Chapter Eight

The Animal World

Cow

The cow in the occult symbolism indicates Light or the consciousness — white indicates the purified or spiritual consciousness — the white Light.

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It is quite clear; it is the Vedic image. In the Veda the Cow is the Divine Light — the white Cow is the pure Consciousness in which there is the Light. The milk is the Knowledge and Power descending from the divine Consciousness.

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The Cow usually means the Higher Consciousness. Perhaps the calf indicates the truth of the higher consciousness (white) in the physical (red).

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The white calf is the sign of a pure and clear consciousness, — the cow or calf being the symbol of Light in the consciousness, something psychic or spiritual that you felt natural and intimate to you and inseparable.

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The vision of the cows must have taken place in the psychic world. It has also a symbolic significance. The sun is the symbol of the Divine Truth, the cows are its powers, rays of the sun, sources of true knowledge, true feeling, true experience.

The descent you felt must have been into some depth of light, probably in the psychic nature.

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Milk is always the symbol of the flow of the higher consciousness.

**Bull**

The bull is an emblem of strength and force. It is also in the Veda an image of the Gods, the male powers in Nature. Again the bull is the vāhana of Shiva. It may in a dream or an experience be any of these symbols — but it is probably the first here.

**Horse**

A horse always indicates some power.

* The Horse is the symbol in dream or vision of a Power or Energy.

* The Horse is Power — white is pure. It is the pure Power.

* The Horse is Power, usually Life-Power, but also it may mean Mind-Power in Tapas if it is dynamic and mobile.

* The Horse is the symbol of Power in motion — often of the Power that makes for rapid progress in sadhana.

* The horse is a force acting for progress.

* The horse is always the symbol of Power; it must be then a Power which you were trying to catch and make your own while sometimes it was trying to come up with you, perhaps to use you. This is what happens in the vital where there are these uncertain and elusive movements. The high platform was evidently the
level of a higher Consciousness which stilled this fluctuating movement and made control of the Power more possible, as it became still and near.

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The ass is the symbol of the inertia and obstruction in the body. The horse is the symbol of force or power. The tunnel of water must be the vital physical and the arch is a passage out, by which, if the ass can cross it or rather be pulled across, then it becomes a horse. In other words, the inertia and obstruction in the physical will be changed into Power and Force of Progress.

Lion

The Lion is the vital force.

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The lion means vital force, strength, courage — here full of the light, illumined by the spiritual consciousness.\(^1\)

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The lion indicates force and courage, strength and power. The lower vital is not lionlike.

Tiger

It all depends on the attitude of the tiger. If fierce and hostile, it may be a form of an adverse force, otherwise it is simply a power of vital nature which may be friendly.

Elephant

The elephant is Strength — sometimes Strength illumined with Wisdom.

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\(^1\) In the correspondent’s vision, the lion’s face was full of shining light and the hairs of its mane were like rays of spreading light. — Ed.
The elephant is Strength — sometimes Strength removing obstacles.

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The blue elephant is the strength of the Higher Consciousness fulfilling itself and removing obstacles.

Giraffe

The Giraffe symbolises aspiration.

Camel

[Camel manifesting violet light] Patient progress and endurance as a gift of the Divine Grace.

Deer and Antelope

The deer = speed in the spiritual path.

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The deer is perhaps a symbol of speed in the spiritual progress.

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The deer is Immortality, the antelope is Rapid Movement.

Boar

It [the boar] is rajasic strength and vehemence. Much however depends upon the context, — these figures have also other meanings.

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The wild boar points to attacks of the crude vital rajas.

Buffalo

A buffalo conveys the idea often of an obscure violence in the
nature — here *in the correspondent’s dream* it seems tied up — i.e. under control but not eliminated. But it is not clear to what it refers — if it is symbolic at all.

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The buffalo is a symbol of unnecessary or blind anger — perhaps it meant that that was still somewhere in your nature.

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*Buffaloes:* Rash and obscure vital forces.

**Goat**

The goat in vision is often symbolic of lust.

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Goats usually indicate sex tendencies.

**Monkey**

The monkey is a symbol of the leaping restless mind; these monkeys are the doubts and suggestions that have been assailing you.

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The monkey is a symbol of the restless vital consciousness or of one or other of its movements.

**Dog**

The dog is the symbol of devoted affection and obedience.

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The dog generally signifies devoted obedience — so it\(^2\) may indicate the action of a devoted obedience spiritualised in the

\(^2\) *In a vision the correspondent saw a dog’s face bathed in blue light, with its eyes full of white light.* — Ed.
higher consciousness.

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The dog usually indicates fidelity and as it is yellow, it would be fidelity in the mind to the Divine — but the other black and white one is difficult to interpret — it is something in the vital, but the meaning of the black spots is not clear.

**Black Cat**

The black cat is usually the symbol of magic of an evil kind or of an evil influence of the vital world acting on the physical as magic does. It is effective so long as its nature and mode of action are not discovered, so long as it can act invisibly — when it is seen it can be dealt with. The others had not seen it and were not aware that it was taking the life of the sick person and that she was not dead and need not die if this force could be destroyed or prevented from acting; you saw it and were therefore able to fight and catch it and kill it. That it took long to kill shows that it was not representing a particular process of magic which can be annulled quickly and decisively, but a Force of evil magic from the vital plane.

**Snake or Serpent**

The serpent is the symbol of energy, it may be a bad or hostile energy — but it may also be a good, even a divine energy.

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The snake indicates some kind of energy always — oftener bad, but also it can indicate some luminous or divine energy. It is [in this case] the ascent of some such force from the physical upwards. The other details are not clear.

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About the snake you saw in your meditation — serpents indicate always energies of Nature and very often bad energies of the vital
plane; but they can also indicate luminous or divine energies like the snake of Vishnu. The one you saw was evidently of this latter type — a luminous divine energy and therefore there was no cause for alarm, it was a good sign.

A snake is a bad symbol only when it comes from the vital or other lower plane.

What you saw was not what is in yourself, but a symbol of the things that are in vital Nature. Scorpions and usually snakes also are symbols of harmful energies; the vital nature of earth is full of these energies and that is why the purification of man’s outer vital nature also is so difficult and there are so many wrong movements and happenings in him, — because his vital is easily open to all these earth movements. In order to get rid of them, the inner being must wake and grow and its nature replace the outer nature. Sometimes serpents indicate energies simply, not harmful ones; but more often it is the other way. On the other hand the peacocks you saw were powers of victory, the victory of the energies of light over the energies of darkness.

The serpent Ananta is the infinite energy in infinite Time-Space which supports the universe.

It is in answer to your aspiration that the Mahakali force descended — the Serpent is the Energy from above working in the vital answering to the Serpent Kundalini which rises from below.

The Serpent is the symbol of energy — especially of the Kundalini Shakti which is the divine Force coiled up in the lowest (physical) centre, Muladhara — and when it rises it goes up through the spine and joins the higher consciousness above.
Energies are of all kinds and the snakes can also symbolise the evil powers of the unregenerate vital nature — but here it is not that.

* The serpent symbolises an energy good or bad, divine or un-divine according to its nature. Here, it looks as if it were the Kundalini trying to ascend to the Brahmarandhra, but it has not yet reached beyond the vital and is stopped — probably because the time has not yet come.

* This [vision] is the symbol of the opening of the centres to the Light.

The swan is the Indian symbol of the individual soul, the central being, the divine part which is turned towards the Divine, descending from there and ascending to it.

The two serpents interlaced are the two channels in the spine, through which the Shakti moves upward and downward.

The serpent with the six hoods is the Kundalini Shakti, the divine Power asleep in the lowest physical centre which, awakened in the Yoga, ascends in light through the opening centres to meet the Divine in the highest centre and so connect the manifest and the unmanifested, joining Spirit and Matter.

* The golden serpent in the Muladhara is a symbol of the energy of the transformed physical consciousness.

* The cobra is a symbol of the Energy in Nature — the upraised hood and light indicate the illumination and victorious position of the emerged Energy.

* The opening of the hood indicates the victorious or successful activity of the Energy indicated by the snake.
The serpent with the hood over the head generally indicates future siddhi.

Snakes and scorpions always indicate attacks or threats of attack of one kind or another, more often threats from the vital plane or hostile influences on the physical.

The serpent is a symbol of force, very often a hostile or evil force of the vital plane. The sea is a symbol of a plane of consciousness. The white light is a manifestation of pure divine force descending from one of the truth-planes leading to the supramental.

The indication is that of a hostile vital force being expelled and the purifying light from above descending to illumine and deliver the part of the plane formerly occupied by it.

**Crocodile**

The crocodile signifies greed, *lobha*, of some kind.

**Frog**

Frog = modest usefulness.

**Fish**

The fish is the always moving vital mind making all sorts of formations.

Fish might be formations in the vital consciousness — for water most often indicates the vital consciousness.

**Bird**

The bird is often a symbol of the being.
The bird is a symbol of the individual soul.

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A bird is a very frequent symbol of the soul, and the tree is the standing image of the universe — the Tree of Life.

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Birds often indicate either mind-powers or soul-powers.

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The bird is usually a symbol of some soul power when it is not the soul itself — here it is a power (awakened in the soul) of the whitish blue light — Sri Aurobindo’s light.

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The Blue Bird is always a symbol of aspiration towards something Beyond.

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The blue bird is the symbol of aspiration to the heights.

**Swan or Hansa**

The swan is a symbol of the soul on the higher plane.

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The swan is the liberated soul.

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Both [the goose and the swan] are symbols of the beings in a man — but the goose or ordinary Hansa usually refers to the *manomaya puruṣa*.

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The Hansa is the symbol of the being — it regains its original purity as it rises until it becomes luminous in the Highest Truth.

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The Hansa is a symbol of the soul or the self — the peacock is the bird of victory. The golden Hansa is the soul living in the Truth, the golden peacock is the victory of the Truth.

Duck

The duck is the symbol of the soul — silvery colour = the spiritual consciousness — golden wings = the power of the Divine Truth.

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The duck is usually a symbol of the soul or inner being; perhaps it was the four beings — mental, psychic, vital and physical — that you saw.3

Crane

The crane is the messenger of happiness.

Peacock

The peacock is the Bird of Victory.

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A peacock is the symbol of spiritual victory.

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The peacock signifies victory — in Yoga the divine victory. The clear sky would indicate perhaps the mental part cleared of obscurities. Seeing the higher part of the bodies [of the peacocks] would mean a victory in the higher parts of the consciousness, in the mental (head and neck) and perhaps also in vital mind and in emotional.

3 *The correspondent saw four ducks with uplifted necks, illuminated with white light, advancing in a row.* — Ed.
Dove or Pigeon

The dove signifies peace. The colours indicate the vital — green would be self-giving in the vital; blue the higher consciousness in the vital. So it must be peace casting its influence from above on the vital.

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The white pigeon must be Peace.

Crow, Eagle, Kite

The crow signifies practical cleverness, the eagle Intelligence. The kite is Krishna’s vāhana.

Ostrich

The ostrich may mean rapidity of movement.

Spider

The image of the spider in the Upanishads is used for the Brahman creating the world out of itself, dwelling in it and withdrawing it into itself. But what matters in a symbol is what it means for you. It may mean for you success or successful formations.

White Ants

Obviously it [white ants seen in a dream] must have been symbolic of small but destructive forces in the lower vital or physical.

Flies

Something small in the smaller vital.