

THE WORD

AUGUST, 1909.

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

Is there any ground for the claim of those who say that the souls of departed men incarnate in birds or animals?

There is some ground for the claim, but the statement as a whole is untrue. Human souls do not reincarnate into birds or animals unless these terms are applied to human beings. After the death of a human, the principles of which his mortal part was composed return into the respective kingdoms or realms from which they had been drawn for the building of the body of the mortal man. There are many grounds on which the claim may be made that the human soul may return to life in the body of an animal. The chief cause of such statement is superstition and tradition; but tradition often preserves a deep truth in absurd literal form. Superstition is the form which was the basis of former knowledge. One who holds a superstition without knowing what it means believes in the form, but has not the knowledge. Those who in modern times believe in the tradition that human souls do reincarnate into animals, cling to the superstition or tradition because they have lost the knowledge which the outward and literal statement conceals. The purpose of incarnation and reincarnation of the mind into bodies is that it shall learn what life in the world can teach. The instrument through which it learns is the animal human form. After it has passed from one human form at death and is about to reincarnate it builds up for itself and enters another animal human form. But it does not enter any of the species of animals. It does not enter a body of an animal. The reason is that the strictly animal form will not offer the opportunity for continuing its education. The animal body would only re-tard the mind. The mistakes of one life could not be rectified by the mind in an animal body if it were possible for the mind to be in an animal body, because the animal organism and brain could not respond to the touch of the individual mind. The human stage in development of the brain is necessary for the mind to contact the human animal form; the animal brain is not a fit instrument for the human mind to work through. If it were possible for the mind to reincarnate into an animal, the mind, while so incarnate, would be unconscious of itself

as a mind in the animal body. Such incarnation of the mind in an animal body would be to no purpose, as no mistake could be corrected and atoned for. Mistakes can be corrected, wrongs righted and lessons learned and knowledge acquired only while the mind is in a human body, and can contact a brain which will respond to its touch. It is therefore unreasonable to suppose that anything could be accomplished by a law that a mind which has acted through a human form should incarnate into any of the animal types.

It is said in the Editorial on Thought, The Word, Vol. 2, No. 3, December, 1905 [p. 5 in the PDF editorial "Thought"], that: "Man thinks and nature responds by marshalling his thoughts in a continuous procession while he looks on with wondering gaze unmindful of the cause. . . .Man thinks and fructifies nature by his thought, and nature brings forth her progeny in all organic forms as the children of his thoughts. Trees, flowers, beasts, reptiles, birds, are in their forms the crystallization of his thoughts, while in each of their different natures is a portrayal and specialization of one of his particular desires. Nature reproduces according to a given type, but the thought of man determines the type and the type changes only with his thought. . . .The entities experiencing life in animal bodies must have their character and form determined by the thought of man until they themselves can think. Then they will no longer need his aid, but will build their own forms even as the thought of man now builds his own and theirs." Can you explain more fully how the different thoughts of man act on the matter of the physical world so as to produce different kinds of animals such as the lion, bear, peacock, rattlesnake?

To answer this question would necessitate writing an article such as one of The Word editorials. This cannot be done in the space devoted to Moments with Friends, and it must be left to the editorial department of this magazine. We shall attempt, however, to outline the principle by which that which is stated in the above quotation is accomplished.

Among all living creatures man is the only being who has the creative faculty (as distinguished from procreative.) The creative faculty is his power of thought and of will. Thought is the product of the action of mind and desire. When mind acts on desire thought is generated and thought takes its form in the life matter of the world. This life matter is on a super-physical plane. The thoughts which take form exist in the super-physical state on the plane of thought. Desire as a cosmic principle acted on by the mind of man produces

thoughts according to the nature of the mind and the desire. These thoughts when so produced are the types of forms which appear in the world, and these types of forms are animated by certain entities or phases of life which cannot create forms for themselves.

Man has within him the nature of every animal in the world. Each animal type or species represents a particular desire and is to be found in human beings. But though all animal natures are in man, he, that is, his type, is human, and the animals in him are seen at such times only as he allows passions and desires to take possession of and manifest their nature through him. It is as though all animal creation were of so many strands which were drawn together and wound up within his body and he is the composite animal of all animal creation. Watch the face of a man when he is seized by a paroxysm of passion, and the nature of the then dominant animal will be clearly seen in him. The wolf looks out of his face and can be seen in his manner. The tiger pants through him as if he would rush on his prey. The snake hisses through his speech and glitters through his eyes. The lion roars as anger or lust works through his body. Any one of these gives place to the other as it passes through his body, and the expression of his face changes even in type. It is when man thinks in the nature of the tiger or wolf or fox that he creates the thought of tiger, wolf, or fox, and the thought lives in the life world until it is drawn into the lower psychical worlds to give form to the entities coming into existence through procreation. All of these different animal types pass through the form and are given expression in the face of man as pictures moved behind a screen. However, it is not possible for the wolf to look like a fox or the fox like a tiger or either of these like a snake. Each animal acts according to its nature and never acts like any other kind of animal than itself. This is so because, as stated in the quotation, and as will be later shown, each animal is a specialization, a particular type of desire in man. Thought is the creator of all forms in the world, and man is the only animal which thinks. He stands in relation to the physical world as God, the creator, is said to be related to man. But there is another way in which man is the cause of the appearance of animals in the physical world. This will also explain one of the many meanings of and is the reason for the statement in ancient scriptures that man may reincarnate or transmigrate into the bodies of animals. It is this: During life the desire in man is a manifold animal principle, which has no definite form. During the life of man, the desire in him is ever

changing, and no definite type of animal remains in evidence very long with him. The wolf is followed by the fox, the fox by the bear, the bear by the goat, the goat by the sheep and so on, or in any order, and this continues usually through life unless there is a pronounced tendency in a man where one of the many animals dominates the others in his nature and he is a sheep or fox or wolf or bear all his life. But in any case, at death, the changing desire of his nature is fixed into one definite animal type which may still have for a time the human astral form. After the mind has departed from its animal, the animal gradually loses the controlling outline of the human and takes on its true animal type. This animal then is a creature with no vestige of humanity. It is this animal which will coalesce with the thought type created for it and according to the thought type and its animal nature it is born into the world through an animal body of its kind which was previously called into existence in the same manner.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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A Non-Profit Organization Established in 1950
P. O. Box 17510 • Rochester, NY 14617 • USA

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