

## P05 – Some Sad Personal Principles & Policies

*Promoted by the Principal Religions of our Culture*

*Plus Preliminaries on Priorities, Plans, Procedures, and Practices*

Dear: Sorry for this chapter’s “snappy little title”, but when you get as old as certain people, you gotta grab any little fun you can find ( ☺ ) – and in which you can still engage ( ☹ ). My goal for this chapter is to try to explain more of what I showed you I review with “P” when I’m walking, specifically, more about: *The priorities are: first premisses, then purposes – and then principles, priorities, and policies – and finally: plans, procedures, and practices (with perseverance)*. In the previous multiple chapters, I focused on “premisses and purposes”; for this chapter, my plan is focus on “personal principles and policies” and associated priorities, plans, procedures, and practices, plus the need for perseverance to pull it all off! <sup>1</sup>

And in contrast to certain old people who grab any little fun in which they can still engage (such as teasing grandchildren!), a youngster such as you has an entirely different battle that you must continuously fight: to constrain yourself from just “having fun”. Thus, rather than reading this junk, wouldn’t you rather go out and “fool around” with some friends? Maybe get some “junk food”? How about phoning so-and-so and arranging something for this weekend? What about more scheming to get your own apartment? Then, free from parental prejudices, you can really party!

But beyond first appearances, Dear, both old and young fight the same war: mind vs. molecule. Most old people must continuously fight their DNA’s decision to “give up the ghost” – or better, “give up the host”! Most young people, in contrast, must continuously fight their DNA’s directives to munch, mingle, and mate! And how pathetic it must seem to youngsters to have some old fogey tell them that the prime goal of all humans is to help humanity, when they know full well that their prime goal is to do what their DNA molecule dictates: find a mate and copulate! But if you dig into details, Dear, you’ll find that the “holy books” of our culture provide even stupider guidance than does your old grandfather.

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<sup>1</sup> Dear: The rather-crude distinction that I make between “principles” and “policies” is that when a person takes some action based on some principle, then that action becomes the person’s policy, driven by the person’s principle.

As an illustration, there's the story in the Old Testament (OT) about Sodom and Gomorrah (*Genesis 18 & 19*). It starts by describing how God met and had a nice little chat with Abraham [later claims (e.g., allegedly made by Moses) that no one could meet and gaze upon God, notwithstanding]; God then sent two “angels” down to check out what was going on in Sodom. The story relates that God was unable to know, from “afar”, what was going on in the city, for he reportedly said (*Genesis 18, 21-22*):

I must go down and see whether their deeds warrant the out-cry which has reached me. I am resolved to know the truth.

So much for the idea that God “knows all and sees all” – although, since then, maybe he got better glasses and a hearing aid (☺).

Anyway, the two angels sauntered on down to Sodom and met and stayed the night with “the only righteous man” in town, a fellow by the name of Lot. The (unbelievable!) story continues as follows (starting at *Genesis 19, 4*), to which (as per usual) I've added a few notes in “square brackets”.

Before they [the two “angels”] lay down to sleep, the men of Sodom, both young and old, surrounded the house – everyone without exception. [To be consistent with the rest of the story, Dear, the crowd would seem to have been more than fifty men, because at *Genesis 18, 24*, Abraham reportedly said to God: “Suppose there are fifty good men in the city; wilt though really sweep it away, and not pardon the place because of the fifty good men?”] They called to Lot and asked him where the men were who had entered his house that night. “Bring them out,” they shouted, “so that we can have intercourse with them.” [How more than fifty men would have sex with two men – and why they would want to – are left to strain the credulity of the reader!] Lot [who apparently concluded that the men of Sodom didn't want just to talk with the two angels] went out into the doorway to them, closed the door behind him [a nice but a rather strange little tidbit to add to the story!], and said, “No, my friends [Lot apparently wasn't very discriminating about whom he called ‘friends’], do not be so wicked. Look, I have two daughters, both virgins; *let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them* [italics added]; but do not touch these men, because they have come under the shelter of my roof.”

Can you imagine it, Dear? Lot, a “righteous man” (“the only righteous man” in town), offered to send his two daughters out to be raped by a mob, to protect two strangers that had “come under the shelter” of his roof? What about his duty to shelter his daughters?! Rather than be saved from the subsequent destruction of the town (as relayed later in the story), Lot should have been shot!

And what did his daughters do? Did they plan and execute suitable punishment for their horrible father? Well, much as we might wish that they did, later the crazy story relates the following (*Genesis 19, 30*):

The elder daughter said to the younger, “Our father is old and there is not a man in the country to come to us in the usual way. Come now, let us make our father drink wine and then lie with him and, in this way, keep the family alive through our father...” In this way both Lot’s daughters came to be with child by their father.

Such is God’s (or, more accurately, some stupid clerical author’s) idea of morality. And such are the vaunted “Judeo-Christian family values”!

In contrast to such stupidity, the DNA molecules of even brute animals have “programmed” into their hosts both protection of their offspring and prohibition against incest. Through experience, the molecules have “learned” that inbreeding doesn’t lead to healthy hosts. Yet from the above quotation, apparently God’s (or, more accurately, some stupid cleric’s) mind is so warped as to advocate such crazy rewriting of the DNA’s instructions? A father sends his daughters out to be raped by a mob? The daughters then seek to be impregnated by their father? Bizarre... crazy... horrible... hideous...? Aaah – there’s an appropriate epithet: “clerical”!

As in the OT, similar stupidity is rampant in the New Testament (NT) – although there is a change in the analogy that the clerics had for women. In the OT (as I’ll show you explicitly in the “excursion” **Qx**), the analogy for a man having sex with a woman is for the man to “plant” his “seed” in the woman, who then, analogously, is little more than dirt. In the NT, in contrast, the analogy is that if a man must stoop to have sex with a woman, then he would “dirty” himself in the “immorality” of intercourse. As an example, the clerics have their Jesus state (e.g., *Matthew 5, 27*):

You have learned that they were told, “Do not commit adultery.” But what I [Jesus] tell you is this: If a man looks on a woman with a lustful eye [what about a woman looking on a man with a lustful eye?!], he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

What balderdash! Dear: if you haven’t had water for three days and then see someone with water, then don’t listen to the stupid clerics who preach “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s [whatever].” Your body has needs; your DNA molecule wants to continue to live; you will “covet” some water;

\* Go to other chapters *via*

you will “lust” after the water; just make sure you use your brain as best you can. Similarly for your sexual “lusts” – just make sure you use your head! The morality of the clerics notwithstanding (in fact, the morality of the clerics be damned!), all that morality should ever mean is to use your brain as best you can.

But the NT gets worse when it deteriorates to the craziness advocated by “Saint” Paul and “Saint” John, both of whom (in my opinion, for reasons I’ll show you in **Qx**) were totally bananas. For now, I’ll illustrate with just a single example. Thus, in *1 Corinthians 7, 2–6*, Paul states:

It is a good thing for a man to have nothing to do with women; but because there is so much immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband... All this I say by way of concession, not command. [Paul was on a “power kick”; he loved to command people.] I should like you all to be as I am myself [i.e., not “polluting” himself with sex]... To the unmarried and to widows I say this: it is a good thing if they stay as I am myself; but if they cannot control themselves, they should marry...

Can you imagine it Dear? The person who (as I’ll show you later) was actually the founder of the Christian religion<sup>2</sup> recommended that people abstain from sex; that people marry only “because there is so much [sexual] immorality.” I can almost hear all DNA molecules scream: “Save us from ‘Saint’ Paul’s insanity!”

Bertrand Russell summarized it well [to which I’ve added the references to Mormonism]:

The Christian view [and similarly, the Mormon view] that all intercourse outside marriage is immoral was, as we see in the above passages from St. Paul, based upon the view that all sexual intercourse, even within marriage, is regrettable. A view of this sort, which goes against biological facts, can only be regarded by sane people as a morbid aberration. The fact that it is embedded in Christian [and Mormon] ethics has made Christianity [and Mormonism] throughout its whole history a force tending towards mental disorders and unwholesome views of life.

And incidentally, Dear, if you wonder how anyone could advocate something so crazy as did “Saint” Paul, then you can find the answer in what he wrote, e.g., at *1 Corinthians 7, 29*:

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<sup>2</sup> Dear: As I’ll show you in **Qx**, if an historical Jesus existed, then based on reports from other than the conniving Christian clerics (i.e., based on the “Gnostic Gospels”), Jesus never advocated the formation of any organized religion.

What I mean, my friends, is this. The time we live in will not last long. While it lasts, married men should be as if they had no wives... For the whole frame of the world is passing away.

That is, Paul had concluded that the world was about to end, and therefore, even if he had known about DNA molecules, he wouldn't have paid any attention to their "desire" to continue to reproduce. Apparently, however, Paul was wrong – and as I'll be showing you, not just about sex and when the world would end! Therefore, Dear, whereas the world has continued and your DNA molecule very much wants to continue to "live", it'll urge you to mate. You, however (in contrast to Paul and all crazy clerics), have a well-functioning mind, and I encourage you to use it to the best of its ability.

In the case of the "holy book" of Islam, the Koran (or Qur'an or Quran), the analogy for men having sex with women is similar to the analogy in the OT (i.e., men are to treat women as little more than dirt), although there's also the analogy that men are like bulls and women are little more than cows for the men to mount. Thus, as another manual for men and similar to the OT, the Koran describes how any man can have a "harem", consisting of many wives (i.e., any man can practice polygamy) and even many concubines (i.e., sex slaves), as well as other "female servants". An example from the Koran is at *The Clans* 33, 50, where Muhammad claims that God (aka Allah) relayed to him the following message:

O Prophet [aka Muhammad] surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries, and those whom your right hand possesses out of those whom Allah has given to you as prisoners of war...

And although in modern times we may find such ideas (men treating women as little more than dirt or cattle) to be repugnant, yet, Dear, if you consider the historical context of many of Muhammad's ideas, you may find that some of them were actually quite "enlightened" for their time (especially his ideas on racial equality) – and certainly much more enlightened than the crazy ideas contained in the Bible (both the OT and the NT).

Yet, not even commenting (yet!) on the terrorism advocated in the Koran, some of Muhammad's ideas were just as bad as those in the OT and NT. Realize, Dear, that all "holy books" of our culture are manuals for men and provide "recommended polices" for how men should treat women. If you'll search on the internet, you can find literally hundreds of examples of

sickening male chauvinism; I'll show you a few examples in **Qx** and more in an **X**-chapter dealing with women's liberation; here, I'll show you just three.

For example, in the above quotation from the OT about Lot, you might wonder: Why didn't the girls' mother stop the incest? Well, I skipped quoting that part. You see, earlier, she didn't do what her husband told her to do, so God morphed her into a pillar of salt. In the NT, similarly, the insane "Saint" Paul states (*1 Corinthians 11, 7*):

Man is the image of God... whereas woman reflects the glory of man. For man did not originally spring from woman, but woman was made out of man; and man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man; and therefore, it is woman's duty to have a sign of authority on her head [covering her hair]...

In the Koran, Muhammad spells out such "authority" of men over women more explicitly. Here, let me just quote Ali Sina (from whom I showed you an extensive quotation two chapters ago). In the following quotation, his references are to verses in the Koran (or Qur'an or Quran):<sup>3</sup>

Let us see what the Quran says about women. It says "men have a degree (of advantage) over them" 2:228; that the witness of woman is worth half of that of man 2:282; that women inherit half of their male siblings, 4:11-12; that a man can marry two or three or four women 4:3; that if a woman becomes captive in a war, her Muslim master is allowed to rape her 33:50; that if a woman is not totally submissive to her husband, she will enter Hell 66:10; that women are "tilth" for their husbands (to cultivate them) 2:223; that men are in charge of women, as if women were imbeciles or minors who could not take care of themselves; that they must be obedient to their husbands or be admonished (verbally abused), banished from the bed (psychologically abused) and beaten (physically abused) 4:34.

In the case of Mormonism, in some cases the male chauvinism is even worse: even in Islam, men aren't permitted to interfere in the relationships between women and their "god", whereas (as I'll show you later) even when they're dead, men continue to control the possibility that their wives can enter the Mormon's fictitious "celestial paradise"!

Yet, in the case of Mormonism, some of the ideas in the Book of Mormon (BoM) are more enlightened than in Christianity, e.g., correcting, at least partially, the crazy Christian principle of punishing the innocent for the sins of the guilty. Of course, one might have expected some "improvement" in

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<sup>3</sup> Copied from "Symposium: Gender Apartheid and Islam" by Jamie Glazov, FrontPageMagazine.com, 31 December 2004, available at <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=16440>.

the BoM, since it was written about 1700 years after the NT – Mormon clerics’ claims to the contrary notwithstanding (even the most cursory evaluation!). But other ideas in the BoM (e.g., dealing with racism) are even more primitive than in Christianity and in Islam. Further, Mormon policy “flip-flops” (e.g., dealing with racism and polygamy) have been amazing.

In fact (and more to the point of these paragraphs) the Mormon flip-flops on sexual policies have been astounding – and caused much of the turbulence in the history of Mormonism [including the hostility Mormonism generated in neighboring communities, the imprisonment and subsequent “jail-house shoot out” that resulted in the death of Joseph Smith, the ouster of Mormonism’s true “spiritual head” (Sidney Rigdon), Mormonism’s split into factions, and its loss of many members, disillusioned with the way “God’s policies” were manipulated for political purposes]. But I’ll delay showing you details of this history and the policy flip-flops in Mormonism until **Qx** and **Yx**. Here, let me show you just the barest outline of the source of their sexual-policy flip-flops.

On the one hand, Sidney Rigdon (almost certainly the author of the BoM) seemed to have a stable and satisfying marriage: there’s historical evidence that (in contrast to Lot) he loved and therefore tried to protect both his wife and daughter. Consistently, his stated view about protecting women from polygamy is as follows (starting in the BoM at the *Book of Jacob* 2, 22):

I [Rigdon, writing for God!] **must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime... This people... excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written [in the Bible] concerning David and Solomon... [who] truly had many wives and concubines, which was abominable before me, saith the Lord... I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old... For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none – for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women... For behold, I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of my people... because of the wickedness and abominations of their husbands. And I will not suffer, saith the Lord of Hosts, the cries of the fair daughters of this people... Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you...**

As if that wasn’t a sufficiently clear statement prohibiting polygamy, Rigdon wrote more that’s similar at *Ether* 10, 5, *Jacob* 3, 5-8, and *Mosiah* 11, 2-4.

\* Go to other chapters *via*

And if you're now thinking something similar to "What's the big deal?", then to understand, Dear, you'd need to learn more about Rigdon. I'll go into some of this in Qx and Yx. Here, to hint that it really was quite a "big deal", let me just summarize this way. As a preacher, Rigdon was trained to be (and was) a "literalist", meaning that he took every word in the Bible to be "the gospel truth" (even what was written in the OT). In the OT, he could clearly see that all the old Jewish "patriarchs" (such as Abraham and his sons, as well as Moses, Solomon, David, and so on) were polygamists – apparently with no complaint from God (aka Jehovah aka Yahweh). Therefore it was quite a "big deal" for Rigdon to abandon what was "obviously" permitted by God ("obvious" to someone convinced that the Bible was "the word of God), and instead, to adopt what the previous ~2,000 years of custom had established, namely, monogamy. Rigdon then wrote the above as if prohibiting polygamy was direct from God.

On the other hand, though, Rigdon's "front man" (i.e., the convicted "money digger" Joseph Smith, Jr.), in the perpetration of the Ridgon-Smith-Harris-Cowdery... fraud (that the BoM was a direct communication from God), apparently had an insatiable sexual appetite. Similar to Muhammad (and Gilgamesh), Smith was like a bull seeking to mount as many cows as possible. To illustrate, let me quote [and add a few notes to] the e-text by I. Woodbridge Riley entitled *The Founder of Mormonism* (written in 1903 as his Ph.D. thesis at Yale University):<sup>4</sup>

But Joseph Smith was by constitution, and already by custom a gallant gentleman [meaning that he wanted to have sex with as many women as possible, even though he was married]. While he was residing at Harmony [New York] and engaged with Martin Harris in the labor of transcribing Sidney's [Rigdon's] manuscript [i.e., what was to become the BoM], an effort he made to seduce a certain Elisa Winters became the occasion of neighborhood comment... [A reference is provided.] It may be conceived, therefore, that he [Joseph Smith] did not relish the stringency with which his colleague [Sidney Rigdon] set his face against polygamy. Accordingly, to a certain extent, Joseph destroyed the force of Mr. Rigdon's opposition [to polygamy, as written, e.g., in the quotation given above] by inserting in the midst of his denunciation of the practice a passage which is somewhat obscurely in favor of it. This sentence, which is supposed with a good degree of confidence, may be attributed to Joseph is expressed in the following terms: "For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise, they shall hearken unto these things" (*Jacob 2: 30*). Here was found in the year 1843 a loophole of sufficient size to allow the ingress of the famous "Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, of including the Plurality of Wives" (*Doctrines & Covenant, Sect. 132*).

<sup>4</sup> Available at <http://sidneyrigdon.com/1903RilB.htm>.

Thereby, Smith promoted the practice of polygamy (although, as I'll show you in **Yx**, Smith was actually involved in extra-marital affairs, i.e., committing "adultery", for at least a decade before he announced his "revelation" that polygamy was okay), and his successor (Brigham Young) both practiced and promoted polygamy. Meanwhile, Rigdon was thrown out of the Church leadership and started up (with Smith's wife) a different branch of Mormonism, which prohibited polygamy. Eventually, Brigham Young's "Western Mormons" officially abandoned polygamy, so that Utah could gain statehood.

Incidentally, Dear, I hope you notice (in the above) what I tried to warn you about in the previous chapter: the audacity of those who claim to speak for God. Such audacity, such presumptuous claims of "authority", have been going on for at least the past 5,000 years, and as I mentioned in the previous chapter, they're normally some combination of the following two "mind sets": either 1) the person is mentally ill and "truly believes" that his ideas (whose origin he doesn't understand) are from some god [examples seem to be Zoroaster, probably Jesus (if he existed), and almost certainly "Saint" Paul and Sidney Rigdon], or 2) the person (such as "Saint" Constantine and Joseph Smith) is on some "power trip" and realizes that one way to gain control over people is to claim that his "revelations" and "commandments" are direct from some god. In some cases, maybe with Hammurabi, Moses, and Muhammad, they seem to have been both mentally ill and megalomaniacs.

But of more interest to me than any of those people, Dear, is you. In particular, the message that I want to convey to you is that, in contrast to what the clerics teach, your sexual needs and drives (i.e., instincts) have absolutely nothing to do with any communications from some giant Jabberwock in the sky. Instead, your sexual instincts are your DNA molecule's method of communicating to you that it wants to continue. Similarly, controlling (or better, "managing") your sexual instincts has absolutely nothing to do with any morality dictated by any giant Jabberwock in the sky. Instead, the only "moral principle" appropriate for managing your "sex life" is the same moral principle that I urge you to apply in managing your entire life, namely, use your brain as best you can.

Stated differently, of course there's absolutely nothing "immoral" about sex. I would maintain, however, that it is immoral not to "manage" your DNA

molecule's sexual messages with your mind. In particular, when it comes to having sex with someone else, Dear, you must take three, rather separate and distinct types of precautions.

First is the need to protect your health. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can destroy your life. Generally, syphilis can now be controlled, but, Dear, think what it did, for example, to poor, brilliant Beethoven.<sup>5</sup> As far as I know, herpes can't be cured. You know about AIDS. Remember this, Dear: it's impossible to have unprotected sex with just a single person; if you have unprotected sex with anyone, then simultaneously you're having sex with every other partner who has had unprotected sex with that person. Consequently, before you have sex with anyone, either obtain a current medical report on your potential partner's health or absolutely demand protection against STDs using condoms (which you can get at any drug store and at most supermarkets).

A second needed precaution is to protect emotions. Sexual intercourse is normally the most intense and intimate intercourse possible. In ordinary discourse, respect is important, tact is useful, and shared secrets must be held in confidence; in sexual intercourse, naked truths are revealed in more ways than one, leaving both parties extremely vulnerable. Unless there's a commitment by both parties to respect and even honor a sexual partner as a separate, valuable, emotional human being, then stay away as far as possible from any potential sexual involvement.

And a third obvious precaution is needed if you're not ready to dramatically change your life and become a parent! Therefore, Dear, although your hormones may be raging (which is your DNA's method of telling you to reproduce), you must outsmart the billion-year-old molecule with your mind. Unless you want to become a parent, then use some method to prevent the male's sperm from reaching the female's ovum. Thanks to contributions from many wonderful and wonderfully competent people, many contraception devices are now available. Do use condoms to protect against STDs, but condoms aren't 100% effective to prevent conception. Therefore, use condoms in combination with some other "birth-control device" that doctors can prescribe, such as "the pill". Please remember that conception

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<sup>5</sup> Dear: In an earlier draft of this chapter, I had added there "and Nietzsche", but recently I saw that the claim that Nietzsche had syphilis was a "smear campaign". Articles and books are available describing the "how, why, and by whom" of the campaign. I haven't read them – but be forewarned!

can occur – you should expect it to occur – any time you have sex without using some method of contraception, including the first time.

As for the morality of “monosexuality” (i.e., masturbation), homosexuality, adultery, and monogamy vs. polygamy, Dear, of course these, too, have absolutely nothing to do with any commandments from some giant Jabberwock in the sky. Again, what’s moral is to use your head as best you can. And although I don’t want to go into a lot of details (in part because you have your own extremely competent head atop your own shoulders!), let me list at least a few points that you might want to consider.

- Enjoying your sexuality by engaging in monosexuality is as healthy as having a drink when you’re thirsty and having some food when you’re hungry. I would have you consider, however, that there are ramifications of drinking too much when you’re not really thirsty and from eating too much when you’re not really hungry. That is, remember the wisdom from antiquity: “moderation in all things”.
- There is absolutely nothing “immoral” about homosexuality, but the behavior of homosexuals can be “immoral”, for example, through failure to protect against a partner’s physical or emotional health. In particular, I still suffer emotionally a little (and at the time, I suffered a lot) from being “propositioned” by a homosexual: homosexuality has never interested me, and I was not only offended but actually quite frightened when I was in my early thirties and a “big bruiser of a fellow” propositioned me.
- In the case of adultery (that is, having sex outside of marriage), that’s a matter between the two marriage partners (and with the person or persons involved from outside the marriage). If someone makes a mental commitment to another (as a free choice, not as part of some “ritual” required to obtain society’s “permission” to marry), then obviously it’s a very serious matter to violate a trust: trust between two people is extremely difficult to build and can be shattered (probably never to be rebuilt) by a single “adulterous affair”. Therefore, Dear, if you value someone trusting you, then protect that trust to the utmost of your ability. On the other hand, there are many cases when the trust disappears for other reasons or it’s no longer of interest to one or both parties (or it’s no longer associated with sexual exclusiveness). But even in such cases, Dear, honesty and openness are normally the best procedures, and always

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it's necessary to appropriately account for the emotional and physical well being of others involved, especially any children.

- Finally, for the morality of monogamy vs. polygamy, again the primary concern should be for any children – but the emotional well being of all individuals involved must be evaluated. In general, society should stay out of the sexual affairs of people. Yet, if the result of polygamy is children with inadequate emotional or other support, wives forced into polygamy (as is still occurring, in many cases, just up the road from us, in Arizona and Utah), or men forced into similar “service” for only one woman (although I've never heard of such cases), then it becomes “the people's business”, because normally we're required to step in to try to remedy damages. In our society, monogamous relations between two freely acting, responsible, reliable, and then trusting adults are therefore the preferred sexual relationship, by far!

And undoubtedly I don't need to add comments about the absolutely horrible immorality of the many clerics (not just Catholic clerics) who prey on children and damage them emotionally. Nonetheless, I'll add my opinion that one penalty for such beasts should be castration; maybe that would make them think before molesting another child.

“And why on Earth [or in Hell!] is my old grandfather going through all this obvious stuff”, asks a certain grandchild, “when I've learned all about sex in school and I could be teaching him what he obviously doesn't know?!”

Well, Dear [since you asked, ☺ ], it's because it provides a good example of the points I want to make in this chapter, dealing with personal purposes, principles, and policies – plus preliminaries on priorities, plans, procedures, and practices! Thus, Dear, at the outset, please make sure you know your purpose in having sex: to become a parent, to enjoy your body, to enjoy sharing yourself with another person, or... [I hope not to “gain popularity” or “hang on to your partner” or “because it's a blast” or “to conquer new territory” or...]. Then, once your purpose is clear, define relevant principles and policies and their priorities, and subsequently, develop appropriate plans, procedures, and practices, all of which undoubtedly will require substantial perseverance!

For example, if your purpose is to be a parent, then let me urge you 1) to adopt the principle that “parenthood is too tough for a single person”, and

therefore, 2) to undertake policies first to get married (to protect your children) and then to protect your marriage (e.g., probably by adopting the policy of avoiding adultery). You will find that putting these policies into practice will require substantial planning of priorities and procedures, as well as perseverance: it's normally not easy to find a mate, many potential procedures are available (now including computer-based searches), and I almost guarantee you that if your top priorities are to keep your marriage intact and provide a healthy environment for your children, then your perseverance will be severely tested!

As another example, if your purpose is “simply” to enjoy your sexuality, then let me urge you to adopt the principle that “there's no enjoyment in contracting a sexually transmitted disease”, and therefore, I urge you to adopt the policy to always protect yourself. Then, in addition, you'll need to undertake necessary planning (setting priorities and establishing procedures and practices) and you'll need to persevere: to accomplish meeting other people similarly inclined, to protect yourself and others involved (both physically and emotionally), and then to always adhere to your principles and policies. So, Dear, maybe you see that your old grandfather isn't so perverted as you first perceived!

Actually, though, Dear, all of the above was just preamble (or, better, an “introduction”) to the main points that I want to make. My first point is to urge you to behave morally (i.e., use your brain as best you can) not just in your “sex life” but in your entire life: first decide on your premisses and purpose(s), then adopt relevant principles and policies, put them in priority, and then pursue them with plans, procedures, practices – including the practice of perseverance. My second point is more important and is this. Dear: please see that the most important step is the first one, i.e., deciding on your premisses and purposes. Once you adopt your premisses and know your purpose, the rest is rather obvious – but requires perseverance.

Clerics will similarly advise you to be moral, but they've concocted a distorted meaning of morality, because they've adopted the bizarre premiss that some supernatural Jabberwock in the sky is “in charge” and they promote the bizarre purposes of satisfying HIS “wants” (even though he can't have any!) and of gaining eternal bliss in Heaven (avoiding eternal torment in Hell). Consistently, the corresponding principles and policies they promote are totally bizarre.

I could show you examples in any religion, but because of your experiences in Mormonism, let me show you what the prior President of the Mormon Church, Spencer W. Kimball, wrote in his article “President Kimball Speaks Out on Morality,” *New Era*, Nov. 1980, 39 (also published in *Ensign*, Nov. 1980, 94). Although I hope you’ll notice how drastically the following ideas differ from what I’ve been recommending in this chapter (namely, to always use your brain as best you can), yet I’ll forego additional comments on the stupidity in the following quotation until later in this chapter.

...Since the beginning there has been in the world a wide range of sins. Many of them involve harm to others, but every sin is against ourselves and God, for sins limit our progress, curtail our development, and estrange us from good people, good influences, and from our Lord.

The early apostles and prophets mention numerous sins that were reprehensible to them. Many of them were sexual sins – adultery, being without natural affection, lustfulness, infidelity, incontinence, filthy communications, impurity, inordinate affection, fornication. They included all sexual relations outside marriage – petting, sex perversion, masturbation, and preoccupation with sex in one’s thoughts and talking. Included are every hidden and secret sin and all unholy and impure thoughts and practices...

Masturbation, a rather common indiscretion, is not approved of the Lord nor of his church, regardless of what may have been said by others whose ‘norms’ are lower. Latter-day Saints are urged to avoid this practice... Sometimes masturbation is the introduction to the more serious sins of exhibitionism and the gross sin of homosexuality. We would avoid mentioning these unholy terms and these reprehensible practices were it not for the fact that we have a responsibility to the youth of Zion that they be not deceived by those who would call bad good, and black white...

The unholy transgression of homosexuality is either rapidly growing or tolerance is giving it wider publicity. If one has such desires and tendencies, he overcomes them the same as if he had the urge toward petting or fornication or adultery. The Lord condemns and forbids this practice with a vigor equal to his condemnation of adultery and other such sex acts. And the Church will excommunicate as readily any unrepentant addict.

Again, contrary to the belief and statement of many people, this sin [homosexuality], like fornication, is overcomable and forgivable, but again, only upon a deep and abiding repentance, which means total abandonment and complete transformation of thought and act. The fact that some governments and some churches and numerous corrupted individuals have tried to reduce such behavior from criminal offense to personal privilege does not change the nature nor the seriousness of the practice. Good men, wise men, God-fearing men everywhere still denounce the practice as

being unworthy of sons of God; and Christ's church denounces it and condemns it so long as men have bodies which can be defiled...

Especially grave errors such as sexual sins shall be confessed to the bishop as well as to the Lord. There are two remissions which one might wish to have. First, the forgiveness from the Lord, and second, the forgiveness of the Lord's church through its leaders. As soon as one has an inner conviction of his sins, he should go to the Lord in "mighty prayer" as did Enos and never cease his supplications until he shall, like Enos, receive the assurance that his sins have been forgiven by the Lord. It is unthinkable that God absolves serious sins upon a few requests. He is likely to wait until there has been long, sustained repentance as evidenced by a willingness to comply with all His other requirements.

Next, the offender should seek the forgiveness of the Church through his bishop. No priest nor elder is authorized to thus act for the Church. The Lord has a consistent, orderly plan. Every soul in stakes is given a bishop who, by the very order of his calling and his ordination, is a "judge in Israel." The bishop is our best earthly friend. He will hear the problems, judge the seriousness, then determine the degree of repentance and decide if it warrants an eventual forgiveness. He does this as the earthly representative of God – the master physician, the master psychologist, the master psychiatrist...

What utter garbage! Not only stupid ideas about "sexual morality", but written by someone who doesn't have a clue about the meaning of morality and justice. To begin to show you what I mean, let me first briefly review some ideas from earlier chapters.

As I tried to show you in the J-chapters (dealing with "Justice"), Mother Nature teaches all humans (and all animals!) the essentials of justice when we're young. By the time we're two-or-so, most of us understand the essence of "natural justice", i.e., that all effects are "justified" by their causes, i.e., the "law" (or better the "principle") of causality. By the time we're four, most of us have learned from Mother Nature the essence of "personal justice", i.e., that we get pretty much what we deserve. And by the time we start school, we should have learned the essence of "interpersonal and social justice" – basically, that such justice is just opinions, but with some hope for uniformity of opinion, because of what Mother Nature has taught us about natural and personal justice; otherwise, if we didn't learn, we'll have difficulty getting along with other kids and we'll

\* Go to other chapters *via*

need to have disagreements settled by some “third-party”, such as other classmates or teachers, to judge what’s “fair”.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to such lessons about justice that Mother Nature teaches us, clerics typically demonstrate less knowledge about justice than modern kids in elementary school! In the case of natural justice, various groups of clerics claim that their god can part the waters or walk on them (or whatever) and they tell tall tales about all sorts of nonsense, from talking bushes to visits from angels. If you examine details, Dear, you’ll find that the foundations of most if not all organized religions of our culture (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Mormonism...) are built on claims of such “miracles”. Some primitive people “believed” (and some primitive people apparently still “believe”) in such “magic” and “miracles”, but surely no modern person older than about six (and who is sane) takes any such nonsense seriously.

Further (and as I wrote in an earlier chapter), it would be a horrible world if “miracles” (in the religious sense) could occur, i.e., if the principle of causality was invalid. Thus, imagine the chaos if we couldn’t trust causality: if some god (or some son of some god) could violate causality, then the bedrock on which all of understanding rests would be instantly transformed into mud and guck in which all mysticism is mired. Therefore, it’s enormously important that people reject all “miracles” in all “holy books” as nonsense, for by definition, such “miracles” violate some principle of nature that humans (and even other animals) have wrestled from nature, winning the prize of “understanding”. In reality, though, and extremely fortunately for humanity, no data support any contention that such descriptions of “miracles” are anything beyond “mere babblings of diseased minds”.

More significantly, not only do the principal religions of our culture corrupt the concept of natural justice, they corrupt the concept of personal justice (and therefore the possibility of interpersonal or social justice). A general description of personal justice is that you generally get what you deserve. In contrast, it’s bizarre to conclude that if you just do what the clerics tell you to do (without thinking for yourself) and if you give a few cans of food (or whatever) to the poor, then in exchange, you’ll be happy in Heaven for eternity. I’ll come back to this in a later paragraph, but for now let me just exclaim: Talk about an incredible return on a meager investment!

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<sup>6</sup> Dear: I’m well aware that I haven’t finished describing the meaning of interpersonal and social justice. I’ll show you more in later **P**-chapters and in the **X**-chapters.

As for the concept of morality, recall that dictionary definitions of morality (or right vs. wrong or good vs. evil) have severe limitations: as is the case for essentially all words in any dictionary, words can be defined in dictionaries only in terms of other words. For example, my dictionary gives for the definition of the adjective *evil*:

1. a) morally bad or wrong; wicked; depraved b) resulting from or based on conduct regarded as immoral...
2. causing pain or trouble; harmful; injurious
3. offensive or disgusting
4. threatening or bringing misfortune; unluck; disastrous; unfortunate

If you then look up the words ‘bad’, ‘wrong’, ‘wicked’, ‘immoral’ and so on, you’re soon referred back to the word ‘evil’ – so you end up chasing your “tale”.

Instead of engaging in such “tale chasing”, we can look to Mother Nature for the meaning of ‘morality’. Thus, Mother Nature (aka experience) teaches us that the morality of any act is a value (say ranging from -10 to +10) that we can assign to the act to indicate how it contributes to or distracts from our objectives. In words, we can call the value -10 to be “totally bad”, “pure evil”, and similar (or, in olden days, “satanic”) and the value +10 to be “totally good” and similar (or, in olden days, “godly”). The moral value (or morality) of all acts would then fall in the range between -10 to +10.

It’s important to remember, Dear, that moral values have a range, which can be normalized to be between -10 to +10, (or between 0 and 100, or whatever range one desires). Thus the moral value of stealing food just “for the fun of it” is low (say a -9), much less that the moral value of stealing food when you’re very hungry (say a -2), which in turn less than the moral value of begging for food (maybe close to 0), in turn much less than getting a job to earn money to buy food (somewhere around +9).

In contrast, simple people (such as most clerics) tend to recognize only the extremes on the “morality scale”, judging every act as “good vs. evil”, as if the world was just “black or white”. An example is in the foolishness quoted above written by LDS President Kimball: “we have a responsibility to the youth of Zion that they be not deceived by those who would call bad good, and black white.” Another example is when, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on this country, the foolish president Bush [or maybe he’s not so foolish and is only “playing to the crowd (of fools)”] stated that the “war

against the terrorists” is a war between “good and evil.” Gimme a break: there is ignorance on both sides, and the ignorance of each side has led to acts of varying degrees of immorality.

But more important than the concept that there’s a range of moral values, Mother Nature (aka experience) teaches us that, as with any “value”, moral values (or “morality”) can be measured only relative to some objective. In particular, morality of some act is a measure of the value of how the act promotes our goals. Please remember, Dear, that ‘morality’ is meaningless without reference to some objective. For example, if your goal is to learn how to do your math, the morality of your reading your textbook may be a +7.8 – and you know that the value of your skipping your studies is down there scraping close to a –10. That is, before one can knowledgeably speak about morality of any act, it’s necessary to define the objective (or objectives) to which it refers.

Now, Dear, once again I don’t want to address the thousand-and-one lower-priority (or sub-) objectives pursued by everyone – and against each of which the morality of relevant acts can be judged, e.g., relative to the objective of building a study house, the morality of using bricks and mortar, rather than bread and butter (or whatever). Instead, let me focus just on what I’ve called our prime objectives. In that regard, and as I might have mentioned once or twice before [ ☺ ], it’s my contention that all humans pursue a trio of prime objectives: our own survival, the survival of our families (whatever we consider to be the extent of our families), and the survival (or promotion) of our values. In what follows, I want to consider the morality of acts by judging them relative to those prime goals.

I should add that, in principle, it’s no restriction to measure moral values relative only to our prime objectives (our trio of survival goals), because even by definition, all our thousand-and-one subobjectives are subordinate to (or in support of) our prime objectives. For example, the morality of the choice of building materials for the house mentioned two paragraphs ago can be related to the objective of building a sturdy house for the survival of yourself and your family. But I should also add that, although in principle it’s unrestrictive to relate morality only to our prime goals, in practice it can be quite a pain. For example, Dear, try to figure out the moral value of, right now, beginning to whistle! [In my own case, the value would be quite low, because your grandmother is sleeping – and if she should be awakened from her sleep by my whistling, then...!]

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Anyway, whistling aside and as I think I might have written before [ 😊 ], although I contend that all humans pursue the same trio of survival goals, differences among humans arise not only from methods chosen to pursue their prime goals (e.g., one person chooses to become a ballet dancer and another chooses to become an engineer) but also (and more significantly) from our choices of our “third survival goal”, i.e., the promotion of our values. Further, because any “value” is meaningless without reference to some objective, then philosophical differences among people primarily arise from the differences in objectives used to measure values.

For those of us who call ourselves “humanists”, we define our values in terms of our dual survival goals, of ourselves and of our “extended family”, which includes all humanity. For “the religious”, in contrast, they accept what the clerics tell them should be both their values and the objectives against which their values are to be measured. In particular, in those religions (Christianity, Islam, Mormonism...) in which the primary purpose of the followers is to gain eternal bliss in Heaven (thereby avoiding eternal pain in Hell), then that purpose provides them with the prime goal against which all their values are measured. Thereby, for example, flying hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center is considered by the hijackers to be highly “moral”.

In contrast to those enslaved by clerics, humanists accept no other prime goals than those we deduce from data by ourselves (including the “data” derived from the insights of other humanists). Thus, in my case, as I’ve tried to show you, all available data suggest to me that our prime objectives are our trio of survival goals, with our values deduced from our dual survival goals (of ourselves and of humanity). In simplest terms, the data (plus Darwin’s insight) suggest that these DNA molecules (which have managed to survive for the past billion-or-so years) have thereby earned the right to claim and to maintain that “the good” is for them to continue. Translated into human terms, with the dominant characteristic of humans being our amazing brains, “the good” (a +10 on a humanist’s morality scale) is therefore to use our brains as best we can – which includes basing our decisions on the best available data.

Using my brain as best I can, I discern two types of morality: personal morality and interpersonal (or social) morality. Further, using my brain as best I can, I conclude that the act of highest personal morality is to use one’s

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brain as best one can! In the case of interpersonal morality, then again using my brain as best I can, I conclude that the acts of highest social morality can generally be described with expressions (or “moral codes”) such as “be kind, if you can, but with keenness”, or “everyone has an equal right to pursue one’s own objectives”.

If humanists fail to act morally (i.e., fail to use their brains as best they can), then borrowing the clerics’ word, it could be said that such humanists “sinned” – but we prefer to say we “made a mistake”! And when we make mistakes, then Mother Nature (with her principle of causality) is always there to dole out suitable “justice” or “punishment”; that is, generally one pays for one’s mistakes; generally one gets pretty much what one deserves.

An illustration that I encountered a few minutes ago is in the manual for my car. It states: “To avoid injury [when tightening a particular bolt], check to see what your hand would hit if the wrench slips.” How true! It’s exactly the right way to avoid smashing your knuckles! Translated into the language that I’ve been using, it states: “To avoid injury, use your brain as best you can!” It’s not a “sin” not to – but it sure can be a mistake!

Similarly with consequences (“punishment”) for mistakes (“sins”) in interpersonal relations, such as the mistake of not being kind to other humans (with keenness) or not recognizing that others have equal rights to pursue their own goals. As I mentioned in an earlier chapter, one of the best, down-to-earth summary statement of this that I recently heard was in some movie (title forgotten) in which the teenage heroine says: “What goes around comes around.” Buddhists call it ‘karma’. In the Bible (both at *Job* 4, 9 and at *Galatians* 6, 7) there is the idea: “You reap what you sow.” Some other good illustrative statements of the same idea are: 1) “Smile; it’s contagious”, 2) the great highway sign that seems to be everywhere in Texas “Drive Friendly”, and 3) the great expression “If you receive a favor, pass it on.” That is, Dear, usually it’s much preferable to live among humans who are generally kind to one another (with keenness) rather than among those who aren’t – because “what goes around (generally) comes around”.

Now, Dear, I hope that the above “humanist’s view” or “humanist’s scheme” of morality and justice seem totally obvious (and sensible!) to you. And if it doesn’t, then I hope very much that you (as a humanist!) will use your brain as best you can (which should include evaluating all available data) to improve on the scheme.

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But then, Dear, for startling contrast – startling in its horridness – consider some of the stupid ideas promoted by the clerics of our culture. If you do consider them (as I’ll be encouraging you to do in **Qx**), then I expect you’ll agree that the Bible, the Koran, and the Book of Mormon promote an astounding range of stupidities (as judged by any humanist), which if transformed into actions, would be an astounding range of immoralities (as judged by any humanist).

For example, an overview of the scheme used by Christian, Islam, and Mormon clerics is the following. First, they promote the stupidity that the prime goal of humans (the “sheep” in their “flocks”) is to obey. Next, switching the analogy from sheep to donkeys, the clerics display both the carrot and the stick with which they proposed to move their donkey followers: if the people do what the clerics demand (if the people are “sinless”), then they offer the people “eternal bliss in a heavenly after-life”. On the other hand, if the people don’t do what the clerics demand (if the people “sin”), then the clerics threaten their followers with the stick of “eternal damnation in Hell”. Thereby, the clerics use their God-idea to enslave their sheepish, donkey followers, with the key to their clerics’ chains (and their dungeons) being their concept of “sin”.

Of course this “carrot and stick approach” is very old. As I suggested in earlier chapters and will show you details in **Yx**, the same approach was practiced by Egyptian and Mesopotamian priests thousands of years earlier – and found to be totally inadequate to fill the clerics’ coffers. What the earlier clerics (and of course the Christian clerics) therefore added was methods for their sinful, sheep-like followers to “change their ways”. Thus, rather than just getting their knuckles banged for not checking what their hand would hit if the wrench slipped, or rather than getting a dose of their own medicine when what-they-sent-around came back-around, sinful sheep-like, donkey followers were told that if they pray (or bray!) to God (aka the clerics) for “forgiveness” of their sins, then (for a price) the clerics would forgive “the poor, wretched sinners”, rescuing them from the horrible fate awaiting them in their imagined Hell. Thereby, the clerics (and whatever gods they invented) played the role not just as “judges” but also as “saviors” in a fanciful con game. As H.L. Mencken summarized:

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What is the function that a clergyman performs in the world? Answer: he gets his living by assuring idiots that he can save them from an imaginary Hell. It's a business almost indistinguishable from that of a seller of snake-oil for rheumatism.

Again, Dear, everyone makes mistakes – even you! Mother Nature (causality) makes you pay for your mistakes: generally you'll need to pay what you owe! Yet, there is a sort of “redemption” available for making mistakes: if you're wise, you'll learn from them. Religious people, on the other hand, are “sinners”. And in contrast to Mother Nature, the clerics demand that you pay them for what they define to be “sins”. If “sinners” pay the clerics enough (now-a-days, they take cash, checks, and credit cards!), then they'll give the “sinners” tickets to Heaven; otherwise, to Hell with them! The “longshoreman philosopher” Eric Hoffer saw it clearly, and saw it was the same for all “mass movements” (be they religious or political):

The technique of a mass movement aims to infect people with a malady and then offer the movement as a cure. An effective mass movement cultivates the idea of sin. It depicts the autonomous self not only as barren and hopeless but also as vile. To confess and repent is to slough off ones individual distinctness and separateness, and salvation is found by losing oneself in the holy oneness of the congregation.

Similar stupidity is still promoted by politicians. For example, as I write this, just last week our stupid president George W. Bush stated at a news conference (associated with comments about homosexuality): “We're all sinners.” What guck! What gibberish! What gobbledygook! What Jabberwocky!

Dear: no “secular humanist” ever was or ever will be a “sinner”. According to my dictionary, the primary definition of ‘sin’ is “the breaking of religious law or moral principle, especially through a willful act.” Rejecting all religions, we humanists therefore never sin! Of course we make mistakes, but we don't “sin”. We make mistakes – and we pay for them, with everything from banged knuckles to lost friendships. Religious people, in contrast, are conned into “believing” that their mistakes are “sins” against their gods – to be paid for not with banged knuckles and lost friendships but with produce, cash, or whatever else the clerics can con from the people!

The stupidity is enough to drive me to suggest a bumper sticker: “I may be mistaken, but you have to be religious to be a sinner.” Or maybe better, because it's shorter:

**MISTAKES... SURE ☹ . SIN... NEVER ☺ !**

How did it come about? Surely it was childish ignorance, fear, and greed. Just as with children today, no doubt the earliest humans could hardly perceive anything except in relation to themselves. This is called an “anthropocentric view”. With *anthropos* the Greek word for ‘human’, ‘anthropocentric’ means “conceiving of everything in the universe in terms of human values” or the view that “considers humans as the central factor, or final aim, of the universe.” And although “anthropocentricism” is the central tenet of all organized religions, yet there isn’t the tiniest shred of data to support it. Stars are born and die, the sun keeps burning, the sky is blue, clouds float by, it rains, rivers swell, floods occur, ants go about their business, and rocks pretty much do what they’ve always done – without the least “concern” for humans!

But when ancient people first started thinking about their surrounding, almost certainly they did so with an anthropocentric view – just as do modern children as well as, unfortunately, a huge number of current adults: Why did that stupid rock trip me? Those darn ants ruined our picnic. Why did that flood ruin our crops? Alternatively, it was (and still is): I must have done something right for the sky to be so beautifully blue! Thank God the sun finally came out! The stars must have some purpose! That is, Dear, people “project” their own views onto the universe, even to the extent of assigning the human concept of “purpose” onto “things” (such as rocks and rivers and stars) that “haven’t a clue” about the “meaning” of ‘purpose’.

And as silly as it is to assign the human notion of ‘purpose’ onto inanimate objects, the next phase of this silliness is even worse: not only to claim that such purposes are known but also that people’s actions can influence such assumed purposes. That is, if the Sun doesn’t shine, a volcano erupts, a drought occurs, the river floods, the people starve, a hunter is killed, a mother becomes ill, a child dies, or if any of innumerable misfortunes occur, then rather than recognize that all are “normal” fluctuations of nature (with, in some cases, inadequate precaution taken by “the victims” of such fluctuations), people with an anthropocentric view of the universe mistakenly attribute their misfortunes not to nature’s randomness (or to their own carelessness) but to their “sins”.

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Now, Dear, you may think that the above is silly, because you have learned to identify other causes for such misfortunes as illness, hunger, death, and so on. For example, a disease descends on a village not as “social justice” from the gods but as “justice” for inadequate hygiene, an inadequate mosquito-control program, or similar. But, Dear, try to imagine the primitive thoughts of early humans: insofar as they were convinced about the existence of powerful gods (who ruled thunder, lightning, volcanoes, the stars, life and death, and so on) and so long as the people experienced misfortunes (becoming ill, being hungry, losing children, etc.), then it must have appeared to be “obvious” (and logical) that in some way or other the infliction was retribution by “the gods” for “the sins” of the sufferer – and the first priests seized the opportunity to start their con games. As Voltaire said: “The first priest was the first rogue who met the first fool.”

Now, Dear, it would require too much space, here, to show you details about how this con game developed. I showed you some in earlier chapters and will show you more in **Yx**. Here, let me just mention a few summary points:

- Subservience to gods and some sort of payments for sins probably started with prehistoric humans. Hints of this are available not only from archeological finds but also from observations of children and animals such as apes: weaker males and females normally pay the strongest male some type of tribute. Similarly, when confronted by some threatening unknown (an erupting volcanoes, a lightning storm), prehistoric humans probably tried to appease some “god” with subservience and some booty.
- The behavioral pattern was then available when human communities developed, with their needs for customs and laws: the leaders and their henchmen (the priests) claimed (and clerics still claim) that the community’s laws were given to them by “the gods”. This was a widespread (if not worldwide) technique, used for at least 2,000 years before Moses allegedly adopted the same method in his proclamations of his many “commandments”. If a person broke one of these laws, i.e., if a person “sinned”, then “the sinner” would be punished.
- The essence of this method can be seen even in a dictionary definition of ‘sin’:

1. a) the breaking of religious law or moral principle, especially through a willful act, b) a state of habitual violation of such principles 2. any offense, misdemeanor, or fault.

This definition, however, is not historically correct (or, as a minimum, it's misleading), because stating that 'sin' is "the breaking of religious law or moral principle..." fails to inform the reader that, in earlier times, all laws and all moral principles were claimed to be religious (i.e., given to the people by the gods).

- As for how the people would be punished if they broke the laws (i.e., if they "sinned"), it depended upon the times and the rulers. For example, as I showed you in **M1**, approximately 500 years before Moses, King Hammurabi of Babylon proscribed punishments for the 'sinners' who broke his god's laws. These punishments were generally of two types i.e., with two goals: either to deter future crimes (e.g., cut off a thief's hand) or to compensate for damages (e.g., pay a person if you put out his or his slave's eye).
- There was, therefore, a time period when the concept of sin was beneficial to community life, as a form of "crowd control". If someone were so inclined, one could argue that Hammurabi demonstrated the final useful application of the method; since his time, the power gained by the clerics corrupted the method, turning it into a con game designed not for the community's benefit but for their own. An overview of this con game is that, in it, the clerics claimed all power: legislative power (making the law), police power (arresting people for suspicion of breaking the law), judicial power (deciding if the law has been broken and the penalty for breaking the law), and taxation power (collecting payments from the "sinners").
- During the most recent 2,000 – 3,000 years, a clash of two principle methods to govern community life has been occurring. On the one side, the clerics have continued to claim control through their manipulation of the concept of sin; this method is still prevalent in many Islamic societies throughout the world, and remnants of the method continue even in this country, especially where some type of "fundamentalism" continues to be strong (e.g., in Utah). On the other side are the "civil governments", with a strong start in Ancient Greece and Rome (as I'll sketch in **Yx**), which started when people saw that it wasn't the gods but other people who

made the laws, and therefore, that it should be some civil rather than some clerical authority that administers justice. The resulting clash was particularly acute in Israel 2,000 years ago, when the Romans ruled the country with their civil law while the clerics tried to continue to rule the people with their “divine” law – which they continue to try to do today!

Therefore, Dear, to summarize the above ridiculously brief overview, the Bible (and similarly the Koran and the Book of Mormon) can be viewed as last desperate gasps of the clerics to their presumptuous claims that they had (and still have) the authority (from God) to govern their communities. Maybe even more ridiculously, they claimed (and continue to claim) that they have the competence to govern: they claim competence to be police, lawyers, judges, legislators, sociologists, psychologists, and even doctors and scientists – while displaying knowledge less than should be learned in elementary school!

And if you think that the above has nothing to do with you, Dear, then please think about what you’ve been taught ever since you were a baby. For example, consider again LDS President Kimball’s statement:

...Since the beginning [of religious con games!] there has been in the world a wide range of sins. Many of them involve harm to others, but every sin is against ourselves and God...

Please, Dear, don’t buy into such stupidity. Of course I totally agree that it’s generally unwise (in fact, usually dumb) to murder, steal, lie, and so on. People have trouble enough in this life without living in societies without such obviously desirable restrictions on behavior. But are violations of such restrictions “sins” against some god?

Let me put it this way. In so far as all ideas about all gods should be dismissed as “mere speculation”, so should all ideas of “sin”. I very much hope, Dear, that you understand what I’m trying to say: when you can break free from all silly speculations about the existence of any god (or gods), then of course there is no longer any meaning to the concept of “offending the gods”, i.e., there is no such thing as “sin”. Of course, there will continue to be actions that you might take that are potentially damaging to your trio of survival goals (and therefore these actions are “immoral” – or just plain dumb!), but they ain’t “sins”!

Stated still differently, Dear: as nearly as your old grampa-with-the-beard can guarantee you anything (and with more confidence than I can guarantee you that you exist!), I guarantee you that never once in your life have you ever committed (or will you ever commit) a “sin”. True, you may have done (or may yet do) something foolish or stupid (and thereby, immoral), but never once have you ever offended (or will you offend) any god. Again: if you’ll forego the immorality of believing in gods, then I guarantee you that you’ll never “sin”!

Further, associated with the clerics’ crazy ideas about justice and morality and their stupid idea of sin is their damnable idea of praying, e.g., praying for forgiveness of sin, but I won’t go into that again; I already addressed it **J4**. Besides, I probably couldn’t damn prayer any better than did the Gnostics’ Jesus, who in the *Gospel of Thomas* reportedly said: “If you pray, you will be condemned”. Yet, I admit that W.C. Field came pretty close:

Prayers never bring anything... They may bring solace to the sap, the bigot, the ignorant, the aboriginal, and the lazy – but to the enlightened it is the same as asking Santa Claus to bring you something for Xmas.

Worse than praying, to top off their incredible stupidity (aka evil), the clerics added the horrible idea of Hell: if you don’t get forgiveness for your sins, if the bishop (or priest or minister or mullah or...) decides that you’re not sufficiently repentant (for masturbating, for some other “fornication”, for not “believing” in the clerics’ god, for daring to think for yourself), then you’re headed for Hell.

Let me quote from some “holy books” their descriptions of Hell. In the OT at *Daniel 12, 2* (claimed to be written by Daniel in about 500 BCE, but actually written by some Jewish cleric hundreds of years later), there is the following description of the “resurrection” of dead people to face judgment:

...many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will wake, some to everlasting life and some to the reproach of eternal abhorrence [i.e., Hell].

In the NT, at *Matthew 13, 40*, the clerics have their Jesus say:

... so at the end of time the Son of Man [Jesus] will send out his angels, who will gather out of his kingdom whatever makes men stumble, and all whose deeds are evil, and these will be thrown into the blazing furnace [Hell], the place of wailing and grinding of teeth.

The Koran has hundreds of statements about Hell. One of these hundreds is at *The Cow (2)*, 39 (which is basically the first chapter of the Koran, following its brief introduction called *The Opening*). Here, Muhammad (claiming to speak for God) threatens:

And (as to) those who disbelieve in and reject My communications they are the inmates of the fire, in it they shall abide.

In the Book of Mormon, similarly, there are hundreds of references to Hell. One is at *Mosiah 2*, 38–39:

Therefore if that man repenteth not... his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment.

For contrast, Dear, consider the following quotation from what more competent, intelligent, and humane people have said about the horrible idea of Hell (here taken from Aiken's collection of quotations):

The doctrine of Hell is the thought of a slave and of a coward. No free-born man, no brave soul could ever have invented so abhorrent an idea. Only under a regime of absolutism, only under an Oriental Sultan whose caprice is law, whose vengeance is terrible, whose favors are fickle, whose power is crushing, whose greed is insatiable, whose torture instruments are without number, and whose dark dungeons always resound with the rattling of chains and the groans of martyrs – only under such a regime could man have invented an unending Hell. (M.M. Mangasarian)

Tell me there is a God in the serene heavens that will damn his children for the expression of an honest belief! More men have died in their sins, judged by your orthodox creeds, than there are leaves on all the forests in the wide world ten thousand times over. Tell me these men are in Hell, that these men are in torment, that these children are in eternal pain, and that they are to be punished forever and forever! I denounce this doctrine as the most infamous of lies... All the meanness, all the revenge, all the selfishness, all the cruelty, all the hatred, all the infamy of which the heart of man is capable, grew, blossomed and bore fruit in this one word, Hell. (Robert G. Ingersoll)

The idea that a good God would send people to a burning Hell is utterly damnable to me. The ravings of insanity! Superstition gone to seed! I don't want to have anything to do with such a God. No avenging Jewish God, no satanic devil, no fiery Hell is of any interest to me. (Luther Burbank)

God says do what you wish, but make the wrong choice and you will be tortured for eternity in Hell. That sir, is not free will. It would be akin to a man telling his girlfriend: "Do what you wish, but if you choose to leave me, I will track you down and blow your brains out." When a man says this we call him a psychopath and cry

out for his imprisonment... When God says the same we call him “loving” and build churches in his honor. (William C. Easttom II, [skeptic@icon.net](mailto:skeptic@icon.net))

I trust that you’re beginning to see what I mean, Dear, by calling them “some sad personal policies”.

Not only “sad”; also, stupid – and understandably so. Thus, first, the people accept the claim of the con-artist clerics that the prime purpose of people is to gain eternal bliss in Heaven and avoid eternal pain in Hell. Consistent with that purpose, the people adopt a set of principles, including:

- Belief in “the supernatural” – even though the word “supernatural” is meaningless, because it refers to nothing,
- Belief in God – even though the word “God” refers to something “supernatural” and therefore to nothing,
- Belief in “immortal souls” – even though the concept of an “immortal soul” is supported by zero data,
- Belief in “life after death” – even though those words are incompatible (i.e., the phrase is an oxymoron),
- Belief in “miracles” (such as living after being dead) – even though the religious concept of “miracle” means “supernatural events” and therefore is meaningless,
- Acceptance of and submission to “authority figures” (i.e., the clerics),
- Acceptance of the clerics’ claim that they speak for the gods,
- And so on, on and on, all a part of what I call “the God Lie”.

If you want to see more such “principles”, Dear, then look again at the “Articles of Faith” of the LDS Church, which I quoted in the previous chapter and which you were forced to memorize as a child (under coercion, for fear of losing your mother’s love).

Next, religious people adopt a set of policies that are consistent with the above principles, in turn consistent with the premisses and purposes they’ve adopted. Thus, by adopting the principles listed above, some consistent policies adopted by most religious people include:

- To accept ideas without evidence, to base decisions on “faith”, and to assume that it’s right to do so; to accept the clerics’ ideas of morality rather than use one’s brain as best one can; to agree to obey the clerics rather than to maintain one’s ability to evaluate;

- To accept the clerics' idea of "sin" (following the clerics like sheep); to engage in prayer (groveling and whining like dogs, rather than behaving as independent, worthwhile, productive humans, pushing on, overcoming obstacles, and persevering); to believe in potentials for miracles (corrupting the concept of natural justice) and in the efficacy of praying (damaging a person's potential for solving problems, while degrading the person's ego);
- To accept the clerics' concept of personal and interpersonal justice (e.g., to accept unfairness in this life, such as denigration of women, segregation, racism, slavery, etc., for a promise of fairness in "the next life"); to accept the clerics' distortion of humanness (e.g., to help others for direct benefits to the helper, i.e., to get into Heaven and avoid Hell, rather than to help others for indirect benefits, i.e., an invisible helping hand: "what goes around comes around"); and to accept other stupid policies dictated by the clerics (on subjects from "kosher" food to "acceptable" sexual behavior, and from engaging in hate crimes to waging war);
- To corrupt one's humanity; to enslave one's mind (to accept ideas on the "authority" of a bunch of con-artist and dimwit clerics, who promote a primitive model of the universe concocted by savages – blind people following blind clerics; fools following fools); to corrupt one's thoughts (to stop asking questions, to accept that something exists outside of nature – beyond what exists!); to accept personal financial loss to support the propagation of ignorance.

That doesn't complete the list, Dear, but surely it's enough for you to "catch my drift" when I describe them as "sad personal policies". And to such a list, in some cases can be added the policy of tying explosives around your waist and blowing yourself up – to get into an imagined paradise.

Earlier in this chapter and in earlier chapters, I already commented on many of these "sad" (and even sick) personal policies and on the differences between them and what I consider to be "healthy" personal policies adopted by scientific humanists. Here, let me add just a few more comments about the worst of these policies, listed above as

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- To adopt ideas without evidence, to base decisions on “faith”, and to assume that it’s right to do so; to accept the clerics’ ideas of morality rather than use one’s brain as best one can; to agree to obey the clerics rather than to maintain one’s ability to evaluate.

Earlier, in **If**, **Ih**, and **Ii**, I tried to show you distinctions between ‘belief’ and ‘faith’ vs. ‘trust’ and ‘confidence’ and that, in fact, it’s impossible to chose a ‘belief’ based on ‘faith’: it’s a ruse (or euphemism)<sup>7</sup> for refusing to examine the true bases of one’s choice.

For most people, the “true bases” for such choices is, first, trust and confidence in parents (misdirected onto the parent’s “choice” of religion) and then, continued affiliation with their parents’ religion simply out of habit (or familiarity). What a pity for humanity that all religions and all sects don’t adopt the policy that they would accept as members only those whose parents were affiliated with a different sect or religion – and what a pity for all people that they don’t adopt a similar policy!

As an illustration of the sadness of the personal policy of accepting ideas on “faith”, let me quote an otherwise seemingly irrelevant op-ed column from the 13 June 2004 issue of *New York Times* entitled “An Electrician From the Ukrainian Town of Lutsk”, written by Daniel Okrent. I’ve put the relevant line (at the end of the quotation) in italics.

I don’t know any electricians from Lutsk, but I would rather have one of them in my mind’s eye than anyone identified as “an analyst”, “an expert”, “a lawyer involved in the case”, “a senior State Department official”, “a Democratic strategist” or any of the other standardized obfuscations that can make a morning with *The Times* so exasperating... In December 2003... 40 percent of the articles invoked at least one anonymous source... the average day’s paper brought 36 such sources into the reader’s home and... more than half of these people were identified, at least in part, as “officials”.

Allan M. Siegal, the paper’s standards editor, says that his frequent spot checks have detected “clear improvement in the identification of sources to editors” since the [new] policy went into effect on March 1... As the policy states, the use of unidentified sources requires the paper to “accept an obligation not only to convince a reader of their reliability but also to convey what we can learn of their motivation.” But Siegal also said, “I don’t mind conceding that habits die hard,” which I regard as

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<sup>7</sup> Euphemism: “**1.** a word or phrase used in place of a term that might be considered too direct, harsh, unpleasant, or offensive, **2.** the use of a word or phrase that is more neutral, vague, or indirect to replace a direct, harsh, unpleasant, or offensive term.”

*an explanation of why readers are still being asked to do what they should never have to: take things on faith.*

Again, Dear, please consider the fundamental mistake of all religious people: they accept their clerics' identification of their premisses and purposes; thereby, they accept their clerics' identification of the prime measure of values; and thereby, they accept someone else's evaluations rather than their own. Thus, religious people have 'belief' and 'faith' in what someone else tells them; they rank someone else's opinion higher than their own; they choose someone else's authority over their own; they adopt 'beliefs' and 'faiths' rather than evaluate the data themselves; they abandon the best of what is to be a human – using one's brain as best one can.

Let me show you how Chester Dolan summarized his opinion about such a horrible policy.<sup>8</sup>

The impression is given that a special kind of morality is affirmed by accepting the vagaries of religion without evidence. But is it moral to accept uncritically every superstition, delusion, or prejudice our pulpiteers espouse? Is not the faith that we are told is holy, the trust in Divinity that we are told is our duty, the certitude that a complete rejection of reason is moral behavior – all of this – nothing more than abject credulity, a complete surrender of our unique, personal sovereign identity? When 'false' or 'true' become irrelevant and a blanket assent regardless of the nature of that which we are asked to believe is considered sane behavior, do we not resign ourselves to slavery? When acceptance is on the basis of infallible authority and not on the basis of personal, reasoned conviction, have we not relinquished something very precious – our natural, temperamental individuality? Is not the mind of one who accepts blindly, precisely the mind of a production-line robot, the mind of one who goes through life oblivious of meaning and values, bereft of the hope of injecting sense into the profusion of nonsense that threatens to engulf us? Is this the faith we are told is good?

Approximately 200 years ago, Volney summarized it well: “To believe without evidence and demonstration is an act of ignorance and folly.” As I've written before, I consider this to be the single most horrible aspect of the “means” that the clerics promote so that people will achieve the “end” of “eternal bliss in paradise”: the clerics advocate that people **Obey**; humanists, in contrast, require of themselves that they **Evaluate**. Therein can be seen the immorality of all religions

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<sup>8</sup> Copied from Aiken's collection, in turn from Dolan's book *Holy Daze: Coming to Grips with 'Religion', the Holy Daze of Humanity* (pp.130-135, MOPAH Publications).

In fact, therein I see another way that I might have tried to answer a certain precious little four-year old who asked her grandfather why he didn't believe in God – although I had to be careful, not to undermine her parents' authority (because before children can look after themselves, they need to respect their parents' authority in most matters). Now that “you're older”, Dear, I've been trying in this book to show you my response to your question, both by showing you what I mean by saying “Belief in god (any god) is bad science and even worse policy” and by showing you what I consider to be “better policy”, i.e., those being developed in what can be called “scientific humanism”. But theoretically at least, I could have answered that I don't believe in any god because if I believed in god or in eternal bliss in paradise or in any supernatural nonsense, then I wouldn't be using my brain as best I could. That would be immoral. In plainer English: it's just plain dumb!

In particular, Dear, and returning to other ideas in what LDS President Kimball wrote, please never (NEVER!) go to your church's bishop to confess your “sins”. That's just plain dumb. By accepting his post, your bishop (similar to the priests and pastors of Christian sects and similar to the imams and mullahs of Islam) has identified himself either as a conspirator in a con game or a fool. In either case, such people aren't (as claimed by your Kimball – and similar claims are made by the head of other religions, such as the idiot Pope or some crazy Ayatollah) “the earthly representative of God – the master physician, the master psychologist, the master psychiatrist...” They're not qualified in medicine, psychology, or psychiatry; they're “bag men” in the clerics' con game!

Instead, Dear, if you feel you have a major problem and decide that you need more help than is immediately available to you from relatives and friends, then seek help from qualified “authorities” (doctors, psychiatrists, lawyers, financial experts, etc., depending on the nature of your problem). Otherwise, when you've made a mistake (in the idiot clerics' vocabulary, if you've “sinned”) and if you think that you can handle the situation on your own, then on the one hand, if you've hurt someone else, try to make amends. And on the other hand, if you've hurt only yourself, then try to learn from your mistakes: next time, before you tighten a bolt, check to see what your knuckles will hit if the wrench slips!

In general, Dear, first please be sure of your premisses and purposes. I hope that your premisses include that you and your thoughts exist, that this

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universe is entirely natural, that you can learn about it using the scientific method, and that you're your own "decider". I hope, too, that you decide that one of your prime purposes is something similar to "to help humanity"; another will necessarily be for you to survive, so you'll be able to help! But whatever you choose, Dear, please do so using your brain as best you can. Then, never failing to retest your premisses and knowing your prime purposes, try to put consistent principles, policies, plans, procedures, and practices in priority – and persevere.

For example, Dear, if you chose as your prime purpose something similar to "to help humanity", then a consistent principle is that: "To best help humanity, I'd better try to stay healthy." Next, identify consistent policies, e.g., don't expose yourself unnecessarily to dangerous bacteria and viruses (e.g., *via* careless sex), eat healthful foods, and get an appropriate amount of exercise – policies whose priorities you'll need to define. In particular, for exercise, a good plan is to walk at least 3 miles every day. So then, as an obvious procedure, set aside some time to walk every day. For example, after you've finished reading this obvious stuff, how about putting your plan into practice: get some exercise – and persevere!