

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM



Spiritists, love one another; this is the first teaching. Educate yourselves; this is the second.

Spirit of Truth - The Gospel According to Spiritism

- The History of Spiritism
- What is Spiritism
- The Triple Aspect of Spiritism
- The Existence of God
- The Existence and Survival of the Spirit
- Reincarnation
- The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds
- The Communicability of the Spirits
- Free Will - Fatalism - Determinism
- Prayer
- Gospel at Home
- Spiritist Behavior - Good and Evil



United States Spiritist Council

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Introduction to Spiritism

Workbook One

This Program is intended for people who want either to learn the basics of Spiritism or to consolidate knowledge they have already.

This Course is based on two main fundamentals:

- Doctrinal knowledge derived from the Spiritist Codification, by Allan Kardec; and from supplemental works of Spirits faithful to the Spiritist tenets;
- Spiritist ethical and moral behavior, according to Jesus' teachings as contained in the Gospels.

The guidelines of this course follow the fundamentals established by Jesus and Kardec. Serious study is essential in order to achieve self-improvement.

In general, the main goal for a Spiritist is to achieve spiritual fulfillment. The objective for each participant is to attain inner transformation and relive Jesus' teaching and exhortations in their daily lives, and as a result, become instruments of peace and balance with the guidance of Enlightened Spirits.

The Workbook One: Introduction to Spiritism provides doctrinal references correlated with Spiritist knowledge. The subjects selected are the ones deemed essential in the study of Spiritism and are discussed thoroughly in each class. The program follows a sequential and gradual order of topics to be studied.

This Workbook should be completed within 60 to 90 minutes. Some of the lessons may be take more than one day, due to the subject's complexity and to the sheer volume of materials presented.

Weekly assignments are distributed at the end of each session. The instructor explains how the student should complete the supplemental activities at home.

The goals for weekly assignments are:

- To provide an opportunity to enhance doctrinal knowledge;
- To motivate or induce further readings of Spiritist books;
- To encourage students to reflect upon the topics studied during the classes;
- To promote group discussions for the following class, inclusive of impressions and experiences related to the weekly assignment.

It is important to note that supplemental activities are required to achieve satisfactory results. However, they can be omitted, if the Spiritist House so desires.

FINAL COMMENTS:

Often, this program introduces complex subjects that need to be worked out in a more dynamic manner. Therefore, the classes should not be transformed into mere lectures, but rather, conducted in a way to facilitate student's participation. The instructor will make use of audiovisuals and group participation techniques as learning resources.

It is important to bear in mind, that the selection of didactic resources and educational techniques must be related to class' objectives and be coherent with:

- The intellectual, emotional and social levels of the students;
- The physical space and the available time for the class;
- The teacher's control and effective use of resources and techniques.

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM

WORKBOOK ONE

SPIRITIST PRINCIPLES

Topics	Week Assignment
1. The History of Spiritism - Part 1	Christian Agenda "A Few Christian Privileges."
2. The History of Spiritism - Part 2	Green Light "Disagreements."
3. The Triple Aspect of Spiritism	Christian Agenda "Useful Reminders."
4. The Existence of God	Life's Answers "Before Birth"
5. The Existence and survival of the Spirit	Christian Agenda "In doing so you will profit."
6. Reincarnation	Christian Agenda "Brothers and Sisters in Danger"
7. The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds	Analyze and write down your thoughts about the statements.
8. The Communicability of the Spirits	Life's Answers "Small Donations"
9. Free Will - Fatalism - Determinism	Encontro Mercado "Free, but accountable for"
10. Prayer	Poem by Rev. James Dillet Freeman
11. Gospel at Home	"Prayer"
12. Spiritist Behavior - Good and Evil	The Pathway, the truth and Life "Gifts"

Main References:

1. *The Spirits' Book* by Allan Kardec
2. *The Mediums' Book* by Allan Kardec
3. *The Gospel According to Spiritism* by Allan Kardec
4. *Heaven and Hell* by Allan Kardec
5. *Genesis* by Allan Kardec

Our Proposal

☉ *You who seek this center must have done it so for one of two reasons:*

- To acquire knowledge about the spiritual world and its relationship with the physical one; in other words you are seeking an opportunity to know yourself better;

- Or, perhaps, in spite of repeated analysis, you have encountered health problems in the family and/or other disturbances that remain unexplained, and which you suspect are of a spiritual nature.

You need explanations for mysterious occurrences in your life. It's important for you understand that, from the moment you entered this House, a series of Spiritist intervening steps have been put in motion on your behalf, taken by the Spiritist institution's support team, which is comprised of the spirits and the mediums. The sole intent is to improve your life, thoughts, feelings, emotions and family life.

☉ *Whatever the reason that brings you here, it's important that you get to know Spiritism and the Spiritist Center, and that you learn the mechanism of spirit torments, direct or indirect, what is your part in them; which course of action the Center will take on your behalf and which ones you need to take yourself.*

☉ *This Spiritist House is equipped and programmed to provide the appropriate support, be it knowledge or assistance, to lead you to the state of inner peace and happiness that is achievable in your present existence.*

☉ *The **Introduction to Spiritism** program is one of the means the House has to help you in a more direct way. The program was designed to provide the information you need and that will facilitate the development of self-knowledge and progress. We will open our doors to you; but it is up to you to walk through them.*

☉ *This Spiritist Group asks that you do the things that are proposed to you as well, at different stages and periods of the program. The mediums, attendants, therapists, monitors, and coordinators will work for you and with you, individually whenever necessary or collectively, by listening, encouraging, guiding and in return, will receive the satisfaction of seeing you get better and grow.*

☉ *It's only fair then, that we expect your best effort, interest, dedication, and regular attendance. Don't leave for later or leave for others the responsibility that is yours to attend to personally. Show good will. There will be difficult times ahead, and one of the major causes of difficulty will be discouragement, and a lack of desire to attend, which can adversely affect the quality of your effort to study. You'll notice that several seemingly accidental things will happen to discourage you from coming, or from studying; rain, snow, cold, car troubles, a crying child, unexpected visitors, relatives that come calling unannounced and things of this sort.*

☉ *Come participate! We ask for your special attention to the following items:*

*- **Attendance** - Don't miss meetings; they're learning instruments for you;*

*- **Effort** - Don't think you can obtain something of value in this life without an effort. At present, you have expectations of success or of finding solutions to your problems. You'll have*



to make a conscientious effort, struggle a little, and resist negative influences. But we are confident you will!

*- **Understanding** - Do you suffer? Don't think you are an innocent victim of misfortune or bitter fate. Nobody suffers needlessly. God does not err, nor is He alienated from us.*

Everything that happens to us comes in the exact measure we need. Understand that and realize how comforting this thought can be:

*- **Gratitude** - Thank God for the hope new solutions bring, for the advantages, and for the happiness in your life. Reflect that few people in the world find what you have found. Learn how to bless life as proof of your gratitude;*

*- **Serenity** - No activity can come to end if a person does not take responsibility for his or her part with serenity. The success that awaits you, or that is attainable by you, depends largely on the manner and thoroughness with which you follow these guidelines:*

☉ *We hope that everyone can make good use of the knowledge that the Spiritist Doctrine brings us and feels motivated to listen to Jesus' advice:*

“YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH AND THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE”.



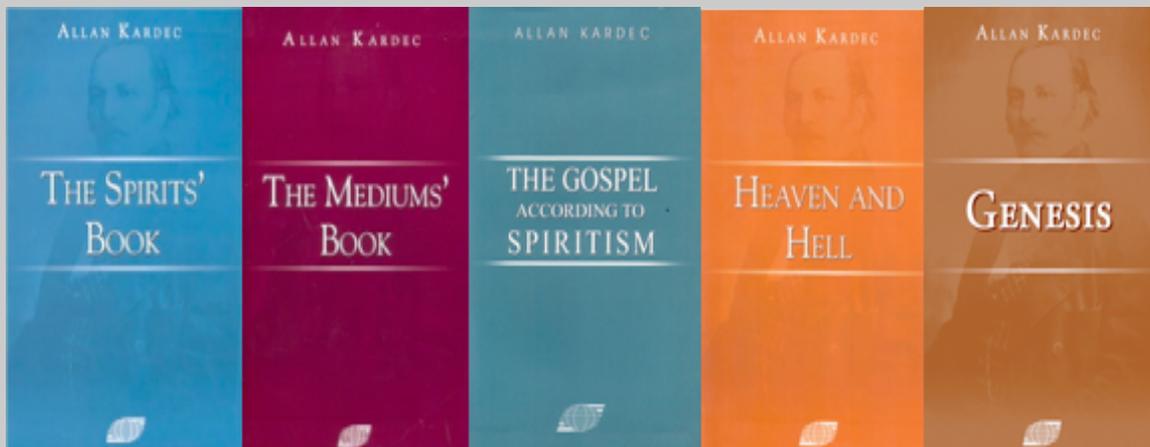


THE HISTORY OF SPIRITISM

Part - 1



United States
Spiritist Council



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The History of Spiritism - Part 1

Lesson 1

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer (5 minutes)
2. Distribute the page titled "Our Proposal" to participants
3. Present the PPT: History of Spiritism-First Part, that highlights the topics presented on the text below: (30 minutes)
4. Quiz: Divide the class into groups and ask them to answer the questions. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute the Week's Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

The Fox Sisters

Historically, Spiritism appeared because of the phenomena involved in the moving of objects that had been witnessed in numerous countries throughout Europe, America, and other parts of the world.

The high point of these events was a series of manifestations that occurred in Hydesville, Wayne County, New York, in the United States of America. The Fox family lived there with two of their three daughters, and had lived at the house since 1847.



On the night of March 28, 1848, annoying knocks were heard from the wooden walls in John Fox's large cabin and disturbed the family's sleep. All members of the family were Methodists. The girls, nine-year-old Katherine (Katie or Kate), and twelve-year-old Margaret ran to their parents' bedroom, frightened by the loud knocks coming from the walls and ceiling in their room. The knocks or "raps" continued that night. Later the manifestations included the sound of chairs being dragged and as time went on, the phenomena became more and more complex. Everything shook, objects moved, and it was like an explosion of loud sounds.

For three consecutive nights up to March 31 of that year, the phenomena were repeated intensely; stopping the family from getting any sleep. Mr. Fox searched inside and outside the house several times but nothing could be found to explain the occurrences.

One day, little Kate who was already accustomed to the noise started to imitate the knocks by drumming on a piece of furniture with her fingers while talking to the side of the house from which the knocks emanated more often: "Let's go Old Splitfoot, do what I do," she said. Immediately, the "stranger's" knocks were heard in equal numbers and stopped when the girl stopped.

Margaret playfully said: "Now, do the same as me; count one, two, three, four," and followed this with small knocks with her fingers. Her requests were satisfied completely to everyone's astonishment and fear."

The Fox girls, who, as previously mentioned, were Protestants of the Methodist persuasion, assumed they were dealing with Satan and called him Mr. Splitfoot, which was a reference to the split hooves of a goat. The Fox family was alarmed; the neighbors and everyone in the community were in an uproar, talking excitedly about the events.

Mr. Duesler, a family friend, thought of using the alphabet to translate the knocks and



understand what the invisible entity was saying. The invisible knocker told them his story. His name was Charles Rosma; he was a traveling salesman who had stayed at the house as a guest of the Bell couple. He was murdered in the house and his merchandise and money had been stolen. He was buried in the basement. They searched the place he indicated and there they found boards, tar, whitewash, hair, bones, utensils, etc.

Lucretia Pulver Lucretia Pulver, who worked as a maid for the Bells, revealed that she had seen the salesman and described him. She recounted the story about how he arrived at the house and also mentioned that he had disappeared mysteriously. Once, when she was going down to the cellar, her foot went into a hole. When she told her boss about it he said that it must have been the rats and quickly made repairs. She had seen objects from the salesman's bag in her boss' hands.

At the time, several commissions were formed to study the strange phenomena and expose the sisters as swindlers. It was noticed that the phenomena happened only in the girls' presence; consequently, they determined that they were mediums. Not one of the commissions was able to find them fraudulent. The facts were absolutely true, in spite of the fact that they had submitted the girls to the most rigorous and severe exams, sometimes coming close to brutality.

The Fox sisters were under considerable pressure. The Church excommunicated them for making covenants with the devil. They were called liars and were threatened with bodily harm several times.

In 1888, at the 40th anniversary celebration of the Hydesville phenomena, Cardinal Manning deceived Margaret Fox with promises of financial gain and made her report to the New York Herald that the phenomena were fraudulent. However, the following year she regretted her lack of honesty towards the spiritualist movement and gathered a large crowd at a music saloon in New York, where she recanted her previous statements. At that time, she not only affirmed that the Hydesville phenomena had been real but she also provoked another series of physical effects phenomena in the crowded room.

On May 20, 1889, On May 20, 1889, The Light and the American New Press newspapers printed her retraction.

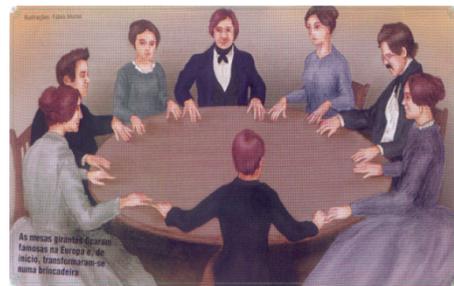
In his book *History of Spiritualism*, Arthur Conan Doyle, wrote that fifty-six years later it was discovered that somebody had been buried in the wine cellar at the Fox house. When the walls came down, children who were playing in the area found the skeleton. To be safe the Bells had walled the body in the wine cellar where they had killed him.

On November 23, 1904, the Boston Journal announced that the skeleton of a man who had possibly produced the knocks that the Fox sisters heard had been found. Therefore, they were exonerated beyond any doubt with respect to their honesty during the discovery of the communications with the spirit.

Turning Tables

At the beginning of 1853 a game that caught the attention of the nobility in the Parisian society appeared in France.

French people who were used to parlor parties started entertaining themselves with a game called "turning or talking table".



They were small round tables about three feet in diameter; people would sit around them and place their hands on top. Instantly the tables would start to move and jump without help from anyone present.

It looked like a magnetic phenomenon; in other words, a product of some type of mental power emanating from those who were predisposed to play. The phenomenon then grew to larger proportions and spread to other European countries and America as well. A method for talking to the tables was devised through knocks on the floor produced by the participant's feet, a code of signals, where one knock meant 'no', and two knocks meant 'yes'.

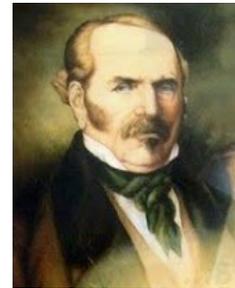
Generally speaking the questions were trivial and provided no illumination as to what was happening. It was then that a lady by the name of Delphine de Girardin developed a method of contact that consisted of a table that moved around its axis like roulette wheel.

Words, numbers and the terms 'yes' and 'no' were placed on top of the table in a circle inside the circle was a needle or a metal arrow and the people in attendance would place their hands on the table's edge. The table would move, then stop moving, and the word toward which the metal arrow pointed would be noted. In this manner the invisible power that caused the table to turn could form a sentence.

As the questions were asked, it was found that spirits inhabiting the spiritual world produced the phenomena. Yet, in this surprising discovery, no one saw any usefulness for the phenomena. What was important was, quite simply, the show, and the cause of the phenomena, which produced the show, did not matter.

Allan Kardec the codifier, a man with a mission

Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail was a French teacher of Mathematics, Language, Physics, Astronomy and Physiology and a researcher of magnetism. Rivail was born on October 3, 1804 in the city of Lyon, to a Catholic family. Rivail was a disciple of Pestalozzi, the father of modern pedagogy (teaching), and married to Amélie Gabrielle Boudet.



During his sojourn in Switzerland, while attending the Pestalozzi Institute, Kardec had lived with Calvinist and Lutheran teachers and had learned from Pestalozzi that **true religion was nothing more than morality.**

A discerning man, Rivail was chosen for a high mission, as the codifier of Spiritism, exactly because of the nobility of his feelings and for his elevated character, both of which were connected to a solid intelligence. He would not let himself be taken by fads and as a student of human magnetism he believed that all of the phenomena produced by the spiritualist movement could be connected to the people who were involved and not to any possible spirit intervention.

In 1855, Rivail was invited by a friend to see closely view certain inexplicable manifestations that were taking over a number of living rooms in the French capital. He had heard about the talking tables and wanted to understand what was happening.

The teacher, Rivail, then participated in a few sessions and was intrigued. He noticed that many of the answers given by those inanimate objects were beyond the cultural and social knowledge of the people taking part in the "spectacle". A piece of furniture could not move by itself, there had to be some invisible intelligence moving them and answering the questions.



Rivail witnessed manifestations of some who attested to be the spirits of people who had lived on earth. *“I noticed in those apparent trivialities, in the pastime that was made of the phenomena, that something was serious, as a revelation of new laws which I started to study. I understood the seriousness of the investigation I was about to undertake. I saw in those phenomena the key to obscure and controversial problems of humanity’s past and future, solutions I had been looking for my entire life. I t was necessary then to conduct myself with the greatest circumspection and not carelessly; I should be positive and not idealist, so as to not be deceived. (Posthumous Work)*

The spirits told him that he was part of a group of superior spirits that came to human beings to fulfill Jesus' promise, in The Gospel of John 14:15-26: “And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Consoler to be with you forever - The Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you. But the Consoler, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name will teach you all things and will remind you of all things I have said to you.”

Rivail learned from the Spirit of Truth that in one of his previous lives he had been a Druid priest by the name of Allan Kardec. That was when he decided to adopt this pseudonym during the codification of the new Doctrine, which would later become known as Spiritist Doctrine or Spiritism. He proceeded in this way so that when people learned about the new principles they would accept them not merely because it was a well known educator who was publishing them, but because, after coming into contact with the Good Word, they would discover its rationality and objective methodology, independent of who was publishing or supporting it.



Quiz: Mark the correct answer to the following statements:

1. What is the name of the city that is considered to be the birthplace of Spiritualism?
 - a. Lily dale
 - b. Sedona
 - c. Hydesville.

2. Why were the Fox sisters' so important?
 - a. Modern Spiritualism started after the phenomena that occurred with them.
 - b. They were the only mediums in the world.
 - c. They created Spiritism.

3. What date represents the beginning of Spiritualism?
 - a. April 18th, 1857
 - b. March 31st, 1848
 - c. March 28th, 1848

4. What was the name of the person who introduced the turning tables in France?
 - a. Madame Pompidou
 - b. Delphine Gay de Girardin
 - c. Marie Antoinette

5. When did the press announce the arrival of the turning table in Europe?
 - a. 1853
 - b. 1857
 - c. 1848

6. Who was Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail?
 - a. A British doctor who wrote The Spirits' Book.
 - b. A distinguished French educator and French Linguist who codified Spiritism.
 - c. A teacher of Magnetism.

7. Why did Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail use the pen name Allan Kardec?
 - a. To use a more appealing name.
 - b. To protect his loved ones.
 - c. To use a name he had during an incarnation in Gallia.

8. What was the name of the young medium who helped Kardec?
 - a. Eusapia Paladino.
 - b. Caroline and Julie Baudin
 - c. Leonora Piper.

9. When and where did Kardec publish The Spirits' Book?
 - a. 1857 in Brazil
 - b. 1858 in France
 - c. 1857 in France

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE

1. c; 2. a; 3.b; 4. b; 5. a; 6. b; 7. c; 8. b; 9. c;



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

The participants should:

1. Read lesson number 3 every day from the book Christian Agenda "A FEW CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES."
2. Highlight the statements that touched you more than others and write in a notebook the one that you feel you need to work on the most.
3. Meditate and answer:
 - a) How do you stay loyal to God?
 - b) What are you doing to overcome your failings?
 - c) Are you already capable of sacrificing yourself for the benefit of others?
 - d) Are you already able to love without expecting anything in return?
4. Affirmation: "I am grateful to God for all the blessings I receive."

A FEW CHRISTIAN PRIVILEGES:

To stay completely faithful to God.

To forget personal desires while observing Superior Designs.

To humble oneself so that the Lord's handiwork may be exalted.

To overcome weaknesses.

To renounce joyfully for the benefit of others.

To reap eternal profit from temporary losses.

To work to help build the Divine Kingdom.

To maintain hope, while others despair.

To enter a temple of silence in the very midst of commotion.

To maintain one's faith above and beyond the torment of doubts.

To remain silent in order to avoid hurting others.

To speak constructively.

To listen to the Divine Friend when in solitude.

To serve without compensation.

To endure one's own cross with valor.

To learn and profit from one's suffering.

To love without demanding.

To help in secret.

To sow with Christ, detached from the results.

To find brothers and sisters in all places.

To cultivate the pleasure of being useful.

To discern the value of causes and things.

To purify and amend evil.

To sincerely assist people who err.

To forgive as many times as necessary.

To overcome obstacles.

To preserve joyfulness and sweetness.

To always be cheerful.

To detach ourselves from the deceits of the world before the world deceives us.

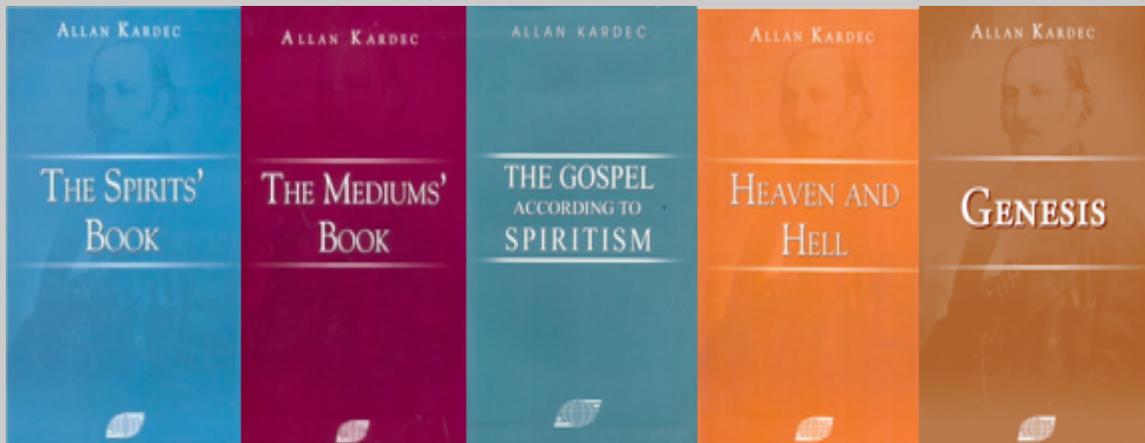
To persevere on goodness to the end.

CHRISTIAN AGENDA - Dictated by the spirit André Luiz to Francisco Cândido Xavier



THE HISTORY OF SPIRITISM

Part - 2



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The History of Spiritism - Part 2

Lesson 2

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer (5 minutes)
2. Study the text below with the participants or present the PPT - The History of Spiritism Part 2: (30 minutes)
3. Quiz: Ask the participants to answer the questions proposed. (10 minutes)
4. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
5. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

The Codification

From his first contact with the spirits in 1855, Kardec spent 14 years organizing Spiritism, which he would finish on March 31, 1869, the day he passed away due to an aneurism.



At first, in order to receive the answers from the spirits about the reasons for the communications and the new teachings, Kardec used a new mechanism called a basket-spinning top; it was a basket with a pencil in the center. The mediums, who were individuals able to perceive the influence of the spirits, would place their hands around the edges and, through their involuntary movements the sentences would be formed. Julie and Caroline Baudin, two adolescents of 14 and 16 years of age respectively, were the mediums Kardec used most often in the beginning.



With time the basket-spinning top became less useful and the mediums' hands took its place, a phenomenon known as psychography. All the questions Kardec asked the spirits, and their answers, were reviewed and analyzed several times; this was done to follow the necessary guidelines for common sense and rationality. The same questions posed to spirits through French mediums were also submitted to other mediums in several parts of Europe and America.¹ This was done so that the statements the spirits made carried the needed credibility. The mediums were not in contact with each other, only with Kardec.

As a result, it was understood that if the answers were the same they had come from the same spirit source. Let us highlight that whenever the questions and answers were of moral significance they were compared to the Gospel of Jesus, which is considered by followers of Spiritism to be the absolute model of good conduct. In the same manner, the answers on scientific and philosophical matters wore the mark of objectivity and reason.

This rigid control of everything that came from the spirit world came to be known as "Universal Control: The Ultimate Authority" (see *The Gospel, According to Spiritism*, Introduction, Item 2). From this, it was decided that in Spiritism, any information coming from the spiritual plane has to be validated by several sources, through several mediums, who have no contact with each other. Any spirit communication that does not follow this guideline is considered to be the personal opinion of the communicating spirit regardless of how well-known

¹ **Contacts described in Kardec's printed works:**

37 countries: Europe (18), America (8), Africa (5), Asia (6) 268 cities - (Fernandes, 2004)



that spirit may be.

After a complete outline was coherently developed, Allan Kardec prepared the publication of the five volumes that comprise the Basic Code of the Spiritist Doctrine, which began in 1857 with the release of *The Spirits' Book*. These books contain Spiritism's whole theory and practice, the basic principles, and the teachings from the spirits about the spiritual world and its continuous influence over the material world.

In 1858, during the code's development Kardec started publishing a monthly magazine called *The Spiritist Magazine*. In it, he commented on news, as well as mediumistic phenomena, and informed the followers of the new Doctrine about its growth and dissemination. Several times the magazine served as a forum for doctrinal debates, among partisans and opponents of Spiritism. *The Spiritist Magazine* was the seed, or source of development, for the doctrinal press.

In the same year, Kardec founded the Society for Spiritist Studies of Paris. The institution was legally registered and became the Spiritist Central Society, a place to study and encourage new groups. Allan Kardec passed away on March 31, 1869 at age 65, victim of an aneurism. His persistence and constant study were essential for the expansion of the Spiritist movement and the organization of the teachings of the Spirit of Truth.

Summary of the Basic Books of Spiritism

The Spirits' Book

Published on April 18th, 1857, it is the main book of Spiritism. It can be considered Spiritism's backbone because it supports all other doctrinal books. It is divided into four parts:

The First Cause

The Spirit World

Ethical Laws

Hopes and Solace

It contains over a thousand questions that Kardec asked the superior spirits who were responsible for bringing Spiritism to humanity. "What is God", "Where do we come from?" "Where are we going?" "What are we doing on earth?" These are some of the questions answered by the Spirit of Truth's group.

The Medium's Book

It was published on January 15, 1861. It contains the benefits and dangers of mediumship, i.e., it is about the channel that connects incarnated people to the spiritual world. It shows that although all human beings have this ability there are those who have it in a broader sense. Kardec and the superior spirits discuss how this subtle faculty allows a person to contact the spirits without being harmed by malicious entities and losing control of mediumship.

The Gospel According to Spiritism

Published on April 15, 1864, this book can be understood as the moral part of Spiritism. In this book Kardec and superior spirits comment in an easily understood language, upon the main passages of Jesus' life. They explain his parables and show the grandiosity of the Master's teachings and also give important advice about our daily conducts as we face life's difficulties



and doubts.

Heaven and Hell

Kardec published this book on August 1, 1865. Through invocation of spirits from all social classes, beliefs, and levels of development he describes their arrival in, and experience of, life in the spirit world after death. Former royalty, farmers, religious people, assassins, ignorant and intellectual people, these are but a few of those who came back to tell about what they encountered in the world of spirits after the terrestrial journey, and how they envisioned their future lives.

Genesis

In this book, published on January 6, 1868, Kardec explains the Biblical Genesis, and how the universe was formed, demonstrating its rationality when compared to scientific knowledge, without the allegories of the time when it was written. Miracles are explained by the laws of nature as products of alterations in the energy that surround us. Finally, Kardec causes religion and science to stand side by side, thereby strengthening the faith of those who believe in God.



Quiz

1) In which country, date, and year was the first book of Spiritism published? What is the name of the book?

2) What are the five basic books of Spiritism?

3) Which of the basic books recounts the main passages of Jesus' life and offer commentaries?

4) There is one book from the code that is all about mediumship. Which one is it?

5) Select a (T) True or (F) False

a) () Spiritism has a religious aspect.

b) () The mention of the promised Consoler is in the Bible, The Gospel According to John, 14: 15-17, 26.

c) () Universal Control is a method to control reincarnations.

d) () Allan Kardec was a doctor.

List by order of Publication the name and the year of the books that compose the Spiritist Codification

The Gospel Explained by Spiritism; The Medium's Book; Heaven and Hell; The Spirits' Book; Genesis - 1861; 1868; 1857; 1864; 1865



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

The participants should:

1. Read lesson number 43 every day from the book Green Light "DISAGREEMENTS."
2. Highlight the statements that touched you more than the others and write in a notebook the one that you feel you need to work on the most.
3. Meditate and answer:
 - a) How is my family composed and what's my position in it?
 - b) How am I doing? What have I achieved professionally? How is my relationship with my colleagues?
 - c) How is my social life? How are my friends? How do I relate to them?
 - d) Do I like to study? What kind of study and types of books have I been reading lately?
 - e) What is my life's goal? Am I an accomplished person?
 - f) What is the greatest problem in my life? How could I solve it?
4. Affirmation: "I live what Jesus teaches me."

DISAGREEMENTS

Remember that people differ widely from each other and therefore have their own ways of reacting.

Clarify on the basis of fraternal understanding without causing controversy.
To antagonize constantly is to be in a process of collecting antipathy.

You can clearly disagree, without upsetting, as long as, during the process of disagreeing,, you show respect for the other person's rights.

Remove aggressive words from your vocabulary.
People want to be themselves, when dealing with responsibilities, just as we want to be ourselves.

There are innumerable ways of helping without hurting other people's feelings.
We are far more likely to argue with our loved ones than with strangers; if this is so, should we disturb those whom we should leave in peace?

Let us learn to make concessions to unimportant matters so that we can be faithful to the essential ones.

If someone says that a stone is in fact a *piece of wood*, we should respect their point of view. However, if someone takes a stone, or a piece of wood, to hurt somebody, then it is important to explain the impropriety of this insane action.

Green Light - Dictated by the spirit André Luiz to Francisco Cândido Xavier - Published by the Spiritist Group of Brighton.







Religion



Science

Philosophy

INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM

LESSON 3

The Triple Aspect of Spiritism



United States
Spiritist Council

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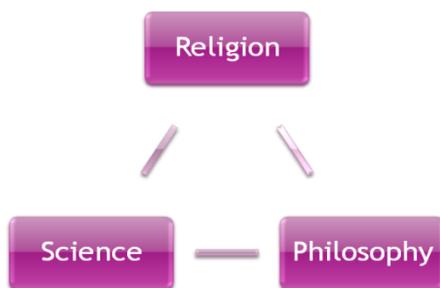


The Triple Aspect of Spiritism

Lesson 3

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their experience regarding their week assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (30 minutes)
4. Quiz: Ask the participants to answer the proposed questions. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
5. Passes, Final Prayer and Water



“Spiritism is, simultaneously, a philosophy and a field of scientific study. As a scientific endeavor, it studies the relationships between the physical and the spiritual worlds. As a philosophy, it deals with the moral implications of such relationships.”

More explicitly, I advance that: “Spiritism is a science that deals with the nature, origin, and destiny of spirits and their relation with the corporeal world.”
Allan Kardec - “Introduction to the Spiritist Philosophy”

Emmanuel said, “Religion is a divine feeling always expressed by the most sublime love. Science and philosophy work with experimentation and reasoning, but religion edifies and illuminates feelings. The first two espouse knowledge and the second personifies Love. These are the two divine wings the soul uses to, someday; enter the sacred portals of spirituality.”

Spiritism presents a triple aspect: PHILOSOPHY, SCIENCE, and RELIGION

PHILOSOPHY - New Fields of Knowledge

Its first aspect, Philosophy, focuses on the moral consequences that occur between the relationships of the spiritual world with the physical world. It studies the communications with the spiritual world, deducing with logic and reasoning the foundations of Science and of Religion, as follow:

- The existence of God;
- The constant and infinite progress of the intelligent principle, through the world and through appropriate bodies.

Great questions about the soul remained under a veil of mystery and dogma for a long time. The liberation of knowledge in modern times allowed for the questioning of dogmatic philosophical principles, which were unable to sustain a minimum criterion of logic.

The Spiritist Philosophy is co-substantiated in The Spirits’ Book.



Allan Kardec established the fundamentals of Spiritism through analysis and selection of spirit communications. He used a universal criterion to test and examine spirit teachings for their veracity. Spiritism propounds a reasoned faith.

The fundamentals of Spiritism are:

- The existence of God
- Existence of spirits, their survival after death
- Reincarnation
- Plurality of inhabited worlds
- Communicability with the material world

We can observe, then, that some of those principles are in all of the Christian religions. In other words, Catholicism, as well as Protestantism and all other religions with a basis in the teachings of Jesus, and a belief in God, proposes in some way the existence of a spiritual life.

Spiritism is a Philosophy because it investigates the true nature of life by answering questions such as: **Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?"**

Every doctrine that offers an explanation of life is a philosophy.

Spiritism is a Philosophical Doctrine, but it has religious consequences, as does every spiritual philosophy, because it touches unavoidably upon the basis of all religions: God, the soul and the future life.

SCIENCE - Scientific Method

In its second aspect, Science, Spiritism gives us as basis: the knowledge of the invisible world, in the center of which we live. It exposes the laws that govern the invisible world and their relationships with the corporeal world. It reveals the nature and the study of the beings that inhabit it, and the human beings' destiny after and beyond death.

Science and Spiritism complement one another. Science without Spiritism is unable to explain certain specific phenomena. The same applies to Spiritism. It would not have had credibility without the confirmation by Science.

Mediumship represents the scientific aspect of Spiritism. Mediumistic phenomena are as ancient as humans on the face of the Earth. They have always called attention to the existence of spiritual life.



Spiritism appeared at a time of liberation and intellectual maturity. It was developed the same way that positive sciences were, by applying experimental methodology. Experimental Spiritism studied the properties of the vital principle and demonstrated that spirit exists.

The experimental part of Spiritism is found in *The Mediums' Book*.



RELIGION - Moral Improvements



Finally we have the Religious aspect. Spiritism is not a constitutive religion. It has no cult, no rites, and no temples and among its followers no one person is designated as head in charge or priest. However, it will institute the true religion, a natural religion that thrives from the heart and reaches God directly, because its faith is reason and its morals are Christian. Allan Kardec - Revue Spirite.

When primitive people could not explain natural phenomena they attributed them to superior powers, which they began to revere, and thus primitive worship started. Spiritism has no external forms of worship, nor clergy, or liturgy. It understands that the basic function of religion is to connect creation to its creator and that this occurs within ourselves, independent of external acts.

The religious or moral part of Spiritism is contained in *The Gospel, According to Spiritism*, published in 1864 and studied because of the moral consequences of human actions.

As a Science, Spiritism is allied to Religion. As Philosophy, it has religious consequences. As Religion (without contradicting the Laws of Nature) it does not stand in the way of progress and will be invulnerable. Allan Kardec - Revue Spirite

Spiritism is considered the Third Revelation from God to humanity.

- The first was through Moses, **ONE GOD AND JUSTICE**.
- The second came through Jesus; he brought us **THE LAW OF LOVE**, revealed future life, trials, and the rewards that await human beings after the death of the physical body.
- The Master himself promised that a Consoler would be sent in the future - **SPIRITISM**.

Progressive Theory

“(Spiritism) is, and ever must be, essentially progressive, like all sciences based upon observation.” **Spiritism, marching hand in hand with progress, will never be overthrown, because, if new discoveries should demonstrate it is in error upon a point, it would modify itself in regard to it.**”

“Spiritism holds its essential aspects in triple configuration. Thus, no one should be restricted in his or her desire to work and produce. Let those inclined toward the sciences to cultivate them in their dignity; those who devote themselves to philosophy to ennoble its postulates; and those who consecrate themselves to religion to turn divine its aspirations. Yet, above all, it is necessary that the basis of Spiritism remain in everyone and everything so that we do not lose the balance at the foundation upon which the organization is constructed.”

Bezerra de Menezes

(Excerpted from the message received by F.C. Xavier, in a meeting of the “Comunhão Espírita Cristã,” on April 20, 1963, in Uberaba, Minas Gerais, Brazil) Reformador, Dec., 1975



Quiz

True or False - use a [T] if the statement is true and [F] if it's false.

1. Spiritism was the first doctrine to demonstrate the existence of the spiritual principle.
2. For a teaching to be true it's sufficient that it's given by one spirit and through one medium.
3. Some form of external worship is fundamental and absolutely necessary to reverere the Creator.
4. Through Spiritism we learn who we are, where we came from, and where we're going after the death of the physical body.

Multiple Choices - select the best answer with an [X];

Spiritism is a triple-aspect doctrine, therefore,

It's more important as science and philosophy;

It's more important as religion;

The three aspects are fundamental and inseparable;

It propounds a reasoned faith.

Correlate - number column 1 according to column 2:

<input type="checkbox"/> True Faith	1. It's a fundamental principle of Spiritism
<input type="checkbox"/> Reincarnation	2. Faces Reason
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritism is	3. Religion personifies love
<input type="checkbox"/> The moral and religious part of Spiritism	4. The Gospel's morals
<input type="checkbox"/> Science and Philosophy espouse wisdom	5. A Spiritualistic Philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> Spiritist Moral	6. Is contained in <i>The Gospel According to Spiritism</i>

ANSWERS

(1) T; (2) F; (3) F; (4) T;
The three aspects are fundamental and inseparable;
2; 1; 5; 6; 3; 4.



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

The participants should:

1. Read lesson number 18 every day from the book Christian Agenda "Useful Reminders."
2. Highlight the statements that touched you more than the others and write in a notebook the one that you feel you need to work on the most.
3. Affirmation: "I am strong and happy, I am healthy and I have courage to deal with the everyday the struggles of life."

USEFUL REMINDERS

Do not continually ask for spiritual guidance. If you already have a tuppence worth of Christian concepts, then you understand enough to know what to do.

*

Do not waste your energy trying to straighten out others by imposition. When we straighten ourselves out we realize that the world is administered by Divine Wisdom and that the obligation to cooperate continuously work together to bring about goodness is our fundamental duty.

*

Do not blame the discarnate spirits for your failures in life's struggles. Note the rhythm of your own life, examine your income and expenditures, your actions and reactions, your manners and attitudes, your obligations and decisions, and you will recognize that you have the situation you sought and that have reaped exactly what you have sown.

*

Do not appeal constantly to your spiritual friends to intervene in petty everyday tasks. They are equally busy and confront problems greater than yours and their responsibilities are more grave and immediate. Considering the grave and serious struggles taking place on Earth, would you have the audacity to ask a generous and kind professor to perform the functions of a baby sitter?

*

Do not wait for death to solve the problems of life, nor claim sickness or old age as an excuse to stop learning, because we are still very far from Heaven. The grave does not bring a miraculous transformation, but opens a wider door to our own conscience.

CHRISTIAN AGENDA - Dictated by the spirit André Luiz to Francisco Cândido Xavier





INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM

LESSON 4

Fundamentals of Spiritism

God - The First Cause



United States
Spiritist Council



Fundamentals of Spiritism

Existence of God

Lesson 4

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their week assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT - God, The First Cause or Study with the participants questions 1 to 9 of *The Spirits' Book*: (30 minutes)
4. Quiz: Ask them to answer the questions proposed. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

Allan Kardec placed right at the beginning of *The Spirits' Book*, a chapter that exclusively discusses God. With this he intended to demonstrate that above all Spiritism is based on the idea of the existence of an Omnipotent Being.

For the Superior Spirits, God is the Supreme Intelligence, First Cause of all things. This means that above of this immense array of beings and worlds, and beyond the incredible variety of material entities that constitute the Universe, there is a Supreme Intelligence, referred to as God, Father and Creator of all things.



Spiritism posits the existence of God as its most basic principle. Without intending to give to humankind the knowledge of the inner nature of God, we can prove that He exists due the palpating and living reality of the Universe that, through existing, must have a Divine Author.

The Spirits' Book - questions and answers 1 - 9 **GOD AND INFINITY**

1. *What is God?*

“God is the Supreme Intelligence, the First Cause of all things.”

2. *What is meant by infinity?*

“That which has neither beginning nor end, the unknown. The entire unknown universe is infinite.”

3. *Could we say that God is infinity?*

“That would be an incomplete definition. Human speech is too impoverished and insufficient to define what transcends human intelligence.”

God is infinite in divine perfection, but infinity itself is an abstract concept. Thus, to say that God is infinity is to replace the thing itself with one of its attributes, to define something that is unknown by referring to something else that is equally unknown.

The imperfect individual, even when discarnate, making use of less material perceptive faculties, is still not able to perceive the divine essence. However, one can have convincing proofs of the existence of God.



PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

4. Where may we find proof for the existence of God?

“In the axiom that you apply to all your sciences: ‘There is no effect without a cause’. If you would search for the cause of whatever is not the work of human beings, then reasoning itself will answer your question.” To believe in God, we need only to behold the works of creation. The universe exists; therefore, it must have a cause. To doubt God’s existence would be to deny that every effect has a cause, and to believe that something could have resulted from nothingness.

5. What can we conclude from the intuitive sentiment of God’s existence, which all human beings have within them?

“That God exists, for where would such a sentiment come from if it were not based on something real? It is an application of the principle that there is no effect without a cause.”

6. Couldn’t our inner sentiment about the existence of God be the result of education and the product of acquired ideas?

“If such were the case, then why do even members of your primitive cultures also have this intuition?” If the sentiment of the existence of a Supreme Being were only the product of education, it would not be universal. Like all scientific ideas, it would only exist in the minds of those who received such education.

7. Could we find the first cause of the formation of things in the inmost properties of matter?

“Even if you could, what would be the cause of those properties? There must always be a first cause.”

To attribute the primary formation of things to the inmost properties of matter would be to mistake the effect for the cause, since such properties are themselves an effect that must have a cause.

8. What about the idea that attributes the first formation of all things to an accidental combination of matter, i.e., to chance?

“Another absurdity! How could anyone with any common sense believe that chance is an intelligent agent? Besides, what is chance? Nothing.”

The harmony that governs the forces of the universe reveals certain set combinations and goals, and thus, an intelligent power.

To attribute the first formation of things to chance would be nonsense, since chance is blind and cannot produce intelligent results. An intelligent chance would no longer be chance.

9. Where may we see in the first cause a Supreme Intelligence, superior to all other intelligences?

“You have a proverb that says, ‘Workers are known by their work’. So, look at the work and you will find the author!

Pride is what creates disbelief. Human pride admits nothing above itself, and that is why people think they are so powerful. Poor beings! God’s simple whisper could crush them!”

We judge the power of an intelligent agent by its works. Since no human being could create what nature produces, it is evident that the first cause must be an intelligent agent superior to anything human.

Whatever the marvels accomplished by human intelligence, such intelligence itself must have a cause, and the greater the results, the greater the first cause must be. No matter what name you give it, this Supreme Intelligence is the First Cause of all things.



Someone asked a poor and ignorant Bedouin, who prayed incessantly to God, how he could believe in Him.

“By His works”, he said. And he explained:

“Don't you recognize the origin of a jewel by the jeweler's trade mark? Don't you recognize the writer of a letter, from the handwriting on the envelope? Can't you affirm that a camel and not a dog passed by the highway, simply by looking at the trace left behind by the animal? Thus, also, I know that God exists by His works.”

“How? Explain it better.”

“It is very easy. The stars, in the sky, are not the work of the human beings. The human beings could not have placed them there. Therefore, they can only be the work of God and therefore, God exists.”

Science finds God



The way Kardec approached his studies allowed for a constant parallelism between Spiritism and Science, in the domain of Astrophysics and Cosmology, these being unique sciences, in which there can only be observations and not experiments. It is not possible to obtain a sample of the fabric of the universe, or to pull off a piece from the Sun, to place it on a slide and to put it under a microscope. It is not necessary to observe black holes, stars in the confines of the dark universe or dark matter to know that they exist. In a similar way, it is not necessary to visualize God or Spirits or sense their influence to know that they exist.

“(…) Every one who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifested in the laws of the Universe -- a spirit vastly superior to that of man, and one in the face of which we with our modest powers must feel humble.”

Albert Einstein - *The Human Side, Selected and Edited by Helen Dukas and Banesh Hoffman, Princeton University Press, 1979.*



"The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous I think clearly there are religious implications whenever you start to discuss the origins of the universe." Stephen W. Hawking

Charles Townes (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1964):
“....somehow intelligence must have been involved in the laws of the universe.”



John Polkinghorne (physicist): “When you realize that the laws of nature must be finely tuned to produce the universe we see, we have to admit the idea that the universe did not just happen, but that there must be a purpose behind it”

*Who would have imagined that we would come to know
so much yet understand so little.*

Albert Einstein

Where is God?



- ◎ *“Where is God?” a scientist asks. No one has even seen Him. “Who is He?” a materialist answers quickly: “God is an invention of faith!”*
- ◎ *A thinker would say sensibly: “I cannot see God, but I feel that He exists. Nature shows clearly that the power of a Creator exists.”*
- ◎ *But a poet would say with the conviction of a person who affirms because of he or she knows: “I see God in a child’s smile, in the sky, ocean, and the light in Nature...”*
- ◎ *“I see God shining with the stars, in the eyes of a mother looking at her child, in beautiful nights by the moonlight. God’s heart beats in everything!”*
- ◎ *“I see God in flowers and fields, in stars rolling around the Infinite. I hear God in the voice of sweethearts and feel God in the tears of the afflicted.”*
- ◎ *“I perceive God in the word that forgives, I see God in the hand that caresses. I hear God in creatures in flight I feel God in peace and joy!”*
- ◎ *“I see God in a doctor who saves, I foresee God in the pain that unites us. I discover God in the wise man that tries to understand human nature!”*
- ◎ *“I see God in a kind gesture, I hear God in the hymns believers sing. I perceive God in the sun, in freedom and I see God in the plants and the seed!”*
- ◎ *“Finally, I see God everywhere. That everything speaks of His powers, I discover God when art is expressed, in people’s love, and I also feel God!”*
- ◎ *“But the most beautiful place I feel God, In His most sublime vibration, Is not in the heart of Nature, It’s inside my own heart.”*



Quiz

Please choose the correct answer:

1. What is God?
 - a. The result of all forces and intelligences of the universe.
 - b. The Supreme Intelligence of the Universe; the first cause of all things.

2. What is the origin of the word God?
 - a. The “good”, from a Germanic source.
 - b. “Wisdom”, from Latin.

3. Which proverb corroborates God’s existence?
 - a. “God is a busy worker but loves to be helped.”
 - b. “The workman is known by his work.”

4. What are some of God’s attributes?
 - a. Unchangeable, Unique, Material and Eternal.
 - b. Just, Infinite, All-Powerful and Eternal.

5. Where can we find God?
 - a. In our conscience and in Nature.
 - b. Only in religious places.

ANSWERS

(1) b; (2) a; (3) b; (4) b; (5) a



WEEKKY ASSIGNMENT

The participants should:

1. Read lesson number 14 from the book Life's Answers "BEFORE BIRTH" every day.
2. Highlight the most touching statements and write down the ones that needed personal attention.
3. Write and reflect on: "I accept the difficulties and challenges in my life; in most cases, they are measures from Divine Providence to redress my expectations and sublimation.
4. Affirmation: "I am the master of my life."

BEFORE BIRTH

In the Spirit Realm, after an assessment of your life and your need for improvement, what do you think you'd ask for?

Physical impairments to cause you to elevate your feelings;

Long-term illness to help control your impulses;

Physical injuries to help you exercise discipline;

A type of mutilation to inhibit your inclination toward excessive aggressiveness;

Psychological disorders to renew your ideas;

A bitter home life so you can learn to appreciate affection;

Hurdles in your social ascension, so that you may overcome excessive pride;

Meeting past adversaries, now as difficult relatives, so that you can redress old debts;

Momentary impossibility to earn a college degree, so that you learn to curb intellectual excesses;

Temporary experience of poverty as a way of developing your qualification for personal work.

Life's difficulties and challenges; accept them because, in most cases, they're Divine Providence's answers to your desire for readjustment and sublimation.

From the book Respostas da Vida (Answers from Life) dictated by the spirit André Luiz to Francisco Cândido Xavier





INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM

LESSON 5

Fundamentals of Spiritism

Existence of the Spirit & Immortality of the Soul



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Fundamentals of Spiritism

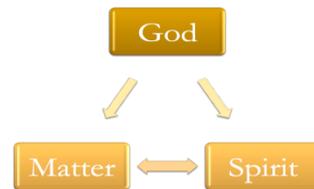
Existence of the Spirit & Survival of the Soul

Lesson 5

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer (5 minutes)
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or read the question with the participants: (35 minutes)
(This lesson should be developed in two sessions)
4. Quiz: Ask them to answer the questions proposed. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

God, the supreme intelligence and the first cause of all things, created the two universal elements: spirit ("the intelligent principle of the universe") and matter ("intermediary agent, upon which the spirit acts").



Jesus consistently mentioned in the Gospel the existence of a spiritual life; and if this life exists, spirits live there. But what are spirits? Let's see what *The Spirits' Book* says:



23. What is spirit?

"The intelligent principle of the universe."

a) – What is spirit's innermost nature?

"It is not easy to explain spirit in your language. For you, it is nothing, because it is not something palpable; nevertheless, for us it is something. You must realize that nothing means nothing and nothing does not exist."

24. Is spirit synonymous with intelligence?

"Intelligence is one of spirit's essential attributes, but both merge into a common principle; thus, for you they are one and the same

thing."

25. Is spirit independent of matter, or is it only a property of matter, as colors are properties of light and as sound is a property of air?

"They are distinct from each other, but the union of spirit and matter is necessary to enable matter to act intelligently."

27. So are there two general elements in the universe: matter and spirit?

"Yes, and over everything is God, the creator and author of all. These three elements comprise the principle of all that exists - they are the universal trinity. But to the element of matter must be added the universal fluid, which plays an intermediary role between spirit and matter per se, since matter is too dense for spirit to act upon it directly."

To Spiritism, the soul is a real, distinct being, the cause and not the effect of all human activities. It explains that spirits are nothing more than the souls of people who lived materially on earth. It means that when people are incarnated the spirit is called the soul but when the body dies it is called the spirit. This difference in terminology exists only to help differentiate



one from the other.

God never stopped creating spirits thereby peopling several inhabited world in the universe. And Jesus said: “In my Father’s house there are many mansions”, John 14:2.

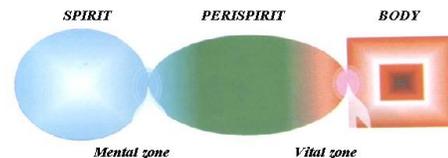
Spiritism teaches that the Spirits:

- Are not created at the moment of the physical conception;
- They are created simple and unenlightened, with an equal aptitude to progress by their individual activity. Each one of us, through reincarnation, acquired the experiences that made us what we are today;
- That all will attain the degree of perfection compatible with human beings by their personal efforts;
- Being (all them) children of the same Father, are objects of an equal solicitude;
- They are created unceasingly, during all times;
- After the death of the physical body they compose the spiritual population of the Earth.

Among the many teachings that Spiritism brings us, there is this triple configuration:

Spirit, perispirit, and physical body.

The perispirit is the intermediary that connects the spirit to matter



THE SURVIVAL OF THE SOUL

Spiritism explains that the spirit is eternal, as per question below from *The Spirits’ Book*.

- 153. *In what sense should we understand the eternal life?*
- Only the life of the spirit is eternal; the life of the body is transitory and temporary.

When the body dies, the soul returns to the eternal life.

Even before considering ourselves to be human beings and the offspring of our parents, we are in reality Spirits, God’s children.

- The existence of spirits has no end.
- Spirits can be imagined as a flame, an ethereal spark.
- Whenever an intent thought is that is also where the spirit is.
- Each spirit is indivisible.
- The spirit can extend its thoughts in all directions.

EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE SPIRIT

The evidence of the existence of the Spirit is given by the consciousness that the person possesses of itself (consciousness of its *self*) and by the manifestation of its will. Spiritism renders it clear and distinct when these beings (the Spirits) prove their identity through countless verifiable indications, referring to individual particularities during their life on Earth. (SB question 152)



In current days, the evidence of the survival of the Spirit can be certified:

- Through mediumistic communications and psychic phenomena;
- Through past life regression;
- Through experiences of Transcommunication: spiritist messages by means of television, video, computer, telephone, recorder, radio etc.;
- Experiences of the Spirits through photographs.

The human soul is, therefore, real, individual, independent and autonomous. It has a purely spiritual nature and has a constant progress as its grand destiny to progress constantly, growing more each time in knowledge and virtues, by means of the multiple corporal existences, in which it purifies and it raises itself gradually until, finally, it frees itself completely from the necessity of reincarnating.

To progress is our destiny. Every human being is an incarnate Spirit on its way towards God.

Life on Earth is always an opportunity to make amends and learn as we travel along the pathway towards goodness. There is free choice in all things and the consequences, either good or bad, are the result of our own decisions. This is the law of action and reaction, of causes and their effects. If we are suffering at this moment it is possible that the cause of this suffering comes from errors in this life or from previous ones.

Therefore, if we commit evil, then sooner or later we will undergo the consequences of that act. Jesus said: "Each according to his works." This explains the reason for so much suffering in the world. This is why one person progresses more quickly than another, just as do different students in the same class. The better the conduct the quicker we are able to liberate ourselves from suffering, thereby shortening our path towards evolution.

*"Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? Therefore honor God with your body."
Paul - I Corinthians, 6:19 &20*

*"The body is the first loan received by the incarnated Spirit."
André Luiz - Conduta Espírita*



Quiz

True or False - use a [T] if the statement is true and [F] if it's false.

1. The life of the spirit is transitory and fleeting.
() TRUE () FALSE
2. Spirits are the intelligent principle of the universe.
() TRUE () FALSE
3. Intelligence is an essential quality of spirit.
() TRUE () FALSE
4. Spirits cannot communicate with human beings.
() TRUE () FALSE
5. Angels are the privileged beings of the universe.
() TRUE () FALSE
6. When the body dies the soul re-enters the world of eternal life.
() TRUE () FALSE
7. The perispirit is the same as the physical body.
() TRUE () FALSE
8. Spirits are always progressing.
() TRUE () FALSE

ANSWERS

(1) T; (2) T; (3) T; (4) F; (5) F; (6) T; (7) F; (8) T



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

The participants should:

1. Read lesson number 15 from the book Christian Agenda "In doing so you will profit." every day.
2. Highlight the most touching statements you find to be the most touching and write down the ones requiring personal attention.
3. Affirmation: "I wish well to everything and everyone."

IN DOING SO YOU WILL PROFIT

Comfort the despairing. You yourself will not escape the temptations of discouragement within the circles of struggle.

*

Lift the fallen. You do not know where your own feet will stumble.

*

Extend your hand to those who are in need of support. Your day for receiving assistance will arrive.

*

Help the sick. Your body, the instrument of your soul, is not invulnerable.

*

Make an effort to understand the less enlightened companion. Know that you do not always have as much of the necessary means for understanding as could be desired.

*

Be sympathetic towards the unfortunate. The sky will not always be sunny for you.

*

Be tolerant and patiently help the ignorant. Remember that there are Sublime Spirits who tolerate us and help us with heroic kindness.

*

Console the downhearted. You cannot foresee the surprises of your own destiny.

*

Help the offender with your good thoughts. He teaches us how hostile and disagreeable we are when we hurt someone else.

*

Be kind to those dependent upon you. Do not forget that Christ himself was compelled to obey.







INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM

LESSON 6

Fundamentals of Spiritism

Reincarnation



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Fundamentals of Spiritism

Reincarnation

Lesson 6

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (35 minutes)
(This lesson should be developed in two sessions)
4. Quiz: Ask them to answer the questions proposed. (10 minutes)
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Reincarnation

The definition of Reincarnation is: *a rebirth of a soul in a new human body.* (Merriam Webster Online): Or, *the doctrine that the soul reappears after death in another and different bodily form.* (Yourdictionary.com)



Spiritism understands that after a time of sojourning in peace, the soul is reborn into human conditions, and carries with it the heritage, good or bad, of its past. It is born an infant, and reappears on the earthly scene to play a new act of the drama of life; to repay old debts and to conquer new powers that will facilitate its ascension and accelerate its forward march.

Let's see what *The Spirits' Books* says about reincarnation:

166. How can the soul that has not reached perfection during its corporeal life complete the work of its purification?

“By submitting to the trial of a new existence.”

a) – How does the soul accomplish this new existence? Is it through its transformation as a spirit?

“In order to purify itself, the soul undoubtedly undergoes a transformation, but for this to occur it needs the trial of corporeal life.”

b) – Then does the soul live many corporeal existences?

“Yes, we all have many lives and those who say otherwise wish to keep you in the ignorance in which they themselves dwell. That is their desire.”

c) – From this principle, it seems that after having left one body behind, the soul then takes on another; in other words, it reincarnates into a new body. Is this the case? “Obviously so.”

The infinite variety of tastes, faculties, and characters is easily explained. All souls are not of the same age; all have not climbed the same paths in evolution. Some have already approached the apogee of earthly progress, after an immense career. Others have barely begun their cycle of evolution.

Reincarnation explains, for instance, why people show precocious inclinations for music, painting, mathematics, and other arts without any incentive in the current existence.



History gives us accounts of prodigies of tender age with faculties so superior to, and having no correspondence with their ancestors, that the subtlest explanations of materialists fail to find an immediate cause. Michelangelo, Mozart, Paganini, Pascal, Rembrandt, can all be named in this class. Mozart came from a musical family, yet its musical capacity was not sufficient to explain how he could have knowledge of the laws of harmony at the age of four!

It's said that some people have "bad tempers" from childhood, when violence, impatience, and selfishness predominate. These tendencies whether good or bad reveal the nature of our spiritual past lives which are translated to and appear as propensities in the present life. It is up to us to nourish them (if they're good) or suppress them (if they're bad).

In relation to that, we find the following sage advice in *The Gospel, According to Spiritism*, chapter 14, item 9: *Having been brought from past existences, these good or evil instincts will manifest themselves from early childhood. It is necessary that parents study these instincts; all badness originates from selfishness and pride. So be on the lookout for the least sign, which will reveal the existence of such vices, and then take care to combat them without waiting for them to take deep root.*

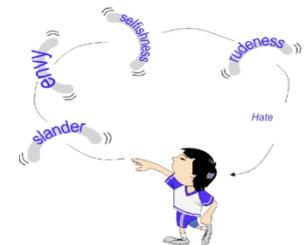
Children are also much more prone to remember their previous existences. In his book *Life and Destiny*, Leon Denis reports the following case: *In 1880 at Vera Cruz, a seven-year-old child possessed the power to heal. Vegetable remedies prescribed by the child healed several people. When asked how he knew these things, he said he was once a great doctor, and his name was Jules Alpherese. This surprising faculty developed in him at the age of four. When alone with his parents he said: 'Father, you must not think I will stay long with you. I am only here for a little while, and then I must go away.' When asked where he would go, he replied, "Far away where it is much better." He died a few years later.*

Dr. Ian Stevenson also wrote several books on this subject, one of them titled "Children Who Remember Previous Lives."

Kardec asked the Spirits what was the purpose of reincarnation? To which the Spirits' replied: **Atonement and humankind's progressive improvement. Without reincarnation, where would justice be?**

1. Reincarnation explains the reasons for problems that are with us from birth and persist throughout our lifetimes. If the reasons cannot be found in the current lifetime then they can only be the result of attitudes we had in other existences. There is then, no fatality. It is the individual who, by his or her own will forges his or her chains; it is he or she who weaves, thread by thread, the fabric of his or her destiny. The law of justice is but the law of harmony; it determines the consequences of acts, which in our freedom we commit. It does not punish or recompense, but simply presides over the order and equilibrium of the moral as well as of the physical world. Or else, where would God's justice be, if He gives health and peace to some and disgrace to others? God's spiritual law gives to each one according to one's deeds.

We reap what we sow, good or bad. There lies God's wisdom in reincarnation. And thus, Spiritism puts an end to eternal atonements; they are irreconcilable with our Father's supreme kindness and mercy. If we, imperfect beings, forgive and grant new chances to our children, God does much more. Instead of throwing the person into an eternal hell God gives new opportunities, where the person reaps what was sowed and learns the best road to travel.



All spirits are headed towards perfection, and God furnishes them with the means of realizing it through the trials of corporeal life. Out of divine justice, God permits the spirits to



accomplish in new existences whatever they could not do or complete in a previous trial.

Many illustrious individuals talked about their reminiscences regarding previous incarnations. Pythagoras recalled at least three of his existences and the names he bore in them (Hermodimus, the Trojan Euphorbus, and one of the Argonauts). Empedocles, who lived in the 5th century BC, declared that he recalled having been successively a boy and a girl. Julian, the Apostate, remembered having been Alexander of the Macedonian. Alphonse de Lamartine in his Voyage in the Orient speaks of his distinct reminiscences of a far distant past. He says, 'I had in Judea, no bible or chart at hand. There was none to give me the antique name of the valleys and mountains. Nevertheless, I at once recognized the Valley and the Battlefield of Saul! When we reached the convent, the Fathers confirmed with exactitude my previsions. Victor Hugo believed in a succession of lives; he believed he had been Juvenal in one incarnation.

The American Edgar Cayce, although he was a worshipper in the orthodox Protestant faith, possessed the faculty of entering into a spontaneous trance, by means of which he would access and disclose knowledge far beyond his habitual level during his conscious state. From within his trance state, he was not only able to diagnose physical and spiritual illnesses, but was also fully capable of disclosing facts pertaining to the previous existences of the people who came to him, and circumstances of his own previous lives.

Benjamin Franklin's witty epitaph for himself, written supposedly when he was twenty-one, was never used on his tombstone, but it remains one of the most succinct and memorable summaries of the idea of reincarnation ever penned. "The body of Benjamin Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents torn out and stripped of its lettering and gilding, lies here, food for worms. But the work shall not be lost: for it will appear once more in a new and more perfect edition, corrected and amended by the author." At eighty-eight, Franklyn wrote to a friend: 'I look upon death to be as necessary to the constitution as sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning.' Benjamin Franklin was among the first to comprehend the Law of Conservation of Matter, Franklin knew that matter changed its form but could never be entirely lost, and this concept conformed well with his belief that on dying we are reborn.



We may also find several passages in the Bible about reincarnation. For instance, the closing words of the Old Testament predict the rebirth of the prophet Elijah, and the Gospel of Matthew 17; 1-3, 10 -13, the passage titled "The Transfiguration of Jesus", mentions Elias reborn as John the Baptist: "After six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then the disciples asked him 'Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?' He said in reply, 'Elijah will indeed come and restore all things. But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also will the Son of Man suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them of John the Baptist."

Here, we see the existence of the spiritual world, spirit communication, and reincarnation. Jesus makes it very clear that John the Baptist, his cousin and preacher, was actually the reincarnation of the prophet Elijah who had lived more than 900 years before Jesus. Jesus had lived with John before he was arrested and decapitated by King Herod. At that time, after his death, John became visible to Jesus as Elijah; John was with Moses, another prophet, who had died 1700 years before.



In another passage of Jesus's life, he said to Nicodemus: "I tell you the Truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again."



Nicodemus asked: “How can a man be born when he is old?” Jesus answered: “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born! I tell you the truth; no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again’.” (John, 3:1-12) Jesus avoided speaking directly about reincarnation to people. He only spoke about reincarnation with his closest disciples, who would be in a better spiritual condition to understand its process. However, there was some difficulty in understanding it completely even among them. That is why Jesus implied and was not explicit when he talked about the subject.

The doctrine of reincarnation was excised from Roman Church thinking in 553 (by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople), when the teachings of Origen (one of the most influential of the early Church fathers) about the preexistence of the soul were anathematized by the emperor Justinian. After this, it disappeared from Church history for nearly a thousand years, briefly entering Europe as part of the teachings of the Cathars who were brutally extirpated by the Church in the notorious Albigensian Crusade.

Nonetheless, evidence of the belief in reincarnation can be found in the writings of poets, writers, and philosophers across centuries: Dante, Marsilio Ficino, Paracelsus, Shakespeare, Goethe, Wordsworth, Swedenborg, Hume, Schopenhauer, George Sand, Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Emerson, Wagner, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, W.B. Yeats, Aldous Huxley, Somerset Maugham, D.H. Lawrence, Rilke, Pearl S. Buck, Carl Jung, Winston Churchill, Norman Mailer, Heine, Thoreau, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Maeterlinck, Victor Hugo, Balzac, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Louisa May Alcott, Edgar Allan Poe and others have written of their belief in reincarnation. The Irish poet W B Yeats summed up the notion of reincarnation in his poem Under Ben Bulbin by saying: ‘Many times man lives and dies, between his two eternities.’ The American poet, Walt Whitman, similarly expressed his faith in just two lines: ‘I pass death with the dying, and birth with the new washed babe, and am not contained between my hat and my boots.’

Finally, Kardec asks the spirits:

175. a) Wouldn’t it be better to remain a spirit?

“No, no! That would keep you at a standstill. What you want is to evolve towards God.”

The doctrine of reincarnation is the only one that can explain our future and give us hope, because it offers us the means of atoning for our errors through new trials. Those who are aware of their own imperfection derive a consoling hope from it, and the thought that such imperfection will not exclude them forever from the supreme good, and the fact that they will be able to reach it through continued effort supports them and renews their courage. Perfection is our ultimate goal and reincarnation is the way for us to achieve it.

“Since our spirit must pass through many incarnations, it follows that we all have had many existences, and that we will have still others along the course of the different stages of advancement, either upon the earth or other worlds. (*The Spirits’ Book* - Introduction - Item 6)

“To not remember a past life, or lives, is therefore no indication that we have not had them, merely a pointer to the fact that memory of ourselves as a personality is not ultimately important. To remember past lives in our present psychological condition would be to know too much.”

Owen Barfield (11/9/ 1898 - 12/14 1997) was a British philosopher, author, poet, and critic.

“To be born, to die, to be reborn yet again, and constantly progress.” Allan Kardec



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT

Participants should:

1. Read lesson number 8 from the book Christian Agenda "BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN DANGER" every day.
2. Highlight the statements you find to be the most touching and write down the ones that require personal attention.
3. See if you run the risks explained in lesson 8 and list them.
4. Reflect and answer:
"What am I doing to avoid falling into temptation?"
5. Affirmation: "I have a strong and achieving will."

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN DANGER:

Those are the ones who wish to transform others, from one day to the next, by the force of mere words.

*

Are those who give intelligent opinions and good advice to everybody, while remaining heedless of their own problems.

*

Are those who place their minds completely in another world without attending to the duties of the world in which they live.

*

Are those who are constantly concerned about defending themselves.

*

Are those who plan ten marvelous projects each day without materializing even one of them in ten years.

*

Are those who recognize the grandeur of the Divine Truths, but never find time to cultivate them in favor of their own illumination.

*

Are those who continually postpone till tomorrow the task of understanding and loving others.

*

Are those who regard themselves as exclusive proprietors of all the work within the field of charity without distributing opportunities of service to others.

*

Are those who declare forgiveness of the offense, but are never able to forget the injury.

*

Are those who find occasion to become weary of life.





INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM



LESSON 7

Fundamentals of Spiritism

MULTITUDE OF WORLDS



United States
Spiritist Council



Fundamentals of Spiritism

Multitude of Inhabited Worlds

Lesson 7

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or read the text with the participants: (35 minutes)
4. Quiz: Ask them to answer the questions proposed. (10 minutes)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

Multitude of Inhabited Worlds

Jesus said: *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.* (John, 14: 1 - 3)



The house of the Father is the Universe. The different rooms are the worlds that circulate in infinite space and offer the Spirits who incarnate on them dwelling places corresponding to their progress.

In *The Spirits' Book* Kardec asks the Spirits:

55. Are all the globes spinning through space inhabited?

"Yes, and contrary to what they believe, earthlings are far from being first in Intelligence, goodness, and perfection (...)"

The world that we inhabit is part of a group of planets and asteroids that follow the Sun in its march throughout the incommensurable vastness of the space. Our planetary system occupies only a small point located almost at the end of the Milk Way. There are approximately 400 billion stars in our galaxy alone.

"The Universe consists of innumerable planets, both seen and unseen. It contains all animate and inanimate beings, and all the stars and energies that fill space." S.B., ch. 3

Within the Universe there are other inhabited worlds, with beings at different degrees of evolution: some equal, others more or less evolved than Human Beings. God has populated all worlds with living beings who all work towards the final objective of Providence. To believe that living beings are limited only to their own particular spot in the universe is to doubt the wisdom of God, who has never made anything without a purpose, and who must have intended these worlds to fulfill a more important role than simply entertaining our eyes. Moreover, there is nothing in the earth's position, volume or composition that could reasonably support the notion that, to the exclusion of many thousands of similar worlds it alone has the privilege of being inhabited.



The physical constitution of other globes is not the same as ours, and the beings that inhabited them also are of a different composition. The conditions for the existence for the beings who inhabit the various worlds must be supposed to be appropriate to the sphere in which they are destined to live.

Independently from the diversity of the different worlds, the words of Jesus also refer to the fortunate or wretched states of the soul in the spirit world. Conforming to whether the soul is more or less purified and detached from material ties, the ambient in which it finds itself will vary infinitely: in the aspects of things the soul encounters, in the sensations it feels and in the perceptions it has. While some cannot leave the ambient in which they live, others raise themselves and travel all over space and the other worlds.

Spiritism teaches that due to this evolutionary difference there are thousands of material worlds which have life, and that they are divided in five categories. Incarnate spirits inhabit them depending on their moral and intellectual conditions. Thousands of years of dedication and often suffering are necessary in order for incarnate spirits to go from one world to the next. Those worlds are:

- Primitive Worlds: where evil and almost total ignorance dominates, intended for the first incarnations of the human soul, for example, what we would find in the stone age;*
- Worlds of Trials and Atonements: similar to earth, where ignorance and evil still predominate although intellect and technology are well developed;*
- Regenerative Worlds: where souls who still have something to atone for may gain new strength by resting from the fatigue of struggle; the next stage for our planet, where goodness and understanding predominate over ignorance;*
- Happy Worlds: orbs where the good outweighs evil, people live for the good of society and seek progress together;*
- Divine Worlds: the habitations of purified spirits, where the good reigns completely.*

Although the earth is a world of trials and atonements, we see in it, for instance, differences in people's attitudes, and this observation leads to the apprehension of a scale of spiritual progress. However, everyone is still restricted by one condition: ignorance predominates over understanding.

Spirits who find themselves incarnated in any world are not bound to that same world indefinitely, nor do they go through all the phases of progress needed to achieve perfection in that one world. When they reach the maximum degree of advancement their world has to offer, they then pass on to a more elevated one, and so on successively till they reach the state of purified Spirits. These different worlds are stations where the Spirits find the elements they need for their progress that are in accordance with their degree of perfection. It is a reward to be allowed to ascend to a world of higher elevation, just as it is a punishment to prolong one's stay in a miserable world, or to be relegated to another even unhappier than that which one was forced to leave, due to persisting badness.

"There are collective emigrations and immigrations from one world to another. Thus, new elements, new races of spirits are introduced to the population of the globe. They come to mingle with existing races, constituting new races of human beings. As spirits, they never lose anything once it has been acquired. They carry with them intelligence and intuition of the knowledge they possess. They impress, consequently, their character on the corporeal race they came to animate. There is no need of new bodies created for especial use. Since the corporeal



species exist, they find them ready to receive them; they are simply new inhabitants." *Genesis* by Allan Kardec (chapter 11, item 37)



Jesus comments on diversity in the well-known "Parable of the Sower", in Matthew 13, 4 - 9: "A sower went out to sow seeds. And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky ground, where it had little soil. It sprang up at once because the soil was not deep, and when the sun rose it was scorched, and it withered for lack of roots. Some seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it. But some seed fell on rich soil, and produced fruit, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

The sower in the Parable is Jesus; the seeds are his teachings. The seed that fell by the road symbolizes people who listen to God's word but disregard it. They're looking for material interests which are symbolized by the birds.

The seed that fell on rocky grounds symbolizes people who listen to God's word and want to follow it. However, they are "too eager" and create blind faith, without rational a basis, so they don't create roots. And when they see the problems others suffer, symbolized by the sun, they rebel against God, because they didn't really understand His teachings. The seed that fell among thorns symbolizes people who listen to the Gospel, and even think it's important, but preoccupations with money and power, represented by the thorns, kill any initiative to achieve spiritual understanding.

Finally, there is the seed that fell on fertile ground, which symbolizes people who listen to the teachings and try to follow them. They try to understand the reasons for life and why we should practice the goodness for our fellow human beings. But Jesus said that there would be differences even among these because we all have our limits and our ability to practice good is different for each one of us. Therefore, it's up to each of us to direct our rate of progress. Jesus sowed his seeds more than 2000 thousand years ago; the harvest is each person's choice.

In The Gospel, According to Spiritism, Chapter 3, Item 19, Saint Augustine presents to us the idea of Progress as being a law of nature. All beings of creation, whether they are animated or not, have been submitted to this law through the bounty of God, who wishes everything to be exalted and to prosper. (...) At the same time as living beings progress morally, so the worlds in which they live progress materially. If we were to accompany a world during its different phases, from the first instant the atoms destined to its construction began to agglomerate, we would see it traveling along on a constantly progressive scale, although these steps would be imperceptible to each generation. It would offer its inhabitants a more agreeable home as these generations passed, according to the manner in which they themselves advanced along their pathway to progress. Nothing in nature remains stationary. So we find that together with people, the animals who are his helpers, the vegetables, and the habitations in which they live are all constantly marching along parallel to one another. . (...) According to this law, the world has been in a materially and morally inferior position to that which it finds itself today, and it will lift itself up in both these aspects so as to reach a more elevated degree in the future. The time has now been reached for one of these periodic transformations, which will move the Earth upwards from a world of atonement to that of a regenerating planet where the individuals will be happy because God's laws will reign.

Regenerative worlds serve as transitional phases between those of probation and happiness. The penitent soul finds calm and rest on them and can continue the purifying process. Beyond doubt, Humankind still finds oneself subject to the laws that rule matter: humanity still experiences the same sensations and desires, but is liberated from the ungoverned passions, which would enslave them, freed from pride which silences the heart,



envy which tortures and hate which suffocates. On all sides the word 'love' is written; perfect equity resides over all social relationships; everyone recognizes God and tries to travel in His direction by fulfilling His laws. Compared to the Earth, these worlds are very pleasant, and many of you would be happy to inhabit them because they represent the calm after the storm, convalescence after cruel sickness.



Quiz

Correlate - number column 1 according to column 2:

() *Primitive Worlds*

() *Worlds of Trials and Atonements*

() *Regenerative Worlds*

() *Happy Worlds*

() *Divine Worlds*

1. *Similar to earth, where ignorance and evil still predominates although intellect and technology are well developed;*

2. *Orbs where the good outweighs evil, people live for the good of society and seek progress together;*

3. *Where evil dominates, intended for the first incarnations of the human soul;*

4. *The habitations of purified spirits, where the good reigns completely.*

5. *Where good and understanding*

ANSWERS

3; 1; 5; 2; 4.



Weekly Assignment

Participants should:

1. Analyze and write down what they think of the following statements:

"To be careful doesn't mean you're suspicious; it means you light your own light and help others who are in the dark."

"It's necessary to cultivate the habit of praying so it becomes a natural part of one's life, as easy as breathing."

2. Affirmation: "When I pray I rise above."

3. Reflect on the lesson below.

Quick Course on Human Relations (by Richard Simonetti)

The six most important words: "I admit I made a mistake."

The five most important words: "You did a good job!"

The four most important words: "What is your opinion?"

The three most important words: "If you could..."

The two most important words: "Thank You."

The one most important word: "We"

The one least important word: "I"



INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITISM



United States
Spiritist Council

LESSON 8

Fundamentals of Spiritism Communicability of the Spirits

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Fundamentals of Spiritism

Communicability of the Spirits

Lesson 8

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (40 minutes)
(This lesson should be developed in two sessions)
4. Quiz: Ask them to answer the questions proposed. (5 minutes)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

Spirits are beings like ourselves and constitute a population surrounding us, though invisible to us in our normal state. Therefore, through mediumship we can obtain as extensive, explicit, and rapid communications from spirits as those that we can have from human beings.

From Spiritism we learn that after physical death we:

- ...keep thinking.
- ...want to communicate with our loved ones.
- ...are able to visit them.
- ...can act upon matter through the perispirit.



Life is a constant coming and going from one sphere to the other. Wherever there is inhabited land on our planet, there must consequently be a steady stream of those returning to the spiritual world, just as there is of those coming in to reincarnate. Traditional religions, bent with their methods of frightening into conversion or holding power through fear, and characterized by the use of rituals and mysticism, have done little to clarify the meaning of the phenomenon called “death”. Rather, they have only taught delusions, which have left the vast majority of earth’s population virtually unprepared for this normal and natural event. The orthodox teachings of heaven or eternal damnation in hell, of sleeping till the final judgment day, have done nothing to alleviate human anxiety; nor has it done anything to prepare people for what they may actually expect on their return to their spiritual homeland.

MEDIUMISTIC COMMUNICATIONS: NATURAL FACT AND RESOURCE OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

The communicability of the Spirits with the living is not a recent fact, but rather an old one. In addition, it was not a creation of Spiritism. The only distinction is that in the past, the mediumistic phenomena were freely disclosed within the population, such as it occurs at the present time; however, only the initiated studied them, in private meetings.

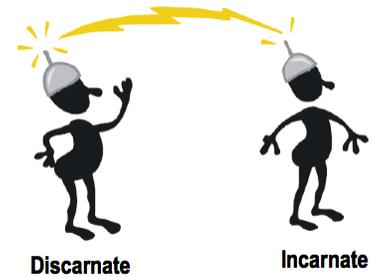
The possibility of the communication of the Spirits does not present a philosophical or metaphysical doubt. It is an established fact, resulting from the observations and experiences rigorously carried through by eminent researchers.



However, some people consider the mediumistic phenomena to be extra-sensorial, limited to the brain or derived from it. Spiritism clarifies this by declaring that: *Spirits constantly act upon the mental and even the physical world. They act upon matter and thought; they comprise one of the powers of nature and are the actual cause behind a multitude of phenomena that have been unexplainable or poorly explained until now, and which have not found a rational solution except in Spiritism.* (*The Spirits' Book* - Introduction - Item 6)

The mediumistic interchange is a result of a perception occurring beyond matter (extra-sensorial perception), followed by an attunement, where the emotions and ideas of the discarnate are captured by the incarnate.

The influence of the Spirits upon our thoughts and actions, either for the good or for the evil, is greater than you suppose, for very frequently it is they who guide you. (*The Spirits' Book* - Question 459)



The communicability of the Spirits is made through mediumship, which is a psychic faculty that all human beings possess, more or less developed, that is to say: *Every individual who senses the influence of spirits to any degree of intensity is a medium. This faculty is inherent in humankind. It therefore does not constitute an exclusive privilege, and there are very few individuals who do not possess it at least in a rudimentary state. Thus, we can state that everyone is a medium to a certain degree. Usually, however, this label is applied solely to those who possess a well-characterized mediumistic faculty that expresses itself through patent effects of a certain intensity, which depends on a more or less sensitive physical organization.* (*The Mediums' Book* - Question 159)

“Mediumship is one of the attributes of human beings, which is used to communicate with Spirits.” (Evolution in Two Worlds by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier and Waldo Vieira)

Definition of Mediumship

Mediumship - the exercise of the mediumistic faculty.

Mediumistic - (from the Latin words *medium* = intermediary and *anima* = soul) appertaining to the special faculty or action of being the intermediary between incarnates and discarnates.

Medium - is the interpreter of the Spirits. Although almost all people feel the influence of spirits, to either greater or lesser degree, this classification is only practically applicable to those people whose faculty shows itself clearly and with some intensity, producing well-marked results.

The mediumistic faculty does not reveal itself in all cases in the same manner. Each medium has generally a special aptitude for some special order of phenomena, thus resulting in as great a variety of mediums as of phenomena. This faculty, although inherent in the human species, is far from existing in all people to the same degree.

There are two levels of Mediumship:

1. Subliminal - Exists or functions without an apparent manifestation
2. Ostensible - Evident to the medium who can either be conscious, semi-conscious or unconscious during the manifestation.



Mediumship is not an evolutionary patrimony of the Spirit, whether it be incarnate or not; it represents a neutral force capable of elevating or lowering the individual according to the direction it receives. *Mediumship is not a quality of the transitory flesh, but an expression of the immortal spirit.*

MOSES PROHIBITION AGAINST EVOKING THE DEAD

Some people, mainly those who embrace religious interpretations different from Spiritism, when they do not reject the possibility of the communication between the two planes of life altogether, highlight the mosaic prohibition against evoking the dead.



In Mosaic law it is written:

Do not turn to mediums or seek out mediums or fortune tellers, for you will be defiled by them. (Leviticus 19, 31)

Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or tells fortune or who consults the dead. (Deuteronomy 18, 10-11)

It is necessary to discuss the motives that inspired Moses to forbid evocation or dialogues with the dead. The Hebrew lawgiver wanted his people to abandon all the customs they had acquired while in Egypt, where evocations were in use, and were subject to abuse. (Heaven and Hell - Chapter 11 - Item 3)

Moses' prohibition was well-justified because evoking the dead did not originate from the sentiments of respect, affection or piety toward them. Instead, it was a means of fortune telling, much like the omens and auguries exploited by charlatanism and superstition. (Heaven and Hell - Chapter 11 - Item 4)

Moreover, Spiritism condemns everything that motivated Moses' interdict. Consequently, since Spiritists "do not sacrifice children or offer libations to honor the gods"; since they do not inquire of heavenly bodies, the dead or sorcerers in order to divine the future that God has wisely hidden from humankind; since they reject any form of making a business of the faculty of communicating with spirits, which some possess; since they are not motivated by curiosity or greed but by a sentiment of piety and a desire to learn, to improve themselves, or to comfort suffering souls, then Moses' prohibition does not relate in any way to them. (Heaven and Hell - Chapter 11 - Item 4)

The mediumistic practice, according to the interpretation of Spiritism, has as its objective to receive advice from the enlightened Spirits; to moralize those people imprisoned in the meshes of vices and passions; to develop and increase knowledge and the clarifications of who we are, what is our origin and what is our destination. Just as importantly, it has as its goal, equally, to maintain friendly and loving relationships with the departed loved ones.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRITS

The instructive, comforting and highly moral guidelines sent to us by the Superior Spirits through mediumship, lead us to reflect upon the mediumistic practice, under the light of Spiritism and of Jesus' Gospel. It is a factor of human progress, due to the benefits it creates.



“Without Christ, mediumship is simply a ‘means of communication’ and nothing more; a mere possibility of information like so many others, which can be possessed just as easily by those interested in causing trouble, thereby increasing the number of unfortunate captives. Mediumship is a ‘means of communication’, and Jesus himself tells us, ‘I am the door ... if anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture!’”
(Missionaries of the Light by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier)

We should not overlook that, just as there are imperfect incarnates, who try to lead people to err and to commit criminal acts, there are also those who attempt to do the same in the spiritual plane. That these is so because the death of the physical body does not transform people into angels or scholars. Therefore, due to the infinite varieties of intelligence and morality that exists among spirits, their communications will always reflect the elevation or the backwardness of the spirits who gives them.

It happens far more often than we suppose, that unhappy Spirits burdened with afflicted minds live very frequently with incarnate companions that attract them. They join us in our common activities, ramble in the domestic nest, they participate in our conversations, and they join us during our meals, upon which they depend, in a unique process of vampirization. They are disturbed and they disturb us; they suffer and they cause us suffering; they hate and they generate hatred within us; feeling unhappy, they make others unhappy. (Divaldo Pereira Franco - Perturbadores. Glossário Espírita Cristão. 3)

“Mediumship is not a gift of the privileged; it is a quality common to all people and requires sincere goodwill in the realm of betterment.” (Missionaries of the Light by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier)

“Do not foster the premature development of your psychic faculties! To see without understanding or to hear without discerning can cause considerable disasters to the heart. Seek, above all, to progress in virtue and to perfect your sentiments. Enhance your self-balance and the Lord will open up to you the door of new knowledge.” (Missionaries of the Light by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier)

“In your spiritualist activities, remember that you are involved in a divine and worldwide movement for the liberation of consciences in a sublime revelation of the eternal life and immortal qualities for all persons of goodwill!” (Missionaries of the Light by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier)

If you intend to have exchanges with the wise, and then grow in knowledge, value your experiences and increase the light of your reasoning! If you are hoping for the sublime company of the saints, then sanctify yourselves in your daily struggles, because angelic entities do not remain secluded in celestial jubilation; they also work for the improvement of the world, awaiting your own rise to the angelic state! If you desire the presence of the good, then become good yourselves! Without affability and gentleness, without fraternal understanding and spiritually constructive attitudes, you will not be able to understand affable and friendly, evolved and constructive spirits. (Missionaries of the Light by Andre Luiz, psychographed by Francisco Xavier)





Quiz

True or False - use a [T] if the statement is true and [F] if it's false.

1. *Spirits* are nothing but the souls of human beings stripped of their physical body.
() TRUE () FALSE
2. After physical death the spirits cannot communicate with their loved ones.
() TRUE () FALSE
3. Mediumship first appeared because of Spiritism
() TRUE () FALSE
4. The influence of the Spirits upon our thoughts and actions is greater than you suppose.
() TRUE () FALSE
5. Everyone who is in any degree influenced by Spirits is a medium.
() TRUE () FALSE
6. The mediumistic faculty reveals itself in all cases in the same manner.
() TRUE () FALSE
7. Mediumship is n a neutral force capable of elevating or lowering the individual according to the direction it receives.
() TRUE () FALSE
8. At the time of Moses people used mediumship as a means of fortune telling, much like the omens and auguries exploited by charlatanism and superstition.
() TRUE () FALSE
9. God has given mediumship to humanity to help us in our worldly affairs.
() TRUE () FALSE
10. Good mediums are those who understand that the true medium has a mission to fulfill, and must be ready to sacrifice oneself for the good of others.”
() TRUE () FALSE

ANSWERS

1. T, 2. F, 3. F, 4. T, 5. T, 6. F, 7. T, 8. T, 9. F, 10. T,



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT - LESSON 8

Participants should:

1. Read lesson number 26 from the book Life's Answers "Small Donations" every day.
2. Highlight the statements that touched you the most and write in a notebook the one that you most feel you need to work on.
3. Reflect and answer:
 - a) What do small donations mean to you?
 - b) Write down what you understood about the 2nd paragraph of the lesson.
 - c) Have you thought about what a donation of a single piece of clothing mean?
 - d) Do you help the sick people you meet?
 - e) How often do you visit sick people in hospitals?
 - f) How often do you offer comfort to your brothers and sisters?
 - g) Do you show tolerance toward your brothers and sisters?
 - h) Give us an example of how you practice the "charity of keeping silent."
4. Write down how often you made small donations this week.
5. Affirmation: "I want and I can help my fellow human beings."

Small Donations

Do not underestimate the so-called "small donations".

A frugal plate of food that you offer to the needy may well be the last resource they need to avoid starvation.

A piece of clothing that you give to the needy may well represent the providential support that will stave off illness.

A small dose of medicine that you managed to give to a patient may well be the relief that helps someone avoid a march down a corridor that leads to death.

A quick visit to a sick person may well be the unexpected encouragement that takes away despair and helps one take the first steps toward the renewal of strength.

The simple comforting note you sent to a brother or a sister in need may well serve as the anchor that helps them regain hope.

One minute of tolerance, when you endured constraints from a person during a difficult conversation, may well be the one time they're helped to escape from an unpleasant situation or a particular accident.

A few lines in a constructive dialogue may well be the means for a person to avoid surrendering to thoughts of suicide or delinquency.

Moments of charitable silence when dealing with aggressive people may well be the indispensable support one needs to accept the need for self-renewal.

Do not underestimate the value of small donations.

The supposedly insignificant assistance you provide may well be the decisive ingredient that tips the balance in crucial moments of salvation.

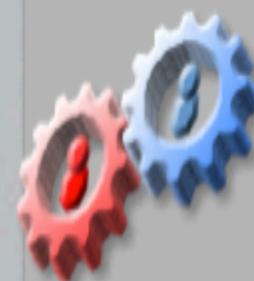
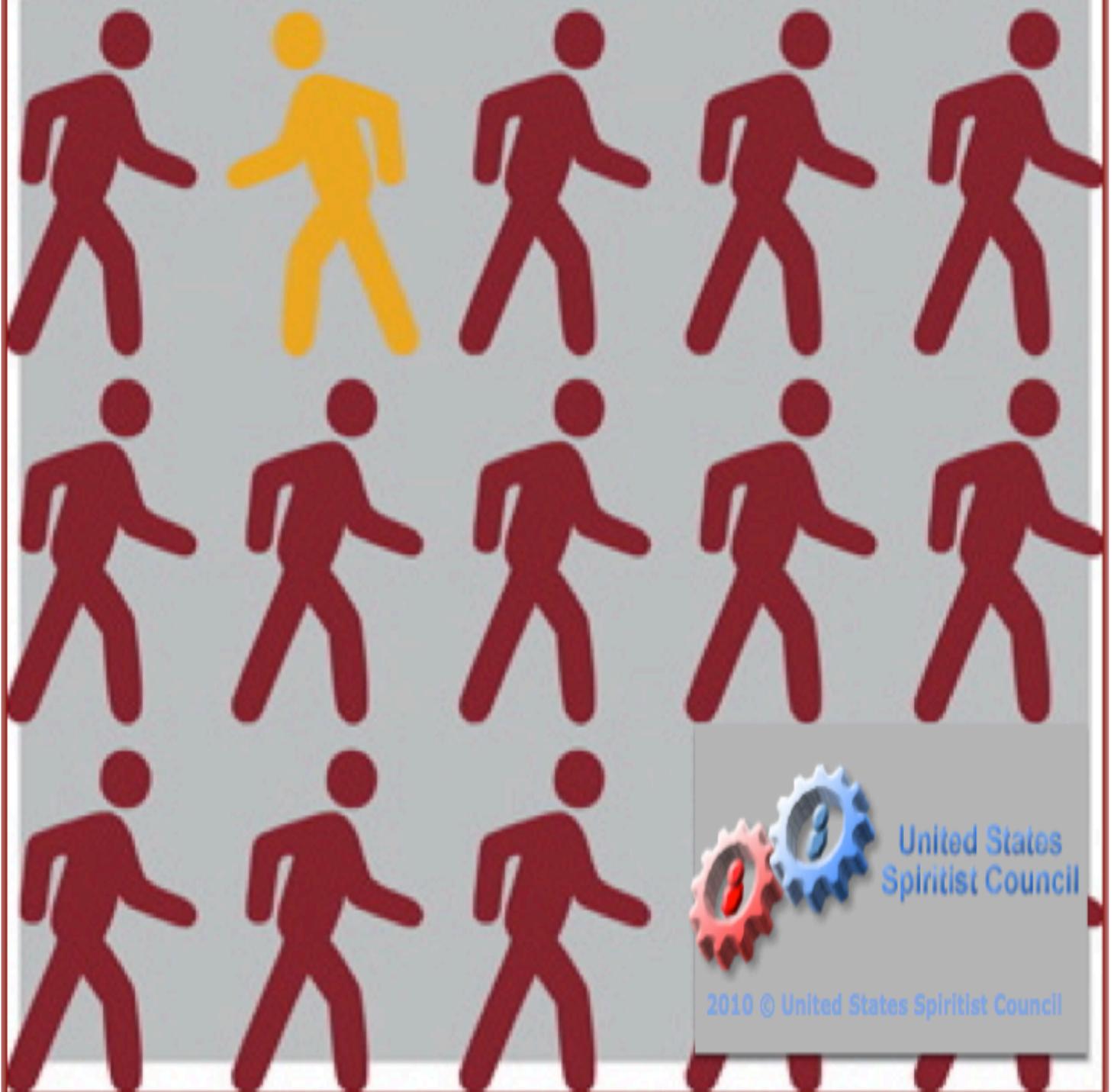
From the book Respostas da Vida (Answers from Life) dictated by the spirit André Luiz to Francisco Cândido Xavier



Introduction to Spiritism - Lesson 9

Free Will

Fatalism and Determinism



United States
Spiritist Council

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Free Will, Fatalism and Determination

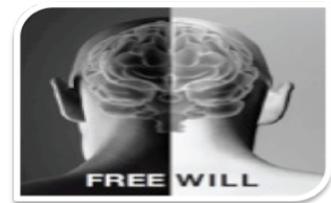
Lesson 9

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (40 minutes)
4. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
5. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

FREE-WILL

The problem of free will has proved to be a grave stumbling block to both philosopher and theologian. Free will has been one of the most important and most debated doctrines in church history. Augustine debated Pelagius over this doctrine.¹ Luther debated Erasmus.² Calvinists have debated Arminians.³



It has seemed all the more difficult to reconcile people's will and freedom with the demands of a natural law and of a divine will, since, to most people, the intervention of blind chance seems to further complicate the problem.

WHAT IS FREE WILL?

It is a sweltering summer day. You trudge past the ice cream parlor. Wow - 10 new flavors! Special of the day! Frozen yogurt, too! You go inside and proclaim: "I'll have double-fudge chocolate, please." Is picking chocolate over the vast array of other flavors a "free will choice?" No. It is simply the exercise of a preference.

"Free will" refers to the type of decision that is uniquely human: a moral choice.

Free Will is the notion that human action expresses personal choice, rather than the intervention of divine forces. Free will is a fundamental right of the human consciousness. It is the faculty that each individual possesses to determine one's own behavior, or, in other words, it is the possibility that one possesses, between two or more sufficient reasons for wanting or acting, to choose one of them and to make it prevail over the others. The belief in personal free will is a deeply rooted aspect of human phenomenal experience, and is so powerful that even those who do not subscribe to it intellectually still feel it in their personal lives as much as others who do subscribe to it.

Allan Kardec asks the Spirits: *Do humans act with free will?*

The reply is: *Since they have freedom of thought, they have freedom of action. Without free will, human beings would be machines.*

¹ See Luther's work, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. Henry Cole (1823; repr., Baker Book House, 1976). [↔]

² See Luther's work, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. Henry Cole (1823; repr., Baker Book House, 1976). [↔]

³ See especially *The Canons of the Synod of Dort*, chapters III and IV. [↔]



Unlike the animals, the human beings have free will. Within this divine spark lies our potential to shape and change the world. Without free will human life would be a mechanical series of predetermined movements. When we decide to do or not do something, our conscience always alerts us about it, approving or censuring us. Proper use of free will beautifies and perfects. Misuse of free will plunders and destroys. It is a uniquely human undertaking to learn how to use free will properly.

A belief in free will is important for human strivings. People cherish their sense of control over the world and their own behavior. Recently published articles by Kathleen Vohs, PhD, and by Roy F. Baumeister, PhD⁴, using arguments based upon observation and experimentation, show the negative consequences (cheating, aggression) of informing participants that free will does not exist.

The good spirits tell us that as a spirit progresses its free will, so to speak, expands, i.e. the spirit takes responsibility for a wider range of choices. The spirit's progress will depend on these choices, as well as the time taken for its progress - that is the reason why it is correct to affirm that *we are the architects of our own destiny*. However, we have a tendency to take credit for the positive things we do (free will), but not for our misdeeds and failures ("I had no choice", "I was abused as a child", "I was angry"). This suggests to us that much of the emotion surrounding the issue of free will is not about freedom per se but about self-esteem maintenance.

Free will, the liberty of the soul, is exercised, above all, at the hour of reincarnation. In choosing its family and environment, it knows in advance what trials await it, but the soul comprehends equally that these trials are necessary in order to develop its qualities, eliminate its defects, and disintegrate its prejudices and vices. We must consider, however, that in compulsory reincarnations the Spirit does not have conditions to participate in its reincarnation planning.

FATALISM AND DETERMINISM

In *The Spirits' Book*, question 851, Allan Kardec asks the Spirits: *Is there fatalism in the events of life according to the meaning attached to that word; that is, are all events predetermined, and if so, what becomes of free will?*

The Spirits' reply is: *Fatalism only exists when applied to the choice made by spirits upon incarnating to undergo this or that trial. Upon choosing a particular trial they delineate for themselves a kind of destiny, which is the proper consequence of the position in which they now find themselves. I am referring only to trials of a physical nature. As for moral trials and temptations, spirits preserve their free will to choose good or evil and are always able to yield or resist. When good spirits see individuals lose courage, they may rush to their aid but they cannot influence them to the point of eclipsing their will. An evil spirit, that is, one who has evolved very little, can disturb and frighten them by exacerbating a physical danger. Whatever the circumstances, however, the incarnated spirit still retains its entire freedom of choice.*

The struggles and the difficulties incarnate Spirits face do not constitute fatalism but, on the contrary, provide an opportunity for the full exercise of their free-will, considering that the trials of life they experience are part of the reincarnation planning carried out or agreed to by the Spirit, before its reincarnation.

The seeming fatalism, which is forever placing obstructions in the path of our endeavor, is in reality but the inevitable outcome of our past errors. It is the effect that reverts to its cause;

⁴ Baumeister, R.F. (2008). Free will in scientific psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3, 14-19



it is the fulfillment of the program to which we acquiesced before we were reincarnated, following the advice of our spiritual monitors, pursuant to our own welfare and improvement.

Spirits are always capable of choosing their own path and their choices will determine what they will undergo throughout their present life and future incarnations. Thus, we should take the responsibility for our choices and their outcomes, since what we may consider to be misfortunes are actually the life events we must endure in order to progress. We establish our own "fate". The power to make it better is in our own hands. Sowing is free; harvesting is compulsory. This means that we can choose what to sow, but we can only harvest what we have sown. Thus, the miseries, the vicissitudes of the corporeal life, are a result of our own imperfections; they are the atonements for errors committed in our current or preceding existences.

Hence, God leaves to each spirit the decision as to what direction it will take so that it can earn the fruits of everything it undertakes. By making use of its free will, the soul establishes its own destiny and prepares the way for its own future sorrow or happiness. So, if a spirit decides to be good, it will reap the rewards for its decision. The same happens to those who decide to do the contrary: their misconduct will catch up with them. And, in both cases, the influence of other spirits will ensue - the imperfect ones will try to lead them towards negative actions; the good ones, towards the practice of goodness. But never - be it in the full tide of progress, in the bitter hour of trial or in the midst of a passionate struggle against evil - will the help that descends from above be refused to it. If the soul will but remain true to itself, no matter how unworthy it may appear to be, then, as soon as it manifests an intention to regain the straight and blessed road, and then will Providence will send assistance and support to it.

This assertion leads us to another question Allan Kardec asks the Spirits: *Why have some spirits followed the path of goodness, while others the path of evil?*

And the Spirits' reply is: *Don't they have free will? God does not create any bad spirits from the start; they are created simple and ignorant, that is, capable of both good and evil. Those who are bad have become so through their own will.*

The first use to which the individual would put his or her absolute freedom would certainly be the elimination of all pain from this life, and to contrive that it should be one all of joy.

Good and evil are not genetically predetermined; it is the exercise of our own choices. Thus, we must reject the popular notion that says, "To err is human." On the contrary, "To be free is human."

FIVE STAGES IN THE STRUGGLE OF FREE WILL

by Rabbi Noach Weinberg⁵

LEVEL ONE: SELF-AWARENESS - Become aware of the choices you're making. Life is a constant stream of decisions. Once you become sensitive to the fact that you are constantly making choices, and then you can then monitor them. That's using your free will actively, not passively.

Don't let decisions just "happen." Put your periscope up. Your decisions shape your life and determine your destiny. Take charge. If you don't, you're just a pedestrian, watching as life passes you by.

⁵ http://www.kiruv.com/TeachingMaterials/foundations/Free_Will_-_Our_Greatest_Power.asp



LEVEL TWO: BE YOUR OWN PERSON - Don't accept society's beliefs as your own unless you've thought them through and agree with them. Live for yourself, not for society.

Evaluate your past decisions. Start each day anew. Don't remain bound to guidelines and determinations you made years ago, or even to ones that you made yesterday. A particular career that you chose in college may no longer be the best thing for you today. Check your assumptions and make sure they are really yours and not someone else's. Don't be a puppet of society.

LEVEL THREE: DISTINGUISH BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL - Within each of us, a fierce battle is raging constantly. It's a battle between the cravings of our body and the aspirations of our soul.

There are times when you know objectively that something is good for you, but your physical desires get in the way and distort your outlook.

Don't be ambushed by your body. Identify whether it's your body or your soul talking. Until then, you don't even know why you've made a decision.

Avoid the escape routes. Choose what is meaningful and productive. Choose life.

LEVEL FOUR: IDENTIFY WITH YOUR SOUL, NOT YOUR BODY

Achieve mastery over your body by identifying with your soul.

"The righteous talk to their bodily desires, while evil people let their desires talk to them."

The question is who's running the show? Who will dictate what you're going to do? (The Talmud)

The only way to attain inner peace is to get the body to desire what the soul wants. The body can go along with the soul. And although it "hurts" a little to walk away from lustful desires, we can survive without them. It's the only practical choice. Real peace comes only when the body wishes for the soul's success.

LEVEL FIVE: MAKE YOUR WILL GOD'S WILL

The highest stage of free will is not when you ask yourself, "What does my soul want?" It's when you ask yourself, "What does God want?" When that is your prime interest, you will have achieved the highest form of living. You are using your free will to merge with the most meaningful and powerful force in the universe: the transcendental.

Free will is the choice between life and death. Attach yourself to God and you will be attached to eternity - the ultimate form of life itself.

Make your will His will.

FREE WILL

(...) Certainly, civilization's greatest accomplishments were achieved by people who used their freedom to exalt the good; however, to explain the realities of free will we must look at the other side of the picture. (...) Let us consider the disappointment of those who hoard coins all their lives, at the cost of much labor by their fellowmen to satisfy their own avarice. When they feel the approach of death, they find themselves without a speck of light to ease their afflictions in the darkness. (...) Let us consider the remorse of those who surrender to delinquency, hypnotized by self-adoration. They wake up weakened and segregated in the bowels of prisons of despair. No one can deny that all of them, though confined to captivity on earth, are free. (...) In spite of the natural obstacles that are part of the learning process, they are free to build, educate, understand and serve. This is why the Spiritist Doctrine excites the human mind today, helping in the discovery of the Divine Statutes. It illuminates our consciences so that we may discover how the freedom to do what we want is inseparable from the freedom to do what is right. (...) Emmanuel - Livro da Esperança (The Book of Hope)



"I may not agree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."
Voltaire

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT - LESSON 9

Participants should:

1. Read the lesson FREE, BUT Accountable for One's Actions, every day.

FREE, BUT Accountable for One's Actions

To those who ask if human beings are free; we answer affirmatively.

Yet, we must add that although individuals are free, they are also accountable for their actions. An individual can carry on with whatever desires he or she may have, but remain inescapably connected to the fruits of their actions.

For the sake of clarifying the subject as much as possible, let us briefly examine some issues with planting and harvesting or, better yet, free-will and fate, as an incarnate spirit journeys through the world.

OWNERSHIP - an individual is free to retain ownerships that terrestrial legislation grants according to personal diligence and provisional rights. If the person exercises these rights for the benefit of all, he or she is regarded as a respectable caretaker by superior forces of life. However, if these rights are abused to satisfy one's excesses and the result is a lack of resources for fellow beings, then the person faces a series of trials and must learn to light the flame of self-denial inside.

BUSINESS - an individual is free to execute whatever business transactions that person believes are acceptable. If the deal brings real advantages to one's clientele, the person receives the title of benefactor. But, if the financial wellbeing of others is destroyed because the objective is to gain unnecessary profits, which cause clear harm to others, then this same person faces a series of trials, and must learn to light the flame of righteousness inside.

STUDY - an individual is free to read and write, teach and study any desired subject and may attain the title of scholar if cultural resources are mobilized to assist others who share that person's terrestrial existence. But, if the values of intelligence are used to support evil and affect the existence of companions in Humanity, for the purpose of inflating the individual's pride; then the person faces a series of trials, and must learn to light the flame of discernment inside.

WORK - an individual is free to engage in whatever tasks he or she chooses. And if the work is a contribution to general happiness, the person is considered a worker for progress. However, if the gifts of enterprise and action are misused, and if disturbing and unfortunate activities are undertaken to gratify one's less worthy interests, then the person faces a series of trials, and must learn to light the flame of service to fellow human beings.

SEX - an individual is free to expend energies and sexual drive in any way he or she prefers. If these energies are used for the healthy protection of a home to fulfill duties as parents, or to support art and culture, or beneficence and enlightenment; the person is seen as a vehicle for blessings. However, if the objective is to satisfy the senses and convert genetic resources into pain and unbalance, as well as anguish and desperation for others, and in the process hurt people's feelings, by being disloyal and disrespectful in life's adjustments and



affective commitments, after proposing or accepting them, then the person faces a series of trials, and must learn to light the flame of pure love.

An individual is free even to receive or refuse life, but invariably he or she collects the goods or evils that result from one's attitudes, before concessions of Divine Goodness are made.

We are all free to desire, choose, create and acquire, but we are also obligated to face the consequences of our own actions.

The Spiritist Doctrine has a role in explaining that the principles of Eternal Justice in the entire Universe do not function simply as the basis for paradises and hells, or external punishments and privileges. They function, mainly, through the mechanisms of reincarnation, in us, with us, next to us and for us.

It was for this reason that Jesus, who understood that there is no right without obligation or balance, or without a clean conscience, stated clearly: "You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."

Excerpt from the book: Encontro Marcado, by Emmanuel & Chico Xavier



Prayers

Introduction to Spiritism - Lesson 10



United States
Spiritist Council



Prayer

Lesson 10

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (40 minutes)
(This lesson should be developed in two sessions)
4. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
5. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

Prayer

Prayer should be an intimate overflowing from the soul to God.

*Prayer is the supreme resource of the afflicted. In the hours of depression, despair, who has not found in prayer some measure of calmness, of comfort, some balm for one's wounds?
(Leon Denis - Here and Hereafter)*

Prayer brings people closer to the Most High; it is the link of union between Heaven and Earth. (GAS Chap. 2 Item 8) Through prayer, humans call to themselves the concourse of good Spirits, who come to uphold them in their good resolutions and inspire them with good thoughts. They thus acquire the moral strength needed to overcome difficulties and to return to the upright path when they have wandered from it. (GAS Chap. 27 Item 11)

Types of Prayer

In The Gospel According to Spiritism, Chapter 27, Item 9, Allan Kardec wrote: Prayer is an invocation: by means of prayer we communicate through thought with the being to whom the prayer is addressed. Its purpose can be a request, an acknowledgement, or a glorification. One may pray for oneself or for someone else, for the living or for the dead. It is through prayers that we open our hearts and establish a powerful link, Creator to Creation. It is still through prayer that we reveal a state of absolute honesty. It is our moment of true intimacy with God, who as we all intuitively understand, is within us, in the innermost recesses of our beings.

- ✚ • Asking Prayer
- ✚ • Thanksgiving prayers
- ✚ • Prayers of praise.

Jesus said: And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like the pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. (Matthew, 6: 5-8)



Quality of Prayer

- ✚ Pray in secret
- ✚ Do not prolong your prayers
- ✚ Before praying, if you have anything against another, forgive them.
- ✚ Pray with humility

As instructed by Jesus, when we pray we should not make ourselves conspicuous, but rather pray in secret. Our prayers don't need to be long and complicated, because it is not by the quantity of the words that they will be heard, but by their sincerity and fervor. Before praying, we should forgive our enemies, so that God can also forgive us. Finally, when praying we should look at our conscience in order to recognize our mistakes and defects, always assuming a humble attitude.

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: "God, I thank you that I am not like other men robbers, evildoers, and adulterers or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get."

But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke, 18: 10-14)



The Effectiveness of Prayer

The effectiveness of prayer has been proven in all areas; its power is derived from the thoughts and love that we use to formulate them; love for other and ourselves. Prayers addressed to God are heard by spirits in charge of carrying out God's will; those that are addressed to good spirits are taken to God. (GAS Chap. 27 Item 9)

- ✚ There are those who contest the effectiveness of prayer, saying that,
- ✚ God knows all our needs and it is useless to enumerate them to Him
- ✚ They say that our petitions cannot change God's decrees.

Without any doubt there are natural and immutable laws from which God cannot derogate according to one's caprice; there is a great distance, however, from believing this and believing that all life's circumstances are subject to fatalism. (GAS Chap. 27 Item 6)

In addition, how could God satisfy all the desires that the human beings pray for? Most people are unable to discern what would be suitable, and most profitable to them. God alone knows what is best for us, and failing to satisfy our demands, he will at least send us fluidic assistance and resignation. (Here and Hereafter, Chapter 51, Leon Denis).



What God will concede is:

- ✚ Courage, patience and resignation.
- ✚ The means of resolving situations with the help of ideas suggested to us by good Spirits at God's instigation,
- ✚ We retain the merit for the decisions taken.

A man is lost in a desert and is suffering from terrible thirst. He feels faint and falls to the ground. He prays to God to help him and waits; but no angels come to bring him something to drink. Meanwhile, a good Spirit suggests to him the thought to get up and follow one of the pathways that are before him. Then, in a purely mechanical motion, he gathers his strength, gets up and walks erratically. Arriving at an elevated area he spots a brook not far away. Upon seeing it he regains his courage, and if he has faith he will exclaim: "Thank you my God for the thought you inspired in me and for the strength you have given me." If he does not have faith, he will say: "What a good thought I had! What good luck I had by taking the path to the right instead of the one to the left! Sometimes chance really does serve us well! I must congratulate myself for my courage and for not having given up!" (GAS Chap 27 -Item 8)

The Action of Prayer: Transmission of Thought

As Spiritism helps us to understand ourselves it improves our understanding of prayer, and helps us transcend the reality of our lives. Spiritism also makes the act of prayer clear by explaining that it is transmitted through thought. Both incarnate and discarnate beings are immersed in the universal fluid, which occupies space. Thought is transmitted through this fluid. So, when a thought is directed toward some being either on the earth or in space, from an incarnate to a discarnate, a fluidic current is established from the one to the other to transmit the thought. The current's energy depends on the strength of the thought and the will; this is how prayer is heard by Spirits wherever they may be, how spirits communicate amongst themselves, how they transmit their inspirations to us, and how communications at a distance are established among incarnates. Prayer is nonetheless still subordinated to the will of God. (GAS Chap 27 -Item 9)

*In the book *Here and Hereafter*, Chapter 51, Leon Denis explains to us the action of the prayer: *When a stone strikes the water, its surface is made to vibrate in concentric undulations. So, likewise is the universal fluid set to vibrating by our thoughts and prayers; but with this difference - the vibrations of the water are limited, whereas those of the universal fluid follow one another ad infinitum. All beings and all worlds are steeped in this element, just as we are in the Earth's atmosphere. It follows from this that our thought, when impelled by a sufficient impulse and speeded by a sufficient force of the will, has the power to impress other, perhaps incalculably distant, souls. A fluidic current is thus established which enables the advanced spirits to influence us and to answer our summons, even from the far depths of space.**

The Power of Prayer

Although the sick man visited one doctor after another, no one could help. In desperation, he traveled to the great sage Reb Mordechai of Neshchiz and asked for his advice. "I suggest you consult the Master of Anipola," Reb Mordechai said. "I'm sure He can help!"

So the sick man hired a wagon and wagon driver. When he finally reached the little village of Anipola, the sick man asked for the Master of Anipola. "There's no doctor or master here!" the villagers replied.



Shocked and confused, the sick man traveled all the way back to Neshchiz, and told Reb Mordechai what happened. The great sage wasn't surprised. "With no doctor, how do you think the people get help?" he asked.

"They must ask God to heal them," the man replied. "That's the Master I was talking about!" Reb Mordechai said. "Ask Him, and He will help you, too." The sick man followed Reb Mordechai's advice. A short time later, he was cured.

All the Spirits recommend prayer. To renounce it is to ignore the benevolence of God. It is through prayer that we receive help from the good spirits who strive to strengthen us through good resolutions and the inspiration of sound ideas.

When people gather for prayer, they must join in mentally in order to transform it into a single vibration of love. This is what the Spirit, Andre Luiz tells us, in the following citation: *Ismalia, in an indefinably refined gesture, then began to pray, silently accompanied by the rest of us. We followed her plea phrase by phrase, mindful of the recommendations of our guide, who had advised us to repeat each phrase in our minds in order to impress the maximum rhythm and harmony onto her words - both sound and idea - in a single vibration.* (XAVIER, Francisco Cândido. *The Prayer of Ismalia - The Messengers.* By the Spirit André Luiz. 33 ed. Rio de Janeiro: FEB, 1999. Chap. 24, p. 162)

We should always pray calmly and serenely; formulating our thoughts of gratitude for Divine Mercy and following the wonderful habit of blessing: our home, our relatives, our neighbors, our street, our neighborhood, our city, everything and everyone that comes to mind. Feeling in peace and in harmony with our life, making of our acts a state of prayer; deciding to be kind and patient with everyone, to be calm in difficult situations, sensible on decisions and actions we have to take. God will listen and answer because above all He understands our feelings in any circumstance.

The Lord's Prayer explained

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name"

- We recognize and praise the importance of God in our lives.

"Thy kingdom come"

- We accept God's providence.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"

- We submit ourselves to the laws of God.

"Give us this day our daily bread"

- God provides us with both physical and spiritual nourishment.

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us"

- It is vital to forgive ourselves and others.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil"

- We recognize our limitations and the protection of God.

"So be it"

- We acknowledge and worship the wisdom of God.

Work as if you were to live a hundred years.

Pray as if you were to die tomorrow.

Benjamin Franklin
(1706-1790) American statesman,
scientist and philosopher.



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT - LESSON 10

Participants should:

1. Read the poem and message below and reflect upon them.
2. Highlight the statements that touched you the most and write in a notebook the one that you feel you need to work on the most.

Do you need me? I am there.

You cannot see Me, yet I am the light you see by

You cannot hear Me, yet I speak through your voice.

You cannot feel Me, Yet I am the power at work in your hands

I am at work, though you do not understand My ways.

I am at work, though you do not recognize My works

I am not strange visions. I am not mysteries.

Only in absolute stillness, beyond self,

Can you know Me as I am,

And then but as a feeling and a faith.

Yet I am there. Yet I am here. Yet I answer.

When you need Me, I am there.

Even if you deny Me, I am there.

Even when you feel most alone, I am there.

Even in your fears, I am there.

Even in your pain, I am there.

I am there when you pray and when you do not pray

Though your faith In Me is unsure,

My faith in you never wavers,

Because I know you, because I love you.

Poet and author Rev. James Dillet Freeman
The "Poet Laureate" of Unity 1912

MOMENTS OF LIGHT

If you are happy, pray, to ask God to give keep the equilibrium in your steps. If you are suffering, pray, so that you may have understanding and patience. If you are on the right path, pray, so that you do not deviate from it. If your soul is marginalized, going downhill or about to fall from dangerous cliffs, pray, so that your ability to reason may return you to the right path. If you are sick, pray, so that your health may be restored. If you have a strong body, pray, so you may not lose your strength. If you are working, pray, to ask God to keep you giving yourself in the privilege of serving. If you are not working, pray, to ask the Lord's messengers to help you find or find again, the happiness of working for the Good. If you already learned to forgive offenses, pray, so that you may continue cultivating this attitude. If you condemn or are disdainful of someone, pray, so that you will learn discernment and tolerance; ask Divine Providence to help you think of what you would do if you were the one who had had fallen or erred. If you possess superior knowledge, pray, so that you have the willingness to transmit it to others, without feelings of superiority and recognizing that the light of your intelligence comes from God, and He grants it so that you may do the best you can with your life and time. However, know also that He gave you the responsibility for your actions. If you still ignore life's truths, pray, so that your soul may assimilate the lessons that higher intelligences teach you. Pray always. A prayer is a moment of light in the darkness and in the midst of trials we encounter as we journey toward an intimate encounter with God's love.

At Times of Light - Andre Luiz.





GOSPEL AT HOME

The Study of Spiritist Postulates

Introduction to Spiritism - Lesson 11



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The Gospel at Home - The Study of the Spiritist Postulates

Lesson 11

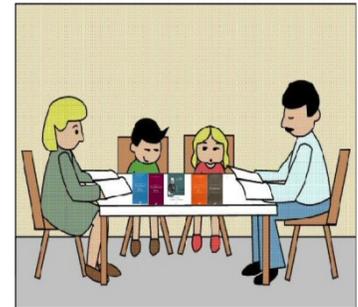
Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Present the PPT or study the text together with the participants: (40 minutes)
(This lesson should be developed in two sessions)
4. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
5. Passes, Final Prayer and Water

Gospel at Home

The Gospel at Home is a venue for spiritual growth that helps us to be tolerant, respectful, and compassionate toward others, and ourselves, at the same time that it expands our spirituality.

It is of vital importance for the spiritual balance of the family and the harmony of the domestic atmosphere. In this meeting, in addition to the study and vibrations carried out together, there is also the opportunity for spiritual friends to provide spiritual assistance to the home, and in particular, to each one of its members.



It is a great opportunity to get together with your family, friends or anyone who might want to work on their spiritual growth. By looking at Jesus teachings on a regular basis, you will come to see Him as an Unconditional Friend who can walk beside you every day, if you choose His company.

Every time we pray at home, we improve the domestic atmosphere. Each prayer from the heart constitutes an electromagnetic emission of relative power.

For this reason, the family practice of the Gospel is not only a course of inner illumination but also an advanced process of exterior defense, because of the spiritual brightness it spreads around.

The individual who prays brings with him or herself a powerful protective armor. The home that cultivates prayer becomes a fortress.

Those entities who are negative experience great shocks when they come into contact with the brilliant vibrations of this domestic sanctuary, and thus maintain a distance and search for other directions in which to go.

Prayer emanating from the recesses of the home “constitutes always an evangelic seed field, extensive to the entities of the invisible plane, who assist it, thus allowing its later development and fructification.”



Those who suffer from spiritual attachment/obsession must be oriented to regularly study the Gospel followed by prayer, at home with their families.

The Gospel at Home represents a powerful moment:

- *For strengthening the moral character of the participants*
- *For strengthening ties, both among the individuals and with the good Spirits who look after them.*

By generating superior thoughts and sentiments among the family members, it offers the possibility of spiritually cleansing the home, thus permitting easy access for positive influence from God's messengers throughout the week.

Gospel at Home - Guidelines

"For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them." Jesus (Matthew 18:20)

The meeting needs to be held on the same day, at the same time, each week (as chosen by a consensus of family members), in cooperation with the good Spirits that make plans to be present in order to give their assistance as well as for the other discarnate Spirits who come to learn with them.

- *Designate a place in the house where you can form a circle for easy communication, and where people can be comfortable and let their minds roam knowing their souls are safe.*

- *Be consistent with the scheduled time. The continuity of the study is highly important.*

- *Begin with a short spontaneous prayer. Remember that sentiment and sincerity are essentials.*

Ask for protection for your study, for the presence of the Spiritual Benefactors and for help in assimilating the lessons.

- *Read a passage from The Gospel According to Spiritism and/or a page from another evangelical work. The recommended books are: Vineyard of Light, Source of Life, Path, Truth and Life, and Our Daily Bread by Emmanuel, channeled by the medium Francisco Cândido Xavier.*

Discuss the passage; explore the different points of view and try to understand the teachings by applying them specifically to your own lives.

- *Next proceed to the vibrations/irradiations part of the meeting. We offer vibrations of love to our planet, for those countries in war, for those who are in hospitals, for those who are poor, starving, sick, unemployed, for our family members, for those who are in the Spiritual world, for those spirits who are suffering and who don't understand that life continues after death, for those who have committed suicide, for all those in need both in the incarnate and discarnate world. Special mention can be made weekly in favor of those victims of natural disasters, friends who may be ill, etc.*

- *Close the meeting with a final prayer where we thank our Spiritual benefactors, our Spiritual mentors, Jesus, and God for the assistance and the opportunity to gather for another Gospel at home, and for the teachings received.*



- *Distribute the magnetized water among participants.*

- *Occasionally, the meeting may be held at a different time when needed due to special circumstances; however, this should happen as little as possible.*

- *If you live alone, you are also encouraged to practice the Gospel at Home meeting, and it is advised that you should read aloud so that the Spirits who come to learn with you can listen to your reading. (Explanation: sometimes, because they are unenlightened Spirits, they are unaware that they do not need to physically "hear" you, as opposed to reading your thoughts -- they may not even realize that they are in the discarnate state).*

- *At no time should this meeting be allowed to turn into a mediumship session.*

- *It is important to note that if this study is allowed to become a mediumship group then all ends would be defeated, both for incarnates and discarnate people alike.*

- *All forms of mediumship must be educated, orientated and finally developed under adequate conditions, through competent methods, directed by experienced and responsible people.*

- *End the meeting with a heartfelt prayer*

- *The recommended time for such meetings is around 15 to 30 minutes.*

“When the Gospel penetrates the home, the heart opens up more easily the door to the Divine Master.”

Emmanuel (Jesus no Lar - psychography of Francisco Cândido Xavier)



The Study of Spiritist Postulates

O Spiritist! Love one another: this is the first teaching. Educate yourselves: this is the second.
Spirit of Truth Paris 1860
(GAS chap.6 Item 5)

The study of Spiritism gives us access to the knowledge that is necessary to illuminate our reason and intelligence.

The great wealth of Spiritist literature is rich with citations of the innumerable schools in the Beyond, all with the objective of increasing the illumination of the individual who comes in contact with it.

The Spirit Humberto de Campos (Brother X) tell us: “in circles closer to Earth, our efforts to gather sentiments, as exemplified by Christ, are intense and scrupulous. Numerous schools multiply, for the discarnate Spirits.”¹

Throughout their lives there are people who grapple with problems that could be easily solved if they were willing to illuminate them by the light of knowledge provided by dedicated Spiritist study.

Many of them are well meaning, dedicated workers in the Spiritist Institutions, but they do not demonstrate the least inclination for studying the superior knowledge, which the Greater Spirituality constantly sends us.

They fall when taken by the claws of obsession, as they cannot identify the signs of inferior spiritual involvement.

The manifestation of spirits who knew Spiritism is becoming relatively common in mediumistic groups. Nonetheless, what preoccupies us is that these spirits do not reveal knowledge, which they should have acquired. In spite of their special access to Spiritist teachings they suffer from ignorance, and from a lack of elucidation, which any humble Spiritist Center could have given them.

We know there are two wings of evolution: love and knowledge.

“Through love, which above all is service to our fellow beings, the human being is inwardly illuminated and beautified, eliciting from others the reflection of its own virtues; and through wisdom, which begins with the acquisition of knowledge, and gathers the influence of those in the forefront of progress, eliciting from others the reflection of their own greatness, propelling them to Heaven.”²

Through love we enhance our value for life. Through knowledge we are valued by life.³

¹ XAVIER, Francisco Cândido. *Na Escola do Evangelho*. Boa Nova. Pelo Espírito Humberto de Campos. 23. ed. Rio de Janeiro: FEB, 1998, p. 11.

² *Instruction. Thought and Life*. By the Spirit Emmanuel. 10. ed. Rio de Janeiro: FEB, 1998. Chap. 4, p. 23.

³ *Instruction. Thought and Life*. By the Spirit Emmanuel. 10. ed. Rio de Janeiro: FEB, 1998. Chap. 4, p. 23.



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT - LESSON 11

Participants should:

1. Read the message below, every day.
2. Write on a sheet of paper the benefits of prayer.

Prayer

In the construction of domestic peace, in the accomplishment of generous ideals, in the unfolding of edifying services, it is necessary to provide resources to aid the general understanding, with a view toward cooperation, responsibility, and to promote the process of essential action. Without a doubt, prayer represents the indispensable renewal of renewal, essential to the elimination of obstacles that prevent us from breaking through the hardened soil of incomprehension.

Prayer is the divine voice of the Spirit in the great silence.

It is not always characterized by verbally articulated sounds, but, invariably, it is a prodigious spiritual power in the communication of the emotions and thoughts, images and ideas, undoing hurdles, cleaning roads, remodeling conceptions and improving the mental landscape within which we perform the tasks we have been called upon to fulfill in the name of the Father.

Quite often, in the struggles of the sincere disciples of the Gospel, the majority of the followers do not understand their true purposes, their friends abandon them, their relatives yield to the shadows and to ignorance; however, it is enough for them to take refuge in the sanctuary of their own life, emitting the beneficial energies of love and understanding, so that they can be moved, in the direction of on high, where they can rest among those who share their ideals.

Prayer, when engulfed by anguish and uneasiness cannot distance itself from the disordered shouts of those who prefer affliction and deliver themselves to imprudence, but prayer clothed in harmony and confidence is a compelling force leading us in the direction of the compass of living faith. It rebuilds the landscape where we thrive and traces new routes toward the superior life (*)

(*) XAVIER, Francisco Cândido. A Prece Recompõe. Vinha de Luz. By the Spirit Emmanuel. 14. ed. Rio de Janeiro: FEB, 1996. Item 98, p. 209-210.





Introduction to Spiritism - Lesson 12

GOOD AND EVIL



United States
Spiritist Council

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Spiritist Behavior - Good and Evil

Lesson 12

Duration: 1 hour

1. Initial Prayer
2. Warm up: Ask participants to share their impressions about their weekly assignment (5 to 10 minutes)
3. Read the following question and paragraphs and discuss them with the participants. (5 minutes)

What are the causes of all negative behavior in human beings?

- **PASSIONS?**
- **FREE WILL?**



§10. ... All passions have a providential benefit. To fail to believe this is to assume that God would have made some things intrinsically useless and hurtful. Only abuse constitutes evil and individuals engage in abuse by virtue of their free will. Genesis by Allan Kardec- Chapter 3

4. Present the PPT or divide the class into 3 groups and ask each group to work with the reading texts 1, 2 and 3 (20 minutes to read and discuss & 5 minutes to present to the other groups)
5. Distribute the Weekly Assignment
6. Passes, Final Prayer and Water



Every language has a word expressing good in the sense of "having the right or desirable quality" and bad in the sense of "wrong or undesirable". A sense of moral judgment and a distinction between "right and wrong, good and bad" are cultural universals.¹

The notion of "good and evil" in an absolute moral or religious sense, however, is not ancient it emerged out of ideals of ritual purity and impurity. Basic concepts of "bad, cowardly" and "good, brave, capable", did not appear in their absolute sense until around 400 BC, with Pre-Socratic philosophy, in particular Democritus.²

The good is defined by many ancient Greeks and other ancient philosophers as a perfect and an eternal idea, or blueprint. The good is the right relation between all that exists, and it exists either in the mind of the Divine, or in a heavenly realm.

*The good is viewed to be whatever produces the best consequences in the lives of people, especially with regard to their states of well-being.*³

¹ Donald Brown (1991) *Human Universals*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press

² Charles H. Kahn, *Democritus and the Origins of Moral Psychology*, *The American Journal of Philology* (1985)

³ Wikipedia



GROUP 1

Read and discuss the following questions with your group. The questions were excerpted from *The Spirits' Book* - Allan Kardec.

115. Are some spirits created good and others created bad?

"God has created all spirits in a state of simplicity and unawareness; that is to say, without knowledge. He has given to each of them a mission, with a view to enlighten them and to make them gradually arrive at perfection through the knowledge of the truth, and thus to bring them nearer and nearer to Himself. This perfection is, for them, the condition of eternal and unalloyed happiness. Spirits acquire knowledge by passing through the trials imposed on them by God."

120. Do all spirits pass by the road of evil to arrive at good?

"Not by the road of evil, but by that of ignorance."

There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance." - Socrates

121. How is it that some spirits have followed the road of good, and others the road of evil?

"Have they not their free-will? God has not created any spirits bad; He has created them simple and ignorant, that is to say, possessing an equal aptitude for good and for evil. Those who become bad become so of their own free-will."

"It is a man's own mind, not his enemy or foe, that lures him to evil ways." Siddhartha Buddha

GROUP 2

Read and discuss the following questions with your group. The questions were excerpted from *The Spirits' Book* - Allan Kardec.

629. What definition may be given to morality?

"Morality is the rule of good conduct; in other words, being able to distinguish between good and evil. It is founded on the observance of God's law. Humans behave correctly when they do everything for the good of all, for then they obey God's law."

630. How can we distinguish between good and evil?

"Good is everything that is in harmony with the law of God, and evil is everything that deviates from it. Thus, doing what is good conforms to God's law, while doing evil infringes upon that law."

632. Since humans are prone to error, couldn't they be mistaken in discerning good from evil and believe that they are doing what is good, when in reality they are doing what is evil?

"Jesus has said to you: 'Do unto others what you would want them do unto you'; that sums up everything. Obey it and you will never go wrong."

"The forces that tend for evil are great and terrible, but the forces of truth and love and courage and honesty and generosity and sympathy are also stronger than ever before." Theodore Roosevelt



GROUP 3

Read and discuss the following questions with your group. The questions were excerpted from *The Spirits' Book* - Allan Kardec.

640. Are those who do not do evil themselves, but who take advantage of the evil committed by others culpable to the same degree?

"It is as if they themselves had committed it; upon taking advantage of it, they participate in it. Perhaps they would have recoiled before the deed itself, but once it was done and they then took advantage of it, it was because they approved of it and would have committed it if they could have or if they had been more daring."

642. In order to be pleasing to God and to insure our future situation is it enough to simply not do what is evil?

"No. All must do good to the limit of their abilities, since all will answer for all the evil that has resulted from the good that was left undone."

643. Are there persons who have no possibility of doing good because of their position?

"There are none who cannot do good; only selfish persons never find an opportunity for doing so. It is enough to be in relation with others in order to do good, and every day life offers such a possibility to whomever is not blinded by selfishness. Doing good does not only mean being charitable, but also being as useful as possible whenever your help is needed."

"The world is a dangerous place, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who look on and do nothing." - Albert Einstein

Do all the good you can,

By all the means you can,

In all the ways you can,

In all the places you can,

At all the times you can,

To all the people you can,

As long as you ever can.

— John Wesley, evangelist and founder of Methodism (1703-1791)

"No evil can happen to a good man, either in life or after death." Plato



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT - LESSON 12

Participants should:

1. Read the message Gifts, every day.
2. Highlight the statements that touched you the most and write in a notebook the one that you feel you need to work on the most.

Gifts

“Every good and perfect gift is from Above.” - (James, 1:17.)

Life on Earth moves to new horizons when mankind realizes that nothing good can be achieved without God’s permission.

An ancient popular saying states:

Do your part and the Lord will help you. As we recognize the elevated meaning of this exhortation, we are compelled to recognize that, with the acquisition of professional titles, man is the “son” who for some years makes an effort, so that the Father may give him a “competence certificate”, through human teachers.

Just as this happens with material achievements so also the edifications of the spirit.

Obviously, every good and perfect gift comes from God. However, in order to receive the benefit, it is necessary to follow the evangelical advice and “knock” on the door, so that it will open to us.

Do you wish to have the gift of healing? Then begin by loving those who are sick and be interested in helping with their needs.

Do you want the gift of teaching? Then make yourself a friend to those who teach on behalf of the Lord, and learn from their works and edifying words.

Do you expect the gift of virtuousness? Then discipline yourself.

Do you wish to speak wisely? Then learn to be silent at the right moment.

Do you aspire to reach the sacred circle of Christ? Then get close to Him, not only by elevated conversation, but also by attitudes and efforts, as if they were his own.

Good qualities are gifts that come from God. However, each one of us has our own door, which requires a different key.

XAVIER, Francisco Cândido. The Pathway, The Truth and Life - Item 52. By the Spirit Emmanuel.
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