"In this vast wheel of creation wherein all things live and die, wanders round the human soul like a swan in restless flying, and thinks that God is afar. But when the love of God comes down upon her, then she finds her own immortal life."

-The Svetasvatara Upanishad

"I died as a mineral and became a plant; I died as a plant and rose to animal; I died as animal and I was a man. Why should I fear? When was I less by dying? Yet once more I shall die as man to soar with angels. But even from an angel I must pass on: all except God must perish. When I have sacrificed my angel soul, I shall become what no mind ever conceived."

-Jallaludin Rumi

One of the cosmic laws taught in the gnostic tradition is the law of transmigration of souls. Everything has consciousness. In humans it is called the essence of the soul, in animals, plants and minerals it is called the elemental. This consciousness moves through each of the four kingdoms of nature in a cyclical pattern so that over countless millennia the consciousness can learn all the lessons of life and eventually, reach liberation.

Mineral

When the consciousness is experiencing life in the mineral world, time moves very slowly. The elemental learns patience, tenacity, resilience in all the myriad forms of minerals including rocks, soil, clay, crystals, precious stones and metals.

The consciousness will live hundreds or thousands of years in different mineral bodies. Starting with experiences as simple earth, and gradually evolving into more precious stones and metals, with a more refined vitality. One example of the evolution of one mineral into another is how copper turns greenish blue when it oxidizes, this is a clue that an elemental of copper is preparing to enter into the precious stone turquoise.

The mineral kingdom prepares the consciousness to enter into the plant kingdom.

http://www.gnosticmuse.com
As an elemental in the plant kingdom the consciousness discovers more movement, vitality and complexity.

The plant kingdom contains greater diversity than the mineral and the consciousness can experience everything from simple shoots, flowers, vegetables, grasses, to massive, ancient trees.

The consciousness can even experience being a carnivorous plant and eating insects, as well as being herbs that are poison or healing to animals and humans. In the plant kingdom the consciousness learns to connect to the four elements by relying on the earth, water, air, and fire of the sun for survival.

As plants the lesson to the consciousness is the beginning of an instinctive nature, an instinctive intelligence of how to survive and live by transforming the elements of nature. The basics of cellular life, nervous system signaling, blood and fluid circulation, and sexual activity begin to be seen in plant existence.

Animal
In the animal kingdom the consciousness may start out as a simple amoeba, corral, insects, simple sea creatures, then fish, reptiles, birds, mammals.

As animals the consciousness learns a type of emotional intelligence, and continues to develop its instinctive and sexual nature.

Animals also experience more deeply life among the four elements, as creatures of the water, air, earth and fire (desert). Animals learn to exist in groups as flocks, herds, schools etc. and also to survive individually. Their physical bodies become even more complex, and as mammals begin to prepare for life as a human.

Human
After thousands and millions of years as minerals, plants and animals, the consciousness is given 108 lifetimes as a human for a rare and special opportunity.

The purpose of human life is to transmute and refine the lessons learned in the three previous kingdoms, to complete the building of the soul and to awaken the consciousness.

This process is the story of all religions and spiritual teachings, the return to God, the Being. The realization of our fullest potential, in the name of the happiness of all beings and essences.

The cycle of the transmigration of souls occurs in a mechanical way, what the Buddhist call the wheel of *samsara*, which means “wandering through”. The path of liberation of the soul is one of great efforts, a revolution against the mechanicity of the wheel.