we really want to postulate that the PE was part of 'eternity'. No doubt it is in a particular sense, however, whether or not we mean that, depends on how one defines 'eternity'. If it is the unchanging state of {foreverxforever}, the PE isn't part of it. But if eternity is more generally defined, the PE is part of it. So far I have failed to explain what I mean. Look at it this way. If the metamorphosis is a sort of loop off the side of eternity, a sort of temporary spur off the main rails, then it really isn't to be considered part of the main route. It is merely an ephemeral stage that we pass through, after which it is ironed out, smoothed out, after which we return to the main route of eternity. The PE then disappears for us after we take the brief frolic in the temporary playground of the metamorphosis. Hopefully this helps you understand what I intend.

⁵ I am going to make you sick of time during the next few pages by referring repeatedly to the time bond our language and culture imposes on us. I will do it to make the point that 'time' is a mortal dimension, a characteristic of mortality, etc. It is something that is an artifact of the testing environment we are confined to here. It is a by-product of the interaction of our veiled spirit with its brain interface and the data streams it collects and processes.

Time is NOT a part of eternity. Is it part of the PE or PM? We don't know. And it really doesn't matter anyway for our test down here.

⁶ This is one of the major language groups in the world today, though by no means the dominant one, which includes as many as ten major branches, depending on the linguist making the determination. The more familiar modern language groups subsumed include the Germanic, Romance, Slavic groups, along with Celtic, Greek, Albanian, etc. Sanskrit is its best known ancestor, though it obviously derives from another language whose characteristics can only be theorized through the use of various linguistic techniques subsumed under the rubric of 'glottochronology'. Proto-Hittite or Hurrian, etc. are postulated as earliest forms of human speech, though their characteristics are vague and confined to phonemes, the syntax and morphophonemics being un-recoverable.

In any event, I-E languages have highly evolved verbs, every form of which is characterized by person, number, tense, mood and voice. Tense is the one we refer to here, that binds our minds, forcing us to perceive of reality as a sequence of events, when the reality of eternity to Gods is not sequenced in this manner. We don't believe. Everything seems to exist at once, simultaneously, which is why they can foresee our future. It isn't future to them, because it already exists for them.

⁷ Tim Shopen wrote his dissertation on THE LINGUISTIC USE OF SILENCE. He believed that pauses and silence are used morphologically, perhaps even syntactically, expressing various things that hearers do in fact comprehend as clearly as they understand oral discourse. But this non-verbal manner of expressing time is rare and insignificant for this discussion.

and help shape, a world view of I-E language speakers.^{8}

Note that while I-E languages are obligated to place the PE before mortality, SMD does acquiesce thereto. Why? We surmise that this is probably because the language and culture within which SMD was restored, have that compulsion or obligation. Therefore anything framed within the context of this pair will reflect that underlying compulsion.^{9} Throughout this work we will refer to the PE having "preceded" earth life in the mortal sense of time, although time is a meaningless construct in dealing with that condition.^{10}

SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM:

Regarding the issue of I-E language handicaps, English does restrict our ability to perceive the universe -as well as the PE, mortality and post-mortality- as a set of co-existent concurrent conditions or processes. What we think we perceive when we look at our reality -at least for English readers of this work- which has this Indo-European past-present-future thread running through it, is a sequence of immutably linked units to which we assign terms like seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, decades, centuries, millennia, epochs and eras. Those are what we think are real. Those are the things we use to count our reality. These are the steel links of the I-E chain of time you live with every (waking?^{11}) moment.

⁸ Which caused which is a question that linguists and cultural anthropologists wrestle with. Chicken and egg sort of thing. The two, language and culture, are so intertwined and affect each other at such deep levels that it is not possible to assign priority to either. They are acquired simultaneously by each child, and it would be immoral to set up some interesting experiments that might determine the priority, if any, of one over the other. But whatever the case, time is mandatorily present in I-E discourse. And Western Civilization. Too bad for us, really, when we dabble around in this stuff.

⁹ A more practical answer is that there is no way to separate the message from the medium, as Marshall McLuhan told us 25 years ago. Even the Lord cannot give us something that would generally be comprehensible but which would be outside the stew of culture and language we partake of daily.

¹⁰ Is the PE in a different set of dimensions from those of mortality and from those of the Spirit World and from those of the Post-Resurrection world? This sort of concept has been suggested for several centuries, according to Rudy Rucker, though it is not well-known in the LDS faith. But a propos Rucker, he makes a statement that illuminates the grandeur of the profession of the astrophysicist and cosmologist, the one which is most likely to shed a glimmer of light on this business of the location of the PE, though only indirectly and unintentionally:

"Questions about the overall shape of space belong to the science called cosmology. I love cosmology: there's something uplifting about viewing the entire universe as a single object with a certain shape. What entity, short of God, could be nobler or worthier of man's attention than the cosmos itself? Forget about interest rates, forget about war and murder, let's talk about space. (1984:91)

In addition to his excitement about cosmology, which is either the parent of, or a subset of astrophysics, his reference to God is fascinating. Only God is more noble or worthy of man's attention. Interesting, isn't that? It is no accident, then, that Stephen Hawking, also attributes creative powers to a God in an unabashed way, referring specifically to Him 11 times in A BRIEF VIEW OF TIME. This breed of scientist is closest to the matter of creation of the cosmos than any other profession, a topic which receives great attention in SMD rites.

¹¹ We wonder whether our sleep periods are so tightly bound up with this conceptual chain. Dreams are free-floating sorts of things, that sometimes blend occurrences from different points in mortal time, as if they co-occurred. Does this blending indicate anything about the "syntax" of dreams, i.e. are they subject to weaker time constraints? Do we even dream discourse in our language? Sometimes we seem to, but other times I'm not sure whether we really 'hear' and 'speak' words of our language - perhaps we communicate telepathically or some such way.

However, the construct of astro-physicists and cosmologists of a space-time continuum, is a more likely descriptor of eternity than are these time terms. At least it loosens the absolute grip of time on reality. This concept is difficult for the non-specialist, I-E language speaker to grasp^{12}. But this is not due to an inherent complexity or difficulty of the concept^{13}. We claim that it is due, in a large degree, to this pervasive emphasis of our language and culture with time-sequencing of events. This emphasis, from a practical point of view, virtually overshadows other dimensions or axes, and makes it difficult for us to grasp other ways to conceive of the universe and the events and conditions of which it is comprised. So the concept of a space-time continuum is difficult to understand.

This raises the question about whether speakers of some non-I-E languages -and cultures- which don't have the same temporal obligation, might not grasp this concept more easily.^{14} Various linguists have noted that some non-Indo-European language groups do not bind the mind to the same degree with this type of grammatical/cultural time bond. Some American Indian languages, for example, lack this emphasis, and this is one of the major reasons for the difference in the world views of the two groups.^{15}

For those who believe in an astral plane, which can be entered during sleep, the concept of timelessness seems to fit. The passage of time is reported as being different than the passage of mortal time.

12
Zukav states this better:

"Newton's laws depict events which are simple to understand and easy to picture. Quantum mechanics depicts the probabilities of phenomena which defy conceptualization and are impossible to visualize. Therefore, these phenomena must be understood in a way that is not more difficult than our usual way of understanding, but different from it." (1977:46)

So Zukav attributes some of the difficulty in grasping new concepts to their "differentness", rather than their difficulty. That is what is believed here.

13
Once more, Zukav says it well:

"Quantum theory is not difficult to explain because it is complicated. Quantum theory is difficult to explain because the words which we must use to communicate it are not adequate for explaining quantum phenomena." (1979:275)

14
As an example of how a non-I-E language is able to handle processes in ways that are superior to English, take two Finnish cases (which apply to nouns and adjectives), the essive and the translative cases. Admittedly, an agglutinative (which combines stems and endings to create new words and meanings) language is difficult to understand for non-synthetic language speakers, eg. English speakers. But in addition to the strangeness of attaching endings to stems to express meanings, these particular cases represent particular difficulties for the English speaker because they deal with processes and conditions, without reference to time or tense. Most Finnish cases have to do with grammatical functions or propositional relationships, but these two are unique in that they define conditions or characteristics of the noun to which they are attached.

The essive ending is "-na" and its general meaning is a "state of being". It is sometimes translated, though awkwardly, with the words "like" or "as". In a similar vein, the translative case, with the ending "-ksi" is translated as a "change of state", or "becoming" something. Since English doesn't make such distinctions at the morphological level, that is within a word, it is difficult for the native English speaker to grasp the full range of meaning of words which have these endings attached, and the situations in which they are correct. However, once grasped, they are marvelous tools for expressing the two states/changes, meanings that seem awkward when expressed through phrases and clauses. These are examples of non-temporal processes and conditions that might enable these language speakers to more easily comprehend space-time.

15
In fact, some Amerindian languages handle tense in a manner that is wholly unexpected in terms of the usual I-E verb morphology and syntax. For example, in Tubatulabal, a nearly-extinct Uto-Aztecan language of the Kern River area of eastern California, the future tense ending is attached to the subject of the sentence, a noun. NOT to a verb. No I-E language would ever attach a tense marker to a noun in any position, regardless of its meaning or function. What an outrageous idea! Tense endings are absolutely, unqualifiedly restricted to verbs. This freedom of placement of tense markers is another example of the freedom some language groups

NAVAJO RUG:

Let have a story here. Years ago my parents were in southern Utah on a vacation tour.^{16} They visited a Navajo home in front of which was a loom with a beautiful wool rug partially completed. After the conversation got to the point that one could discuss purchasing the rug, a price was agreed upon. It was also agreed that it would be completed for a certain day in the following week. They spent time touring other parts of the state until the agreed upon day came to pick up the blanket. When they returned to the home, the rug was unfinished and the weaver was gone. Then, when dad asked when she would be home, the person quickly answered, "Tuesday afternoon at 2:30." He knew he was providing the sort of answer that pleased the Anglo - something with fixed dates and times. But these temporal concerns didn't match his own culture as shown by the incomplete wool rug.

The Navajo perception of the universe doesn't require the use of a clock, but that does not make it defective. In a similar manner, the Anglo concern for times^{17} is also a legitimate world view. But because of these deeply rooted predispositions, which seem to discount or exclude the other, neither culture can truly comprehend the other in the arena of time management. Their own world views and cultures have evolved (pardon the E-word, please) in such a way that they each lack basic tools required to understand the other.^{18} That doesn't mean that either one is

have in their handling of time.

¹⁶ Note how this event takes on the sense of a wholly completed event which occurred in the distant past, an event which is unrelated in any manner to 'today'. English does that to us. The reality is, however, that this event still exists in some psychedelic fashion.

¹⁷ It seems likely that Americans' penchant for goals and objectives are related in part to this clock business.

¹⁸ My own experience with foreign languages demonstrated this clearly. I lived in Finland for two and a half years and spent the last three months as a full-time translator. My fluency was such that natives mistook me for another native, particularly since I took great pains to dress like them. And four years later, my wife and I lived for two years in the Amazon basin speaking a blend of Portuguese and Indian dialects while living the midst of a mestizo population.

The point now: in neither setting did I every truly comprehend what native speakers meant in all settings, in anything but an obvious, superficial manner. This was particularly surprising in Finland because I was repeatedly mistaken for a Finn when I lived in Helsinki, at least based on pronunciation and appearances. But I could tell from the nature of the conversations, where Finns were obviously communicating things I couldn't grasp, that I lacked the deep acculturation that occurs when one is born into a culture and grows up in it, learning both that language and culture. Consequently, when a native speaker used a word that carried a subtle cultural nuance that was separate from the obvious lexical content, I missed that meaning. And after those experiences in both countries, I have doubted that most of us who learn another language as an adult, will acquire the cultural fluency that one learns when growing up from childhood within the culture where the language is used. Granted, there are a few marked exceptions. The best known example for me is Joseph Conrad. His novels illustrate a profound grasp of both English language and culture, in spite of the fact that he was non a native-English speaker. But these exceptions confirm the rule for me.

I was gratified to find a similar conclusion stated by Peter Freuchen. He was a remarkable person who did a most remarkable thing. He, a Danish anthropologist, chose to live inside of the Greenland Eskimo culture for more than 50 years. He married an Eskimo woman by whom there were two children. Through this wife, and his own excellent abilities, he was able to learn a great deal about Eskimo culture, but note how categorically he denies the possibility of ever actually knowing or understanding Eskimo culture:

"...Though I myself spent more than half a century with the Eskimos, I do not believe I ever completely understood them. On the contrary, I know less now than when I first went to the Arctic, believing in my youthful inexperience, that after a year or two I would have the logical explanation

defective. But it does mean that they may not communicate well in some situation.

HOPIOID LANGUAGES:

In contrast to I-E languages, some Amerindian languages like Hopi, a Uto-Aztecan language of the Aztecan-Tanoan phylum, (or a Yuan language of the Hokan phylum, depending on one's preference^{19}), replace the obligatory time arrow in a sentence with an emphasis on process, on the manner in which things are done, time scales being of secondary importance. For example, rather than simply state that, "a horse went somewhere," the manner of going must be described, i.e. ambling, galloping, quickly, slowly, etc. It is impossible to simply state that it "went", because tense is a secondary concern. Benjamin Lee Whorf^{20} suggested that Hopi should be the language of physicists due to its ability to handle subtle distinctions of process^{21}. In a similar manner, a Hopioid language may be better suited for grasping some of the subtle and important aspects of the POS than English is.

As an example, take the Perfection Doctrine^{22} which tells us that mortals, who by origin, nature and practice are sinful, may nonetheless demonstrate worthiness to enter the Celestial Kingdom. English 'makes' it extremely difficult to grasp the fact that it is, in fact, a possibility that each one of us badly blemished

of all arctic phenomena. I gradually began to see that there were many things that I had misunderstood in the beginning. And after ten or fifteen years among the Eskimos, I finally realized that problems deepened into mysteries; and that I knew practically nothing about them. Their souls had depths almost impossible for a white man to penetrate," (1961:140)

That is a remarkable conclusion from an anthropologist who was obviously trained in understanding other cultures, who should have learned the second culture during his 50 years in that setting, IF it were possible to learn a second culture at the deep, internal level referred to here. If you read his book, you will understand just how deeply he did acculturate otherwise. For example, he describes in detail the types of foods that were considered delicacies and indicates that he, too, learned to savor them, e.g. year old game birds which, without being plucked or even gutted, had been sewn into a seal skin that retained its layer of blubber. He considered this to be one of the finest delicacies of the Eskimo diet. So he clearly did acculturate in their "material" culture world. But he said he couldn't learn the culture. That is the conclusion I reached, though my own experiences were considerably more abbreviated. No one can get into another culture if they attempt the transition after reaching adulthood, and perhaps even teenagehood.

The point of this lengthy note is that first, adults can't learn other cultures and languages, and second, language and culture binds our minds incredibly tightly, although we are generally oblivious to this fact.

¹⁹ These options exist because of disagreement between language classifications developed by different linguists. The source for this information in parentheses is the CF and FM Voegelin MAP OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES, published by the University of Washington Press, 1966.

²⁰ His famous "Whorfian Hypothesis" is based on his beliefs about the correlation between language and culture. See his LANGUAGE, THOUGHT AND REALITY for a discussion of this "Hypothesis" and related topics.

²¹ So one wonders whether there are other languages today which would be better suited than I-E languages (German, French, English, Spanish, Italian) for doing quantum mechanics. Is Japanese better?

²² Recall that this doctrine actually applies to the product of a lengthy, three-phase metamorphosis, so it isn't just mortality that is the issue.

blundering mortals can aspire to achieve.^{23} In contrast to the perfection of the Savior, even a prophet is sinful. The scripture that states that no unclean thing can dwell in the presence of God (the Celestial Kingdom) would imply that even a prophet, who is so good in comparison to the rest of us, but who is nonetheless flawed when compared to real perfection, would be denied admission on the basis of this scripture. But other scriptures do indicate that prophets, and even the rest of us, have a chance of getting to the top, so there has to be something about our spirits that allows such judgment to be made, something which we can achieve on earth which is not actually perfection.

If our language were better suited to handle the diversity of functions and processes, and the subtleties of changes and states of being -as capable of doing that as it is of handling the extremely fine distinctions of time that it can^{24}- then perhaps we would find it easier to grasp how it is that mortals can be in a condition of imperfection that nonetheless merits such blessedness. One wonders, then, whether Hopi or another language, may not be more capable of making subtle distinctions about conditions or states of being that would enable the speaker/hearer to reconcile the sinful reality of this world to the real possibility of exaltation.

HOW LONG, OH LORD?

Another obvious point to make here regarding the PE: for those spirits who have not yet found their way down here, their PE is still going on. So we cannot unequivocally refer to the PE as having 'preceded' earthlife. That can only be said -and even then only within a small set of conditions, I suspect- when we as individuals living on the earth, or individuals in post-mortality, are speaking because on the obligatory time scale into which I-E mortality is embedded, anything that has gone 'before' the 'present' is assumed to have preceded it, and equally importantly,

²³ I hasten to admit that there is another significant difficulty with this doctrine. This one arises from our Judaeo-Christian ethic regarding sin and punishment. Theoretically we are to love the sinner but to hate the sin. However, practically speaking, we are hidebound in a tradition where we hate them both. So when we Judaeo-Christian English speakers hear the Perfection Doctrine, we are constitutionally unable to comprehend it at a deep intuitive level. Intellectually, we grasp it, but only intellectually. As a doctrine, it ought to give us confidence, reassurance, comfort and encouragement. Instead, it depresses us.

²⁴ It is one of those commonplace facts that are not understood by non-specialists that English (or any Indo-European language for that matter) is, in fact, capable of expressing extraordinarily subtle and/or complicated distinctions of time/tense with its highly flexible, complex verb. (See Bull's TIME, TENSE AND THE VERB for an excellent discussion of this matter. He uses Spanish as his model, but its verb is fully comparable to that of English.) This contrasts with some other languages.

Take Finnish as an example again. It has a verb, that while capable of expressing adequate time relationships, is nonetheless fairly simple in comparison to English. For example, the Finnish passive voice has even lost five of its person/number markers, the full complement of tenses is limited, etc. However, Finnish compensates in its own remarkable way through the use of five infinitives, rather than just a single one as in English. And the third infinitive is capable of transformations that perform astonishing feats. It can take a verb and convert it into a comparative temporal adverb expressing, for example, the translative case meaning. The latter is startling because case is typically confined to nominal systems. Whether either language exceeds the other in range and subtlety of time expressions is difficult to determine. However, the point remains that this ability to handle time fetters the mind to varying degrees.

is assumed to have ceased to exist.^{25} This point, that the PE co-exists with mortality, is nonetheless interesting because it appears as a minor example of the doctrine that everything is "present" with the Lord: things that in a rigidly defined temporal system appear sequential, and therefore never concurrent, are nonetheless concurrent with Him.^{26}

Next, regarding the length of "time" that we, at least, were in the PE, no one can say with any certainty how long we were there. However, once more, we can pull in several tangential references which shed a weak light on this issue. First, we can talk about how many children there were up there. Second, we can talk about how long it took to create the earth. So hang on.

We don't know how many spirits lived in the PE, other than that all of us mortals who have, do and will live on this earth will have lived up there.^{27} But there are 5+ billion of us on earth now, and if we arbitrarily allow the same number for those who have preceded us and an equal number for those waiting their turns, we arrive at a total of 15,000,000,000 spirits, +/-10 or so, who will eventually have been processed through this particular testing maze. If they all came from a single mother, then allowing even a single month of our time for the 'gestation' period,^{28} the length of time that went into the creation of that many spirits would be around 1.25 billion years of our time, rather a long time.^{29} So let's allocate 1.25 billion years to the length of time it took to create us all. That would be the first portion of the PE.

The other scrap of indirect evidence to drag into this

²⁵ Note, again, how English is unable to state this relationship in a simple, comprehensible, non-contradictory manner, that there are two processes going on, each in a different 'location', each of which is in different degrees of completion, but occurring and existing simultaneously. True, we can explain these aspects of the situation as I just have, but at a deep, internal level, it is contradictory in English for me to say that my PE is over, but that it still exists.

²⁶ Rudy Rucker also makes this point in another way by stating that in a Hilbert space of infinite dimensions, all of us would be alike, and all things would be present "at once". Sounds like he's trying to describe the Celestial Kingdom?

²⁷ This is another unstated assumption of SMD: all mortals come here from the same PE. However, there really is no evidence that states that there could not be mortals from several different PE conditions who made the trip here. We endorse the assumption, however, that we all derived from the same one. That is a stronger position than the other.

A related issue raised by some involves spirits who end up on other earths. These contend that all of those spirits derive from OUR PE. To us it seems so silly to consider such a possibility, given the magnitude of creations that must exist, if we believe our own dogma, that it seems preposterous to postulate only one PE for all spirits for all worlds created by all Creators, etc. However, some claim this is the case. We will take the strong position here, as well, and deny that there is only one PE. Then we will claim, instead, that each world has its own PE. Why would individuals believe otherwise?

²⁸ See 11. SPIRIT BIRTH ORDINANCES for a discussion of this matter. That is a nice discussion based on logic and organization of information in the canon. Implications of a few vague doctrines are ferreted out and displayed for your consideration.

²⁹ However, it is noted that if a collection of wives were involved, the time would be decreased. If there were only 10 wives/mothers, the time would be reduced to a mere 125 million of our years. This notion raises the profoundly disturbing SMD doctrine of polygamy, which, doctrinally, makes LDS akin to Islam. I don't understand the doctrine, I dislike it and I would like to reject it.

And of course, time is irrelevant anyway. Why do we keep picking on this time business?

discussion regarding the length of the PE is the creation of the world. According to the evidence of the earth sciences - geology, stratigraphy, etc.- the length of time that it took to create the world before *homo sapiens*^{30} appeared was on the order of 5 billion of our years.^{31} That, too, is a believable number based on the soundness of the scientific evidence collected.^{32}

So if we put the creation of children at one billion mortal years, and if the earth was created in 4 billion years, then we have a PE that covered 5 billion of our years^{33}. Obviously, those of us who came down first had a shorter one than we today did, but the difference is trivial. And in this long period of time, we either got terribly bored, or we engaged in various sorts of enterprises and probably accomplished a great deal.

PRE-EXISTENT TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS:

³⁰ Part of the problem in determining just how long involves the sparse fossil record and the difficulty in identifying the "first" man. *Homo habilis* is old, and seems to come close, but s/he isn't *homo sapiens*. We really don't know when the latter first appeared. Nor, for that matter, do we even know how long Adam remained in the Garden of Eden. The impression is probably that the time period was not more than a few thousand years, but why do I say that? I don't know. It could have been considerably longer. If he named all of the animals, as stated in the scripture, then we ask whether he did name the dinosaurs? Some of them are still hanging around in the form of emus, sharks, silverfish, turtles, crocodiles, cockroaches, odonata, etc. so he could have seen those varieties in a "short" garden experience.

But it is also possible that he may have lived there a very long time, perhaps even living through the tail end of the mesozoic on into the cenozoic. But if we allow him to have lived in the mesozoic, why not have him in the paleozoic? No reason not to. So: maybe he came down during the Cambrian period and watched the whole evolutionary process, starting with the amino acid soup that yielded the first single celled creatures that ultimately evolved (yes, that lovely concept. More later on it.) into what we know as modern flora and fauna. (You don't like that idea, do you.) This doesn't seem likely, however, if the creation story is correct. It describes the formation and creation of the world before A & E are placed in the already-prepared Garden of Eden. Of course, the story could be incorrect. We will accept it at face value and take the position that the earth, therefore the universe, was created before A & E were placed on Earth.

Obviously, it really doesn't matter, but we are making the point that the brevity of the scriptural accounts may create the impression that the Garden experience was equally brief, which is no more likely, than is the contrary idea.

³¹ If you have a hard time with that length of time, you need to drag out a stream table and do some experimenting. Using controlled flows of water on soil of measured density which is placed on a table tilted at a known angle, one will obtain results, which are reproducible by other similarly equipped investigators, regarding rates of erosion and deposition of soil, regardless of where in the world you do your experiment. Those results are one of the data elements used to estimate the length of time involved in various geological processes.

³² We could spend hours on the creation myths, eg. the "fragment-of-another-world theory", etc., but they aren't credible enough, to an open mind, to warrant discussion. But an example of the peculiar behavior of some who espouse these peculiar, unscientific stories comes from the 1960's in Salt Lake City. A local metallurgist turned himself into a cosmologist/geologist and pushed the 1-day-equals-1,000-years scripture as the explanation of the length of time that went into the creation of this world. He amassed a sizeable following among the less discriminating, but for some reason, he refused to address the geological record of the earth. Several geologists from a neighboring university approached him with an invitation that he accompany them to view two geological formations, the angular unconformity and the discontinuity, for the purpose of allowing him to explain to them how his 6,000 year long creation would account for them. The rationale for the choice of these two was that in standard scientific theory, they both require huge lengths of time to be created, so they provided optimal opportunity for the doctor to explain how things "really are/were." Curiously, he flatly refused to either discuss the formations with them, or to accompany them on the one-day trip needed to view them both.

Regrettably, this mind set is not all that uncommon within mainstream Mormonism, at least not in my experience. One of my daughter's MIA teachers even taught the fragmented-earth theory as doctrine in class. When I asked her about this matter, in a curious, non-threatening manner, she was greatly stressed that I didn't agree with her. And her explanation for believing was that, "That was what I was taught when I was a child." HmMMM. Weak explanation, don't you think? That's fine for a child, though sort of dishonest (but any more dishonest or worse than the Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy or Santa Clause) but an adult?

³³ The evidence to support the concept of two serially ordered time periods -one for the creation of the spirits, and another for the creation of this earth- is Abraham 3:22, where he said all intelligences were organized before the world was.

To return to the nature of the PE, as noted above, we claim here that it was a "period" of testing in precisely the same way that mortality is a "period" of testing^{34}. The PE was the first of the three testing phases which were designed to elicit critical information about our spirits. The three phases are complementary to each other. We use the term 'complementary' in the particular sense of 'items that occur one at a time, without any appearing simultaneously'. Whether these phases duplicate each other is not provable, but we surmise that there is both something unique about each phase, as well as something comparable. The priesthood and its various components are in place in all three phases, so there will be similarities. When asking, "why three phases only?", "why not four or why not two?" there is no obvious answer. But we postulate that each phase fulfills some function, or functions, that cannot be filled by the others. The Parsimony Principle suggests this to be the case, in the sense that there will be no overlap or waste.

In regards to the purpose of each phase, there is no scriptural evidence that:

- a) **there are even three testing phase,**
- b) **that they would each have unique purposes, or**
- c) **what those purposes might be.**

Reading between the lines, the evidence that suggests what the major purpose of the PE must involve the Council and War in Heaven. We claim this is so because those are the most frequently attested fact about the PE. If those oft-repeated stories have any relevance here, they must involve free agency and choice-making^{35}. But how is that any different from the other two phases? All three phases entail testing and exercise of free agency. However, it is possible that there were two major purpose of the PE: first, to acquaint us with our free agency, which would be a remarkable ability for a new spirit, to sort of let us solo with it to get the feel of the thing; and second, to present us with an extraordinary choice, the Council/War Choice to see how we did after we have become experienced in using the thing. That certainly is a unique pair of objectives for the duration of the metamorphosis. Nowhere/nowhen else do we have the opportunity -or necessity- of doing those precise things because once they have been accomplished, they cease to be opportunities.

Now, during mortality, we individually live with the consequence of that choice. We are already accustomed to using agency, so the major challenges here are different from those of the PE. It is obvious that the qualities of faith, obedience,

³⁴ If this were written Hopi -and you were able to read it- that sentence would be more instructive or convincing of the nature of the PE and of this business of testing. Sorry, we couldn't understand it either.

³⁵ Granted, there are other principles of truth and justice, etc. involved in the story, but for us individually, that is of less importance than the effect of that controversy on us, which ultimately resolves into the matter making choices and the one we made.

repentance and free agency are also tested during mortality, as they are presumably tested during the PE, and will be tested during PM. But the precise environmental context in which these qualities are tested varies between the PE, mortality and post-mortality, so the tests and their meaning must also vary. We speculate that family relations and morality are the major test of mortality.^{36} But we have no guess about what the major test of post-mortality will be/is.

As noted, Christianity doesn't indicate that comprehensive testing occurred in the PE^{37}, but there are various arguments for that concept. The first argument for testing derived from the Parsimony Principle, though in an unexpected manner. First, there is a corollary to this principle which asserts that everything done by the Lord has a purpose, that everything He creates has meaning and functions embedded in them.^{38} Second, since the PE was a long time for us, we conclude, based on this corollary, that the Lord created or arranged it that way. Since He created it, according to this corollary, there must be a purpose to the entire period of 'time'. Here, it is claimed that the purpose could not have been fulfilled solely by the Council and War decision, in spite of the magnitude of its meaning. Even if that battle lasted half a billion years or more^{39}, it would still have been only a short segment of the PE. A great deal of time remained to be filled. And, obviously, it is believed here that the remainder of that time was devoted to being tested^{40}.

³⁶ For detailed speculation about the major tests of the mortal phase, see Chapter 21. MALE AND FEMALE, CREATED HE THEM..." The arguments are tenuous at best, but are promising to us as being the ultimate experiment we must traverse.

³⁷ For that matter, no other religion we have run into postulates any sort of pre-mortal testing of spirits. That doesn't mean that none don't, but we aren't familiar with them. Actually, given the rich variety of religious conceptions of everything, it would be surprising if there weren't some faiths that endorse the concept that spirits earned their places on earth as a result of some pre-mortal testing.

This concept is to be distinguished from the reincarnation doctrines. Those, obviously, entail some sort of testing and judgement as the framework within which successive states/lives are 'earned'.

³⁸ We term this the Mechanics Corollary to the Parsimony principle because every piece of a machine has a specific purpose and function. Indeed, the very shape and size and metal composition of each piece is related to that function. And if a person assembles a machine and has a part left over, he has a problem, though it may not be immediately evident. We know from personal experience. That is what this corollary means. The Lord only uses the minimal number of 'parts' that are required to do the job, and every part He uses will have an integral role in the overall operation of the algorithm to which it is assigned.

³⁹ Note how vague the scriptures are about how long the debate and war lasted. As in the Garden story, its brevity intuitively suggests a short time. However, that is highly unlikely. The two sides doubtless had all the time they could possibly desire to prepare and prosecute their arguments. We make this claim because we do not believe that the Lord would artificially truncate those opportunities. Such premature closure of the competition would be against the order of heaven, tantamount to denying individuals their right to exercise their free agency. So one thousand years or one million years or one billion years, who knows? The time period was as long as it had to be for everyone to come to their own conclusion.

Of course, once more, the notion of time is probably a pointless thing to discuss anyway. Time wasn't characteristic of the PE. So perhaps this footnote should focus, instead, on processes and relationships of factors and alliances. Sort of like the rising of bread.

⁴⁰ Since the PE testing is still going on for those spirits up there, one can't help wondering whether the spirits who were born first up there were sent down here first. Seems "logical", but logic probably has nothing to do with this question - because 'time' isn't meaningful. And if time doesn't have meaning, then there probably isn't any sort of "ordering" or "sequence" to births, no birth order at all, as we comprehend it. So one-way trips are simply allocated to the next "deserving" spirit? We don't know.

The next consequence of this conception of the PE, at least from our point of view, is that we required direction and support to help us on our way^{41}. We must have been organized into some sort of society. Choices must have been presented to us continuously, just as during mortality, etc. The difference is that the spirit attributes investigated, analyzed or measured in the PE were either different than those being measured here now, or the emphasis in the testing was different.

OPPOSITION CONDITION:

We first encountered the white and black priesthoods in the PE, because they affected or applied to us as soon as we were formed. They both existed in the universe, or eternity, before our spirits were formed, and as soon as we became conscious of our environment, we also became conscious of these opposing forces^{42}. One way to view the effect of this pair of forces is to compare them to a magnetic field which has a north and a south pole. The poles are inherently opposed to each other, but they are inextricably bound together in the "center" of the magnet. That is perhaps how the good and the bad sides of the priesthood force work. STAR WARS is actually right on the money in this matter as noted already, and Obi Wan Kenobi was actually describing our own priesthood and its opposite energy.

The Full-dose Corollary was also operative in the PE. We always receive a full charge of the amount of opposition we are candidates for. We undergo the maximum test that we can be subjected to, so we really have no reason to breathe a sigh of relief, because we are constantly in jeopardy. True, the dose of evil is limited to our capacity, but the important point is that it is nonetheless all that is needed to tip us over the edge, even when we are unaware of it. Refer to the magnet model again: if we push like poles of two magnets just close enough that their outermost lines of flux touch, neither magnet will move in response to those forces at that distance from each other. But the forces are nonetheless present, impinging on both magnets. This is how our own situation is: the dark side of the force is exerting "lines of flux"^{43} on us at all times. The amount of evil influence we

⁴¹ Remember that we believe that we were living by faith, and it isn't consonant with the laws of heaven to believe that the Father would leave us unattended or unguided in that state. True, it's darn hard to glimpse the guidance sometimes. But it's there.

⁴² This issue of consciousness is a fundamental one that, unfortunately, isn't well-understood by anyone. Zukav (1979) even has physicists suggesting that the universe itself is conscious. Our chapter 15 CONSCIOUSNESS -COGITO, ERGO SUM touches on this matter briefly. But it is acknowledged that the issue of consciousness and ego are among the major issues dealt with philosophers and religions for millennia, so we don't presume to have anything new to offer.

⁴³ This issue of force being exerted is interesting. How is it that either priesthood exerts influence or force on or around us? Brigham Young, in an address delivered in 1977 in Farmington, UT, said that:

"We are as independent in our organization as the Gods are, but still we are creatures of

feel is sufficient to overwhelm us at any point if we succumb to it.

SPIRIT RESISTANCE:

But how is it that our capacity to endure more evil increases? We believe that it has to do with the relationship of the dark force to the nature of our spirit matter, which relationship is also bound intimately in the relationship of our spirit matter to the white priesthood. In a figurative manner, one might suggest that there is some how a sort of hull around us that protects us. Then, as we progress, that shell, or outer layer, is removed. However, that's too contrived. It is suggested here that as our spirits are being refined through adversity and through self-discipline, as the spirit molecules are rearranged, our sensitivity to BOTH good and evil increases. These influences are intimately bound together, as the north and south poles of the magnet. As our spirit matter's sensitivity to sense one at a certain level, it will also be receptive to an equal quantity of the other. The molecular structure of our spirits themselves is intrinsically open to both forces.

This suggestion implies that spirit matter functions in some sense as a radio receiver which can be tuned to varying wave lengths, or as a lab instrument which can be recalibrated to measure varying amounts of something.^{44} This concept almost appears to be a higher level metatheoretical one^{45}. It applies to spirit matter in all conditions and applies uniformly. Spirit matter is open to equal amounts of both the black and white force and there is some sort of servo loop that alters the degree of susceptibility of the spirit as it undergoes change. The 'servo' mechanism is probably not anything external to us or to the powers of heaven. This aspect of the theory probably is simply an artifact of the manner in which spirit matter and the POH interact with each other. To push the magnet model further, this relationship might be compared to the effect of a magnet on different types of metal. Aluminum does not respond to magnet

circumstances, influenced by the spirits and by the powers of eternity that are here and round about us, We are here and are operated upon by them in our organizations."

But he offered no explanation of how it is that these force fields are set up. And there will be no explanation in mortality. This quote turns out to be one of the seminal ones that spawned this whole thing. I was working with Dad in the Dry Mesa Quarry in 1972, when I encountered this quote. I was astonished at its implications, and spent part of a Sunday discussing it with him. The analogy of a magnet is apropos.

⁴⁴ The real problem with this matched-level-condition involves the retrograde movement of spirit quality. As it is stated, it makes an assumption that spirits are only improving in performance, and that this opens them to greater degrees of both forces. However, it is clearly the case the individuals can choose to pursue evil and to turn themselves into evil creatures. And when they do this, they are obviously NOT going to find their spirits open to an equal amount of the white force. For this reason, then, there must be a qualifier built into this condition that does allow for an increase in evil to result from either an increase in goodness or from pursuit of evil. Curious, that. It doesn't matter what we do. Evil will have an increasing chance at us. Way to go, Satan!

⁴⁵ It is probably tied in with the Opposition Condition and the Full Dose Corollary.

fields, while ferrous metals do. No need for anything to be postulated to explain why this is the case because it is simply the consequence of the nature of magnetic fields and their effect of substances of various kinds.

This concept probably contradicts an unstated belief of MMF. MMF probably implies or suggests that as we become better people, more capable of hewing to the straight and narrow, that we become less sensitive to evil. It may well be true that we tend to not sense evil influence as much. But if that is so, it is because we have chosen to ignore it, not because our sensitivity to it has decreased because it is believed here that our sensitivity to evil forces has actually increased.^{46}

To return to the STAR WARS model and the discussion of the Darth Vader Dilemma: we ask, again, are there two separate forces, one white, and one black? Or are there merely two sides to one force, like the sides of a coin? This difference, practically speaking, is no more than a notational variant. The differences exist. Period.^{47} While we were rollicking about in the PE, we were being bombarded by both influences. Evil was always present, like the low-level background radiation which fills our universe from the big bang. This influence was automatically present, and was one of the initial conditions that allowed the PE to be a period of formal testing of our spirits.

Take Abraham again as an example of the testing business in the PE. He was called up by the Lord and was set apart as a leader because he had already demonstrated what a good guy he was. The Lord describes him as one of the "choice" spirits. That is the point of his story in this context. In order for him to be characterized as choice, he had to have demonstrated his excellence in some manner. We believe that the only way such excellence could be demonstrated was through the exercise of agency as he selected the positive valued options, under 'live' testing conditions.^{48} Since he was 'choice', there implicitly were "not-choice", or "less choice" spirits, ones that had not exercised their agency as well as Abraham had.

Then, on the basis of such behaviors, the Lord convened convocations of the type alluded to in this particular Abraham

⁴⁶ As discussed elsewhere, the logical extension of this concept is that God Himself is subjected to the maximum amount of evil. And I believe that is the case. For Him, the full power of evil shines constantly, unabated by anything. But that is not problem for Him, temptations not being possible. But the radiation is nonetheless there by this corollary.

⁴⁷ This is, in fact, a profoundly important question, but it is difficult to adduce any evidence in favor of either answer. Indeed, we don't know whether these are even the only possible alternatives. What is the relationship of the black priesthood to the Aaronic Priesthood? Is it different than its relationship to the Melchizedek Priesthood? Are there levels or types of black priesthood, analogous to the Aaronic and Melchizedek? And are there offices within each? Are there keys in the black priesthood? Wonderful, but difficult questions.

⁴⁸ As noted already, it could be that innate qualities or abilities of spirit were also involved in the selection process. But here it is believed that preferred interpretation of the scripture refers to behavioral excellence, rather than intrinsic spirit qualities.

story, and set apart spirits who had qualified. This story is interpreted as evidence for the claim that we lived under testing conditions in the PE. We were being tested during the entire 5 billion years of the PE through the influence of the dark side of the force.^{49}

SATAN AND THE BLACK PARTY:

It is believed here that, in keeping with the Double Bind Condition, the choices represented by Satan and Christ were alternatives that were as difficult to choose between as were the two impossible-to-keep commandments given to Adam and Eve in the Garden. Satan and Christ represented two alternative, possible realities, EACH of which had its positive and negative aspects, just as in the Multiply-but-Don't-Partake Dilemma. Ignoring the issue of who gets the honor for the moment, Christ would allow free agency to operate, which was a highly valued feature, but that was off-set by the likelihood of losing many spirits in the process. In contrast, Lucifer would guarantee salvation for all of us, also a highly valued feature, but in that plan, he would neutralize our free agency, a major weakness in the plan. So both plans had their problems and advantages.

If one accepts the SMD version of Satan, one must wonder whether Satan sincerely believed in his cause, SMD seeming to imply considerable cynicism on his part.^{50} Perhaps he believed at some level in the truth and justice of his cause. Perhaps he was persuaded -intellectually, perhaps- that the Obligatory Salvation model truly was the better model. One can admit that there is an appealing side to it. As a parent, one can appreciate its attractiveness. How horrible to know that a model of free choice is automatically consigning some children to die. Terrible. And when we love them, isn't there an attractiveness to the wish that we could save them the pain and guarantee their salvation? And don't we think sometimes that we would even substitute ourselves in some way to take on their suffering if we could, just to save

⁴⁹ I need to clarify a belief I have that SMD probably misleads us a tad here, too. If I am not mistaken, most LDS would admit harboring an unspoken perception about the PE that portrays it as a place where we did see God and interact with Him, and where we had lots of knowledge about what was going on and what was going to happen. I do NOT believe that for a minute. If one believes the PE was a test, then the only way to run a fair test would be to put the pea under one of several shells and then let us try and find it ourselves. And we definitely did not know much about the real terms of morality and even less than we know about the post-mortals phase. We doubtless knew about the resurrection in some schematic way but only in general terms.

I am absolutely convinced that when we were presented with the choice to come down here, we had no idea about how terrible painful it was going to be. We simply had no conception of how badly we were going to be hurt and how painful the bulk of our lives was going to be, and how blind we were going to be, and how impaired we were going to be. We did not know. And we could NOT be told because to be told would have been to negate the legitimacy of the choice and test we are going through. This obviously sounds very fatalistic or some such thing, but whatever it is, I am convinced it is true. And Satan was ripening at the same time. And then the Council was held, and the War resulted, we each already had a full dossier of recorded behaviors that were involved in our decision and in the judgment.

⁵⁰ Especially since he had already failed in this attempt in previous worlds. Could it be that he doesn't carry memories forward from one world cycle to the next? Of course, it is also possible that there is a different satan for each world, in which case there would be no memories to carry forward. But we don't believe the latter as noted above.

them?^{51}

Satan was indeed the bad guy on two counts:

- (1) he wanted to take our agency away, and
- (2) he wanted glory for saving us.

But he had a plan that was appealing and it wasn't simply a cheap tinsel gimmick foisted off on us. It was a legitimate alternative.^{52} Obviously, the consequences of his plan would be profoundly different than the plan we chose, but it was a *bona fide* choice. We believe that Satan's option appealed to a lot of good, intelligent souls. They made the wrong choice, but we sympathize with them.^{53} It is likely that Satan developed a cadre of disciples during the PE who stood up for him in the Council. They struggled with the rest of us to try and persuade us to go their

⁵¹ I do. So I appreciate this aspect of the Mandatory Salvation Plan. I suspect that anyone who scoffs at it may not have really considered this dimension of the problem. I personally am persuaded that some of the third who were expelled after the great war were convinced that his was actually the better choice. Save them ALL, don't risk losing any of those precious souls, take care of them, protect them. Anyone who has lost a child or family member or friend to evil feels pangs of longing for those souls and wishes that they could have been saved from their tests and resulting tragedy.

⁵² Actually, I vacillate here. Sometimes I am persuaded that Satan's plan HAD to be a legitimate alternative. Other times I'm not. And this problem remains in either case: how could any plan of Satan's, predicated on the evil priesthood, ever be applied to free agents? To grant that possibility is to grant the possibility that the black priesthood can in fact overpower the white, a horrible, horrible possibility with implications and ramifications that I cannot even guess at, except to know they are bad. It is believed here that it HAD to be a legitimate, workable alternative to the Silver Plan. If it were not a true alternative, meaning that it was merely a strawman to use as a foil against the other option, then the whole Council and War were merely a cosmic charade of sophistry. I really don't like to think that the Lord was so cynical as to lead us on in a silly game where one of the choices wasn't workable. However, it may be possible for a world population to choose Satan's plan which is then implemented. The result would be what would be judged an impoverished existence compared to this one, at least in our minds. But there would be the positive fact that no spirits would be lost. (Nor would the spirits even know him for what he is because the alternative wouldn't be present.) I feel compelled on the basis of logic - a dangerous enterprise in the best of times - to believe that this type of reality is in fact possible for the reason that it would be a cheap trick, a poor charade, to offer to us spirits in the council two options, only one of which represented a workable option. Doesn't that seem sort of a poor way to run a railroad? Isn't the Father bound by the demands of justice? And wouldn't justice demand that there be no stage tricks? If one choice was a phoney, i.e. unworkable one, the Savior choice we made was really a bogus exercise of free agency, one that was predicated on a falsehood. (Recall that in the D&C it is stated that an un-resurrected spirit will not even extend his hand to shake hands, because it is against the laws of heaven to be deceitful, the deceit in this case being the fact that a mortal wouldn't feel the spirit matter that he apparently could see. That would be deception sez the D&C. So deceptions practiced by the Supreme one won't happen.)

I cannot accept that possibility because it demeans the Father and scoffs at justice. But I am puzzled how an earth could be created for such a plan. He wouldn't have the authority to create one (unless he somehow exercises control over some type of black intelligence and could create a sort of anti-matter universe), nor is it likely that the Father would do it for him. Actually, we can't even guess whether Satan's plan would require an earth for its implementation. Testing would not be involved for those spirits in their "next" phase, so a world populated with the tests we face would be unnecessary. He could simply place the people in some limbo. And it doesn't seem likely that a physical body would be required for that limbo, because the mortal body's sole function is to facilitate this three-dimensional testing we experience. We still hold open this possibility, as argued above.

⁵³ And I'm not at all sure that the choice I made was as clear-cut and easy to make as SMD seems to imply it was. We sort of are led to believe that all of us down here knew better than to go with Satan. We just turned our backs easily on the bad guy and his troops. Not. I think I struggled mightily with the choice and sometimes can still feel deeply and dimly down in my soul how hard it was to choose a plan that I suspected was going to result in the immediate loss of many of my siblings, only to be followed later by the loss (from Celestial glory at least) of more of another huge percent who stayed on - even possibly including me. I hurt at the time making that choice and I still do. It was right. But it hurts badly and I sit here with tear-filled eyes, relieving a shadow of the struggle.

way and they obviously attracted many.^{54}

TIMETABLE FOR THE COUNCIL AND WAR:

Next, why was the Council finally held at the time it was in the PE? The strawman says, "That's when the Lord wanted it." and that is a true answer, but only in the most general sense. So one asks, "Well, why did He want it just then?" And now we start getting at the interesting stuff. It is believed that there were a set of conditions, derived from the priesthood, that had to be satisfied in order for the Council to be convened. In this respect, it was precisely like the Second Coming in one particular - only the Lord knew when the time was right, and it had to do with the conditions created by us spirit children wherein dark and silver were balanced in some manner and the conflict had escalated sufficiently. One of the major conditions that had to be satisfied had to do with Satan.

The escalating conflict of opposing forces had to evolve and mature, in order for the conflict to be brought to a head. So the Council could only be held when there was a champion of the Dark side with a strong enough following. In Satan, we had such a champion.^{55} He may have been the "final straw", that had to be in place for the mixture of forces and conditions to crystalize and precipitate into an open conflict that was represented by the Council.^{56} Perhaps he personally had to sour sufficiently, or perhaps he had to accumulate a sufficiently large army to challenge the other party, thereby setting up the crisis of government the necessitated the Great Council. But in light of the evidence adduced above to show that Satan has existed always as the counterpart to the Christ, the 'souring' option doesn't seem

⁵⁴ One of the interesting thoughts that many of us wrestle with occasionally comes up when considering Satan's role. He was only doing what had to be done, and the recognition that without him, the POS could not have unfolded. And then: doesn't it seem sort of unfair to beat him up for

- (1) doing what had to be done, and
- (2) for actually allowing us the opportunity to work out our salvation?

But this is apparently one of the paradoxes that cannot be resolved with mortal logic. SMD doesn't comment on this paradox, but it, like the Judas who served a comparable role and purpose, are not easily rationalized.

⁵⁵ As we faced the dilemma of which plan to choose, I believe that many of us would have been able to accommodate ourselves to the loss of agency in return for saving everyone. But the point at which Satan's proposal really started to fall apart for us was when he demanded to be given the glory for accomplishing this thing. As noted above, that was not the first time you and I saw him to that. He had done similar things for millions of years already, so his arrogance did not surprise us. In fact, it was a major factor for many of us. So we threw over his plan and adopted Christ's. Perhaps as much out of a desire to reject him as to endorse Christ. This isn't a sound reason for our choice, but it may have been a motive for some. No problem. The other two testing phases will sort it out for us all.

⁵⁶ One must ask a question, unanswerable, but interesting nonetheless, what would have been the outcome if Satan had guaranteed salvation AND had given the glory to the Father?

Additional questions to consider include: What was the nature of the War? What were the weapons? How long did it last? Were we adults and children? Were angels involved, etc. We don't know the answer to these questions, but we can be assured that it was a major event. To refer to it as a "War" is to shed some light on the seriousness of the situation.

likely. We suspect that one of the most important factors that were involved in the decision about when the Council and War should occur involved characteristics about us.

Let's look in the Christian Canon for possible suggestions about 'when' the Council would have occurred. We are told that the Millennium will occur at the end of this earth. It will be a 1,000 year domination of the bureaucrats who will do the ordinances and paperwork that remain uncompleted for those who might have chosen to sign on with the Father, who didn't already have a chance for that stuff to be done for them. In the present context, the point in referring to the Millennium is this:

**Only the Father apparently knows 'when'
it will occur.**

Even the Christ is ignorant of the 'time', though He is prepared to go when ordered. Since 'time' is a non-issue for the Father, it seems evident that a point in time is not what determines 'when' it occurs. Instead, it seems obvious that the determinant is a set of conditions. A simple-minded suggestion, that is partially correct, is this:

**The proportion of righteousness and evil in the
metamorphosis⁵⁷ must reach a critical blend, at the
same time most spirits have about completed
their metamorphosis.**

We claim here that the same principle applied to the Council and War in Heaven. Conditions known only by the Father had to occur in order for Him to convene the Convocation where the two plans were brought into focus after which we participated in the conflict.

FAITH IN THE PREEXISTENCE:

In looking at the issue of free agency in the PE, we need to touch once more on the role of faith. Take the Council again as the model that illustrates the exercise of agency. We must understand that the situation during that War was probably like one of our political campaigns: there were fervently held, opposing beliefs. The choice was difficult for us to make. It wasn't simple. It wasn't clear cut. It was fuzzy and grey and the process of reaching our own decision was protracted and painful. Here is the point:

**We believe that we ultimately had to exercise our
agency on the basis of faith.**

⁵⁷ "In the metamorphosis" is the only way we can refer to all three testing phases. It seems likely that the PE will be empty by the time the millennium occurs, though mortality will apparently still have inhabitants, with most of us residing in the PM world. Whatever the nature of the conditions are, they will have to take into account the conditions in all three testing phases.

We weren't positive, we didn't know "beyond a shadow of doubt", and all the other current cant, ^{58} that Christ's plan was the best. We finally chose it and are living with the painful consequences.

We sometimes wonder if we might not change our minds if we could replay the decision process again down here on earth. Aren't there times, when we are maximally pained, when we might be tempted to reconsider the freedom-of-choice business again? ^{59} This theoretical model claims that we exercised faith during the Council/War sequence, and that we exercised it during (most of) ^{60} the rest of our PE. That is one of the essential characteristics of a testing environment, a consequence of the metaconditions defined above. It is comforting to think that in that sense our test in mortality is really a replay of what things were like before. ^{61} We have apparently succeeded, at least in a general way, in the first of the three rounds, so we are encouraged that we can do it again. But this isn't an amateur match. The Lord plays for keeps, so we best do our best.

MORTAL ASSIGNMENTS:

⁵⁸ This pat phrase has to be one of the most hypocritical things we say today in the LDS church. Perhaps it's said in other Christian faiths as well. To illustrate why it appears so hypocritical to us, return for a moment to the New Testament. Take the story of John the Baptist when he was in prison. He sent a message to the Christ, asking "Are you the one or do we look for another?" This is the man who had baptized Him, who had heard the voice, who had seen the sign of the dove and had personally described Him as the Lamb of God, who perceived himself as the precursor for the Messiah. While he languished in prison near the end of his life, he still was not positive of the truth, even after experiencing those stunning experiences. So how is it that people today, who have neither seen nor heard such monumental things, can so glibly parrot this empty phrase! The Baptist didn't "know beyond a shadow of doubt", in spite of those evidences that he had personally collected during his sojourn. He sent messengers to the Christ asking, "Are you the One, or do we look for another?"

Now you SMDs who are bucking badly at this point, please pull out your much revered, dog-eared copy of JESUS THE CHRIST, go to pages 253-4 and read how Talmage explains that the Baptist's lack of faith was gently but firmly reproved by Christ. If there had been no doubt, there had been no reproof. The Baptist doubted, in spite of the stupendous spiritual evidences that he had received.

So how can we mere mortals today bandy such a sacred, profound statement about as if we were telling the time of day? I presume that people who parrot this tired phrase will be forgiven their hypocrisy because

- (a) it is construable as a form of testimony, and
- (b) they really don't know the magnitude of their error.

Within the context of the gospel, ignorance is, in fact, an excuse. Fortunate, aren't we.

⁵⁹ I suspect that suicides and other chronically, over-whelmingly depressed individuals would change their votes if they were given the chance during their periods of crisis. Seriously, I do.

In a peculiar sense, it may be that suicide is in fact a re-vote of the original Council decision. See Chapter 33. OBESITY, ALCOHOLISM AND SUICIDE for information about how we interpret suicide within the context of this theory.

⁶⁰ This qualifier "most of" was inserted many drafts ago. Initially, we didn't perceive that faith was operative in the PE, so when the concept first appeared, we were hesitant to acknowledge it. Today, however, we don't need the qualifier for the PE. We leave it in to point out one of the essential new doctrines that has gradually come into focus as we work through this assignment.

⁶¹ There is at least one scripture which was discovered later that DOES specifically state that faith was operative in the PE. In Alma 13:3 there is a statement that some spirits were called and prepared from the foundation of the world

"...on account of their exceeding **faith** and good works" (emphasis added)

Faith in the PE, then, is even attested in the LDS canon. And isn't it true that faith can only be operative when there is lack of knowledge, uncertainty, etc.? Yes, please. It is true. So we do have a problem of having to relate the MMF belief that we lived with God during the PE, with the concept that we didn't have knowledge of how things 'really' were/are. We have tried in this chapter to offer alternative explanations, but don't know what the truth is. We just know that there is this problem.

The last notion to wrestle with in this chapter is the relationship of premortal performance to mortal assignments, i.e. nationality, health status, etc.. There are a few references in SMD to the manner in which some conditions of mortality may be related to what we did or did not do in the PE. Even the NT has some references from Christ's life to this business, so apparently there is some relationship.^{62} What we achieved there determined in some way the status we were given down here. And this then brings in the issue of foreordination and predestination - which I don't have the strength to wrestle with tonight. Good Night!! (You write your own chapter on those topics, please.)

CONCLUSION:

⁶² Buddhist scriptures are much better informed in this regard than Christian scriptures. For example, Evans-Wentz (1960:53) quotes from the Tibetan *Vinaya Pitaka* or *Dulva*:

"Now the future Buddha was in the Tushita Heaven, and knowing that his time had come, he made the five preliminary examinations: first, of the proper family (in which to be born); second, of the country; third, of the time; fourth, of the race; fifth, of the woman."

The family, the country, the time, the race and the mother are specific determinations made prior to returning a spirit to the earth.

SMD possess nothing as specific regarding these decision, but since the SMD process claims to be orderly, there parallel decisions must be made. At least that is what one would surmise, given the basic SMD premise that everything is ordered and orderly. In this case, then, the only real question in this model is, who gets to make these decisions: the individual spirit about to be born, or some ordinance worker or a leader? A similar parallel to the Buddhist scriptures is found in *THE DEAD SEA SCRIPTURES*. Gaster notes:

"By 'Sons of Zadok' is meant those elect of Israel who have been designated by name and that shall go on functioning in the last days. Behold, their names have been specified, the families into which they are to be born, the epochs in which they are to function (have been specified)..."
(1976:70)

Family, name, time. This is remarkably comparable to the Buddhist premortal selection process isn't it. Scott Robertson provided a fascinating article from President David McKay which is also pertinent here. In 1947, in a letter addressed to University of Utah students, President McKay said:

"In the *Blue Bird*, Maeterlinck pictures unborn children summoned to earth life. As one group approached the earth, the voices of the children earthward-tending, are heard in the distance to cry: 'The earth! I can see it! How beautiful it is!' Then following these cries of ecstasy, there issued from out of the depth of the abyss, a sweet song of gentleness and expectancy, in reference to which the author says" 'It is the song of the mothers coming out to meet them.'...Songs of expectant parents come from all parts of the earth, and each little spirit is attracted to the spiritual and mortal parentage of which the spirit has prepared itself."

What a beautiful metaphor! It is interesting in terms of content, because it supports the concept of an assignment of some sort, assignment to specific women which entails time, family, country, etc. But more interesting to us is the concept that there is some sort of message or signal being produced by expectant parents which guides the spirits to their proper assignment. (Note once more, as in the reference to the earlier quote from J.R. Clark, how astonishingly liberal this prophet McKay was in his treatment of gospel topics. None of the soul-numbing correlation of the current dynasty, which interestingly enough only developed after he died, though he was the one who started the juggernaut. His liberalness is refreshing today, and it entails liberalness in sources ((he goes on to quote Wordsworth)) as well as generous freedom to venture to actually think new thoughts about the gospel. Wonderful.

Sad that the faith has lost that resilience and freshness, which was so characteristic of Orson Pratt, BH Roberts, etc.. But this sort of conservatism is characteristic of a revolutionary organization which has finally established itself, earning some sort legitimacy. At that point it drops its revolutionary mentality like a hot potato and trades it in for a rigid conservatism that denies the legitimacy of the revolutionary methods that earned it its then current position of power and position. Ironic, predictable, and sad.

I like the way Eric Hoffer says it:

"The conservatism of a religion -its orthodoxy- is the inert coagulum of a once highly reactive sap."
(1951:4)

(Ha, ha! Did he choose the term "sap" as anything more than a benign metaphor?)

Another intriguing question arises here: if pre-mortal performance is the precursor to mortal assignment, isn't it possible that there may be a comparable sort of relationship between mortal performance and our position in the post-mortal world (other than simply spirit prison or paradise)? It isn't provided for by SMD, but one comes to this question when trying to apply things uniformly and systematically. In fact, over time we become convinced that this is the case. However, it is likely that in some manner the assignment will actually take into account both PE as well as mortal performance.

Our test in the pre-existence was as critical to our post-resurrection success as is our present test here on earth where we are fumbling along, making mistakes, but trying our best. As we bounce off a wall and hit the door frame trying to enter the next room, we nonetheless are doing something incredibly heroic. Only after we get to the other side^{63} will we see the enormity of the challenges we faced here, and in the PE. Then we will understand that our personal challenges were as difficult for us as was Christ's challenge to Him.^{64} And we do it alone when it counts. That makes a successful life all the more incredible and meritorious because it is done alone, against incredible challenges, with the seeds of godliness starting to grow. The cost in pain is immense.

⁶³ We ought properly say, after we have completed the [judgment+resurrection] process we will comprehend these things. This is because we claim that post-mortality is also a testing phase, which means we lack knowledge there as well, and that Satan is present and we must exercise faith. So we can't have the whole story in that phase either, only after the resurrection.

⁶⁴ One may quibble with this statement, and I admit a degree of hyperbole. But only a degree. I do believe that our personal struggles MUST be of an extraordinary nature because only by such testing will we be capable of manifesting in a persuasive manner our obedience. Testing procedures that fail to strain, stress and stretch every cubic nanomicron of our souls will ultimately fail in their determination. The Lord's plan has no provision for failure. Obviously, Christ's test, in an absolute sense of some sort, exceeds the extent of our own. BUT: He was also endowed with Godhoodness during mortality, which we aren't, which means He had abilities and capacities we don't. (In fact He really isn't even the same category of person as we are because He has been creator, etc. on other worlds, so fits into the next higher tier of beings.)

But the fact that in an absolute sense His test may be greater than ours, does not negate this concept that our tests are in fact comparable. The comparability derives from the fact that He and we must be tested to the ultimate limit, whatever that is for each of us. Note that there is, in fact, going to be a wide range in the extent of the tests that even we mortals are subjected to, because there is such a wide range of talents and gifts. After we have each been subjected to testing up to our limits under all relevant, essential conditions, and have conclusively demonstrated that under any conditions we will comply with the laws of heaven, we will merit godhood.