

THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

Why is a snake regarded so differently by different people?. Sometimes a snake is spoken of as the representative of evil, at other times as the symbol of wisdom. Why does man possess such an inherent fear of snakes?

Education and training has much to do with the manner in which man regards snakes and all other creatures. But there is something in the man himself apart from his education which accounts for the rest. A snake may be properly considered as venomous and evil or as the symbol of wisdom. It depends on the standpoint that is taken. Aside from destruction of the vermin which some snakes feed upon, it is not known that snakes confer any special benefits on man and the world, or that they exhibit any habits more wonderful than other animals, or that they show symptoms of intelligence greater than other animal forms. On the contrary, they are sometimes deaf and blind; they may so glut themselves as to go into a stupor, unable to defend themselves or keep out of danger, and the bite of some snakes is so deadly as to produce death soon after the victim has been bitten. But there are comparatively few snakes which are not harmless, and the movements of a snake are among the most graceful and the quickest of all creatures.

There is nothing which a snake does nor any purpose which it serves which would warrant its being spoken of as the wisest of creatures or as the symbol of wisdom. Yet from the earliest of times sages have spoken of and scriptures mention it as the wisest of all creatures, and used it as a symbol of wisdom.

There are many reasons why the snake may truly be called a symbol of wisdom. Better than any other creature the snake represents, is related to and moved by the electrical power of the universe, which power gives wisdom to man, when man makes himself ready to receive it. In man's present condition he is unfit and unable to have this power act directly through him. The organism of the snake is so constituted as to allow the direct action of this electrical power. But the power does not give wisdom to the snake; it only acts through the snake body. A mind is necessary to be aware

and make use of the wisdom. This the snake has not. The snake has the most completely and economically vertebrated animal body. The spinal column runs throughout the snake, and it is the spinal column through which the electrical power acts. The spinal column in man is in the form of a snake, but the spine in man will not allow the electrical power to act directly through it because the current is switched off from the spinal column by the present uses to which the nerve currents of the body branching out from the spinal cord are put. The present arrangement of nerves and the uses of the nerve currents prevent the universal electrical power from acting directly through the body and enlightening the mind of man. In the abdominal and pelvic regions of the body the nerves are coiled, serpent-like. These nerves now supply the generative organs with their power of action. It is said in Eastern books that kundalini, the serpent power, is coiled within the body and asleep; but that when this serpent power is awakened it will enlighten the mind of man. Interpreted, this means that certain nerve currents of the body, now unused or misused, must be called into their proper action; that is, that they will be opened and connected with the spinal cord. The doing of this is like the turning of the key on an electrical switchboard which turns on the current and starts the machinery into operation. When the current is opened and related to the spinal cord in the body of man the electrical power is turned on. This current first acts through the nerves of the body. If the nervous organization of the body is not strong and fit the current burns up the nerves. According to the unfitness, it will make the body diseased, disorganized, produce insanity or cause death. If the nervous organization is fit the power electrifies the astral form body and then clarifies and illuminates the mind, so that almost instantly the mind may know of any subject concerning the physical world or the astral world. This power has the movement of a snake and it acts through the spinal cord within the spinal column, which is in the form of a snake. Like a snake, the power will cause death to the one who arouses and is not able to master it. Like a snake, the power develops a new body and sheds its old one as the snake sheds its skin.

Man has an inherent fear of animals because each animal in the world is a separated and specialized form of the desire in man, and the animal that man fears shows him the specialized form of his own desire which he has not mastered. When he masters and is able to control his desire man will not fear the animal and the animal will have no fear of and do no harm to man. Man has an inherent fear of a snake because he has not mastered and is not able to control the force in him which the snake represents. Yet a snake has an

attraction for man, though he fears it. The idea of wisdom is also attractive to man. But he must overcome fear and love truth before he can get wisdom, else, like the serpent-like power, it will destroy him or make him mad.

Is there any truth in the stories that the Rosicrucians had ever burning lamps? If so, how were they made, what purpose did they serve, and can they be made and used now?

There is no valid reason why the Rosicrucians or other mediaeval bodies should not have made and used ever-burning lamps. The reason why we of to-day think ever-burning lamps are a myth invented by fancy, is chiefly due to our notions that a lamp must be a vessel containing combustible matter, such as wicks and oil, or through which illuminating gas is used, or through which an electric current passes and gives light by incandescence of the filaments. The idea of a lamp is, that it is that through which light is given.

The fabled ever burning lamp of the Rosicrucians is thought to be unreasonable because we think that a lamp cannot give light without fuel or something which is supplied to it. It is thought that an ever-burning lamp is only one of the many supposed impossibilities which abound in traditions concerning Rosicrucian and mediaeval times.

We cannot now say how the Rosicrucian or some men in the middle ages made an ever-burning lamp, but the principle on which such lamp may be made can be explained. Let it first be understood that an ever-burning lamp does not consume oil nor gas nor any other material which it is necessary to supply by mechanical means. The body and form of an ever-burning lamp may be of a material suitable to the uses to which the lamp is to be put by the mind who conceives and makes it. The important part of the lamp is the particular material through which the light is given. The light is induced from the ether or astral light. It is not produced by a burning process. The material which is used to induce light must be carefully prepared and adjusted or attuned to the etheric or astral light. The preparation of this material and the tempering and adjusting of it to the ether or astral light was one of the secrets of the Rosicrucians and Fire Philosophers. That all this could have been, is now demonstrated by the discovery of radium. Radium seems to give light without consuming itself or diminishing in quantity. Radium does not as is supposed give light from itself. The light is induced and focussed by the radium. The light which appears to be shed by radium is from the ether or astral light. The radium serves as a medium only through which the light is brought from the astral world and manifested to the physical senses.

The material through which came the light of the ever-burning lamps of the Rosicrucians was arranged on similar principles though it could have been prepared differently and may have been of different material than radium, as there are forms of matter other than radium through which light from the ether or astral world may be manifested in the physical world.

Ever-burning lamps have most likely been constructed for many and different purposes. A lamp constructed for one purpose could not be put to all uses for which ever-burning lamps were made. Thus for instance, radium gives a light, but radium is not now used for light because not only is the preparation of it too costly for it to be put to such use, but because the light radiated injures near animal bodies.

Here are a few of the purposes for which ever-burning lamps may have been made and used: To give light at secret gatherings; to look into and investigate the astral world and some of its entities; to keep away adverse influences and entities opposed to the work in which one or more may have been engaged; to protect the physical and astral body during sleep or while in trance; as a means for the treatment of metals for transmutation; as a means of preparing certain simples for medicinal purposes or for effecting curses; to adjust the senses of the physical to the astral or inner senses by which the unseen astral world could be entered.

Other ever-burning lamps could be made now, but although they may be made in the future it is not necessary to use them now. They have been used for psychic or astral practices and purposes. The time for such work has passed. The mind of man should be growing out of such practices. What was controlled by astral means may and should be now controlled by the mind and without other means than that furnished by man's own bodies. The mind should be a light unto itself. Its body should be the lamp. Man should so prepare his body and bring it so under control of the mind that the mind will shine through it and enlighten the surrounding world, and make of the man who is seen an ever-burning lamp which will radiate light for all time.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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