

"Is there something that guides us?", I asked.  
"Certainly. There are powers that guide us."

"Can you describe them?"

"Not really, except to call them forces, spirits,  
airs, winds or anything like that."

-JOURNEY TO IXTLAN  
(Castaneda 1972:86)

"The last time we saw her before she died, she  
winked her eye and said, 'I'll see you later out  
there somewhere'."

-THE HUMAN ENCOUNTER WITH DEATH  
(Grof 1977:45)

57. WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

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## INTRODUCTION:

We have attempted to demonstrate that the POS in the form we know it here on this earth -recognizing that there are doubtless different versions revealed on other worlds- is predicated on a few basic principles, including the power of the priesthood and the nature of our spirits. We have formulated a hypothetical model of the POS, albeit one filled with holes and inconsistencies. This mode is based on a set of initial and boundary conditions that seem appropriate, though they are taken on faith. However, as time passes and these ideas simmer and mature, defects will be remedied, though only by degrees.

Having come to the Conclusion, we find that we scarcely remember what we did along the way. The POS is such an enormously complicated subject. It is additionally so enormously complicated by its multifaceted interface with the scientific domain of mortality and human anatomy, physiology, psychology and sociology, etc., that one is exhausted with a project as simple as trying to just remember what was said, let alone trying to keep track of where and in what context it was said.

This is merely a first approximation of one of many possible hypotheses that attempt to dig out relationships and meanings of seemingly disparate elements of the POS. It was done first, for the sheer pleasure of doing it. Norgay Tensing said he climbed Everest because it was there. Similarly, we did this because it was there to be done. But secondly, we did it to tease out underlying insights into the POS that provide satisfaction and joy.<sup>{1}</sup>

## FUNDAMENTAL FORCES:

Among the few major insights illuminated by this model is the

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<sup>1</sup> We want to bring in another motivation for writing this book, one that perhaps is the greatest justification for doing this at all. I say this because my experience with sharing parts of this book with others shows that no one else grasps what is contained in these pages, at least not in the way or to the degree I do. That is not to say that I am superior, or that this is all truth. Neither statement would be fair or true. This text is, in fact, filled with errors and mis-representations, my only defense being that they are unintentional and not malicious. One could only find fault in the latter respect with some of the footnotes that are perhaps unnecessarily critical of mainstream Mormonism, something that is unkind, though unkindness has not motivated me. Rather, clear thinking has illuminated some of these false cultural traits we practice, sometimes under the guise of the Gospel, when nothing could be further from Christ's intention. I have not resisted the urge to make note of them, perhaps to my own detriment.

Back to the motivation for this book: Lawrence Durrell, certainly one of the finest writers I am familiar with, captured it neatly in a quote from Pursewarden, an enigmatic writer in the ALEXANDRIA QUARTET. In the volume entitled BALTHAZAR, it says:

"You see, he really had begun to regard it as 'divinely unimportant' --a characteristic phrase. I know this for certain because he once wrote me out on the back of an envelope an answer to the question, 'What is the object of writing?' His answer was this: 'The object of writing is to grow a personality which in the end enables man to transcend art.'" (1958:141)

That is the net product of this lengthy exercise which has consumed thousands of hours over tens of years. My understanding of the gospel has deepened, and my comfort with it has grown to the point that I feel little need for support or direction from the ecclesiastical organization itself. I need it to partake of the sacrament for my soul's benefit, but I need little else. Goodness and service to my fellows can be rendered quietly and invisibly -which is really a quality missing from SMD-directed activities- in my own life to my neighbors and friends outside the faith. This work has enabled me to "transcend" the organization.

fact that there is a parallel of sorts between it and the basic forces of physics in a particular sense. Both sets account for incredibly broad ranges of phenomena. The nuclear force, gravity, the weak force and the electromagnetic force interact in astonishingly diverse ways to produce all of the things we see around us. To laymen, it seems impossible that wind, sunlight, amoeba and uranium should share so much in common, but they do. There are merely intervening processes and complex sets of environmental factors and conditions that result in these diverse expressions of the basic forces, simultaneously concealing the relationships and similarities.

So all of the laws and ordinances, when placed in a metaphysical retort for assay, reduce to the basic propositions stated at the beginning of this text.<sup>{2}</sup> The Laws of Heaven are eternal in the broadest sense of the term, being manifestations or facets of the Eternal Priesthood which pre-existed the God of this world. And, equally importantly -indeed we are tempted to unnecessary hyperbole here - an eternal opposing forces interacts with that Priesthood to produce the swirling mixtures of our dilemmas and realities.

#### **AGENCY:**

Then, we, as gods-in-embryo, endowed with the essential property of agency, are able to manipulate that pair of opposite powers. And it is through the exercise of ourselves that we manipulate and form ourselves into structures that will endure eternally. Choices alter us in positive or negative ways, according to the nature of the choice and to the Law of Heaven invoked, whether white or black<sup>{3}</sup>. This is the reason that the War in Heaven was predicated on the struggle between opposing concepts about allowing agency to be exercised during our

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<sup>2</sup> We hasten to note, once more, that there will be as many sets of basic principles as there are individuals interested in subjecting themselves to this psychological torture. And in a similar vein, the exact form of the model will vary with the initial conditions selected to start from. We do not contend that this is either the only model, nor that it is even an accurate model. But we do insist that this IS a model, deserving of consideration, which consideration will lead the interested person further on the path toward the truth about the POS. And we believe that such endeavors are worthy of the energy required to prosecute them. Good luck to anyone who struggles through this morass and has the energy to proceed on that pathway. Tell me of your findings when we meet.

<sup>3</sup> But in the process of aligning ourselves with gospel principles, we might actually give up some of our agency. Or we may fail to exercise at a deep level. This may occur when we blindly, without comprehension, accept doctrines and follow them. Eric Hoffer commented on this:

"The total surrender of a distinct self is a prerequisite for the attainment of both unity and self-sacrifice; and there is probably no more direct way of realizing this surrender than by inculcating and extolling the habit of blind obedience...All mass movements rank obedience with the highest virtues and put it on a level with faith...Obedience is not only the first law of God, but also the first tenet of a revolutionary party and of fervent nationalism. "Not to reason why" is considered by all mass movements the mark of a strong and generous spirit." (1963:121-2)

It appears that this is precisely the intention of the present SLC dynasty. There are blessings, probably, for such behavior. But within this model, such blind acceptance is lesser valued because it doesn't require, or represent, the same degree of exercise of agency as does the comprehending variety of obedience. (Rationalization?)

metamorphosis.<sup>{4}</sup>

#### **LAWS OF HEAVEN:**

There are tight relationships between all of the laws and ordinances that have been revealed to us, all of which are derivable from the initial conditions and metatheory. The source of those Laws is the very source of the Priesthood, if it had a source. Indeed, they are not derived from, rather are inherent in, the priesthood. During mortality, the canon provides advice about prescribed and proscribed behaviors. But that advice is merely a collection of signposts that tell us which behaviors manipulate some of these Laws.<sup>{5}</sup>

The set of laws and ordinances revealed to this world are merely a subset of the complete set of laws and ordinances subsumed by the Priesthood and the complete POS. Those have existed eternally and only a portion of them are pointed out to us because they are the major ones we need to succeed in this mortal test. But there are sets of Laws and ordinances operative in the pre-existence, and there is a set operative in post-mortality. Whether there is complete congruence or not between the three sets is not know, but it is likely that there are identical sub-sets.

#### **UNIT OPERATION:**

As this work developed, a peculiar understanding also developed which seems to us to be crucial to understanding many things, including the meaning of suffering: the plan of salvation functions on a unit level. We are each units. We act as units. We are rewarded or punished as units.

When we stand in judgment, or better, when judgment happens to us, we might as well each be isolated under bell jars, because the only actions that will be critiqued and evaluated at that time are

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<sup>4</sup> Our agency during mortality is most often externally curtailed by governmental entities. CG Jung noted the following in reference to "fanaticism":

"Free opinion is stifled and moral decision ruthlessly suppressed, on the plea that the end justifies the means, even the vilest. The policy of the State is exalted to a creed, the leader or party boss becomes a demigod beyond good and evil, and his votaries are honored as heroes, martyrs, apostles, missionaries. There is only one truth and beside it no other. It is sacrosanct and above criticism. Anyone who thinks differently is a heretic..." (1957:35)

The disturbing thing about this comment is that it is applicable to religions as well, even SMD. This quote makes blind belief and loss of identity into a problem - which it is. Of course, leaders of any faith who are guilty of this type of suppressive rhetoric will self-righteously deny it, and perhaps not even be able to see that they in fact practice behaviors comparable to those of political fanatics. After all, fanaticism is just that, regardless of the creed.

<sup>5</sup> This fact is never stated, but it is true. Neither is it stated that there are actually more Laws of Heaven than are even alluded to, each of which has its own key behavior which activates it, triggering the related blessing.

our own actions<sup>{6}</sup>. Nothing that is done to us will be relevant in the awarding of our personal prize. Obviously, we are all in the same life boat, so we do interact with each other all the time, but that interaction is only significant in the final judgment in terms of how we each individually responded to each other. It matters not what was done to us, only how we responded to what was done to us. So the entire plan is based on the unit concept. And this unit concept means that there **IS** no other meaning to the suffering of mankind. None. The significance of suffering is that it serves as a retort wherein our spirits are assayed. Gold or dross will remain after the suffering has been experienced. But suffering has no other meaning, that to serve as this retort.

We do note that if suffering is caused through the agency of other mortals, the responsible mortals will be held accountable in some manner for that. But that will be at the unit level: the person who acted badly will be judged in some manner for behaving badly. However, the individual subjected to the suffering is only going to be evaluated along one dimension: how did s/he respond to the suffering? There will be no sympathy from the Lord, no allowance made because someone was mean to us. That is really why we are put here, to be tested, so the bad behavior of others is actually part of the test.

Typically, mortals lament the fact that there is so much privation and evil and want in the world, and then conclude that there is some sort of injustice, hence meaning, in those things. But this model doesn't support such a concept.<sup>{7}</sup> Such an idea has no place in this model because it imputes a broader purpose to the POS than the one that is the basis for this model. We believe the POS is designed to allow individuals to exercise their agency and to determine for themselves whether they will be obedient or not, whether they wish to rise to the levels of God or not, whether they wish to squander their personal resources on frivolous things of this world or not. As long as our final judgment is predicated on

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<sup>6</sup> Tantric Buddhists share a startlingly comparable belief with Christianity. Avalon (Woodroffe) says:

"...a man who repeatedly thinks good thoughts has a tendency towards the thinking of such thoughts, and by continued good thought character is molded and transformed. As the *Candogya Upanishad* says: 'As a man thinks he becomes.' Similarly, the *Gandharva Tantra* says: 'By meditating on anything as the self, one becomes that thing.' A man can thus shape his mind for good or bad." (1978:471)

This sounds like something straight out of the NT and SMD. We note it here because that captures the basic concept that underlies the POS as described in this hypothetical model.

<sup>7</sup> One of the reasons that I personally like this consequence of this model is because the only other conclusion that I can draw from the evil and misery of this world is that the Creator is either a horribly callous person at the least, or, at the worst, He is a sadist of the worst sort. I don't like either possibility.

Here the evil of the world is a byproduct of

- a) the powers and forces of the black priesthood, and
- b) the choices we make which manipulate those laws and forces.

This combination multiplies evil and pain logarithmically. The Creator is not the author of the evil of this world. We are.

the actions that we performed with intention<sup>{8}</sup>, there is no impact on our salvation of those things done to us.<sup>{9}</sup>

Put another way, we believe that our individual worlds consist, in fact, of individuals: ourselves. My world is peopled only be me, and yours by you. True, we appear to share world experiences because we interface with each other variously, but the impact on us is precisely that: impact on us. So the belief system we live in is one created by us, out of the detritus of our experiences.

We pick and choose, and then place our mantle of "reality" over those objects which we endorse. We believe in things because we believe in them, not because someone forced us to believe in them, nor because they somehow are objectively verifiable by everyone else, nor because they even do have some sort of objective reality<sup>{10}</sup>. Granted, there are powerful external influences which weigh heavily on us, but those forces affect our public behavior primarily, leaving us intact internally if we so choose. We are able to retain within us whatever beliefs we wish to retain.

#### **SILVER AND BLACK:**

To return to the opposing force pair, there is the light and dark force combination that is manipulated by each of us as we exercise our free agency. Our choices -ALL of our choices, excepting the choices about whether to wear the brown or black shoes- results either or both of two effects. First, the exercise of our agency magically activates one of the laws of heaven -or laws of the dark force- which releases that aspect of that force which then acts on whatever is to be acted on by that force. A blessing of some sort results if it is a beneficent power, else it is a curse. Second, the exercise of agency alters the molecular structure of our own spirit matter.

#### **RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT:**

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<sup>8</sup> This term "intention" is critical. Only actions that we consciously chose to undertake will be weighed in the final analysis. Purists may complain at this point, and I grant that it is an over-simplification, but this note captures what I do believe is a critical metric in the judgement process. The problem is how are unintentional sins or acts of goodness going to be evaluated.

<sup>9</sup> The other reminder to add is that within this model there is an assumption that all spirits will somehow manage to be exposed to all necessary tests and to be provided all necessary opportunities to demonstrate what their preferences will be. SO: the only thing to be added to the unit concept is this assumption that the equal opportunity condition will be operative.

<sup>10</sup> Research physicists explain well how it is that taking measurements of a physical process actually interrupts and thereby creates and artifact in that process. This artifact cannot be avoided by the instrumentation/measurement process, so it is not possible to develop a completely objective picture of even the interaction of high energy particles in bubble chambers, etc.

We don't know which will be first of this pair<sup>{11}</sup>. But after they have applied to us, we will be fixed into the state-of-being that we formed ourselves into through the choices selected by the exercise of our agency. As noted above, we believe that the judgment will be dramatically different from the juvenile Sunday school image of a Bar of Justice with a stern judge sitting behind it, muttering to Himself as he peers with furrowed brow through the Big Black Books.

The relationship of the resurrection to quantum mechanics is unclear. Our bodies consist of molecules constructed of atoms which in turn consist of protons and electrons and neutrons, all of which are further reducible into baryons and mesons. The latter phrenetic particles flicker and twitch in billionths of a second and constitute the irreducible "matter" of our mortal being. How is the resurrection going to act on that? Whatever the Lord does, is done systematically, without black magic, so the particle zoo of 200 species will be accounted for in some regular manner.

We have provided other arguments against the resurrection of mortal matter. That is not to say we deny it. We just cannot understand how it can be. However, we do note at least one possible way for mortal matter to be resurrected. In this case, the mortal matter is itself intelligence that has undergone a priesthood-mediated transformation to make it three-dimensional. If this were so, then the resurrection would undo the temporary priesthood alterations and return the intelligence to some other form.<sup>{12}</sup>

We maintain here, as noted in the title, that judgment is a highly mechanical process. Spirit matter will be the subject of the judgment. Its traits and characteristics will have been basically created or modified or altered by our free agency through the entire metamorphosis. So the application of the judgment to that spirit matter will be analogous to tempering super-heated steel<sup>{13}</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> However, we suspect that the judgment is the first, after which the resurrection, our cold water bath, fixes us in whatever condition we are at that point.

<sup>12</sup> One day my dad was snorting about the stupidity of "some guy" in Salt Lake who said that the entire universe was going to be resurrected. How stupid! But - maybe he's right. And if mortal matter is just modified intelligence, then resurrection of everything seems likely.

<sup>13</sup> This concept is stated more rigidly than I really believe it to be. Specifically, I do believe that there will be variations of sort allowed by the Father. He will be able to adjust the reward, according to His mercy. We have no idea how that is possible but that's OK. We don't understand how the atonement works in the first place, and what this statement basically is saying is that the atonement will intervene in some manner in special cases.

The dangers of over-emphasis on strictly mechanical application of law and justice were recognized by various groups. The extremes of some Jewish law is well know. And Robinson says:

"The post-Vedic Brahmins had reduced sacrifice to a mechanical determinism such that the gods had no option but to comply." (1970:11)

We aren't that extreme. We admit that God can over-ride things if He wishes.

That's all. {<sup>14</sup>}

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<sup>14</sup> Now that this work is completed, I must offer an observation that stems from years of living with these ideas and perceptions. This is offered perhaps as a caution to the reader. Perhaps I should have offered this in the first chapter.

As I have integrated these perceptions and understandings into my own mind, I discover that my perception of the values or "life-style" of SMD has been significantly altered. I no longer feel the strong need to commune with other members. Indeed, I feel estranged. I do feel the need to partake of the sacrament at regular intervals, and I sometimes find priesthood and even Sunday school interesting. But for the most part, the present perception of the POS minimizes the communal force of the central-stakes of Zion mentality to the point that it is non-existent. One sees that all of that hand-holding and fervent bearing of testimonies and fanatical proselyting are not intrinsic parts of the actual Plan of Salvation. True, they are all accommodated therein, but to insist that they are implicitly required by the Plan, and worse, to insist that they are the marks *sine quae non* of the celestial spirit, is to grossly misrepresent the Plan. Individuals who haven't even known the POS during mortality will not be hindered in their progress, as long as they have love for others. These fanatical traits represent the accretion of folklore and cultural mythology which have melded with the basic doctrines.

Unfortunately, I now find that most "discussion" of doctrine are essentially reiterations of a fairly limited repertoire of LDS cant, characterized by a collection of needlessly dogmatic assertions that have little essential meaning, time-worn platitudes, formulas and cliches, and worse, a fair sprinkling of outright dishonest claims, i.e. "I know beyond a shadow of a doubt, etc. etc." In some church classes, I have mused that a pair of tape recorders with synchronized question and answer tapes would provide the same feelings and insights as the conversations between teachers and students. The teacher says, "Tithing!", to which a class member will shout, "Windows of heaven!", the teacher says, "word of wisdom", a class member will say, "smoking", etc. Thus a "conversation" of a peculiarly constrained type can proceed for 45 minutes. Nothing original, nothing heartfelt. In fact, some times there is even a quality of defiance or challenge in the exchange, as if it were a game with some valuable prize that the teacher is trying to protect, or that class members are zealously striving to earn through their fanatical, telegraphic conversations.

I find that few members really comprehend their loudly proclaimed beliefs beyond the 12 year old level. True, many can recite stories that exemplify the true effects of the POS, but grossly incorrect conclusions are drawn from them in some cases. And perhaps the saddest conclusion I reach, is that too many of the leaders of congregations and stakes have such a shallow comprehension of the doctrines that they cannot fairly lead their flocks. Worse, some are outright dishonest in their claims of what constitutes "good" membership, e.g. stake presidency members will severely chastise prospective-for-missionaryhood eighteen year old boys for not being able to state the dishonest statement, "I know beyond, etc." Something is wrong when the faith must stoop to this level in its leadership.

The POS is elegant and true. It will stand on its own IF it is allowed to do so by the leaders. However, leaders appear to be anxious to protect the members from its true nature. One wonders whether the leaders themselves have the testimonies they so loudly proclaim.

In any event, if one persists in thinking about the gospel in the manner defined above, s/he will discover that s/he is gradually drifting rightward from the center a few degrees. There is no anger or hostility or even censure in this change. But it is real change, and one feels left alone and isolated. And, in the words of Castaneda in the final pages of A JOURNEY TO IXTLAN, one can no longer go back home. It is lost forever, and all that remains is a lonely journey of searching.

So, one asks, is this exercise worth while? To which, I respond that it is because it is a truthful process that can only produce true understanding which compensates for any of the disappointments that accompany such enlightenment. But there is a price to be paid for this independence.