

"Now then, Kay," he said, when they were at the church door. He looked at his first-born kindly, but straight between the eyes.

"Here is the stone, and you have the sword. It will make you King of England. You are my son that I am proud of, and always will be, whatever you do. Will you promise me that you took it out by your own might?"

-THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING
(White 1967:206)

"...It was amazing to see them guide their knives down through meat and blood and hit exactly at the designated spot. If a man happened to be a little off, it was taken as a sign that he had lied the same day. Then everybody laughed and said that here was a man who had wasted his thoughts by failing to speak the truth, and so he had forgotten that animals are created with joints that serve to divide them."

-BOOK OF THE ESKIMOS
(Freuchen 1961:109)

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INTRODUCTION:

After considering the implications of honesty in our lives on earth and within the context of the POS it becomes apparent that the commandment to "be honest" is in a different class than commandments like "don't kill". Attendance at meeting and praying daily are commandments with significant implications for the

individual, but in comparison with the commandments regarding honesty they are less profound.

The requirement to be honest is stated as a law -don't bear false witness, etc.- so superficially, it resembles any other law, but look at the consequences. When we stand before the Lord, honesty is not going to be just another law we are matched against. For example, if we didn't attend church, that will be one item evaluated, but once it has been evaluated, there will be nothing else to say about it. In contrast, when talking about honesty, it will actually pervade the entire conversation we have with the Lord. Every aspect of our life will be matched in some way against this metric.

That leads one to suspect that honesty is actually a higher level requirement than most commandments. It almost rises to the level of a condition that belongs in the metatheory. However, the reason it isn't fitted in there is that the individual must be allowed to exercise free agency, so honesty must be given some sort of a provisional status that we can choose to ignore if we wish.

Perhaps it is actually a bi-partite principle, one part being a commandment we may obey, the other being the metatheory-like item.

The highest level of honesty that we can achieve, and against which we will be judged, whether we realize it or not, is honesty with ourselves. The outward honesty we show at work or in the family is important, but the acts themselves may be no more than actions without corresponding internal emotions or commitments. We can pay tithing but can be uncommitted. We pay it because it's a habit, but writing a check and handing it in does not require us to have the appropriate sacrificial mind-set required to fully comply with the requirements of the law. That sort of element is a highly personal one that only the individual and the Lord can evaluate and understand. Even bishops during tithing settlements must rely on the testimony of the individual, which testimony can be false to varying degrees.

Socrates famous instruction fits admirably in her. "Know thyself." Indeed.^[1] To achieve that state is to actually achieve the highest level of conformance with gospel principles that can be achieved, so Socrates was definitely on the right track. It's rash to make the following statement, but it's tempting to make: I fear that many LDS have little comprehension of the profoundly important aspect of self-honesty, or integrity, or consistency that is required by the POS. And I fear that many don't realize that the slightest degree of self-deception is a major event that must be reversed before further progress can be made.

And the next troublesome comment to make is that as LDS advance in knowledge, the standard for honesty and consistency also advances for them as well. Greater light and knowledge are

¹ Such a simple statement. And so difficult. We only delude ourselves in our dishonesty most of the time. Who isn't able to see through the self-deception we practise on ourselves, while simultaneously being unable to perceive his/her own dishonesty of the same ilk?

blessings which bring with them greater requirements of various types, not the least of which involves honesty. And as one progresses, it becomes apparent that the mechanics of honesty are everywhere evident as one lives out his life. Ultimately, every single decision (at least those of more significance than which shoes to wear) must be internally consistent and in harmony with the POS. When we reach the level of knowing inside our heart the significance of honest, we can no longer delude ourselves into doing something wrong. If we do something wrong then, it is only because we specifically looked at the choices and chose to do wrong, with a full comprehension that we were making such a choice.

In a certain respect, honesty is perhaps the most important behavior we can manifest, next to being of service to our fellowmen, at any point in our metamorphosis. And this is because only an individual who is completely honest is worthy of being trusted with the immensely powerful authorities and powers that go with godhood. There cannot be the slightest deviation from the standards of the Plan, and honesty or integrity, two almost identical items, must be present before being given those powers.