

Werner Hartinger

Anthroposophy and Animal Protection

Translator's Introduction¹

In his Foreword to this book and in his answer to Question 21 (both not translated for this edition) Dr. Hartinger discusses in philosophical terms the nature of “science”, arguing that we have in the world today no more than a “natural science”. This limits itself to what can be interpreted in a purely mechanical way, as its sole focus is on processes in the inorganic world. Anything of an organic nature lies outside its scope. Consequently its understanding and treatment of the illnesses that afflict the organisms of animal and man is quite inadequate. “Science” would need, in order to do justice to the complexity of man as body, soul and spirit, to transcend the limitations of natural science and become spiritual science.

Speaking on behalf of many campaigners for animal protection, Mrs. Heidi Weber asked Dr. Werner Hartinger M. D. the following questions on the theme of Man and Animal:

What is the evolutionary development and goal of man and animal? How should they behave and relate to one another in harmony with the laws of creation?

What do they share in common, and what are their differences? What are the causes of their illnesses? What is man's duty towards his fellow-creatures?

She also asked him to say something about their shared path of destiny and the redemption of the animal kingdom, and to answer all the questions from the perspective of (Anthroposophical) spiritual science.

1. In Anthroposophy and in the Christian Community people have at their disposal a wide range of knowledge and insights, yet there is hardly any talk of the duty of man towards his fellow-creatures. The question seems to be deliberately avoided. What has been your experience?

¹ First published by Druckerei Fred Wimpfler, Munich, in the 80's; newly translated by Graham B. Rickett for Lochmann-Verlag, Basle.

On behalf of the animals, I would like to thank you for your interest in this complex subject. Rudolf Steiner did not lecture on this as a main theme, but I have been able to draw references from many different lectures which together provide deep insight into the shared Karma of man and animal.

Unfortunately, such terms as 'compassion', 'evolutionary connection', 'fellows in creation' are seldom heard in anthroposophical lectures and seminars. But R. Steiner often spoke of the sacrifice made by the animals for man, and of the grave consequences of the torture and killing of animals. He pointed out that animal experiments for medical reasons cannot lead to an improvement in human health or to the curing of illnesses – rather the contrary.

The neglect by Anthroposophists of the whole subject of our obligation towards the animal kingdom probably has to do with the traditional emphasis laid by the Christian churches on the individual's need to strive for his own personal salvation.

2. Do not Christianity and Anthroposophy in particular have a special task in regard to the relation between man and animal?

Absolutely! From the early Christian centuries onwards, however, the ideas of empathy, compassion, respect and love came to be neglected, owing to ignorance of the esoteric dimension of the New Testament. Add to this the selfish profit motive of our time and we have the un-Christian and unacceptable treatment of our fellow-creatures today. It would be wonderful if many Anthroposophists were to take to heart R. Steiner's statements on this question, and recognize the animals' right to live unharmed. They should also attend to their own nutrition through a change of life-style.

3. How do you explain the varying attitude of the human being to animals and an obvious lack of interest and empathy?

It is a matter of the level of knowledge attained, experiences from earlier lives, the path of destiny and Karma in connection with the lifelong learning process of the human being.

4. Do animals experience the Christ, or does their path of knowledge and development all the way to redemption go via and together with the human being?

A very important question. According to Dr. Steiner, the animal has no direct vision, nor knowledge, of Christ. Through living freely with human beings, the domestic animals are meant to experience the selfless Christian love impulse. Here, the individual animal learns and, after death, brings its experiences and knowledge into the fund of knowledge of the group-spirit. The being of the animal has developed the cosmic intelligence very far, further than the human being. But the essential love-impulse exists in it only in its most elementary form as sexual partnership and in varying forms between parent animals and their offspring up to the stage of sexual maturity. Then this force, necessary for maintenance of the species, comes to an end. Until the stage of a later absorption of the Christ impulse its path of knowledge goes via its life together with the human being, and it is not only in this respect that the animal depends upon man's thought and action as a fellow-creature.

5. When a close connection exists, looking into the eyes of an animal, especially a dog, we get the impression of being looked at by not just a "dog".

People with a spiritual-scientific orientation are aware that the eye takes in, not only visible light, but also other qualities of radiation found in sunlight. This contains far more energy-rays than are known of and, because they cannot be analyzed or demonstrated physically they are not scientifically recognized – although, logically, the fact that they cannot be proven by methods of analysis that are inadequate because they are only adapted to matter or known forms of energy, cannot constitute proof of the non-existence of other energy qualities.

It is, therefore, via this route that, on an etheric and astral level, we absorb various – not always good – spiritual, astral and etheric influences from other beings. It is conceivable that, at some point, the partially incorporated group-spirit wishes momentarily to take in the thoughts of a human being in this way. Anyone with the right sensitivity can perceive its presence in the animal through its out-raying force. This presupposes, of

course, that one acknowledges the spiritual worlds and leads a corresponding way of life. This is also an unusual way of receiving the words of Christ, which explains why St. Francis was able to preach to the animals about Christ.

6. Animals often play a significant role in human destiny, and their self-sacrificial intervention to help a person is well-known. Are such events prompted by the group-soul, do they have a special meaning, and whose "instrument" are the animals in such cases?

Yes, more often than one thinks, and nothing happens by "chance". The animal has a perceptive capacity far superior to man's in the ether and astral region, where it sees all the elemental and spiritual beings who can intervene in the events of the physical world. It is the gnomes in particular in such cases, who in a certain way complement the intellectual knowledge of the vertebrates and can give warnings and instructions, which are then defined by science as "instinctive behaviour". Events of this kind are in most cases due to direct influence on the part of the personal guardian spirit, if the preconditions are given together with the permission to intervene in the human being's individual freedom of decision. But a person spoken to in this way will not notice such signs, unless he believes in the possibility of the intervention of spiritual worlds in our own, and if he perceived them he would not believe them. Of course, the action required of the animal must correspond to its physical capacities and disposition.

7. And yet the human being has been, in many ways, for millennia the tragic fate of the animals. His actions are felt by many people to be unjust or are even described as criminal. How are such forms of behaviour ever be atoned or compensated for?

The renowned poet and Anthroposophist Christian Morgenstern made a clear statement about this when he said: "Whole world-ages of love will be needed, in order to repay the animals for the ways they have served us and earned our gratitude."

It would not correspond in any way to the idea of a loving and just God if one being could harm another without having to answer for it. Reparation for such deeds is necessary from two aspects, the level of civil and penal law, as it were. In his next life the human being takes on all his actions as

a karmic burden of destiny, in order to compensate for them vis-à-vis the one who has suffered harm. This happens in various forms, depending upon the level of insight attained in the course of development. The penal consequences of man's infringement of the laws of creation – and only these – were placed by Christ upon his own karma with his deed of redemption. But then the human being must learn what he has done wrong. Therefore, after his death he will experience, himself, more intensively during what is known as Kamaloka (Purgatory, in religious terms) his deeds, utterances and thoughts and the consequences of his actions, with respect to the suffering, pain, fear and death he has caused, but also joy and sympathy. For the soul in question the worst effects arise from the tormenting, harming and killing of an animal entrusted to our care, whereby the alleged or actual reasons for such actions are irrelevant. R. Steiner says in regard to vivisection in his book "Before the Gates of Theosophy" (GA 95) what can be expressed as follows: During his life, the human being arouses, consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, suffering, fear and pain, but also pleasure and joy, in his fellow-men and fellow-creatures. All this he meets again as he passes through the period of Kamaloka. Formerly, he caused pain to others, now he must suffer this pain himself in a more intense form. Especially terrible, therefore, is the Kamaloka of the vivisectionist, as the consequences of his actions manifest unavoidably in the form described. The supposedly unintentional nature of his action, the appeal to scientific necessity or a "noble purpose" cannot prevent this; the law of spiritual life is unyielding!

At an Annual General Meeting he completes the picture as follows: The fact that the human being must endure after his death and to a heightened degree, all the torment and suffering he has caused, is the reason why the same human soul will never become an animal tormentor or experimenter again. For, there lives on in his subconscious the memory of the consequences of his actions after death, and this holds him back from repeating such actions.

8. Do suffering, pain and death have the same meaning and value for man and animal?

On this question R. Steiner says the following: The animal does not feel pain and sorrow in the same way as the human being. For example, the

warm-blooded animal suffers far more intensively, because it does not have in the same form as man: knowing, thinking and willing, which create a strong counter-stream, thus enabling the pain to be held in a bearable balance. This means that its suffering is much more intense and, besides this, the pain is not only felt at the place where it is inflicted – the animal's whole body is pain. Its inability to understand this pain and its causes always arouses in it the fear of death, which makes all its sensations still more unbearable.

In "The Revelation of Karma" (GA 120) these processes are illumined from the aspect of individual development, and he made the following comparison: We have to bear pain and suffering and this is for us a means of attaining insight and perfection if we overcome it. The animals do not have this possibility because they do not have in them an individual spirit principle, which is the source of the counteractive forces for reduction of pain mentioned earlier. As a result they are in a far worse position that we are, because they cannot overcome pain. When we left them behind in evolution and they took on those astral qualities that hinder our development, they had the capacity to feel pain, but not the possibility of raising themselves above it by overcoming it consciously.

9. Is a loving attitude and inner connection with animals from one's childhood onwards an expression of earlier relationships, forms of behaviour or knowledge?

In the first place it is an expression of the level of insight that recognizes one's fellow-creature as an independent being with the indissoluble right to life and freedom from harm, just as much as we respect the relationships that carry with them a duty from the evolutionary point of view. This insight is of course a result of past modes of behaviour and experiences. R. Steiner gives an impressive account of the once shared path of man and animal, and also their separation: At an early point in evolution we left the animals behind with our astral burdens, at a stage of development where they did not yet have the possibility of overcoming pain for the sake of their own further progress, and pain also does not embody the same process of knowledge as it does for us. They must therefore endure to our own advantage, far more intense suffering, until they are redeemed. This is not a theory; it is primordial knowledge of humanity, which comes to

expression, in a process of soul-recollection, as empathy for the animals. This can then develop into an understanding of them as our fellow-creatures, and even into the readiness to suffer with them. This compassion will return consciously when the human being is prepared to receive spiritual wisdom and recognizes how closely bound together are the Karma of mankind and the world-karma of the animals.

10. Animals often have very lively dreams: they bark, run around, smell and breathe in the sleeping state as if they are having such experiences. In spite of this, in contrast to human beings, they perceive events on the physical plane very exactly and can react at once. How is this possible?

To understand these differences, one must first get to know the three states of consciousness of the warm-blooded creatures, which recur more or less regularly through a whole lifetime and are a part of the bio-rhythm. They are the states of consciousness: waking, dreaming and sleeping, which have, nevertheless, in man and animal somewhat different functions and dimensions.

When the human being is awake, he notices with his sense-organs only the physical surroundings; other perceptions – particularly in the spiritual world – do not occur. In the state of sleep he is without earthly consciousness and he does not perceive the physical events around him; he dwells completely in the spiritual world and has, in general, no ability to remember what he experienced there. His dreaming is a brief intermediary state in which certain impressions from the astral world can remain and be carried over into the conscious waking state.

With the animal this is not the same, although it, too, knows the rhythm of waking, dreaming and sleeping. Its ability to perceive in the waking state is not limited to the physical surroundings; it also perceives events in the astral world with a dulled consciousness and can retain them in the memory. It remains awake, as it were, only with a part (generally the greater) of its consciousness in the physical world, and with the other part in the spiritual region, whereby the proportions in percentage terms vary a great deal from one species to another. In sleep it is the other way round; here it is with its perceiving capacity mainly in the astral world, but it still experiences in a weaker form the events in the physical surroundings

through its sense-organs. Thus, neither the waking nor the sleeping consciousness of the animal limits it to either of the two levels, and what is being experienced on the astral plane during sleep can, via the nervous system, show itself simultaneously in the body in the form of corresponding movements and changes in biological functioning.

Equally, in dreaming the earthly perceptive and cognitive capacity is not completely switched off, which is to be viewed, particularly in the case of wild animals, as a necessary protective measure, a relic of which is found in the domestic animal.

Such differences in the perceptive faculty are due to the functional processes that bring about the state of sleep. In the human being, the individual 'I'-consciousness and the astral body leave the physical and etheric body completely and dwell, under the guidance of the guardian spirit, in the other world. This is why, on waking, it takes a while before the physical body can be fully controlled, because the return and the "embodying" in the physical and etheric body is a process for which time is needed. In the case of the animal, however, the astral body does not, in sleep, leave the lower bodies completely, which is why it receives via eye, ear, smell and feeling all the impressions from the surroundings and can also react immediately. Thus, the movements and sounds to be seen or heard during sleep or dreaming are the result of this difference in the physiology of sleep, whereby in the animal what is experienced on the astral plane with other animals is transmitted by the not fully separated astral body directly into the nervous system of the body. Waking, dreaming and sleeping are therefore, by these criteria alone, not the same in man and animal, however many outer similarities there may be.

11. How is it that animals can have a special sense for future events, which could almost be described as clairvoyance, and that they can largely grasp man's thoughts and mental pictures?

The fact we have described, that the animals have only a part of their perceptual consciousness on the physical and the other part in the astral plane, allows them also to perceive events in the surrounding astral world and place them in their right context. They are helped in this by the regular elemental beings of the solid earth, who have a one-sided but highly-

development intelligence and also an intense interest in all human affairs – namely, the gnomes. In addition, the animals see the etheric and astral aura of the human being, in which are manifested all his thoughts, feelings and intentions in different colours and changing colour combinations. Those animals in particular who cannot bring their feelings to expression through a sound or tone emitted from within have, in addition to this, a further form of perception, so-called picture-consciousness. This enables them to perceive the meeting with another being through an inner picture that conveys to them a pleasant or an unpleasant impression. The latter means that the encounter is dangerous. Thus, these animals do not see the world optically as clearly as we do, and have no comparable definition of what is seen by means of a concept, but sense the danger or friendliness of the encounter in a repelling or pleasing inner picture, and sense astrally the thoughts and emotions of the other being. All this together prompts them in the shortest time, without conscious and differentiated recognition, without reflection, to get out of the way, to turn back, to defend itself or to attack, in the manner of a reflex action. Wrong decisions or incorrect interpretations of others' intentions, of which the human being is capable because he receives information only through the eye, do not happen. This kind of perception exists in varying forms and degrees in relation to all beings, also the human being, although it is considerably less developed in mammals. These really have, instead, a kind of clairvoyance. It comes about through the fact that the limits of the etheric head do not coincide with those of the physical head (as in the human being), but extend outwards in all directions. This is the precondition for any clairvoyance. It is found especially in horses and elephants.

Then one should also mention that in the early phase of his development the human being also had a picture-consciousness of this kind and judged his surroundings in this way.

12. One can observe how the dog, when there is a close bond with the human being, no longer behaves in an absolutely typical dog-like manner, but that dog and man grow similar not only externally, but also in their inner nature. How do you account for this?

Particularly during the sleep of man and animal together in the same house, a close etheric and astral contact comes about, as the ether and

astral principles are not so clearly delimited relative to their surroundings as is, for example, the physical body. This results in a mutual influence and mutual resemblance which, in its turn, inclines to similar emotional responses and favours mutual understanding. It is via these forms of contact that, after a certain time, the soul connections are consolidated; movements and even the bodily principles grow similar. In this process it is, of course, the animal that adapts most to the human being, from whom it wishes to learn. He has, in any case, during sleep, together with the so-called dead and under the supervision of Angelic hierarchical beings, to plan and shape the future forms and configurations of the kingdoms of nature, of which the animal is a part.

13. How could one sketch out the animal's path of evolution? What experiences does it have just before and at its death? Is there for the animal, too, a kind of Rückschau, and where will its soul live after death? How is one to imagine a further development as a Salamander?

These are unusually profound and many-layered complexes of questions, to answer which not only requires much time, but to understand them presupposes a detailed knowledge of what we share with the animals on an evolutionary level in the past, the present and the future. Here we can, therefore, only go into some introductory aspects:

First, the animals are the physical forms of manifestation of autonomous spiritual beings with a path of development of their own which, seen from the perspective of evolution as a whole, only passes through a given time-period in the present manner, in company with the human being. This fact needs to be known and acknowledged, with the consequence that man would allow the animal its own physical and spiritual independence and not obstruct or exploit it. If he interferes with its development and does not leave this as it is planned and as it should be, if he alters its form and capacity for survival, then he is in any case fully responsible for the consequences and remains karmically burdened until the balance is restored. This is to a special degree the case if, through biological-physiological modification, he has weakened or limited the fitness or resistance of an animal species vis-à-vis its environment. He must then, for an unlimited time, care for its ability to live painlessly, and for its nourishment and the

quality of its surroundings. This obligation applies not only to the offender(s) personally but, as the karma of mankind, to all human beings!

Many people feel the injustice that is done to animals in this way through maltreatment, exploitation, torture and slaughter for commercial purposes, and wish to restore their rights through various forms of compulsion or even violence. But this contradicts the fundamental Christian idea of respect for a free development of insight by the individual, and for the justice arising from Divine guidance. The injustice of these kinds of behaviour and their consequences for man himself and for the animal should be addressed again and again and be described from all aspects, but whether the guidelines are taken up or not should be left to the free decision of the individual. Only if these principles, which are valid for any path of knowledge, are respected can any change be brought about that is in keeping with evolution.

Still more misguided is the use of black magical practices for this purpose. Even if the aim is a good one, they represent an illegitimate interference with the rights of the personality and have bad consequences for all those involved. This is evident from the tragic fate of Anne Kingsford in her relation to the vivisectionist Claude Bernard, which is described in a book by Jaffe in the Daimon-Verlag, which we can highly recommend.

How the animals can best be helped, here and in the life beyond, was indicated by Francis of Assisi in his well-known prayer and in numerous other texts. The central element in our reflection should always be gratitude and joy over the brief sharing of our paths in life, to the advantage of both, whereby the animal's sacrifice is mostly the greater.

Our sorrow at separation from an animal we love should also prompt us to extend our admiration and love over the whole animal kingdom as a part of creation.

The animal has during its life no spiritual consciousness of individuality, but it does have a sense of itself as a personality, as it can very well distinguish itself from other living creatures. However, individual difference must not be confused with a difference that is acquired through individuality ("Theosophy", GA 9).

In “Theosophy of Rosicrucian” (GA 99) R. Steiner says in this regard: “Just as we speak of an individual soul in the case of the human being, so do we speak in the case of the animal of a group-soul, and this is to be found on the astral plane. It is simply that, not the single animal living here on the physical plane, but the species – all lions, all tigers together – have an ‘I’ in common, which is as a group-soul to be sought on the astral plane ... An entire group of animals is, on the astral plane, a being with whom one can speak as with a single individual here. However, shortly before their death and during this process the higher animals experience briefly a consciousness of individuality with all the positive and negative consequences for their soul. This means that it can experience, on the one hand, the immense joy of individual experience, but on the other hand it must also sense the consequences of its actions. This is tragic especially for the beasts of prey who, in this brief span of time, experience concentratedly within themselves the pain, suffering and fear they have caused, which one could describe as a kind of balance-restoring Rückschau. After this, the animal soul normally returns to a state of union with the group-soul of the animal being, brings with it its life-experiences as knowledge and loses its feeling of individuality. Its physical, etheric and astral existence has thus come to an end.

In the case of a strong bonding with a human being, some mature animals do not find the way back, or do not want to follow it. They then begin a different evolutionary path, as a regular elemental being of warmth, a Salamander. They thereby achieve a certain individualization, receive a body that is substantial though not physically visible, and are in this form of being directly subordinate to the Seraphim, the highest beings of the Angelic hierarchy. Contacts to the human being of their choice are now possible, whom they wish to thank for the love they have received. Their action then comes to expression in an everyday event which we generally speak of as a “happy coincidence”, without noticing the underlying intention of the animal we were once connected with.

Man and animal owe the onward-striving feeling of their personality, which is developing into consciousness, to the lofty beings of the Sun region, who will in the future lead our animals, too, out of their bondage to matter. In the God-given dignity of their posture and behaviour, in the

ever-pleasing beauty and harmony of their movements and in their often majestic sublimity, they reveal something of the archetypally pure formative principles of their Divine creators. They are the noble, lesser reflections of the spirits of Form, who have left them, despite their earthly burdens, in a Paradisal state, which only man was able to disturb. It belongs to their own perfection that they are morally “without knowledge” and live with their whole being in a wisdom raised high above our level. They are therefore always innocent, even if, seen from a given time-perspective they may sometimes be seen cruel or even harmful, or would be so for us in the present moment.

But through this Sun-being of the middle Angelic hierarchy, man is given a space for his own freedom of decision. For this reason, he can become guilty on the one hand, but on the other he can also create the moral balance through a deed born of a high level of morality. Thus, this spiritual guiding power embraces the destiny-weaving of the community of man and animal in a differentiated way from two sides: from the karmic necessity sprung from the past, which overcomes guilt and leads onto the path of brotherliness with all beings; and from the spiritual freedom of both, which opens up to the future and makes possible a new configuring of the destiny for all.

14. How can one explain the fact that the human being often has difficulty overcoming his grief at the passing of his four-legged companion, and may sometimes believe he can sense its presence after its death?

Let me first deal with the last question. There are very many reports of contacts with animals that have died, which can happen in the most varied ways. A precondition for this, however, is invariably a special receptivity of the person concerned, and an especially close bonding with the animal. These experiences extend from a simple perception in feeling, to re-materialization. One of many books to be recommended is “When Your Animals Die”, a short but informative and impressive work by S. Barnabell, published in the D. E. Schroeder-Verlag.

Such contacts occur, above all, when the connection of the person to the animal arose out of a more or less self-centred love, and the separation was hard to cope with. But because of the grief, the animal soul that has

passed on is bound, and it is also both sorrowful and held back from its planned further development. The same applies after death to comparable human connections.

The temporary separation is all the more painful, the more the sympathy lies in the egoistic sphere or arose out of a disillusioned turning away from one's fellow human beings. Here, it would be better to put joy over the companionship one has received and humility towards destiny above one's personal interests, encompassing all animals in one's love, whereby they are all helped.

15. Can the human being do something for his pet after its death?

I think I have answered this question in what was said before, and point once again to the indications and descriptions of Francis of Assisi, particularly to his "Hymn to the Sun".

16. What does man owe to the animal from the aspect of his evolution? What would the redemption of the animal world as described in the Epistle to the Romans entail? How are we to understand their sacrifice?

It would take years to answer this question, whereby ever new complex points of view would open up and require new efforts of comprehension. So I would like here to focus mainly on the redemption aspect as it was heralded in the Letter to the Romans 8, 19-23. I will use as a basis for this the New Testament translation of Lic. Emil Bock which comes closest to the original meaning of this statement, the translator having taken special account of the spiritual-scientific background of these teachings. He formulates it as follows:

"Around us, all creatures await with great longing that in mankind the Sons of God may begin to shine with radiance. The creatures are subject to transitoriness, not for their own sake, but for the sake of him who has drawn them forcibly into transitoriness; and thus everything in the created world is filled with a future yearning. For, the breath of freedom is also to waft through the realms of created nature; the tyranny of transitoriness is to cease. In the luminescence of the spirit-spheres unfreedom will yield to freedom, which is due to be bestowed on all those sprung from God. We know that the whole created world suffers and sighs in the pangs of a new

birth, up to the present day. It is not alone in this; it does so with us who have received the gifts of the firstborn of the new spirit, and yet painfully await the mystery of Sonship, which will bring with it redemption for us, down into our bodily nature.”

These statements with their wealth of content can only be understood if one considers from a spiritual-scientific point of view the evolution of man and animal and the circumstances and reasons for their separation in the remote past. R. Steiner spoke of this in “The Revelation of Karma” (GA 120) and “Before the Gates of Theosophy” (GA 95). His statements, in condensed form, are as follows:

“All the differences between man and animal can be understood from the processes of development of our solar system and its inhabitants. Originally, the whole animal kingdom was, as it were, spiritually and astrally within the total being of man and united with him in this form. However, it is a cosmic law that continually repeats itself, applying both then and now, that two beings living in a unity, but with different speeds of development, must of necessity separate so that both are offered the conditions of evolution that they require. For this reason, the being of man had to separate out those parts which, on the one hand, were hindering his evolution and, on the other, needed for themselves different conditions of development. Thus, all the pre-animalic spirit principles were separated out, which later evolved into our present animal kingdom. In this separation, first the fish were ejected from this overall union of beings, then the amphibians and reptiles, later the birds and finally the mammals.”

At a considerably later stage a further separation, on the astral level, took place when, in the planetary condition of Earth before the departure of our moon, there were only three so-called intermediary kingdoms, namely, a man-animal kingdom, an animal-plant kingdom and a plant-mineral kingdom. Only with this separation did today’s four kingdoms of nature emerge, insofar as man ascended half a stage of evolution to the present-day human being, the animal was set back half a stage and became an animal. In a similar way, the animal-plant kingdom and the plant-mineral kingdom separated, so that the four earthly kingdoms still existing today came into being. Both separations, however, did not happen suddenly, but gradually.

Only this second process of separation led to our natural kingdoms of today, and had in addition a quite special significance. In the course of his separate development the human being had accumulated astrally so many qualities that obstructed his development that his normal and necessary evolution as planned for the future was endangered. Therefore, the animals, together with their stepping a stage backwards in favour of man, also took on his negative attributes, vices, passions and desires in order not to put at risk our higher development.

The freeing of our astral body from the astral qualities that hamper our development we owe, therefore, to the sacrifice of the animals, who took them on in favour of man through the separation we have described. All that our fellow-creatures have by way of cruelty, voraciousness, desires, vices and greed, we would still have in us and would have to cope with them if the animals had not taken them upon themselves.

They now live around us and with us as living proof of the fact that we only came to our present human development thanks to their sacrifice. We left them behind at a stage of development in which they had the capacity to feel pain, but not the possibility of a further, individualizing spiritual development through the conscious overcoming of it.

Through the fact that, knowing the causes of pain, we overcome it by an effort of will, we rise to a higher level of insight. With the animal, this is not the case, so that it suffers immeasurably more and is defenceless against pain. Despite this, they endure these far more intense sufferings for our benefit, still because they have taken upon themselves the qualities that hinder our development.

Previously, the human being at the Luciferic fall into sin had forcibly drawn the innocent animals into earthly transitoriness with birth, death and physical body, because they were on the same level of development. Therefore, they still await today with longing their redemption by the "children of God", whereby those for whose sake they were drawn into this situation honour their promise to free them from the tyranny of transitoriness.

In a lecture-cycle for theologians R. Steiner said on 15.6.1921:

“We must endure the tragedy of the thought that the animal world has to share the sufferings on this earth for the benefit of man, without having erred, without having become guilty – indeed, without being able to become guilty! They are nevertheless subject to the earthly suffering that arises through evolution because, at the moment when man fell, they were at a stage where it was possible for them to be embroiled in the Fall into sin, which was for man a rightful consequence, but for the animals was not necessary. In this way they were drawn forcibly into suffering, which was actually only man’s path, and not that of the animals.

It is therefore an obligation of the human being, far beyond all earthly conceptions hitherto of duties and laws, to redeem the animals from their present fate. We will not be able to achieve this in the present condition, but only in that earthly condition which no longer prevents us through the laws of nature from intervening in the redemptive process and taking the suffering from the animal world. The laws of nature are not eternal: only that is eternal which we have worked for within ourselves together with Christ and will carry out into the cosmos. Only the animals will come with us, which we are obliged to redeem in this way!”

As an addition to these thoughts about the development of the man-animal relationship we would quote the following from “Experiences of the Supersensible” (GA 143):

“Occult research teaches us that any torment inflicted on a being that can feel pain, and also its death, represents a karmic seed planted for the future. When man intervenes in the animal’s evolution and does not leave it as progressive Divine development wills it to be, then all pain and death inflicted on animals returns and arises anew, but not through reincarnation. The animals subjected to pain and suffering will not resurrect in the same form, but the soul that can experience pain comes back, and its demands must be satisfied. When earth evolution is replaced by the Jupiter condition, the forces of feeling and sensation will appear as parasitic creatures in the human being. That is the occult truth that must be spoken out boldly, even if it is not pleasing to the ear of the human being of today.

Only much later will the animal group-souls take in the same experiences

as the human being and build up for themselves a body of their own, become a single individual and have an individual soul. There will never emerge from the animals a human being in the form he has now – they will be quite different. It is possible to pass through the cosmic human stage in many different forms, just as other beings have done before us. Thus, the human being was from the very beginning human, he was not an ape and is not descended from them, because in the course of his development he ejected the whole animal kingdom out of his own being.”

Each one of us is a part of the creation, a part of the whole. We therefore participate morally and thus effectively in the acts of cruelty, even when we are passively letting them happen. We are tainted with the dark forces that pervade our world. Humanity thus burdens itself with a collective karmic guilt of gigantic proportions. But people are too indifferent and unconcerned about the suffering of others, and the motive of financial gain or other advantage is all-powerful. The movements concerned with animal protection are a symptom of a change that is beginning, as the new society that is emerging will increasingly consist of people who are no longer ready and willing to tolerate the barbarism of the cruelty that is normal and legal today.

The whole of nature fulfils itself in sacrifice and mutual assistance; only the human being as the steward of the planet has failed and departs from the Divine law. He pollutes the earth, wastes its resources of raw materials, exploits the animals to an extreme degree, hunts and kills them at his pleasure, tortures them in vivisection in the name of science and violates life and the rhythms of nature with profit-oriented “animal factories”. In the creative vision of unity we all share the responsibility, and the heaviest part is borne by those who have the knowledge or failed to act. All around us we must make a start, in order to bring about the great redemption. (See R. Meyer “Redemption of the Animal World”)

17. Is there in some animals an individual development similar to that of the human being?

Every development is subject to certain laws, which are never changed. That of the animal is similar to man's, but the animal will never become a human being in our sense. It will pass through the same stage of devel-

opment, but in another physical form. Allow me to interpose here some thoughts of my own. – Just as we are watched over and led by our guardian Angels, so is this also necessary for the animal now and later. In evolution as a whole there is the development through knowledge and the development through sacrifice, in which one's own knowledge is attained through help and sacrifice in favour of other beings who come later. It is conceivable that, today already, individuals have opted consciously or unconsciously for one of these two paths of knowledge for the benefit of their fellow-creatures.

18. Do illnesses have the same causes and significance in man and animal?

This question is of special importance, in view of the medical conception current today and the statements we hear all the time claiming that animal experiments need to be done to give us insight into human illnesses and their cure. We can only judge the situation if we have knowledge of some aspects of evolution, which I will now explain and, in part, repeat: In any organism it is the etheric or life-body that is responsible for development, growth, cell regeneration, and the healing of damaged tissues and sick organs. It is therefore closely connected with the physical body for the whole lifetime and only at a person's death does it separate from the body, whereby the greater part of it is reintegrated into the ether-substances surrounding the earth. But a substrate of it remains behind and must, when the next incarnation of the same individuality takes place, be taken up for the sake of the building up of the life-body. [Where sickness is concerned] we have to do with the extract of wrong – i.e. in disharmony with the laws of creation – thinking and action in the course of a life, which, during this process, permeates the newly-developed ether-body and hinders it in its function. But because it is the builder and sustainer of the physical body, these negative – or positive – consequences of earlier modes of behaviour are imprinted into the physical organism as predisposition to illness, developmental disorders, or as immune weakness against pathogens – or as especially sound health.

In "The Revelations of Karma" (GA 120) R. Steiner points to the occult research showing that an egoistic thinking and action appears in the next incarnation as a general weak resistance in the body. But such conse-

quences extend, with varying symptoms, over several incarnations. If, for example, someone has led a reckless, profligate, self-centred life with no interest or love for the world around him, then this shows in the next life as a strong tendency to untruthfulness in word and action, and in the physical existence after that, as misshapen or wrongly functioning organs, with a predisposition to illness. No more than a relatively trivial outer stimulus is enough to turn the disposition into a recognizable illness.

The animal does not have karmic burdens of this kind on the ether or astral body because, being governed by instinct, it has no responsibility for its actions on the one hand, and on the other it has no individual reincarnation. It therefore receives at birth an unburdened and fully-functioning life-body, because it has no individual karma that could affect the development of the personality in this way. It is only burdened with a karma of species and with world-karma, which manifest in other forms.

Through reckless exploitation man harms and changes his environment, and with this the life-conditions of the animals, in such a way that they can no longer find a suitable basis for their existence. With pesticides, fungicides, vermicides and other chemical poisons he puts a strain on the health of all living beings and in addition destroys, through monoculture and artificial fertilizers, the naturally evolved biotopic relations so persistently that they offer animals neither the conditions required for survival nor a healthy nutrition. The spiritual-scientific teaching on nutrition made amazing predictions possible, as one can read in R. Steiner's lecture of 13.1.1923 in GA 348: The consequences are particularly serious if herbivorous animals are forced to eat the flesh of their own species or other animals. This is done on the false assumption that animals should be given protein, which is a life-necessity for them and increases their weight for slaughter. This is a serious error with devastating effects, because the animals have the innate capacity and also the forces to form for themselves from their own nourishment a sufficient amount of the protein appropriate to their own species.

Thus, if cattle are fed with the flesh of other animals excessive quantities of uric acid and uric acid salts develop, which cannot be broken down and excreted. These uric acid products have a special affinity to the central nervous system and brain, where these salts are deposited, resulting in

severe damage to the tissues and in functional disturbances. The outcome of this is that these animals on the one hand can no longer control their nervous system as they should, and they go mad, and on the other hand they become strongly disposed to illness.

In this connection we would point to the countless cases of mad cow disease in European countries. These animals were fed on pork obtained by forced slaughter and powdered, after which they developed “mad cow disease”, BSE or “bovine spongiform encephalitis”. The animals that died of this disease or were subject to forced slaughter were turned in a similar way into “protein-rich fodder”, and fed to other animals. This resulted in the scrapie disease in sheep and goats, a condition closely related to BSE, which caused the death of these herbivorous animals.

Through the process of sale and feeding a BSE epidemic spread throughout Europe affecting thousands of cattle, whose numbers can scarcely be estimated owing to the long incubation period of more than 3 years.

The poisons in the environment forcibly ingested by animals accumulate in their bodies and disturb the biological functioning, damage the immune system and lead to a progressive weakening of the body, with illnesses, genetic disturbances of development, parasitic infestation and infections.

In a biotope that is unaltered and suited to the species these hardly ever arise in a healthy animal, or they can to a large extent be brought under control. But through the selective extermination and suppression of plants that seem unimportant to us, for the sake of “optimal use of agricultural land”, involving the removal of “weed-bearing” meadows and fields necessary for the animals, those plants were also destroyed and poisoned, which they instinctively take as remedies when they are sick. Thus, they are no longer able to help themselves and are threatened with death by almost any illness.

What manifests here in the animal as instinctive action when it keeps itself healthy with food it chooses itself, or cures itself in illness through the ingesting of a certain plant, is the insight of the group-spirit which is far in advance of man. Its deep understanding of nature, its feeling-relation to the plants and knowledge of their organism’s healing powers make it possible nearly always, in normal conditions, to treat successfully

the sickness of the individual animal. Only through further development morally and spiritually will this knowledge also stand at man's disposal in the future. Then, eating will no longer be for him a merely biological activity – or one that makes him ill. He will then know that any food he takes in is the outer form of an ensouled being, whose spiritual and astral qualities he is absorbing. The grace before a meal will then be a naturally-offered thanks and prayer for a development in keeping with the laws of creation, for the soul and spirit element of the nature-beings that has been received into us.

In the human being illnesses arise mainly through a karmic effect upon the etheric and astral bodies as a consequence of earlier events and actions. They manifest initially in the constituent bodies (Wesensglieder) by way of a predisposition, which then, in connection with outer influences, becomes the symptom of a clinical illness. A similar influence can be seen as the cause, also where accidents are concerned.

The animal, however, becomes sick because of the misguided man-made changes in breeding processes and environment, the poisoning of nature and nourishment, and the husbandry on the physical level that is not suited to the species. From these factors arise the differing meanings of illnesses for the affected creature concerned and also the differences in treatment. For the human being they are the consequences of his own failure, and thus a reason to reflect on what was done wrong and what he should change in order to conform better with the laws of creation. Viewed from the causal aspect, therefore, his illnesses can only be cured in connection with self-knowledge and a change in lifestyle, whereby the doctor can do no more than assist. Removal of a symptom by means of chemotherapy is not a cure reaching back to the cause and including the constituent bodies.

By contrast, for the cure of sick animals the environmental causes of illness must be removed; they must be given an unpolluted environment and food and shelter appropriate for the species, so that the animal does not fall ill because of the conditions in which the human being forces it to live.

Here, in an irresponsible way disinformation is being fed to the general

public. The names “fungicide”, “pesticide”, “vermicide” or “insecticide” are incorrect, because these poisons do not work selectively on just one of these alleged pests. They are biocides, that is actual life-poisons, which damage any organism until it dies, including the human being. In this they are the same as the substances used in chemical warfare, which make no distinction between big and small living beings, nor between friend and enemy!

Even if the spiritual-scientific truth is not to everybody's liking, when a human being falls ill, this is not an unjust blow of fate as it is for the animals, but he is himself responsible for his illnesses, just as on all levels he bears responsibility for the illnesses of his fellow-creatures.

Moreover, it is obvious that such fundamental differences with regard to the emergence of illnesses and their cure where man and animal are concerned – leaving aside the fact that no comparison is possible between the one or the other organism's healing capacity – do not allow any conclusions to be drawn by analogy from experiments carried out on a natural-scientific basis.

19. There are many differences of opinion on vegetarianism. According to certain quotes from the Bible and interpretations of equal value, it is permitted to eat animals. The human being is an omnivore, so science says, while others claim the opposite. How could the question be answered from the standpoint of spiritual science?

I would like to answer this important and many-layered aspect of question from various angles: Seen from a historical perspective, the Biblical interpretations contain considerable inaccuracies through the translations. As one example among many we could mention Gen. 1, 28: “... replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion over ...” Here, the Hebrew word “rada” was wrongly translated as “subdue” and interpreted in the sense of “trample down” or “destroy”. The official statements of the Churches regarding the man-animal relationship would seem to leave no doubt as to the correctness of this interpretation. Only in recent years have “questions” arisen because linguists were translating “rada” undeniably in the sense of “protecting” and “guarding” by a shepherd. Apart from the fact that this translation and interpretation has been known of for centuries

but clearly did not fit into the prevailing view, one can ask how much longer we must wait for the Churches to put this “new insight” into practice and allow the animals, also in religion, their due according to the laws of creation.

Regarding the way man should be nourished there would be no difficulties of interpretation, because in Gen. 1/29-31 God says literally: “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree, in ... which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”

[After further discussion of the nutrition question as it appears in the Bible, Werner Hartinger continues as follows:] Investigations into the consequences for health of a vegetarian diet, as carried out by the German Cancer Institute, the Giessen University Institute for Nutritional Physiology and the Federal Health Dept., carry an unmistakably clear message. All agree that the vegetarian is far less susceptible to malign tumours, despite living 10 years longer on average: that he suffers only half as much from heart and circulatory disorders, and has to visit the doctor only 20% of the average frequency. Particularly impressive is the low susceptibility to infectious diseases.

In the well-know long-term study by the Mormons of several thousand members of this “Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints” in the U.S.A. the health figures are still more convincing, because they are all strict vegetarians and shun alcohol and nicotine. The cancer rate of their preachers, who do not live in seclusion and who follow a normal career, is only 10% of the average! Would this not be a sure indication of a sensible nourishment for the human being, even if he is described by science, based on odontological analogies with chimpanzees, as an “omnivore”?

But now to the spiritual-scientific approach to this problem: Anthroposophy is not an “anti” or alternative movement that aims by means of prescriptions for reform in breath technique or nutrition to achieve a change in outer life-conditions. Nor does it have the intention to take people’s thinking away from them and order this or that by decree. Its aim is to present spiritual-scientific truth, make it understandable and indicate the

consequences of actions. What conclusions the human being draws from this, is up to him to decide freely for himself.

In “Nutrition and Consciousness” R. Steiner is quoted as follows: “I never tell a person to be a vegetarian or eat meat; I only show what effect it has when he does the one or the other. He can then decide for himself what he wants to eat.” It does not help one’s development to abstain from eating meat just for health reasons or to increase one’s life expectation, because if one has an inappropriate inner attitude, this can even have harmful effects. Only your personal progress in knowledge shows that a food is no longer right for you, through the fact that you start to feel a kind of aversion to it. Elsewhere (GA 254) R. Steiner said that within the framework of the generations of the sixth epoch the animal kingdom will change enormously. Those animals in particular that are bred and kept for meat consumption will for the most part have died out. People will then have recognized the spiritual basis of meat-eating and its negative consequences for health and will sing the praises of a meat-free diet. They will recall in incomprehension that their ancestors in ancient times, barbarically enough, ate the flesh of their fellow-creatures.

In all the Mystery schools of mankind it has been known for thousands of years what importance the food ingested has for the physical and spiritual development of the human being and of humanity. Mindful of the knowledge that nourishment is not merely a physical but primarily a spiritual process, with which the ether body brings about the first transformation of substances in the direction of “etherisation”, they lived as strict vegetarians, did not even eat all the fruits of the earth and fasted regularly. But all that has been forgotten, and science has favoured the interpretation of nutrition as a purely biological-material process, whereby the nutrients are absorbed in their molecular structure by the body. This is not the case, because the molecules and atoms as they pass through the intestinal wall, are broken down to a level of immaterial existence. In the biological energy-fields of the organism, the atom is split into its primary components, namely, its astral formative forces and the four ethers of the earth out of which they were built. In this physically non-demonstrable form they are taken up in part by the human ether-body, and the astral forces by the astral body, which represents the main part of the soul. The other part of

the ether-substances absorbed in this way is used directly for the building-up of carbon compounds belonging uniquely to the body, that is, for the protein that is unique to the species. Just as the sun in the macrocosm, with the help of the spirits of Form, lets a new plant arise from the ether-forms, so are the microcosmic bodily substances formed in the organism of man within the energy-field of his 'I'. Digestion therefore means spiritualization of the ingested substance and stimulation of the forces of the personality for the creation of new human protein. Thus, it is a capacity of the spiritual personality that means for the plant an evolutionary process of development.

Everyone knows that, despite the same food, no one person is the same as another. The one is fat, the other is thin, the one has eaten sufficient, the other is still hungry, the one falls ill, the other stays healthy, the one grows intelligent, the other relies more on the media. It is quite clear that the human being has in him nothing that his own spirit has created for him. All that he has absorbed into himself his spiritual 'I' had first to lead over into an immaterial form of existence in order to develop from this the individual principle.

Thus we can see that with vegetarian food only minerals of the earth and ether-substances of the plant are taken in and digested, because the plant only has these two constituent bodies. But the animal also has an astral body, so that when we eat meat both the minerals and the etheric forces and the astrality of the animal are taken in. Quite apart from the fact that the separation of animal matter into its astral formative forces and etheric substances is considerably more difficult than that of the plant – which is why a person always feels so tired after a meal containing a lot of meat – he also takes in the animal astrality, which influences him unconsciously in his own soul-principle. As a result, his own thinking, feeling and willing are changed. This is why Moses said emphatically in Deuteronomy 12, 16 and 23 that the animal's soul is in its blood and that through eating the blood from its flesh the human being is turned into an animal.

It was known to the initiates and they tried to formulate it in a way that was understandable, that consumption of meat makes one aggressive, warlike and bloodthirsty as well as quarrelsome, but also susceptible to

illness, especially infectious diseases. The peoples of the world are, of course, susceptible and influenceable in differing degrees. Jews and Arabs in particular react to the consumption of meat in a strongly emotional way, above all through the eating of pork. Due to an innate disposition of the Jews it led, to a considerable degree, to diabetes, because it makes the breakdown of sugar in the body very difficult; and in the Arab it can lead to an uncontrolled emotional reaction in the way of passion, anger and belligerence. Hence the taboo on the eating of pork. Such influences of animal flesh on the consumer have existed for millennia, and there are well-known survivals today. Why does the hunter eat the heart, liver and kidneys of the wild animals he has caught? Because he wants to have for himself its life-forces, stamina and combativeness. And the cannibal, too, does not eat his slaughtered enemy because of hunger; he wants in this way to acquire the enemy's positive qualities, such as courage, cunning, experience and strength.

But for the animal in the wild these qualities are advantageous and necessary, because of the principle of selection and survival prevailing there. Not for the human being, however, who generally cannot control them. They do not fit into his cultural context and evolutionary principle, and only hamper him in his development. At an early stage man had to hand over his astral qualities to the animals because, burdened in this way, his further evolution was questionable. Today, he unwittingly takes them back into himself through the consumption of meat, and fails to recognize the connection with illnesses, on the basis of "proven scientific medical knowledge" and even despite studies of the health of vegetarians.

20. How are we to judge the consolidating trend in the European Union with regard to the man-animal relationships, and what forces will gain the upper hand?

Events and development on the earth are always the result of corresponding processes in the spiritual world. It is therefore difficult for someone without clairvoyant faculties to give a perspective of the future. He can therefore, on the basis of personal experiences, of events that have occurred and developments of the past, only hazard a forecast which in terms of time and content cannot be regarded as authoritative.

If I may take as a starting-point my observations so far and my knowledge of the political, economic and spiritual-political scene of recent years, together with the horrifying indifference of most people towards the suffering of others; the justification of the present exploiter mentality by the Churches, backed up by incorrect Bible quotations; the business-oriented influence of industry on politics and legislature; the moral development of the human being on questions relating to our fellow-creatures; the enormous lobby for the profit-oriented use of animals; and the proposals made and in part already accepted, and the guiding directive in the new Europe, then my forecast is very, very pessimistic where a change is concerned in the direction of a more Christian and compassionate attitude towards our fellow-creatures.

I cannot avoid the impression that a spontaneous change of mind by people out of their own cognitive capacity is no longer possible. The influences of powers that think differently on unthinking and uninterested fellow-humans are too strong and lead to an ever-intensifying greed for money, entertainment, economic and supposed health benefits and to a further reckless exploitation of animals, environment and nature, until the basis for human existence is irreparably destroyed. What happens in this way to the animals will bring the greatest difficulties to mankind in the future. This would be reason enough for those people, at least, to act differently, who have had the opportunity to gain the knowledge and insight needed to inform others publicly and in all openness. I would even see this as a duty.

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