

What Is the Animal Essence?

Resurrection as Animals on the Judgement Day

Why Do Some Individuals' Inward State Change into Animal Essence?

As we mentioned in previous lessons, the human being is the noblest of creation. However, their nobility and superiority compared to other creations have nothing to do with their inanimate, vegetative, animal, or intellective perfections; this is because the human being shares these perfections with other beings. So considering this issue, the human has no advantage over other beings. Being superior to others means having something that others do not have; thus, if a human being's animal dimension is strong and they behave like animals, it means they have become a stronger animal, not a better human. The same applies to other dimensions.

As we have repeatedly mentioned, what makes the human superior to other beings is that they have the supra-rational dimension or heart, which has been breathed into us by God. We are called human beings only because of this dimension. Our heart, like our other existential dimensions, yearns for perfection. However, it desires to achieve Absolute Perfection. Nothing else can satisfy it. No matter whether our heart has attained all other perfections, it is restless until it connects with God and embraces His love. Absolute perfection is none other than God. Therefore, through connecting with God, loving Him, and becoming similar to Him, we become superior to other beings. Consequently, if someone does not develop their supra-rational dimension during their lifetime, fails to know their true Beloved, or does not desire to be with Him, they are no longer considered human,

and are void of human value. What they are called and their value depends on the beloved or beloveds they have chosen over God. Based on this, individuals are divided into several groups. Those who have devoted their hearts to inanimate beloveds, their essence or heart turns into inanimate essence or heart. They are at the level of inanimate objects. Those who desire to have vegetative beloveds find their hearts turn into vegetative hearts. They are at the level of plants. Those whose animal dimension rules their heart, find their essence or heart turn into animal essence heart. They are at the level of animals. In previous lessons, we discussed the inanimate and vegetative hearts and outlined their deviations. Here, we will examine the animal essence and heart.

What Does Metamorphosis and Change of Inward State Mean?

We know that the essence of the hereafter is different from that of the world. There are no veils of the material world in the hereafter. Therefore, the essence and truth of everything is revealed. In this world, we call any being with a human body a human. The reason is that we cannot see the inward self of individuals. However, the hereafter is not like the world. In the hereafter, no one has a physical body. In fact, what is seen in the hereafter is the true face and essence of individuals.

In a *hadith* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), it is mentioned that some individuals will be resurrected in the form of monkeys and pigs on the Judgment Day. Some will be deaf- mute. Some will be blind. Some will be amputees, and some will walk on their heads instead of their feet, etc. You might think these are literary expressions like metaphors or similes, but that is not the case. These are concrete realities.

The inward state of some individuals will be changed in the hereafter due to their actions in this world. As a result, they will have animal essence that is naturally unusual; however, this does not mean that their identity will be changed, rather, it is their form that will undergo transformation. Murteza Mutahhari says:

I am on the day of resurrection, whether I am with this body or with another body, I am one hundred percent the same person, although my appearances might have changed. Even if I undergo a metamorphosis on the day of resurrection in proportion to my psychological attitudes, and I am resurrected in an animal form, it is still me who has animal organs.¹

Furthermore, this change is not something that can only be seen in the hereafter. In this world, the friends of God and those who have spiritual insight are often referred to as "those who can see the unseen," can see the animal essence of individuals, and even accurately identify their deficiencies.

What is seen in the hereafter is nothing but the manifestation of our actions in this world. Just as a fetus develops their body through their actions in the mother's womb, we shape our heart or soul through our actions in the womb of this world; thus, if our actions do not align with the purpose for which we have been created, our inward self gradually changes. The more we deviate from this purpose, the more terrifying this change will be.

The Relationship Between Animal Essence and Types of Birth into the Hereafter

¹. *Majmū'a-yi āthār*, vol. 4, p. 703.

Before discussing the relationship between animal essence and types of birth into the hereafter, it is necessary to briefly address the concept of sin. It is because sin is the most significant factor in the change of essence. Sin has a very broad scope. So it is not limited to theft, murder, adultery, lying, and similar acts.

Sin refers to anything that gets in the way of achieving the purpose of our creation and prevents us from being born healthy into the hereafter; thus, many of our shortcomings and neglects, which may seem insignificant, are counted as sins.

For example, someone who decides to have a child without learning about fertilization processes and child-rearing principles commits a grave sin. A child is a gift and trust from God. If a child is hurt physically or emotionally due to parental negligence, the parents are responsible for this event and will be tried in the court of divine justice. Similarly, someone who starts a business without learning the Islamic economics is sinful. The reason is that such a person disrupts their country's economy and hurts thousands of families. Sin can even occur due to going to extreme in doing permissible actions. For instance, someone who does not nourish their soul or supra-rational faculty properly while involving in charity works has committed a grave sin because they have wronged themselves. Therefore, when we talk about sin, we do not only mean unusual or major sins; rather, anything that deviates us even a little tiny bit from the Straight Path and prevents us from becoming is a sin.

Sin distorts the inward self of a person. When the inner essence is distorted, the individual distances themselves from the standards and measures set for a normal human. Anyone whose essence deviates from these standards will not be born healthily into the hereafter. In fact, they will be born in one of these types of birth:

weak, sick, defective, or deformed. However, a weak birth is different from a defective birth, just as a weak newborn differs from a defective newborn. Nevertheless, anyone born weak or sick will be still punished. He must be admitted to the hospital of the hereafter, Hell, to be treated.

Considering these points, those with an animal essence are not merely those who commit grave sins and are resurrected in the form of monkeys, dogs, or pigs. The term "animal essence" is actually a term used to describe individuals' deviations from the standards of humanity, no matter whether this deviation occurs due to doing forbidden actions or going to extremes in doing permissible actions or whether large or small. Thus, even those who seem harmless and adhere to the Sharia may have an animal essence and heart. According to the Quran, they are like cattle ²; this issue was discussed in the article "Types of Hearts." This is because, as we mentioned earlier, going to extremes in doing acts of worship and involving in charity works do not make us human; even abstaining from sin alone is not considered the criterion for being human. What distinguishes a human being from an animal is the maturity of the supra-rational dimension and being in alignment with the hierarchy of love or in other words prioritizing Allah, Prophet Muhammad's Household (Peace be upon them) and striving in Allah's cause (*jihad*) over our other beloveds. Anyone whose primary priorities in life are not these three beloveds is *fasiq*, abnormal, and unbalanced, and has a non-human inward self. Such an individual will not be born healthily into the hereafter. However, the form in which their birth occurs depends on the extent to which they deviate from the criteria for being humanity.

². Quran, 7:179

In the next lesson, we will discuss the human essence further. We will also provide criteria that you can use to identify your inward self in this world without the need for any mystical vision.

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