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Donald W. Parry

Poetic Parallelisms of the Book of Mormon

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Summary:

Donald Parry defines poetic parallelism in general and specific parallel forms. He gives several examples of each form from the Book of Mormon.

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"The poetry contained in the inspired books, the most ancient and the most simple, is superior to all others, and deserves exclusively to be denominated sublime. As it had no model, so it will find no successful imitators." ¹

Although these words were composed five years prior to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, they prove to be prophetic. Clearly, the world's biblical scholars of the early 19th century had not the slightest hint that a companion volume to the Bible would soon come forth, having poetic forms that were in all respects equal in value and style to biblical poetic verse. In fact, more than 150 years after the first edition of the Book of Mormon came forth, few are yet aware of the attestation of scriptural poetry in this sacred book.²

Poetic Parallelisms

One of the most impressive types of Hebrew poetry, called parallelisms, can be found throughout the scriptures--most notably in the Old Testament and Book of Mormon. It was Bishop Lowth who is credited with calling to attention the importance and prevalence of biblical parallelisms. In his two volume work entitled *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* he

¹Sarchi, Philip, *An Essay on Hebrew Poetry, Ancient and Modern*, (London: Printed by Richard Taylor, 1824).

² The exhaustive bibliography of the Book of Mormon, produced by F.A.R.M.S in 1987, revealed that pitifully little work had been done on the subject of Book of Mormon parallelisms, hence this study.

introduced the idea of *parallelism membrorum*, or "parallelism of the members."³ In a later work Lowth defined parallelism as:

"The correspondence of one Verse, or Line, with another, I call Parallelism. When a proposition is delivered, and a second is subjoined to it, or drawn under it, equivalent, or contrasted with it in sense, or similar to it in the form of grammatical construction, these I call parallel lines; and the words or phrases, answering one to another in the corresponding lines, parallel terms."⁴

Although this statement, given by this distinguished pioneer in the field of Biblical poetics, has been the standard by which parallelisms are known and understood, many scholars of recent years have contended that Lowth was too narrow in his definition. For instance, Adele Berlin, in her recent work, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, introduces a broader definition of parallelism. Perhaps inspired by Lowth's explanation that parallelisms include "parallel lines. . . words or phrases," Berlin wrote:

"Once we admit smaller segments as being parallel--e.g., words, phrases, even sounds--though the lines to which they belong are not parallel, we raise the incidence of parallelism with a text. And if we do not restrict our search for linguistic equivalences to adjacent lines or sentences, but take a global view, finding equivalences anywhere within a text, we raise the incidence of

³ Robert Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 2 Vol., (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1787 Reprint, 1969). Clearly, Bishop Lowth was not the first to discover biblical parallelisms. What sets him apart from earlier writers and scholars, however, was his remarkable two volume work which defined and developed the idea of poetic structures in Holy Writ. All of Lowth's predecessors, who made mention of sacred poetry, did so only in a passing manner. Concerning the history of the study of biblical parallelism, see James L. Kugel, *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 96-170; and D. Broadribb, "A Historical Review of Studies of Hebrew Poetry," *Abr-Nahrain* 13 (1972-73), pp. 66-87.

⁴ Lowth, *Isaiah*, p. ix.

parallelism still more."⁵

Thus we define poetic parallelism as words, phrases, or sentences which correspond, compare, or contrast one with another, or are found to be in repetition one with another. To be more precise, in scriptural poetry there are various ways in which words or sentences are found to be parallel. To demonstrate the major ways, there are:

- synonyms (or near synonyms) such as "heart-soul," "statutes-commandments," and "preacher-teacher;"
- identical words or phrases, such as "light-light," and "cry unto him-cry unto him;"
- antonyms, such as "holy-unholy" and "poor-rich;"
- complementaries, such as "bows-arrows," "bread-butter," and "river-sea;"
- different inflections of the same root, such as "to judge," "a judge," "judgment," and "judgment-seat;"
- gradations, an increase or decrease of the sense or idea;
- superordinates, such as "breastplates-shields," "wine-drink," and

⁵ Berlin, Adele, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 3. Berlin admits that "the definition of parallelism offered here is broader than that found in most biblical studies" (p. 3). However, broad as it may appear, her definition is more conservative than that of Paul Kraus, who once set out to prove that the entire Old Testament was composed of poetic forms. Upon failing to do so, he committed suicide. For this tragic account, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 4. For a contrasting view of biblical poetics, see Kugel, cited above. A contemporary of Berlin, Kugel comes close to rejecting the presence of poetry in the Old Testament altogether. To be sure, Berlin's definition lies in the mainstream of contemporary thinking. See for instance, Robert Alter, cited above; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry*, (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984); and David Noel Freedman, *Pottery, Poetry and Prophecy-Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry*, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1980).

"gold-metal,"
 --and reciprocal, such as "to retire-sleep," "to eat-to be full," and
 "to sin-pain of conscience."

With this introduction, let us proceed to examine the many forms of poetic parallelisms found in the Book of Mormon.

Contrasting Ideas

*Antimetabole*⁶ (Greek, "to throw against in a reverse way") is a poetic style which throws or compares one subject or idea against another, for the purpose of creating a contrast between the two ideas. The concept is simple, beautiful, instructive, and the variations are endless. We assume that the prophets of old employed this poetic structure in order to create comparisons between sin and righteousness, life and death, deliverance and destruction, good and evil, and so on. A simple example of antimetabole is found in 2 Nephi 9:39.

"Remember,
 to be carnally-minded
 is death,
 and to be spiritually-minded
 is life eternal." (2 Nephi 9:39)

The contrast created in these few words is obvious, a carnal mind versus a spiritual mind--spiritual death versus eternal life. One concept is opposed

⁶ It should be noted that the English language lacks terminology sufficient to describe the manifold figures and poetic types found in the scriptures. Bullinger has pointed out that "the ancient Greeks reduced these new and peculiar forms to science, and gave names to more than two hundred of them" Therefore, of necessity, we must turn to the Greeks for assistance. See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), p. v.

to the other, instructing the reader to heed concerning what things will possess his thoughts. These words are simple and easily understood.

Alma, in his great discourse delivered to members of the church of Zarahemla, uses this poetic form. His words are brief, yet conclusive.

"For I say unto you
that whatsoever is good
cometh from God,
and whatsoever is evil
cometh from the devil." (Alma 5:40)

Two words epitomize the perfect contrast, "good and evil," and two Beings are considered the opposite extremes on the scale of "good and evil," Deity and Satan. God is good and the devil is evil. All things good originate from God, and Satan is the instigator of all things evil. Alma's methods of contrast are written in such plain terms that even a child may understand.

In an inspired play on words, the prophet Mormon makes a comparison between love of riches, versus love of people.

"For behold,
ye do love
money,
and your substance,
and your fine apparel,
and the adorning of your churches,
more than ye love
the poor
and the needy,
the sick
and the afflicted." (Mormon 8:37)

The verse can be divided into two parts. Part one includes the expression "ye do love," and is followed by four synonymous expressions dealing with material wealth and goods. Part two begins with the

superlative expression—"more than ye love," followed by four additional synonymous expressions dealing with those who are in need of the goods and/or services which can be bought with the money mentioned in the first half of the verse. A perfect comparison. A perfect teaching technique.

Other examples:

"Behold, doth he cry unto any, saying:
Depart from me?

Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but he saith:
Come unto me all ye ends of the earth. . ."
(2 Nephi 26:25)

"I say unto you,
can you imagine to yourselves
that ye hear the voice of the Lord,
saying unto you, in that day:
Come unto me ye blessed,
for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness
upon the face of the earth?

Or do ye imagine to yourselves
that ye can lie unto the Lord
in that day, and say--Lord,
our works have been righteous works
upon the face of the earth?" (Alma 5:16-17)

"Therefore, if a man bringeth forth good works
he hearkeneth unto the voice of the good shepherd,
and he doth follow him;

but whosoever bringeth forth evil works,
the same becometh a child of the devil,
for he hearkeneth unto his voice,
and doth follow him" (Alma 5:41)

"...if they have been righteous
they shall reap the salvation of their souls,
according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ;
and if they have been evil
they shall reap the damnation of their souls,
according to the power and captivity of the

devil." (Alma 9:28b)

"Yea, I say unto you, my son,
that there could be nothing so exquisite
and so bitter as were my pains.

Yea, and again I say unto you, my son,
that on the other hand,
there can be nothing so exquisite
and sweet as was my joy." (Alma 36:21)

"Enter ye in at the strait gate;
for strait is the gate,
and narrow is the way that leads to life,
and few there be that find it;

but wide is the gate,
and broad is the way which leads to death,
and many there be that travel therein. . ."
(3 Nephi 27:33b)

"For every thing which inviteth to do good,
and to persuade to believe in Christ,
is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ;
wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.

But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil,
and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve
not God,
then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is
of the devil." (Moroni 7:16b-17a)

Simple Alternate

Alternate consists of four lines, placed alternately, such as A-B/A-B. In this formation, the "A"s are synonymous, as are the "B"s. Apparently, the prophets and writers of the scriptures employed the repetition of alternating synonymous lines for the purpose of reinforcing their teachings and doctrines. By hearing something repeated twice, albeit in different words, the hearer is more apt to understand and remember the doctrine

being taught. Furthermore, the teaching will come with more impact, more force, and a greater level of intensity.

- A "Our father,
- B behold he was filled with joy,
- A and also my mother, Sariah,
- B was exceeding glad" (I Nephi 5:1b)

Lines one and three form synonymous expressions using the complementary word-pair, "father-mother." These lines alternate with lines two and four, which contain the synonymous word-pair, "joy-glad," thus forming a perfect example of an alternating synonymous parallelism.

- A "And there is none other salvation
- B save this which hath been spoken of;
- A neither are there any conditions whereby man can be saved
- B except the conditions which I have told you." (Mosiah 4:8)

Another example demonstrates that the "A"s are parallel as are the "B"s. In line one the noun "salvation" is used to parallel the verb of line three, "to save." Also, the expression, "which hath been spoken of" is equal in value to the phrase "which I have told you."

Alma alternated the word-pairs "preacher-teacher/hearer-learner" in a manner that was instructive:

- A "for the preacher
- B was no better than the hearer,
- A neither was the teacher
- B any better than the learner." (Alma 1:26b)

In I Nephi 11:25 the words "waters" and "tree," two prominent features of a beautiful landscape, alternate with the expressions "love of God," in order to personify this particular characteristic of God.

- A "which waters
- B are a representation of the love of God;

- A and I also beheld that the tree of life
 B was a representation of the love of God." (I Nephi 11:25b)

Words do not need to be synonyms to make up the alternating lines. The repetition of identical words repeated twice, as in the following two examples, are frequently found in the Book of Mormon.

"And now it came to pass that I, Nephi, was exceeding sorrowful
 because of the hardness of their hearts;
 and now when they saw that I began to be sorrowful
 they were glad in their hearts. . ." (I Nephi 17:19a)

"And the bodies of many thousands
 are laid low in the earth,
 while the bodies of many thousands
 are moldering in heaps upon the face of the earth." (Alma 28:11)

At times, entire phrases are shown to parallel one another. In this alternate form, four short phrases form the nucleus of the A-B-A-B pattern, as shown in italics.

"For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ,
 which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss,
 as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass,
 which would point unto them a straight course to the promised
 land." (Alma 37:44)

As is this verse:

"And he was a just man,
 and he did walk uprightly before God;
 and he did observe to do good continually,
 to keep the commandments of the Lord his God." (Alma 63:2)

Here two different multitudes leave their places of occupation and craftsmanship in order to teach and be taught concerning the things of Deity.

"And when the priests left their labor

to impart the word of God unto the people,
the people also left their labors
to hear the word of God." (Alma 1:26a)

Alma 2:29 depicts the two opponents, Alma and Amlici "fighting" and "contending" with the sword, in the position of "face to face," or "one with another."

"And it came to pass
that Alma fought with Amlici with the sword,
face to face;
and they did contend mightily,
one with another." (Alma 2:29)

Here the doctrine is expressed, that the earth was created for the purpose of habitation by the children of God.

"Behold, the Lord hath created the earth
that it should be inhabited;
and he hath created his children
that they should possess it." (1 Nephi 17:36)

By means of the resurrection, man is raised from the dead, and by means of the atonement, repentant souls are raised from everlasting death--such is the doctrine taught by Nephi.

"Wherefore, may God raise you from death
by the power of the resurrection,
and also from everlasting death
by the power of the atonement." (2 Nephi 10:25)

One of the keys to a good simple alternate form of poetry are the synonymous word pairs found in the four lines. Of course, the prophets were inspired in their choices. Many examples listed above illustrate this, but many other examples could be given. For instance, such word-pairs as the following are found in the Book of Mormon: "eldest-youngest /Nephi-

Lehi" (Helaman 3:21), "heavens-earth/throne-footstool" (1 Nephi 17:39), "Jews-Gentiles/Christ-Eternal God" (2 Nephi 26:12), "drunken-stagger/wine-strong drink" (2 Nephi 27:4), "secret-darkness /revealed-light" (2 Nephi 30:17a), "river-sea/sand-gravel" (1 Nephi 20:18b-19a), "heart-soul/flesh-iniquities" (2 Nephi 4:17), "sons-daughters/arms-shoulders" (2 Nephi 6:6), and "soul-heart/sin-enemy" (2 Nephi 4:28).

Similarly, synonymous phrases are an important part of alternating synonymous constructions. Some of these include:

"people of Coriantumr-people of Coriantumr/people of Shiz-people of Shiz" (Ether 15:6b); "children of Nephi-descendants of Nephi/Zarahemla- Mulek" (Mosiah 25:2); "Coriantumr-Shiz/army of Coriantumr-army of Shiz" (Ether 15:13b); "bodies-body/this life,-eternal world" (Alma 34:34); "spirit and body-limb and joint/perfect form-proper frame" (Alma 11:43); "sucking child-weaned child/asp-cockatrice" (2 Nephi 30:14) "lion-young lion/beasts of the forest-flocks of sheep" (3 Nephi 20:16b)

Repeated Alternate

Repeated alternate is similar to alternate, but has two lines which repeat three or more times, as in A-B/A-B/A-B, etc.

- A "the God of Jacob, yieldeth himself,
- B according to the words of the angel,
- A as a man, into the hands of wicked men, to be lifted up,
- B according to the words of Zenock,
- A and to be crucified,
- B according to the words of Neum,
- A and to be buried in a sepulchre,
- B according to the words of Zenos. . ." (1 Nephi 19:10b)

Here prophecies concerning the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ are placed in an alternating position, making mention of the prophet who delivered the prophecy. In this manner, the burden of the scriptures--the atonement of the Redeemer--is inseparably connected with those who carried the good tidings to mankind--the prophets.

"Ye say that this people is a free people.

Behold, I say they are in bondage.

Ye say that those ancient prophecies are true.

Behold, I say that ye do not know that they are true.

Ye say that this people is a guilty and a fallen people,
because of the transgression of a parent.

Behold, I say that a child is not guilty because of its parents.

And ye also say that Christ shall come.

But behold, I say that ye do not know that there shall be a Christ."

(Alma 30:24-26)

The ongoing arguments between those who are anti-Christ and those who are true Christians is set forth in this passage.

Other examples:

A "wherefore they scourge him,

B and he suffereth it;

A and they smite him,

B and he suffereth it.

A Yea, they spit upon him,

B and he suffereth it. . ." (1 Nephi 19:9b)

"And it shall come to pass

that the Jews shall have the words

of the Nephites,

and the Nephites shall have the words

of the Jews;

and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words

of the lost tribes of Israel;

and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words

of the Nephites and the Jews." (2 Nephi 29:13)

"For I perceive that ye
 are in the paths of righteousness;
 I perceive that ye
 are in the path which leads to the kingdom of God;
 yea, I perceive that ye
 are making his paths straight." (Alma 7:19)

"But if he murdered
 he was punished unto death;
 and if he robbed
 he was also punished;
 and if he stole
 he was also punished;
 and if he committed adultery
 he was also punished;
 yea, for all this wickedness
 they were punished." (Alma 30:10)

Extended Alternate

Extended alternate belongs to the same family as alternate and repeated alternate, but differs from the other two, however, in that it adds additional alternating lines, as in A-B-C/A-B-C or A-B-C-D/A-B-C-D.

A "I beheld others pressing forward,
 B and they came forth
 C and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron;
 A and they did press forward
 B through the mist of darkness,
 C clinging to the rod of iron. . ." (I Nephi 8:24a)

"Nevertheless, I have received a commandment of the Lord
 A that I should make these plates,
 for the special purpose that there should be an account engraven
 B of the ministry of my people.
 C Upon the other plates should be engraven
 D an account of the reign of the kings,
 E and the wars
 F and contentions of my people;
 A wherefore these plates
 B are for the more part of the ministry;

C and the other plates
 D are for the more part of the reign of kings
 E and the wars
 F and contentions of my people." (I Nephi 9:3-4)

"This death,
 of which I have spoken,
 which is the temporal,
 shall deliver up its dead,
 which death is the grave.
 And this death
 of which I have spoken,
 which is the spiritual death,
 shall deliver up its dead;
 which spiritual death is hell." (2 Nephi 9:11-12)

"And again he saith:
 If my people shall sow filthiness
 they shall reap the chaff thereof in the whirlwind;
 and the effect thereof is poison.
 And again he saith:
 If my people shall sow filthiness
 they shall reap the east wind,
 which bringeth immediate destruction." (Mosiah 7:30-31)

"And it came to pass
 that they began to prosper exceedingly in the land;
 and they called the land Helam.
 And it came to pass
 that they did multiply and prosper exceedingly
 in the land of Helam." (Mosiah 23:19-20)

"I say unto you,
 can ye look up to God at that day
 with a pure heart and clean hands?
 I say unto you,
 can you look up having the image of God
 engraven upon your countenances?" (Alma 5:19)

"Nevertheless I say unto you,
 that it shall be more tolerable for them
 in the day of judgment

than for you,
 if ye remain in your sins,
 yea, and even more tolerable for them
 in this life
 than for you,
 except ye repent." (Alma 9:15)

"Let us nourish it with great care,
 that it may get root,
 that it may grow up,
 and bring forth fruit unto us.
 And now behold, if ye nourish it with much care
 it will get root,
 and grow up,
 and bring forth fruit." (Alma 32:37)

"For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers
 by following its course,
 to the promised land,
 shall the words of Christ,
 if we follow their course,
 carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of
 promise." (Alma 37:45)

"therefore blessed are ye
 if ye shall believe in me and be baptized,
 after that ye have seen me
 and know that I am.
 And again, more blessed are they
 who shall believe in your words because that ye shall testify
 that ye have seen me,
 and that ye know that I am." (3 Nephi 12:1b-2)

Simple Synthetic Parallelism

Simple synthetic, as a rule, is composed of two lines. In this poetic verse, line two gives explanation, or adds something new or instructive to the first line.

"Adam fell that men might be,

and men are, that they might have joy." (2 Nephi 2:25)

This well-known verse is a quintessential example of synthetic parallelism. Line one, while complete in itself, is followed by additional explanation, found in line two.

"Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people;"
yea, he trieth their patience and their faith." (Mosiah 23:21)

The prophet first introduces the doctrine that God often chastens his children, and immediately gives further details "yea, he trieth their patience and their faith."

"Behold, he hath heard my cry by day,
and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime."
(2 Nephi 4:23)

This verse demonstrates that, following the daytime prayer, knowledge was revealed unto the prophet during the hours of the night.

"Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh.
Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss." (2 Nephi 4:35)

Nephi teaches that the Lord gives to those that ask, but qualifies this statement with, if we "ask not amiss."

"And it had come to pass,
yea, all things,
every whit,
according to the words of the prophets." (3 Nephi 1:20)

Again new information is added to the beginning words. Here lines two and three, which are synonymous phrases, unfolds into line four--thus it is the "words of the prophets" that are fulfilled "every whit."

"Yea, many have testified of these things at the coming of Christ,
and were slain because they testified of these things." (3 Nephi 10:15)

The additional information added in these lines is clear--for many, the
result of prophetic testimony of Jesus resulted in martyrdom.

"And I am filled with charity,
which is everlasting love." (Moroni 8:17a)

What is "charity?" The prophet explains in the second line of this
parallelism--charity "is everlasting love."

Extended Synthetic

Extended synthetic parallelism consists of two or more simple synthetic
parallelisms, connected together within a passage or collection of verses.

"And wo unto the deaf that will not hear;
for they shall perish.
Wo unto the blind that will not see;
for they shall perish also.
Wo unto the uncircumcised of heart,
for a knowledge of their iniquities shall smite them at the last day.
Wo unto the liar,
for he shall be thrust down to hell.
Wo unto the murderer who deliberately killeth,
for he shall die.
Wo unto them who commit whoredoms,
for they shall be thrust down to hell.
Yea, wo unto those that worship idols,
for the devil of all devils delighteth in them.
And, in fine, wo unto all those
who die in their sins;
for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their
sins." (2 Nephi 9:31-38)

In this example, there are eight separate examples of synthetic
parallelism. Each beginning line is followed by an explanation. Therefore,
the prophet writes in line one, "wo unto the deaf that will not hear," and
expands into line two, "for they shall perish," and so on.

"Many Bound Together"

Polysyndeton is the Greek word used to describe the repetition of the conjunction "and," found at the beginning of successive phrases or sentences. The literal translation of *polysyndeton* is "many bound together" -- referring to the many phrases bound together by the repetition of the many conjunctions. Thus, this figure creates parallel lines by the "many ands," and binds a passage or verse together into a central thought or unified idea.

"And now, because of the steadiness of the church
they began to be exceeding rich,
having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need--
and abundance of flocks and herds,
and fatlings of every kind,
and also abundance of grain, and of gold,
and of silver, and of precious things,
and abundance of silk and fine-twined linen,
and all manner of good homely cloth." (Alma 1:29)

The use of several conjunctions, each commencing a new phrase, is manifest in this passage. Here the riches and abundance of members of the church are listed and then bound together by the many "ands."

"and we have been cast out,
and mocked,
and spit upon,
and smote upon our cheeks;
and we have been stoned,
and taken
and bound with strong cords,
and cast into prison." (Alma 26:29b)

"And" is eight times repeated at the beginning of successive phrases. This appears to be a chronology of terrible incidents, listing the many ways by which Ammon and his brethren were persecuted.

"And he served many years in captivity,
 yea, even all the remainder of his days.
 And he begat Heth,
 and Heth lived in captivity all his days.
 And Heth begat Aaron,
 and Aaron dwelt in captivity all his days;
 and he begat Amnigaddah,
 and Amnigaddah also dwelt in captivity all his days;
 and he begat Coriantum,
 and Coriantum dwelt in captivity all his days;
 and he begat Com." (Ether 10:30b-31)

The constant usage of the word "and" tends to connect this brief history of several generations into a concise narrative.

In this context it should be noted that in many ancient Semitic languages, the conjunction "and" played an important role. Incidentally, both the scribes and writers felt free to employ this conjunction often. Unfortunately, many modern translators do not translate the "and" into English, perhaps due to the fear of redundancy. The prophet Joseph Smith, however, left the many "ands" in the English rendition of the Book of Mormon, thus keeping the translation true to the original text.

Climax

When the same word or words are found at the end of one sentence and at the beginning of the next, this is called "climax." This continuation of thought from one sentence to the next adds power through repetition to the discourse, while at the same time connecting the lines into an inseparable body. To easily recognize the climatic pattern, the verse can be structured as follows:

"And the first fruits of repentance is
 baptism; and
 baptism cometh by faith unto
 the fulfilling the commandments; and

the fulfilling the commandments bringeth
 remission of sins; And the
 remission of sins bringeth
 meekness, and lowliness of heart; and because of
 meekness and lowliness of heart cometh the visitation of the
 Holy Ghost, which
 Comforter filleth with hope, and perfect
 love, which
 love endureth by diligence unto prayer,
 until the end shall come when all the saints shall dwell with God."
 (Moroni 8:25-26)

Accompanying climax is the idea of an ascension of expression, from a beginning point to a climatic situation. For instance, in the passage just quoted, note that the series began with repentance, which is an essential step onto the path of eternal life. Repentance was followed by baptism, then obedience, and finally culminated with the righteous receiving an eternal station with God.

Similarly, a climatic verse in Mormon 9:12-13a begins with the fall of Adam, but concludes with man being "brought back into the presence of the Lord."

"Behold he created
 Adam, and by
 Adam came
 the fall of man. And because of
 the fall of man came
 Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of
 Jesus Christ came the
 redemption of man. And because of the
 redemption of man, which came by
 Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord."
 (Mormon 9:12-13a)

Again, Alma 42:22-23 presents a case of climax. In this passage the penitent souls, who finding mercy through the atonement, are found saved in the Kingdom of God.

"and mercy claimeth the penitent,
and mercy cometh because of
the atonement; and
the atonement bringeth to pass
the resurrection of the dead; and
the resurrection of the dead bringeth men into the
presence of God; and thus they are restored into his
presence. . ." (Alma 42:22b-23)

Parallelism of Numbers

In Semitic languages, numbers have no synonyms (with the exception of twenty=score). Such equivalents as twelve=dozen and fractions, half/hundred=fifty, are not found. Neither do the numbers have antonyms. Therefore, they are parallel only when they are repeated in the passage, or when the *a fortiori*, "how much more so" principle is in effect. Both of these types are found in the Book of Mormon.

The first two examples demonstrate synonymous parallelisms, where the numerical figure is simply repeated.

"Behold, he is a mighty man,
and he can command fifty,
yea, even he can slay fifty" (I Nephi 3:31b)

"And thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord,
yea, thousands were brought to believe in the traditions of the
Nephites." (Alma 23:5a)

There are only two examples of *a fortiori* number parallelisms in the Book of Mormon. Both use the numerals "thousands-tens of thousands" in their construction.

"And in one year were thousands
and tens of thousands of souls
sent to the eternal world. . ." (Alma 3:26a)

"Yea, will ye sit in idleness
while ye are surrounded with thousands of those,

yea, and tens of thousands,
who do also sit in idleness. . ." (Alma 60:22a)

Number parallelism is used to heighten, and at times to exaggerate the principal theme of the verse. Therefore, in the passage quoted above, the inspired writer notes that Laban is a "mighty man," so mighty that he is able to "command fifty," in fact, so powerful is Laban, that he is even able to "slay fifty" (1 Nephi 3:31).

Antithetical Parallelism

This parallelism is characterized by an opposition of thoughts between two lines or thoughts. Often the second line is introduced by the conjunction "but," which is immediately followed by the contrasting element.

"Ye are swift to do iniquity
but slow to remember the Lord your God." (1 Nephi 17:45a)

Here the contrast is apparent. The word "swift" is an antonym to the word "slow," and the phrase "to do iniquity" is the obverse side of "to remember the Lord."

"And I would not that ye think that I know of myself--
not of the temporal
but of the spiritual,
not of the carnal mind
but of God." (Alma 36:4)

This double antithetical parallelism demonstrates that the opposite of "temporal" is "spiritual," and the idea of carnality and godliness are contrasting elements.

"Fools mock,
but they shall mourn." (Ether 12:26b)

Those who mock place themselves upon a self-built pedestal, but those who mourn are often humbled by a power beyond themselves.

Other examples:

"Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord,
but to take counsel from his hand." (Jacob 4:10)

"I give not
because I have not,
but if I had
I would give." (Mosiah 4:24)

"Wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ,
but acknowledgeth that he is." (Moroni 10:6b)

Staircase Parallelism: Going Up

Anabasis, (Greek, "to go up") called gradational or staircase parallelism, this poetical devise is a stepping up from one sense to another, until, at the pinnacle is a culmination of thought. Alma's explicatory remarks concerning Melchizedek, a segment of his larger discourse to the people of the land of Ammonihah contains a staircase parallelism.

"and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days;
therefore he was called the prince of peace,
for he was the king of Salem." (Alma 13:18b)

First it is important to note the three parallels of this statement:

- line 1 "Melchizedek" (Heb. "my king is righteous") "peace"
- line 2 "prince" "peace"
- line 3 "king" "Salem" (Heb. "peace")

The first line represents Melchizedek, (which is a Hebrew name meaning "my king is righteous"), simply as a man who establishes peace in the land. Line two refers to Melchizedek as royalty, the son of a king, or the "prince." The culmination of the passage is found in line three, where Melchizedek is now referred to as the "king of Salem", or "king of peace", the ruler of the

area known as Salem. Thus the gradation up, from man to prince to King of peace.

An *anabasis* can pertain to a duration of time. Alma 48:17 reveals a progression of time, from the past, to the present, and finally to the future.

"Yea, verily, verily I say unto you,
if all men had been,
and were,
and ever would be,
like unto Moroni,
behold, the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever."
(Alma 48:17a)

Similarly, these lines demonstrate a progression of time.

"as well in these times
as in times of old,
and as well in the times of old
as in times to come." (1 Nephi 10:19b)

A characteristic often found in staircase poetry is the idea of an ascension from specific to general things. 2 Nephi 29:12 is illustrative of this. Note how the writer first mentions the Jews, one of the twelve tribes. This is followed by mention of two more tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh, which the Book of Mormon calls "Nephites." Then is mentioned the "other tribes of the house of Israel," and finally "all nations."

"For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews
and they shall write it;
and I shall also speak unto the Nephites
and they shall write it;
and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel,
which I have led away, and they shall write it;
and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth
and they shall write it." (2 Nephi 29:12)

"And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!

And again, O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet
 of those that are still publishing peace!
 And again, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet
 of those who shall hereafter publish peace,
 yea, from this time henceforth and forever!
 And behold, I say unto you, this is not all.
 For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet
 of him that bringeth good tidings
 that is the founder of peace,
 yea, even the Lord" (Mosiah 15:15-18a)

Prophets from all ages and of all statures have proclaimed the message
 of peace, and the founder of peace, Jesus Christ, was their central message.

"And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests,
 and delivered up unto the priests by the teachers;
 and the priests brought them before Alma,
 who was the high priest." (Mosiah 26:7)

Here the gradation is subtle. During the days of Alma the high priest,
 certain disputations were first brought to the teachers, afterwards to the
 priests, and finally to the high priest. Hence, the gradation of ecclesiastical
 authority is thus demonstrated

"I have repented of my sins,
 and have been redeemed of the Lord;
 behold I am born of the Spirit." (Mosiah 27:24)

Here the staircase parallelism powerfully describes the ascent of the
 faithful--from repentance to redemption to the state of being born again by
 the Holy Ghost.

"... and conceive
 by the power of the Holy Ghost,
 and bring forth
 a son,
 yea, even the Son of God." (Alma 7:10b)

Jesus grew from "grace to grace" (D&C 93:20) or from "glory to glory"

(2 Cor. 3:18) so explain the inspire writers of the scriptures. Connected with this doctrine, and dramatically expressed in these few words is the idea that the Lord was son of the mortal Mary, and then the "Son of God."

"Now, the leader
of the Nephites;
or the man who had been appointed to be the chief captain
over the Nephites
--now the chief captain took the command of all the armies
of the Nephites--
and his name was Moroni." (Alma 43:16)

Here the reader is momentarily held in suspense before the name of the leader and chief captain of the Nephites is finally designated.

Staircase Parallelism: Going Down

Catabasis (Greek "going down") is characterized by a lowering of the sense, from one level to another, with each succeeding line. Like *anabasis* this formation may properly be called staircase parallelism, but unlike *anabasis* this poetic type represents a going down or descending of the stairs. A remarkable example is found in Helaman 11:36-37. Describing the people of God, the Book of Mormon prophet demonstrates that, with each succeeding year, there was a retrogression from a state of righteousness to a condition of wickedness.

"And in the eighty and second year
they began again to forget the Lord their God.
And in the eighty and third year
they began to wax strong in iniquity.
And in the eighty and fourth year
they did not mend their ways.
And it came to pass in the eighty and fifth year
they did wax stronger and stronger in their pride, and in their
wickedness." (Helaman 11:36-37a)

In a single verse of scripture, a view of the deteriorating condition of the Nephite nation is portrayed. Simple forgetfulness was a feature of the eighty-second year of the reign of the judges, but after a period of four years, the Nephites became full of "wickedness" and "pride."

Catabasis is illustrated in Ether, the book which represents the most ancient section of the Book of Mormon.

"And it came to pass that they came forth,
but were driven again;
and they came the second time,
and they were driven again the second time.
And it came to pass that they came again the third time,
and the battle became exceeding sore." (Ether 14:29)

Here the descension is clear. The army is driven back once, then a second time, and finally the struggle becomes intense.

"they will reject him,
because of their iniquities,
and the hardness of their hearts,
and the stiffness of their necks.
Behold, they will crucify him." (2 Nephi 25:12-13)

In this verse, two principal lines demonstrate the climatic situation, line one and line five. The other three lines serve as explanatory notes. Because of the extreme wickedness (iniquities, "hardness," and "stiffness") of the people, Jesus is crucified--the ultimate rejection.

A final example in this category establishes the fact that four simple and succinct lines carry all the power of a lengthy discourse.

"Yea, they are grasped
with death, and hell;
and death, and hell,

and the devil." (2 Nephi 28:23a)

Synonymous Words

When a group of three or more words, similar in sense but not identical in meaning, come together in a verse or passage with characteristics which parallel one another, this is called *synonymia*, or "synonymous words." All synonyms found in a verse do not make up a parallelism-- the proper form and function are needed, and "then it is for the purpose of enhancing the force and fire of the passage."⁷

Synonymia is used to emphasize the future magnificent reign of the Lord.

"the Holy One of Israel must reign
in dominion,
and might,
and power,
and great glory." (1 Nephi 22:24b)

The four words "dominion," "might," "power," and "glory," are synonymous, not that they have analogous meanings, but that the purpose and goal of each are similar--to describe the grandeur of the Lord's reign.

"And when that day shall come they shall be visited
of the Lord of Hosts,
with thunder
and with earthquake,
and with a great noise,
and with storm,
and with tempest,
and with the flame of devouring fire." (2 Nephi 27:2)

The six words employed by the prophet are similar, in that they describe the terrible and frightening atmospheric conditions resulting from God's

⁷ Bullinger, p. 324.

judgments. Obviously "thunder" and "earthquake", or "storm" and "fire" are not true synonyms, but belong to the same family of words.

Presented in Alma 16:18 is a list of twelve crimes against God--all descriptive words portraying a picture of wickedness and immorality.

"Now those priests who did go forth among the people did preach
 against all lyings,
 and deceivings,
 and envyings,
 and strifes,
 and malice,
 and revilings,
 and stealing,
 robbing,
 plundering,
 murdering,
 committing adultery,
 and all manner of lasciviousness,
 crying that these things ought not so to be--" (Alma 16:18)

3 Nephi 3:22 features the many types of possessions typical of the period:

"and they had taken their horses,
 and their chariots,
 and their cattle,
 and all their flocks,
 and their herds,
 and their grain,
 and all their substance. . ." (3 Nephi 3:22b)

This passage lists various weapons employed by the armies of the Lamanites.

"and armed them with swords,
 and with cimeters
 and with bows,
 and with arrows,
 and with head-plates,
 and with breastplates,

and with all manner of shields of every kind." (Helaman 1:14b)

Verbal forms also present a picture of synonymia. In a very ancient verse of scripture, six different verbs are employed, all agricultural terms illustrative of working and farming the ground.

"And they did make all manner of tools
to till the earth,
both to plow
and to sow,
to reap
and to hoe,
and also to thrash." (Ether 11:25)

"Nor" and "Or"

The repetition of the disjunctives "either" and "or" or "neither" and "nor" at the beginning of successive sentences is called *paradiastole*. Jesus used this manner of speech during his visit to the righteous Nephites after his resurrection.

"Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.
Have ye any that are sick among you?
Bring them hither.
Have ye any that are lame,
or blind,
or halt,
or maimed,
or leprous,
or that are withered,
or that are deaf,
or that are afflicted in any manner?
Bring them hither and I will heal them,
for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy."
(3 Nephi 17:7)

Nine times the disjunctives neither and nor are found in 3 Nephi 8:21-22:

"And there could be no light,
 because of the darkness,
 neither candles,
 neither torches;
 neither could there be fire kindled with their fine and exceedingly
 dry wood,
 so that there could not be any light at all;
 And there was not any light seen,
 neither fire,
 nor glimmer,
 neither the sun,
 nor the moon,
 nor the stars,
 for so great were the midsts of darkness which were upon the face of
 the land." (3 Nephi 8:21-22)

Ironically, by using disjunctions, the inspired writers caused a junction
 (rather than a disjunction) or linkage between each succeeding phrase, thus
 creating parallel lines.

"If not so, my first-born in the wilderness,
 righteousness could not be brought to pass,
 neither wickedness,
 neither holiness
 nor misery,
 neither good
 nor bad.
 Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one;
 wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead,
 having no life
 neither death,
 nor corruption
 nor incorruption,
 happiness
 nor misery,
 neither sense
 nor insensibility." (2 Nephi 2:11b)

"Many Inflections"

This figure of speech called *polyptoton* (Greek, "many cases," or "many inflections") involves many inflections of the same root, thus creating a close correspondence of two or more words, in both sense and sound. For instance, the well known expression by Lehi, "Behold I have dreamed a dream. . ." (1 Nephi 3:2a) employs both the verb "dreamed" and the noun "dream." Both words are derived from the same root, and both have similar soundings. When only the noun-verb combination is used, this is called the cognate accusative.

- "I will curse them even with a sore curse." (1 Nephi 2:20-23)
- "and he did judge righteous judgments." (Mosiah 29:43b)
- "succoring those who stood in need of their succor." (Alma 4:13b)
- "having warred a good warfare. . ." (Alma 1:1b)
- "die a spiritual death" (Alma 12:16)

These examples are simple, and yet demonstrate the usage of "many inflections." Many instances of this figure may be hidden in the English translation of the Book of Mormon. The English language does not prefer the cognate accusative, as do the ancient Semitic tongues, and it is probable that the Prophet Joseph Smith, for the sake of clarification, preferred an idiomatic translation over a clumsy literal traslation --"to take a walk," rather than "to walk a walk."

The Book of Mormon contains longer examples of *polyptoton*.

"they must appear before the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel;
and then cometh the judgment,
and then must they be judged
according to the judgment of God." (2 Nephi 9:15b)

Here is shown many inflections of the same root--"judgment-seat," "judgment," "judged," and again "judgment." Note how both the sense and the sounds are repeated in the passage.

For other examples of *polyptoton* see Alma 11:1-2; 12:16; 24:11b-13a.

"Working Out"

Often found in scriptural poetry are two or more lines which deliberate and explain what was first said in line one. This is called *exergasia* (Greek, "working out"), because these subsequent lines "work out" and echo the words introduced in the first line. Note Nephi's usage of *exergasia*.

"We had gathered together all manner of seeds of every kind,
both of grain of every kind,
and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind." (1 Nephi 8:1b).

Lines two and three are a deliberation and explanation of line one. Obviously, the introductory phrase "all manner of seeds of every kind," is inclusive of all other types of seeds, including "grain" and "fruit."

"And now, behold, the Lamanites could not retreat either way,
neither on the north,
nor on the south,
nor on the east,
nor on the west,
for they were surrounded on every hand by the Nephites."
(Helaman 1:31)

The fact that the Lamanites were not able to "retreat either way" is explained in the verses which follow-- there were Nephites in every direction, on all sides, specifically, to the "north," "south," "east," and "west."

"I will give unto the children of men
line upon line,
precept upon precept,
here a little and there a little." (2 Nephi 28:30)

In this example, there is little difference between lines two, three, and four. Presumably, the writer has employed this repetition in order to

emphasize his point, thus making clear by what process the Lord reveals his truths to his people.

"Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks." (Jarom 1:3a)

In general terms, the expressions in lines two through four can be understood to have synonymous meanings. But a careful consideration of each line will show that lines two and four are devoted to the inner soul ("hearts" and "minds,") and lines three and five to the outward man ("ears," and "necks"). Each line, however, can properly be called an explanation of the first line.

"And they gave thanks to God,
yea, all their men
and all their women
and all their children that could speak
lifted their voices in the praises of their God." (Mosiah 24:22)

Lines two, three, and four explain who the "they" of line one refers to-- the men, women and children. The final line of this passage can be viewed as a restatement of line one.

"And behold I say unto you all that this was a *snare* of the adversary, which he has laid to *catch* this people, that he might bring you into *subjection* unto him, that he might *encircle* you about with his chains, that he might *chain* you down to everlasting destruction, according to the power of his *captivity*." (Alma 12:6)

Again, line one introduces the central thought of this passage, but it is followed by several parallel thoughts. Note the different methods which

the devil utilizes in order to trap the wicked. He "snares," "catches," "subjects," "encircles," "chains," and "captures," all words similar in sense, but not identical in meaning.

Random Repetition

This figure of speech, often called "repetition," is the random recurrence of an identical expression within a verse or successive verses of scriptures. The Greeks called this figure, *epibole*, which is translated "to cast upon," or "to cast one upon another," meaning to repeat one phrase after another.

"my days" three times (1 Nephi 1:1)

"garments spotless" 3 times (Alma 7:25)

"...I will go with thee to the land of Middoni;
for the king of the land of Middoni,
whose name is Antiomno, is a friend unto me;
therefore I go to the land of Middoni,
that I may flatter the king of the land..." (Alma 20:4)

"And there shall be no disputations among you,
as there have hitherto been;
neither shall there be disputations among you
concerning the points of my doctrine,
as there have hitherto been." (3 Nephi 11:28b)

"ten thousand" 10 times (Mormon 6:10-15)

"For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are
built up, and not unto the Lord,
when the one shall say unto the other:
behold, I, I am the Lord's;
and the others shall say:
I, I am the Lord's;
and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches,
and not unto the Lord." (2 Nephi 28:3)

"Know ye not that the testimony of two nations

is a witness unto you that I am God,
 that I remember one nation like unto another?
 Wherefore, I speak the same words unto
one nation like unto another.
 And when the two nations shall run together
the testimony of the two nations shall run together also."
 (2 Nephi 29:8)

Regular Repetition

Cycloides or "circular repetition," as Bullinger explains, "the figure is so called because the sentence or phrase is repeated at intervals, as though in regular circles." This figure, therefore, features a phrase, expression, or sentence repeated regularly throughout the paragraph. For instance,

"And now behold,
 I say unto you, my brethren,
 you that belong to this church,
have you sufficiently retained in remembrance
 the captivity of your fathers? Yea, and
have you sufficiently retained in remembrance
 his mercy and long-suffering towards them? And moreover,
have ye sufficiently retained in remembrance
 that he has delivered their souls from hell?" (Alma 5:6)

The three times repetition of the phrase "have you sufficiently retained in remembrance" is striking, placing emphasis upon the expression rather than the words which follow. Clearly the importance of Alma's message is for the saints to remember the important divine interventions of God. This phrase is not unlike that written by Moroni, who in his epistle to Pahoron three times inquired, "have ye forgotten. . ." (Alma 60:20).

Another example of *cycloides* demonstrates the regular repetition of a given phrase. By repeating the phrase "by the hand of their enemies,"

apparently Abinadi desired to stress the method by which the wicked King Noah and his people would come into bondage.

"behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies,
yea, and they shall be brought into bondage;
and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies."
(Mosiah 11:21)

Other examples:

"therefore they have drunk
damnation to their own souls.
Therefore, they have drunk
out of the cup of the wrath of God." (Mosiah 3:25b-26a)

"And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed,
a fifth part of their gold and of their silver,
and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper,
and of their brass and their iron;
and a fifth part of their fatlings;
and also a fifth part of all their grain." (Mosiah 11:3)

"And again: I will set a mark upon him
that minglenth his seed with thy brethren,
that they may be cursed also.
And again: I will set a mark upon him
that fighteth against thee and thy seed." (Alma 3:15-16)

"...and fled from the presence of Alma and Amulek
even as a goat fleeth with her young from two lions;
and thus they did flee from the presence of Alma and Amulek."
(Alma 14:29b)

"Now behold,
because of the exceeding great length of the war
between the Nephites and the Lamanites
many had become hardened,
because of the exceeding length of the war." (Alma 62:41a)

Other examples are equally as striking. "I thank my God" is repeated four times in Alma 24:7-10, the vocative "O Lord" is found regularly (eight

times!) beginning each thought in Helaman 11:10-16, and the affirmative phrase "know ye" is repeated four times in Mormon 7:2-5.

Chiasmus

For this figure of speech, see John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10 (1969), pp. 69-84.

Some examples:

"Wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered among all nations;
yea, and also Babylon shall be destroyed,
wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered by other nations."
(2 Nephi 25:15)

"And he shall smite the earth
with the rod of his mouth;
and with the breath of his lips
shall he slay the wicked." (2 Nephi 30:9b)

"For behold, by the power of his word
man came upon the face of the earth,
which earth
was created by the power of his word." (Jacob 4:9)

"Behold, it is not expedient that we should have a king;
for thus saith the Lord:
Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another,
or one man shall not think himself above another,
therefore I say unto you
it is not expedient that ye should have a king." (Mosiah 23:7)

"But behold, he did deliver them
because they did humble themselves before him;
and because they cried mightily unto him
he did deliver them out of bondage." (Mosiah 29:20a)

"...I have seen my Redeemer;
and he shall come forth
and be born of a woman,
and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name."

(Alma 19:13a)

"For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice;
yea, not a sacrifice of man,
neither of beast,
neither of any manner of fowl;
for it shall not be a human sacrifice;
but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice." (Alma 34:10)

"The soul shall be restored
to the body,
and the body
to the soul." (Alma 40:23a)

"Now the land south was called Lehi
and the land north was called Mulek,
which was after the son of Zedekiah;
for the Lord did bring Mulek into the land north,
and Lehi into the land south." (Helaman 6:10)

"Yea, go ye in unto the judgment-seat,
and search;
and behold, your judge is murdered,
and he lieth in his blood;
and he hath been murdered by his brother,
who seeketh
to sit in the judgment-seat." (Helaman 8:27)chi

Repetition of Words

"Repetition" is the frequent appearance of the same word within a passage of scripture. This repeated word may be found at irregular intervals, at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence. 1 Nephi 9:2 illustrates the usage of repetition.

"And now, as I have spoken concerning these plates,
behold they are not the plates upon
which I make a full account of the history of my people;
for the plates upon
which I make a full account of my people,
I have given the name of Nephi;

wherefore, they are called the plates of Nephi,
after mine own name;
and these plates also are called the plates of Nephi" (1 Nephi 9:2)

Clearly the word "plates," which is repeated six times in this verse, represents the main thought of the paragraph. Note that this word is not found on a regular basis, but is scattered throughout the passage.

Attention should be paid to the frequent recurrence of the word "voice" in 3 Nephi 11:3. In this passage, the "voice" of the resurrected Jesus Christ is described by Nephi.

"they heard a voice as if it came out of heaven;
and they cast their eyes round about,
for they understood not the voice which they heard;
and it was not a harsh voice,
neither was it a loud voice;
nevertheless, and notwithstanding it being a small voice
it did pierce them. . ." (3 Nephi 11:3a)

No where in Holy Writ is the voice of the Lord depicted in such a perfect way. His voice is neither harsh nor loud. To the contrary, the voice of God is small, yet it has qualities which pierce the soul.

It is probable that the inspired authors had a purpose in employing the repetition of the same word. Such frequent usage tends to join the several expressions of the paragraph into a unified body—the various parts connected by the repeated word. Often this is done in such a subtle way, that a hasty and cursory reading of the text may persuade the reader to miss its significance.

Examples of this type of speech pattern are plentiful in the Book of Mormon. For instance, the word "filthy" is found five times in 1 Nephi 15:33b-34; "names" six times in Alma 5:57b-58a; "order," 13 times in

Alma 13:1-16; "light" 7 times in Alma 19:6; "joy" 7 times in Alma 27:17-18; "by" 8 times in Alma 44:5; "man" 7 times in Alma 48:11; "lifted" 5 times in 3 Nephi 27:14-15; "remember" 11 times in Helaman 5:6, 9-10; and "treasures" 5 times in Helaman 13:19.

Simple Synonymous

Simple synonymous consists of two lines, line two being a synonymous repetition, or an echo, of line one. The power of repetition is skillfully demonstrated when synonymous expressions are employed. When the prophets introduced an idea, then repeated it in different words, the hearers were thus enabled to more fully understand the word of God. New levels of knowledge are reached, additional insights are discovered. The following examples demonstrate the many ways in which the prophets were able to repeat in line two what was said in line one.

"pray unto him continually by day,
and give thanks unto his holy name by night." (2 Nephi 9:52)

This verse contrasts the antonyms "day-night," and compares the verbs "pray-give thanks," in order to form a simple synonymous parallelism.

"for their works were works of darkness,
and their doings were doings of abominations." (2 Nephi 25:2)

In this passage the expressions "works of darkness" and "doings of abominations" are synonymous-both reveal the wicked deeds of the Nephites, as the following examples demonstrate.

The words "soul" and "heart" are commonly used as synonyms in the scriptures.

"for his soul did rejoice,

and his whole heart was filled." (1 Nephi 1:15b)

"Behold, my soul is rent with anguish because of you,
and my heart is pained." (1 Nephi 17:47a)

"Behold,
thou art Nephi,
and I am God." (Helaman 10:6a)

The pronouns "thou" and "I" join together with the proper names, "Nephi" and "God" to create this parallelism.

"And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." (2 Nephi 30:11)

The elements "faithfulness-reins" of line two are parallel with the respective synonyms of line one, "righteousness-loins."

Other examples:

"Even this mortal shall put on immortality,
and this corruption shall put on incorruption. . ." (Mosiah 16:10a)

"For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God;
yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their
labors." (Alma 34:32)

"O remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth;
yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God."
(Alma 37:35)

"Surely he hath blessed the house of Jacob,
and hath been merciful unto the seed of Joseph." (3 Nephi 5:21)

"for the Lord will go before you,
and the God of Israel shall be your rearward." (3 Nephi 20:42b)

"Wo unto him that spurneth at the doings of the Lord;
yea, wo unto him that shall deny the Christ and his works!"
(3 Nephi 29:5)

"...and no monster of the sea could break them,
neither whale that could mar them." (Ether 6:10a)

In 1 Nephi 20:1 there are found five different synonymous parallelisms.
(Compare Isaiah 48:1).

"Hearken,
and hear this,
O house of Jacob,
who are called by the name of Israel,
and are come forth out of the waters of Judah,
or out of the waters of baptism,
who swear by the name of the Lord,
and make mention of the God of Israel,
yet they swear not in truth,
nor in righteousness." (1 Nephi 20:1)

Extended Synonymous

Extended synonymous constructions consist of three or more lines being similar or identical in meaning. When father Lehi and his wife, Sariah, were in the final period of their mortal existence, Nephi wrote this concerning them:

"they were brought near even to be carried out of this time to meet
their God;
yea, their grey hairs were about to be brought down to lie low in
the dust;
yea, even they were near to be cast with sorrow into a watery
grave." (1 Nephi 18:18b)

Similar to all accomplished writers, Nephi was able to express the condition of his aged parents in three different ways.

Note the beauty of this verse, describing the concluding scenes of the destructions in the lands of America.

"and the earth did cease to tremble,
and the rocks did cease to rend,
and the dreadful groanings did cease,
and all the tumultuous noises did pass away." (3 Nephi 10:9b)

Note the repetition of the idea, expressed in three different ways.

"And the highways were broken up,
and the level roads were spoiled,
and many smooth places became rough." (3 Nephi 8:13)

In this verse, there is a synonymous construction:

"And it came to pass that there were many cities built anew,
and there were many old cities repaired.

Followed by another synonymous parallelism:

And there were many highways cast up,
and many roads made,

And finally, three parallel lines:

which led from city to city,
and from land to land,
and from place to place." (3 Nephi 6:7-8)

"Like Sentence Endings"

Epistrophe, or "like sentence endings," is the repetition of an identical word or expression at the end of a sentence. This type of repetition causes a coherence between the various parts of the passage. For instance, in the description of the Jaredite barge, as described in Ether 2:17, the writer makes clear the point that the boats were built "like unto a dish."

And they were built after a manner that they were exceeding tight,
 even that they would hold water like unto a dish;
 and the bottom thereof was tight like unto a dish;
 and the sides thereof were tight like unto a dish;
 and the ends thereof were peaked;
 and the top thereof was tight like unto a dish;
 and the length thereof was the length of a tree;
 and the door thereof, when it was shut,
 was tight like unto a dish." (Ether 2:17)

Another example of one identical phrase paralleling another is found in Alma 21:4.

"And he began to preach to them in their synagogues,
 for they had built synagogues
after the order of the Nehors;
 for many of the Amalekites
 and the Amulonites were
after the order of the Nehors." (Alma 21:4b)

From this type of construction it is evident to see that the Nehors and their "order" had quite an influence upon civilization of this period.

"yea, and whosoever murdereth against the light and knowledge of
 God,
it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness;
 yea, I say unto you, my son,
 that it is not easy for him to obtain a forgiveness." (Alma 39:6b)

Alma's reiteration of the phrase "it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness," proves to reinforce this important doctrinal point.

Note in what way a parallelistic structure is formed by the triple repetition of the expression, "waters of Mormon."

"And now it came to pass that all this was done in Mormon,
 yea, by the waters of Mormon,
 in the forest that was near
 the waters of Mormon;
 yea, the place of Mormon,

the waters of Mormon,
the forest of Mormon." (Mosiah 18:30a)

Other examples:

"Gather together on the morrow,
for I shall die;
wherefore, I desire to speak unto the people
before I shall die." (Jacob 7:16)

"Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death;
and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death,
that all shall be raised from this temporal death." (Alma 11:42)

"Detailing"

The poetic pattern of *prosapodosi* (Gr. "detailing,") features an introductory phrase or sentence, followed by one or more subsequent lines which "detail" what was said in line one. Often, the first line of the stanza is complete in itself, but additional lines are presented for the purpose of answering one of the questions—"who," "which," "where," "why," "what," or "how?" Perhaps a statement in Alma, which, incidently is an example of *prosapodosi*, best explains the purpose of this poetic group.

"And they are made known unto us in plain terms,
that we may understand,
that we cannot err." (Alma 13:23)

Lines two and three answer the question of "why?" Why are the things of God made known unto the children of men? So that "we may understand," so "that we cannot err."

Note how Nephi introduces the idea of "two churches," and then he immediately adds the important details as to who the churches are.

Behold there are save two churches only;
the one the church of the Lamb of God,

and the other is the church of the devil." (1 Nephi 14:10a)

The prophet speaks plainly. The "two churches" are respectively, "the church of the Lamb of God," and "the church of the devil."

"And now there was a great mourning and lamentation among the people of Limhi,
the widow mourning for her husband,
the son and the daughter mourning for their father,
and the brothers for their brethren." (Mosiah 21:9)

Who participated in the "great mourning and lamentation?" The details for this passage are straightforward and not to be misunderstood. The widow, the son, the daughter, and the brothers all were found grieving for their loved ones.

"...and thus we see the great reason of sorrow, and also of rejoicing--
sorrow because of death and destruction among men,
and joy because of the light of Christ unto life." (Alma 28:14b)

"Death" and "destruction" always bring "sorrow," and "joy" is the result of the "light" which emanates from the Lord.

Other examples:

"My God hath been my support;
he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness;
and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep."
(2 Nephi 4:20)

"...ye are free to act for yourselves--
to choose the way of everlasting death
or the way of eternal life." (2 Nephi 10:23)

"Like Sentence Beginnings"

Anaphora, translated from the Greek, is defined as "to bring again," or "to repeat," and refers to "like sentence beginnings." This figure is so-called because the same word is found at the beginning of several successive phrases or sentences. This does not include the conjunction "and," a figure called *polysyndeton*, or the disjunctions "neither/nor-either/or" which are called *paradiastole* (see above).

Anaphora is considered a parallelism because, by its unusual repetition of identical words within a short span of space, it creates a series of thoughts being parallel or connected one to another. This connecting element joins all similar phrases or sentences into a single group for consideration by the reader, thus enabling him to focus on the central message of the passage. Several examples of this figure are found in the Book of Mormon.

For instance, in Alma 11:44, the word "both" introduces four successive thoughts, which in turn join together to define the meaning of the words "to all," given in line one.

"Now, this restoration shall come to all,
both old and young,
both bond and free,
both male and female,
both the wicked and the righteous." (Alma 11:44)

A series of questions is begun by the interrogative particle "who."

"And now, behold,
who can stand against the works of the Lord?
Who can deny his sayings?
Who will rise up against the almighty power of the Lord?
Who will despise the works of the Lord?
Who will despise the children of Christ?" (Mormon 9:26)

Other examples:

"Believe" six times (Mosiah 4:9-10)

"And behold, now it came to pass that it was upon a tower,
which was in the garden of Nephi,
which was by the highway
which led to the chief market,
which was in the city of Zarahemla;
 therefore, Nephi had bowed himself upon the tower
which was in his garden,
which tower was also near unto the garden gate
 by which led the highway." (Helaman 7:10)

Like Paragraph Endings

Anacodaen, or "refrain," features a recurring phrase or sentence found at intervals, always at the end of a paragraph. Often the repeated phrase is the culmination or summary of what has been said.

"...there arose a great storm, such an one
as never had been known in all the land.
 And there was also a great and terrible tempest;
 and there was a terrible thunder,
 insomuch that it did shake the whole earth as if it was about to
 divide asunder.
 And there were exceeding sharp lightnings, such
as never had been known in all the land." (3 Nephi 8:5b-7)

"to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face,
 that the blood of the prophets and the saints should not come up any
 more unto me against them." 6 times (3 Nephi 9:5-11)

Key to Abbreviations

alt=Simple Alternate
amoe= *Amoedaeon* or "Like Paragraph Endings"
ana= *Anaphora* or "Like Sentence Beginnings"
anabasis= *Anabasis* or "Staircase-Going Up"
ant=Antithetical
antime= *Antimetabole* or "Contrasting Ideas"
cat= *Catabasis* or "Staircase-Going Down"
chi=Chiasm
climax=Climax
cyc= *Cycloides* or "Regular Repetition"
ep= *Epibole* or "Random Repetition"
epis= *Epistrophe* or "Like Sentence Endings"
exer= *Exergasia* or "Working Out"
ex alt=Extended Alternate
ex syn=Extended Synthetic
ex synon=Extended Synonymous
num=Numbers
pol= *Polyptoton* or "Many Inflections"
poly= *Polysyndeton* or "Many Ands"
para= *Paradiastole* or "Nor & Or"
pros= *Prosapodos* or "Detailing"
re alt=Repeated Alternate
rep=Repetition of Identical Words
syn=Synthetic
synon=Synonymous
words= *Synonymia* or Synonymous Words