

# THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

*Have animals minds and do they think?*

Some animals exhibit remarkable ability to understand what is said to them and will do what they are told as if they understood. Animals have not minds as the human being understands the word, nor do they think, though they do appear to understand much that is said to them and will do many of the things which they are told to do. Mind is the individualizing principle in man which causes him and enables him to think of himself as I-am-I. Animals have not this principle and nothing in their actions or behavior would suggest that they have it. Not having mind, they cannot think because thought is possible only by the presence of mind with desire. Animals have desire as their dominant and actuating principle, but they have no mind as have human animal bodies.

In a different sense than in the human, the animal has mind. The sense in which an animal may be said to have mind is that it acts from the impulse of the universal mind, without any such individualizing principle. Every animal, which is not immediately under the influence of man, acts according to its nature. An animal cannot act different than its nature, which is the animal nature. Man can act according to his animal nature strictly, or according to ordinary human instincts and social or business customs, or he may transcend the animal and the ordinary human and act in a saintly and God-like manner. This choice of his action which man has, is possible because he has a mind or is a mind. If the animal had or was a mind it would be possible for some such choice to be noticed in its action. But an animal never acts differently than the species to which it belongs, and which specie determines the animal's nature and action. This all applies to the animal in its natural and native state or condition and when it is not interfered with nor comes under the immediate influence of man. When man brings an animal under his influence he changes that animal to the extent that he exerts his influence upon it. Man is able to exert his mental influence upon the animal in a similar manner in which he exerts the influence of his mind upon the animal in himself. Desire is the principle of the

animal, mind the characteristic principle of man. Desire is the vehicle of mind. Desire is the matter with which mind works. The reason that animals can be trained to obey the commands of man is because the principle of desire will respond to the action of mind and obey its dictates when the mind persists in its efforts to rule the animal. The animal therefore does not do the thinking when carrying out the orders of a man. The animal simply obeys automatically the thought of the mind which directs it. In illustration of this it may be said that no animal has been known to understand and obey an order which is different from other orders before given it. Each thing that it does is similar in kind to what it has been taught by man to do. The character of mind is to plan, to compare, to originate. No animal has the ability or capacity either to plan a thing, to compare by argument, or to originate a course of action for itself or another animal. Animals perform tricks or obey orders because they have been taught and trained to perform and obey them and this is due to the mind of man thrown onto the desire of the animal which reflects his thought in action.

*Will any evil influence be brought to human beings by the presence of domestic animals?*

That depends on the human being more than it does upon the animal. Each may help the other, but as to how much help may be given or harm done is to be decided by the human. The animal is helped by the association with man if man will teach and control the animal with kindness. The animal in its wild and native state requires no human aid, but when by breeding and domestication man brings the animal under the influence of his mind, the animal is no longer able or has the opportunity to hunt for its own food for itself and young. Then man becomes responsible for the animal; and having assumed such responsibility it is man's duty to care for and protect the animal. Man does this not because he desires the elevation and education of the animal but because he desires to put the animal to his own uses. In this way we have domesticated such animals as the horse, cow, sheep, goat, dog and fowls. The entities which animate the bodies of the animals are being educated to certain uses with the animal bodies preparatory to animating a human body in some future evolution or world. In this way there is an exchange made between the animal, and man. The animal is educated by man for the services which it renders man. The desire principle of the animal is acted on by the mind of man, and by such

continual action and reaction the desire principle of the animal is prepared by the human principle of the mind of man, so that in some far distant period the desire principle of the animal may be brought up to a state allowing it to associate immediately and directly with mind. Man will fulfill his duty better if he does his duty intelligently and cheerfully instead of by force of circumstances and grudgingly. Man will help the animals if he regards them in the light just outlined and will treat them kindly and with consideration and will show them a certain affection; they would then respond to his wishes in a manner that would amaze him. In showing them affection, however, care should be exercised. Such affection should not be that of a foolish and whimsical petting, but the affection that one feels for the soul in all living creatures. If man would do this he would develop the animals and they would respond to him in a way that would cause the present man to think positively that the animals had intelligence in the sense of having the reasoning faculty. But even then, if the animal appeared to act far more intelligently than the best do at present they would still not be possessed of the power of thought or of the reasoning faculty.

The association between the human and the animal is evil and pernicious when animals are brought out of their sphere by silly human beings and made to fill a place which is neither animal, human nor divine. This is done by men or women who attempt to make an idol out of some animal pet. Usually a dog or cat is selected for such purpose. The pet is made an object of adoration or worship. The poor human being pours out from an overflowing heart a wealth of silly words on the object of its adoration. The idolization of pets has been carried to such extremes as to have the pet tailored in the latest or special fashions and made to wear jeweled necklaces or other ornaments, and to have specially liveried attendants for cleaning perfuming and feeding it. In one case they took walks with a dog or drove it in a special carriage that it might have the fresh air without being fatigued. The pet was thus nurtured through its life and when death came it was placed in an elaborate casket; ceremonies were performed over it and it was followed by its worshipper and her friends to a cemetery specially prepared for it, where it was laid to rest in pleasant surroundings and a monument placed over it to commemorate the sad event. An animal is not to be blamed for such as this; all blame is to be attached to the human. But the animal is injured by such action because it is taken out of its natural sphere and put into a sphere where it does not belong. It is

then unfitted to re-enter the sphere from which it has been taken and is unable to act naturally, usefully and properly in the position given it by the abnormal human being. Such action is an abuse of opportunity of position by the human, who will forfeit all right and claim by such abuse to a like position in a future life. The wasted opportunity of position, the waste of money, the degradation of other human beings in compelling them to be servants of the pet, and in unfitting the animal to the place given it, will all have to be paid for in misery, disappointment and degradation in future lives. There are few punishments too severe for a human being who makes an idol out of an animal and worships that animal. Such action is an attempt to make a potential god the servant of a beast, and such attempt must receive its just deserts.

Under certain conditions the influence of animals is very injurious to certain human beings. For instance, when a person is weak or asleep a cat or an old dog should not be allowed to touch the body, because when the body has not the presence of its mind or the mind is not conscious in the human body, the animal magnetism of the human body will be drawn off by the dog or cat or other animal which touches it. The animal instinctively crouches near or touches the human body because it receives a certain virtue from it. An evidence of this is that a dog, an old dog especially, will always rub up against a human body. This he does for a double purpose; in order to be scratched, but more particularly because he receives a certain magnetic influence from the human body which he appropriates. It may have been frequently noticed that a cat will select some person who lies asleep and will curl itself up on his chest and purr contentedly as it absorbs the magnetism of the sleeping person. If this is continued night after night the person will become weaker and weaker until even death may result. Because animals may absorb magnetism from man, that should not cause man to shun an animal or to be unkind to it, but rather make him use his judgment in dealing with animals, show them all kindness and the affection that man should feel for all living creatures; but he should also train them by the exercise of discipline, which will educate them into useful and dutiful beings, instead of allowing them to do as they please, because he is either too lazy or careless to train them or because he shows foolish and extravagant indulgence of their impulses.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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