

"As mentioned previously, butterflies, moths, like other holometabolous insects, undergo complete metamorphosis...passing through three quite distinct stages: larva, pupa and adult."

-Butterflies of the World
(Sbordoni *et al* 1988:24)

3. METAMORPHOSIS METAPHOR

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INTRODUCTION

The POS is usually presented as a roadmap one must follow to get from premortality -the point of spirit birth actually- into immortality^{1}. It describes how to navigate the portions of that territory -whether temporal or spatial or something else is immaterial at this point- where we live, which is a minuscule part of a vastly larger eternity. The bulk of the information revealed^{2} to wo/man on this earth by God describes the code of morality to be followed during mortality, prescribing some sacraments and ordinances, with some information revealed about post-mortality^{3} and a bit more about premortality. The concepts described in this work agree with that description of the Gospel.

However, as already noted above, we believe that the Plan is actually not an arbitrary collation of laws and commandments that were just tailored for this particular world. We believe the elements of the Plan which have been revealed to mortals are actually portions of a broader blueprint. This larger blueprint exists as an expression and/or extension of the priesthood which spans all dimensions, space and time^{4}. It describes and controls the evolution of all spirits in all phases of their existence, from their first birth during the pre-existence, through mortality and post-mortality, to their ultimate destination after the resurrection. But the whole plan is not revealed during any phase. Only the elements that are somehow required for each phase will be revealed therein.

The process that we pass through during our spirit evolution entails more variations and processes involved than is revealed in the scriptures, but all such variations are subsumed by the plan, and are under the control of the priesthood. The development and evolution of a human spirit across all testing phases is compared in

¹This word is sort of fudging if you believe in an eternal nature of spirits, i.e. that spirits have existed eternally. We don't, hence the term.

²How "revealed"? Claims to revelation from the Father are found in the Christian and Jewish canon, but revelation from a personal God is not characteristic of Hinduism, Taoism, Buddhism, etc. It is possible that the sense of [right&wrong] is inherent in spirit matter, which would be one explanation for how personal "revelation" works: there would be no external influence exerted on a person, rather the sense of "This is right (or wrong)" would be internally generated. However, this begs the broader question about how information about the POS is transmitted to mortals. Revelation is real. But we don't know much about it.

Revelation is also manifested in the other two testing phases. This is entailed by the requirement that we act on faith, not knowledge, which means spirits are veiled to the extent that they don't have all the information about the POS. Therefore, it must be provided in some manner by external agencies.

³Note that SMD inadvertently confuses things in this regard. I'll make this point several times to reinforce the idea.

Reference is made to being in "heaven" after mortal death, and reference is also made to being in heaven after the resurrection. All LDS can explain the specific organizational differences between these two regions WHEN they are specifically asked to describe "where we go after we die", or "How many degrees or glory are there after the resurrection?" But nonetheless, the distinction between the CONDITIONS operative in those two structures is badly blurred.

And this confusion is further compounded by the loose use of the term HEAVEN to also refer to the pre-existence. There are actually three different heavens or locations -or 'conditions'?- where we spend specified portions of our existence. The use of a single term to refer to them all is unfortunate, though it is understandable that the language is not supplied with separate words for each "heaven".

We wonder whether PE spirits understand that they are going to "heaven" when they die into mortality.

⁴See Chapter 9. DARTH VADER DILEMMA for more thoughts on the matter priesthood, both the white and black. Perplexing topic.

this work to the metamorphosis of a mortal lepidopteran^{5}. These creatures pass thorough a mandatorily and progressively sequenced set of phases -termed 'instars'- from birth to their demise. We compare the testing and development of human spirits to that type of metamorphosis, which is initiated in the PE^{6} and culminates in the judgment and resurrection.

STRUCTURE OF THE METAMORPHOSIS:

The metamorphosis metaphor is apt for this model for many reasons. It captures the concept of developmental phases that are mandatorily sequenced with respect to each other. No organism can change the order of the phases, in this case, the PE, mortality and PM. Nor can an organism skip a phase.^{7} Each phase must be experienced by every individual as s/he goes through the process of testing, development and maturation. Each phase starts with a beginning and ends with an ending. We compare these beginnings and endings of each phase to birth and death, and note that a "life" is lived out between the two. All phases of spirit development are interdependent and must be successfully experienced for there to be a successful outcome for the individual.

The lepidopteran phases and human spirit phases might be compared in this manner:

| Lepidopteran phases | Human spirit phases |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. larval | 1. pre-existence life |
| 2. pupal instar | 2. mortal life |
| 3. pupal instar.... | 3. post-mortal life |

TABLE 1. LEPIDOPTERAN AND HUMAN PHASES

We believe that the pre-existence phase was actually a full-blown testing phase for our spirits, as will be described in Section III PRE-EXISTENCE PHASE. We also believe that mortality is a testing phase, and that post-mortality is a testing phase. Note the evolutionary nature of these stages. Each phase represents a higher developmental level which can only be attained by having navigated the prior phase(s).

⁵This family includes three distinct subgroups, only two of which are commonly known. The unfamiliar group are the *megathoridae*, or 'large thorax'. These are the ubiquitous, zippy and difficult to see, 'skippers'. Their metamorphosis is like that of moths and butterflies.

⁶This would be true of any spirits on any world.

⁷The familiar problem case in this regard is the still-born. Some LDS claim that spirits who failed to inhabit that homunculus were so worthy that they didn't need to undergo the mortal test, rather were simply provided the mortal vehicle for the resurrection machine. However, we demure in some manner.

We don't believe the mortal vehicle is the thing resurrected as you will see below in Chapter 44. RESURRECTION, METALLURGY AND QUANTUM MECHANICS. In this case, the deceased homunculus is merely the (spontaneously) aborted/stillborn by-product of an unsuccessful gestation.

Please with hold your ire. We know that the doctrine of the resurrection of the mortal body is perhaps the most copiously documented doctrine of Christianity, and that to tamper with that concept is to commit heresy of the worst kind, to deny the divinity of the Christ, etc. Just wait till you read the evidence and then you decide for yourself what you think. We are simply perplexed in the final analysis.

Keep the notion of a metamorphosis in mind. It captures the essence of this model's conception of spirit evolution. The process of being created as an embryonic spirit initiates or turns on this obligatory developmental sequence. The phases are pre-set, and the conditions in each are pre-defined. All spirits must move through each one, choosing whatever they wish to choose during those experiences.⁸

STATES AND PHASES:

These phases and states are displayed in tabular form in this table:

| STAGE | SECTION | DESIGNATION | NATURE/CONDITION |
|-------|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | II | INTELLIGENCE STATE | STATE-OF-BEING |
| 2 | III | PRE-EXISTENCE | DEVELOPMENTAL |
| 3 | IV | MORTAL EXISTENCE | DEVELOPMENTAL |
| 4 | V | POST-MORTAL EXISTENCE | DEVELOPMENTAL |
| 5 | VI | POST-RESURRECTION STATE | STATE-OF-BEING |

Table 5. STATES AND PHASES

Note that it is divided vertically into three sections:

- A) INTELLIGENCE STATE (STAGE 1)**
- B) METAMORPHOSIS OF THREE STATES (STAGES 2,3,4)**
- C) POST-RESURRECTION STATE (STAGE 5)**

The difference between the three sub-groups is simply that **B)** is a developmental condition during which our spirits can undergo change. **A)** and **C)** are states-of-being where no change is possible in spirit nature.

The arabic number in the left column indicates the order in which each of these stages occurs during spirit metamorphosis. The roman numeral in the next column gives the number of the section in this work which addresses that stage (See Table of Contents). The third column gives the name of the stage, and the fourth column indicates the nature of the stage vis-a-vis spirit evolution, at least as conceived in this

⁸ The only way we know a spirit can interrupt this otherwise externally controlled process is to commit suicide during mortality. (Can that be done during the PE or PM? We have no idea.) See Chapter 33. OBESITY, ALCOHOLISM AND SUICIDE for a discussion of this perplexing matter.

text. Note that only arabic number 1 and 2 are covered in Fascicle I. 3, 4 and 5 are covered in the other two fascicles.

TESTING AND STATE OF BEING:

It is postulated here that during the active developmental phases (numbers 2, 3 and 4 in the middle portion of Table 5), spirits exist in an abnormal-for-them condition⁹, during which they grow, develop and change. They undergo continual testing, though the specific tests of each phase probably vary. It is also postulated that the tests of these phases are specifically sequenced according to the developmental needs of the spirits in each phase.

As an analogy, take the developmental sequences of mortals: an infant progresses physically, psychologically, emotionally, morally and intellectually in predictable¹⁰ steps. S/he moves in a generally predictable manner from birth into childhood, through puberty into adulthood,¹¹ even though there are minor individual variations.¹² The testing phases of the metamorphosis, the middle part of Table 5, are assumed to be sequenced and organized in a similar manner. Spirits progress and develop from one phase to the next, with consequences of each being passed forward¹³.

The point of the testing during these three phases is to challenge each spirit sufficiently to allow it to demonstrate how it will choose to behave under the full range of conditions that must be evaluated prior to the resurrection. This enables

⁹ Abnormal -or unusual- for them simply because this is the only portion of their eternity during which they are 'open' to this type of change and growth. The remainder of their eternity, on both sides of this segment, is state-of-being. Even if the total mortal 'time' involved were 5,000,000,000 years, it would still be only a sliver of eternity.

¹⁰ Dr. Spock cashed in on this predictability by telling us insecure parents what to do and expect at each stage. I'm not sure whether he helped us or not. (I also suspect that Dr. Spock was the logical precursor of Dr. O'Leary, the guru of LSD (not LDS), ultimately not a nice thing. However, it was bound to happen.)

¹¹ An important qualification is in order here. While it is generally true that we have all basically completed our development by the time we reach adulthood, there is still an important moral and/or theological dimension along which we can still change, IF we wish. This is the dimension of 'repentance', a rather mystical process, through which individuals can actually alter profoundly inbred characteristics. True, the cost of such changes is immense, but the effect justifies it.

This work is based on the critical assumption that we are all capable of this type of change through most of our mortal existence. This puts the cop-out, "That's just the way I am!" in the proper perspective - the royal cop-out. We can -and should- change and keep trying and be altered and be different. If we hear ourselves saying that, we best sit down quietly and think about why we are persisting in what we obviously acknowledge to be a self-defeating behavior.

Please note the corollary here: it is also believed here that this type of moral change is an essential element of the other two testing phases, that repentance is active in those spheres as well. Much more on this as we go forward.

¹² Obviously, when I refer to 'predictable', I am referring to "normal" individuals. Abnormals exist and vary, sometimes dramatically, around the mean for each of these parameters. I suggest that both the predictability as well as the variability is true for all three testing phases. There are norms and variations around them. However, in the final analysis, all details will be given proper value we believe, so we don't worry about it.

¹³ Note the curious fact that the developmental phases are sandwiched in a matrix of states-of-being. This peculiar ordering relationship is discussed in detail in chapter 51. NESTED OR CRISS-CROSSED DEPENDENCIES? We refer to two states-of-being. However, it is possible, even probable, that there is only one state, one matrix, with the metamorphosis being a segment of the matrix that is altered by priesthood powers applied to embryonic spirit matter.

the Lord^{14} to ascertain the degree to which each spirit will choose to exercise its free-agency "properly"^{15}.

Note, once more, that it is believed here that the state-of-being of 'intelligence' entails no testing. Spirits as such do not exist. It is admitted that there may have been some priesthood-mediated processes that occurred prior to the creation of spirits, processes that sorted intelligence into different categories or classes and perhaps manipulated or altered it in some manner in preparation for spirit creation. But we claim that there were no spirits. The formation of spirits is the *sine quae non* of entry into the pre-existence, hence into the metamorphosis. It is also assumed in this model that there is no testing after the resurrection. Whatever state a spirit is in after the resurrection is the state it will be in eternally. It will no longer be subjected to any tests, and will no longer be capable of making the types of choices that must be made under testing conditions.^{16}

PURPOSE OF THE METAMORPHOSIS:

The purpose of this metamorphosis is to enable and allow spirits to transform themselves from the embryos of pre-earth life into the heroic beings of the post-resurrection world. At that point, if they have done things correctly, they will (eventually?) be transformed into the ultimate being called Gods, who are capable of manipulating all forces and powers of immortality, with no strictures imposed externally on them. The POS includes the instructions, power and authority needed to make the necessary personal changes. The information required to activate the necessary powers are given as commandments and various instructions.

It is evident throughout this work that the POS is process-oriented, not product-oriented, although its purpose obviously is to create certain products. It is designed to aim our spirits in certain directions, not to "finish" them during mortality, nor during any phase for that matter. It is designed to enable us to start to learn certain skills. It is designed to provide us all of the opportunities for testing that are required for individuals who aspire unto god-ness. It is designed to allow us to feel freedom and learn to make correct choices under adverse conditions, etc. If this were not so, there would be no hope for anyone to become a God because the experimental conditions set up for this world, and the other two testing phases, by

¹⁴ I'm not so sure it's the "Lord", the Person, that needs to be shown and convinced. It seems more likely to me to be 'justice' that must be persuaded. And then appeased, where necessary and possible, in order for the show to go on. Or, perhaps even more accurately, it is ourselves who are determining what we will be in the eternities by what we choose to do during the metamorphosis, hence there is little need for a judge or justice. This is the basic position we take in this work, which is based on the concept of a metamorphosis that accomplishes its purpose as a result of our OWN decisions.

We hasten to add, however, that we acknowledge the reality of the priesthood and of divine interventions, so believe that our own choices can be 'interpreted' or extended in some manner when the Father chooses to intervene.

¹⁵ "Properly" is also given a highly parochial definition. It is assumed here to mean, "in the way that an individual must perform in order to be granted and allowed to exercise all of the keys of the priesthood without any constraints." That's a very particular definition, but it captures what is believed in this work to be the essential metric that will be applied to us in the judgment.

¹⁶ Note the tight definition in this sentence: spirits will no longer be 'tested' as they were during the three developmental phases. However, it is noted that perfected beings who attain the unspeakable glory of godhood will be capable of on-going development in some sense. Whether this entails learning more or simply creating more -or both, or something else- is not known. Both represent change in a positive direction (quantitatively at least), but neither alters the intrinsic condition or nature of the spirit itself. The resurrection somehow obviates that possibility.

our God are such that none of us can become perfect in them.^{17}

DIFFERENCE:

There is a major difference between the lepidoptran metamorphosis and the one we are experiencing:

The lepidopteran has no choice about what happens during its metamorphosis.

Lepidoptran phases, i.e. larva, pupa and adult as noted in the quote over this chapter, are initiated and terminated by a complex of chemical, light, and temperature variables, with there being some instinctive responses by the individual. The individual has essentially no control over the process.

But the whole point of the human spirit metamorphosis is to exercise choice. Granted, there are variables experienced during the course of human development over which the individual has no control. The effect of those variables is believed here to be negligible in the final analysis. The only elements of the metamorphosis that will ultimately affect the final outcome for the individual are those wherein s/he exercised agency^{18}. Those items over which no control is effected are probably by-products or artifacts of the testing environments, which are incidental to the testing.

CONCLUSION, INSTARS AND METAMORPHOSIS:

The entire sequence of stages through which a butterfly passes is termed a 'metamorphosis', a lovely term^{19}. Within this model of the Plan of Salvation, the three phases of spirit development will be compared to the instars, or metamorphic phases, undergone by a butterfly, skipper or moth of the mortal order **Lepidoptera**. These instars move the organism from the state of a fertilized egg on to the state of an adult.^{20}

When the final instar of a metamorphosis is reached for the peculiar, often garish-looking worm-like juvenile, it enters into a chrysalis, cocoon, pupa or some such protective chamber for the final miracle, suspended from a silken thread, buried in

¹⁷ I presume that the particular tests that are characteristic of the PE and PM worlds are equally resistant to "perfect" handling by incomplete organisms.

¹⁸ We admit that the initiation and termination of each human phase is outside the control of the human individual (except in the cases of suicide), just as it is for the lepidopteran. But that is irrelevant in the end. The type of lives lived out during each phase are what is measured.

¹⁹ The greek terms "meta-" and "morph-" and "-osis" can be translated as 'through', 'shape' and 'condition of'. Together they denote a "condition of shape changing", precisely the conception that we elaborate in this work.

²⁰ This comment suggests another thought about intelligence. If we push the lepidoptran model 'backwards', we end up comparing germ cells from the parents to intelligence. Two haploid cells of mature, conspecific lepidoptrons are merged to yield a zygote. The thought comes out a question: Is intelligence more than an undifferentiated mass, a mass that is actually subdivided into at least two general types, with a spirit creation requiring a dab of each? See Chapter 8. BLACK MATTER, INTELLIGENCE AND COSMIC BULLDOZERS and Chapter 15. CONSCIOUSNESS - COGITO ERGO SUM for more about this mystical stuff.

the ground, wrapped in leaves, etc.. The process may be completed in weeks^{21} or over years. During that time when the organism is protected from the effects of weather, viruses, fungi, bacterias, etc. the cellular structures of the worm are reworked nearly completely.

When the chrysalis finally ruptures, a miracle of nature has been wrought. The product has virtually no visual kinship to the worm it derived from. We believe that the testing our spirits are subjected to is part of its metamorphosis. Indeed, that is the entire function and purpose of it. The result for those who successfully traverse their metamorphosis, will be as stunning in comparison to the PE spirit as that between the fat ugly worm and its final form, a creature of color, light and beauty. A butterfly. A goddess.

²¹ I made a bad mistake with a batch of small moth caterpillars. One summer when I was experimenting with lepidoptrans, I put a batch of them in the master bedroom in a plastic container covered with saran wrap, feeding them, expecting them to pupate so I could put them out in the fall for a spring hatching. However, they decided to get out of confinement without my knowledge. The first sign of their success was my wife's scream during the middle of the night when one of them fell off the unlighted bathroom ceiling onto her. They were only an inch long, but were all over the place, in the bed, on the walls and floor. I wonder if we aren't figuratively doing something comparable. Hope not. But wouldn't bet on it.