

A Spatial Language

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The language of The Book of Mormon includes many long run on sentences. One summer I was introduced to a book that describes how the complexity of an individual's language describes their potential capability in planning.¹ As I studied The Book of Mormon lists, I started to see a completely different pattern, which I attribute to the fact as a seismic interpreter I am much more comfortable working with pictures of subsurface geology, than lists of words. This pattern fits with the fact I accept as a fact The Book of Mormon was written in the language of the Egyptians,² and this has been referred to as a form of hieroglyphics.

One March Andrea and I visited the ruins at Palenque, Edzna, and Calakmul in Southern Mexico. I was struck with how the hieroglyphics take up space, and each hieroglyphic has a similar size. As I was reading The Book of Mormon that summer, I started to look for patterns that could relate to 2 columns and 4 rows of concepts, or 3 columns and 3 rows of concepts. The idea which seemed to be planted in my mind was each concept could be a separate hieroglyphic. Patterns of 9 related concepts seemed to come up over and over again in this reading of The Book of

Mormon. In fact, it appears most of The Book of Mormon can be repackaged as sets of nine concepts. Over time, this has developed into what I refer to as a spatial language.

¹Human Capability, A Study of Individual Potential and Its Application, Jaques & Cason, Cason Hall & Company Publishers, Falls Church, VA, 1994, 164 pages.

²1 Nephi 1:2

The following pages demonstrate this pattern by coloring text which could be represented as a hieroglyphic: the chapter text; then the tables for that chapter.

1 **I, Nephi**, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of **my father**; and having seen many afflictions in the course of **my days**, nevertheless, having been highly favored of **the Lord** in all **my days**; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in **my days**.

2 Yea, I make a record in the language of **my father**, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.

3 And I know that the record which **I make** is true; and **I make** it with **mine own hand**; and **I make** it according to my knowledge.

4 For **it came to pass** in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, (**my father**, Lehi, having dwelt **at Jerusalem** in all his days); and in that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city **Jerusalem must be destroyed**.

5 Wherefore **it came to pass** that **my father**, Lehi, as he went forth **prayed unto the Lord**, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people.

6 And **it came to pass** as he **prayed unto the Lord**, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and **he saw** and heard much; and because of the things which **he saw** and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly.

7 And **it came to pass** that he returned to his own house **at Jerusalem**; and he cast himself upon his bed, being **overcome with the Spirit** and the things which he had seen.

8 And being thus **overcome with the Spirit**, he was carried away in a vision, even that **he saw** the heavens open, and he thought **he saw** God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels

in the attitude of singing and praising their God.

9 And **it came to pass** that **he saw** One descending out of the midst of heaven, and he beheld that his luster was above that of the sun at noon-day.

10 And **he also saw** twelve others following him, and their brightness did exceed that of the stars in the firmament.

11 And they came down and went forth upon the face of the earth; and the first came and stood before **my father**, and gave unto him a book, and bade him that he should read.

12 And **it came to pass** that as he read, he was filled with **the Spirit of the Lord**.

13 And he read, saying: Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem, for I have seen thine abominations! Yea, and many things did **my father** read concerning **Jerusalem—that it should be destroyed**, and the inhabitants thereof; many should perish by the sword, and many should be carried away captive into Babylon.

14 And **it came to pass** that when **my father** had read and seen many **great and marvelous** things, he did exclaim many things unto **the Lord**; such as: **Great and marvelous** are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and mercy are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish!

15 And after this manner was the language of **my father** in the praising of his God; for his soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled, because of the things which he had seen, yea, which **the Lord** had shown unto him.

16 And now **I, Nephi**, do **not make a full account** of the things which **my father** hath written, for he hath written many things which he saw in visions and in dreams; and he also hath written many things which he prophesied and spake unto his children, of which I shall **not make a**

full account.

17 But I shall **make an account** of my proceedings in my days. Behold, **I make** an abridgment of the record of **my father**, upon plates which I have made with **mine own hands**; wherefore, after I have abridged the record of **my father** then will **I make an account** of mine own life.

18 Therefore, I would that ye should know, that after **the Lord** had shown so many marvelous things unto **my father**, Lehi, yea, concerning the **destruction of Jerusalem**, behold he went forth among the people, and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard.

19 And **it came to pass** that the Jews did mock him because of the things which **he testified** of them; for **he truly testified** of their wickedness and their abominations; and **he testified** that the things which **he saw** and heard, and also the things which he read in the book, manifested plainly of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world.

20 And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away. But behold, **I, Nephi**, will show unto you that the tender mercies of **the Lord** are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.

I Nephi 1:1		
I, Nephi	having been born of goodly parents,	therefore I was taught somewhat in the learning of my father ;
and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days ,	nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days ;	yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness
and the mysteries of God,	therefore, I make a record of my proceedings	in my days .

I Nephi 1:2-3		
Yea, I make a record	in the language of my father ,	which consists of the learning of the Jews
and the language of the Egyptians.	And I know that the record which I make is true;	and I make it
with mine own hand ;	and I make it	according to my knowledge.

I Nephi 1:4		
For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year	of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah,	(my father , Lehi,
having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days);	and in that same year	there came many prophets
prophesying unto the people	that they must repent,	or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.

I Nephi 1:5-6		
Wherefore it came to pass that my father , Lehi,	as he went forth	prayed unto the Lord ,
yea, even with all his heart,	in behalf of his people.	And it came to pass as he prayed unto the Lord ,
there came a pillar of fire	and dwelt upon a rock before him;	and he saw and heard much;

I Nephi 1:6-7		
and because of the things which he saw	and heard	he did quake
and tremble exceedingly.	And it came to pass that he returned to his own house	at Jerusalem ;
and he cast himself upon his bed,	being overcome with the Spirit	and the things which he had seen.

I Nephi 1:8		
And being thus overcome with the Spirit ,	he was carried away in a vision,	even that he saw the heavens open,
and he thought he saw God	sitting upon his throne,	surrounded
with numberless concourses of angels	in the attitude of singing	and praising their God.

I Nephi 1:9-10		
And it came to pass that he saw	One descending out of the midst of heaven,	and he beheld
that his luster	was above that of the sun at noon-day.	And he also saw
twelve others following him,	and their brightness did exceed	that of the stars in the firmament.

I Nephi 1:11-12		
And they came down	and went forth upon the face of the earth;	and the first came
and stood before my father ,	and gave unto him a book,	and bade him that he should read.
And it came to pass that as he read,	he was filled	with the Spirit of the Lord .

I Nephi 1:13		
And he read,	Wo, wo, unto Jerusalem,	for I have seen thine abominations!
Yea, and many things did my father read	concerning Jerusalem—that it should be destroyed ,	and the inhabitants thereof;
many should perish by the sword,	and many should be carried away captive	into Babylon.

I Nephi 1:14-14.5		
And it came to pass that when my father	had read	and seen
many great and marvelous things,	he did exclaim	many things unto the Lord ;
such as:	Great and marvelous are thy works,	O Lord God Almighty!

I Nephi 1:14.5-14.9		
Thy throne is high in the heavens,	and thy power,	and goodness,
and mercy	are over all the inhabitants of the earth;	and, because thou art merciful,
thou wilt not suffer	those who come unto thee	that they shall perish!

I Nephi 1:15		
And after this manner was the language	of my father	in the praising of his God;
for his soul did rejoice,	and his whole heart was filled,	because of the things
which he had seen,	yea, which the Lord	had shown unto him.

I Nephi 1:16		
And now I, Nephi,	do not make a full account	of the things which my father hath written,
for he hath written many things	which he saw in visions and in dreams;	and he also hath written many things
which he prophesied	and spake unto his children,	of which I shall not make a full account.

I Nephi 1:17		
But I shall make an account	of my proceedings in my days.	Behold, I make an abridgment of the record of my father,
upon plates which I have made	with mine own hands;	wherefore, after I have abridged the record
of my father	then will I make an account	of mine own life.

I Nephi 1:18		
Therefore, I would that ye should know,	that after the Lord had shown so many marvelous things	unto my father , Lehi,
yea, concerning the destruction of Jerusalem ,	behold he went forth among the people,	and began to prophesy
and to declare unto them	concerning the things	which he had both seen and heard.

I Nephi 1:19		
And it came to pass that the Jews did mock him	because of the things which he testified of them;	for he truly testified of their wickedness
and their abominations;	and he testified that the things which he saw and heard,	and also the things which he read in the book,
manifested plainly	of the coming of a Messiah,	and also the redemption of the world.

I Nephi 1:20		
And when the Jews heard these things they were angry with him;	yea, even as with the prophets of old,	whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain;
and they also sought his life,	that they might take it away.	But behold, I, Nephi , will show unto you
that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen,	because of their faith,	to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.