



THE SPIRITIST INFORMATION SERVICE

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INFLUENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

D.Villela

In the first years of Spiritism, while it was still being codified, a fact relating to spirits' communications was quickly perceived: that in general the messages reflected the attitudes and interests of the people and environment where they were received. That is, serious individuals interested in serious study obtained in their midst instructive messages in an elevated language, whereas at frivolous meetings, where the practice of mediumship was treated as recreational, the messages were imbued with puerility and a vulgarity of ideas and expressions. Superficial observers, by the way, saw in that a sign that the messages originated from the mediums themselves, who, similarly to mirrors, reflected the influence of the thoughts of those present at the meetings.

Clarifying this point, the Codifier Kardec stated that "It is a mistake to suppose that a man must be a medium in order to attract to himself the beings of the invisible world. Space is peopled with spirits; they are always around us, always beside us; they see us and watch us; they mingle in our meetings, and follow or avoid us, according as we attract or repel them. The medianimic faculty has no influence in this respect for that faculty is only a means of communication. . . . Thus, whenever men assemble together, they have around them an invisible assembly, sympathizing with their good or bad qualities, and this, as a matter of course, *and without any invocation having been made or even thought of.*" This makes it clear that this invisible assembly is not passive or neutral, but, to the contrary, takes an effective participation – sometimes determining – involving those spirits who live around us without our knowledge.

Given the great influence the environment exerts on these communications, Spiritist meetings dedicated to mediumistic exchanges ought to maintain the characteristics that

facilitate the action of spirit mentors: uphold higher purposes, have a commitment to schedule and attendance, as well as to the study of mediumship.

Religions affirm that our individuality is spiritual and survives death, but Spiritism is almost alone in its affirmations of contact and permanent influence back and forth between these two levels of life. It is, however, crucial knowledge because it alerts us to be watchful of certain environments. To that effect, it is common for us here on earth not to go to certain places because of the risk involved for those who dare to walk through them or stay in them. On the same token, there are places which appear totally secure as far as their physical aspects, but represent a dangerous site of negative influences due to their moral characteristics, requiring our utter prudence in avoiding them, or doubling our vigilance when circumstances out of our will or control take us there.

Spiritism shows us that the discarnate cannot assault or hurt us the same way as incarnate delinquents can, but if we permit, their influence can be even worse, that is, they can incite us to do evil, resulting in harmful consequences whose reparation almost always prove to be long and difficult.



The Mediums' Book (Second Part, Ch. 21).

CALAMITIES

Yvon Luz

Calamities such as the world has recently seen, when thousands of people disincarnated in a matter of minutes by way of a geological phenomenon [tsunamis in Asia], shake many philosophical and religious convictions.

Is there a God? Is He the Supreme Goodness? Does He control the destiny of humankind? If so, why a calamity that brought so much suffering, not only for those directly hit by it, but for all those who saw it unfold incapable of lending any help?

For those who have a materialistic

vision of life, there are plenty of arguments to doubt the existence of God based on what has happened. Few religions are equipped to satisfactorily answer the questions relating to this natural disaster, based on the fact that they ascribe to the Creator the same conditions of humankind, attributing to this anthropomorphic God their sentiments and actions, although He is the Creator of the whole universe.

The Spiritist Doctrine, however, with its holistic vision based on spirit's immortality, enables the understanding of these occurrences, regardless of their breadth and consequences. It explains that life is an evolutionary process, showing us the impermanency of beings and things, in an infinite sequence whose purpose is the relative perfection next to our Father.

Created by God, the laws of harmony and balance rule the universe, and mankind, divine creatures that they are, will have to conduct their learning through individual journeys wherein compliance to these laws throughout many experiences will take them to the ultimate reward they are all destined to achieve.

Thus, a geological disaster considered catastrophic for its dimension, that shakes to the core all sentiments, acquires a new meaning when seen as an event that cannot be evaluated by human understanding of the macrocosmic trajectory of earth as a member of the universal community. It is an event related to the evolutionary process of humankind, motivating the mobilization of fraternal joining of forces that will contribute to the evolution of the inhabitants of the planet, still engulfed in selfishness, power, ambition, and hatred.

As time goes by, mankind will no longer need sufferings and trials of such magnitude in order to awaken in its hearts the sublime sentiments taught by our Master Jesus.

Our brothers and sisters who disincarnated collectively, continue to live in another dimension. The Spiritist knowledge will permit us to perfectly understand this sorrowful event in the light of the infinite Justice, Wisdom and Love of God, our Father.

AROUND THE WORLD

• ARGENTINA

The Fundação Espírita Humanista Allan Kardec – Departamento Editorial 18 de Abril [Allan Kardec Spiritist Humanitarian Foundation – Editorial Department April 18], a tax-exempt organization, has translated into Spanish a great number of Spiritist books. This task, accomplished in a small room by volunteers, has been invaluable for the dissemination of Spiritist ideas in countries of Spanish-speaking peoples. Recently, other classics of the Spiritist literature were re-edited by the organization. Among them are *La evolución anímica – ensayos de psicología fisiológica según el Espiritismo*, [Animic Evolution: Essays on Physiological Psychology According to Spiritism], by Gabriel Delanne; *El porqué de la vida – solución racional del problema de la existencia* [Reason for Life: Rational Solution for the Problem of Living], and *Síntesis doctrinal espírita – Bajo la forma de diálogo y de catecismo* [Spiritist Doctrinal Synthesis Under the Form of Dialogue and Doctrination], both by Léon Denis.

To get to know more about the work of the Foundation and how to acquire their materials, please go to www.fehak.com.ar, or write to Av. Entre Ríos, 1.181 – C1080 ABF – Buenos Aires – Argentina – fax (054) (011) 4306-7030; email espirita@fehak.com.ar.

• AUSTRALIA

The Franciscans' Spiritist House started the new year with good news. Since the first of January it is operating, along with the Foundation Joana de Cusa—one of its departments—from a bigger location offering more comfort to its frequenters and

workers. At this new location, which also has a backyard, there will be courses on children and youth evangelization, with activities aimed at parents and guardians, a course on self-discovery, a course for lecturers, and basic courses on Spiritism.

This new address is located at 1 Lister Ave – Rockdale – 2216 Sydney – Australia – phone (02) 9597-6585 – Internet: geocities.yahoo.com.br/joanadecusaf, or franciscanshouse@yahoo.com.au.

• BOLIVIA

The Bolivian Spiritist Movement is preparing for the next national congress to take place from March 25 to 27, 2005, in La Paz, sponsored by the Bolivian Spiritist Federation. The first news on the 4th Bolivian Spiritist Encounter announce the presence of Brazilian medium Divaldo Pereira Franco, who will give two lectures, one on “Suicide, Hate, Abortion, and Euthanasia in the Spiritist Vision,” the other on “Spiritism for the Third Millennium.” Divaldo will also participate in three panels, two with themes already defined: “Human Being and His/Her Conscience,” and “The Conquest of Happiness.” The event will take place at the Hotel Calacoto, and the lectures at the Colégio de Advogados de La Paz [College of Attorneys of La Paz].

More information on the Encounter can be found in the bulletin *Camino de Luz* [Path of Light], of the Bolivian Spiritist Federation, at www.spiritist.org/bolivia/index.html. Registrations for the event are already available, and should be requested directly from the Bolivian Spiritist Federation at Calle Libertad 382 entre Seoane y Buenos Aires – Casilla de Correo 6746 – Santa Cruz de la Sierra – Bolivia; fax (591) 3 337-6060.

• CANADA

The page “Espace Espírita International” will soon be available in the Internet, according to the recent issue of *A Revista Espírita Belga* [The Belgian Spiritist Review], a publication of the Belgian Spiritist Union (Rue Maghin, 43 à 4000 Liège – Belgium – phone (32) (0) 4 227 60 76 and Internet page at <http://users.skynet.be/usb>. The information can be confirmed at www.espaceespirita.com and www.spirite.qc.ca, which also shows the logo and a brief summary of the activities carried out at its headquarters at 4866, Ste-Catherine est – H1V 1Z6 Montreal – Quebec – Canada – Internet: espaceespirita@sympatico.ca.

• COLOMBIA

The 11th Colombian Spiritist Congress has definite dates and location: April 13-15, 2006, in Neiva, Huila. The event is sponsored by the Federación Espírita del Sur Colombiano (Fedesur) [Colombian Spiritist Federation], headed by Luis

Guillermo Cortes, with Henry Parra Vega heading the Executive Committee.

More information can be found at www.geocities.com/fedesur, or at Fedesur (Carrera 1, 37-52 Neiva – Huila – Colombia – phone 098 8 758197 – email fedesur@yahoo.com); or directly with the Steering Committee at phone 300 218 8201, or email secregeneralfedesur@hotmail.com.

• FRANCE

To commemorate the 200 years of the birth of Kardec, the Centre Spirite Lyonnais Allan Kardec [Allan Kardec Spiritist Center of Lyon] published an 8-page booklet titled *Discovering Spiritism: Its Philosophical, Moral and Spiritual Principles*. It explains what Spiritism is, how it appeared, what it teaches, and its practices (passes, mediumistic meetings, etc.). It also presents details on Kardec's life, and can be ordered directly to the organization located at 23 rue Jeanne Collay – 69500 Bron – Lyon – France. Contacts can be made by phone 04 78 41 19 03, email spirite@free.fr, or at <http://spirite.free.fr>. For reading and downloading, the site posts the four last years of the magazine “Le Spiritisme” [Spiritism], also published by the Centre Spirite Lyonnais Allan Kardec.

• PORTUGAL

The Portuguese Spiritist Movement is organizing for 2005 another National Encounter of Spiritist Youth, for individuals between the ages of 14 and 30. It will be the 22nd edition of the event, to take place on April 22-24, under the theme “Tighten the ties of family life.” This information was distributed to Spiritist organizations in Portugal by the entity organizing the event, the Associação Espírita do Paião [Spiritist Association of Paião] (Rua Professor José Nunes Gonçalves, 36 – Paião – 3090-495 Figueira da Foz – Portugal).

• PUERTO RICO

One more issue of the *Revista Unión Espiritista* [Spiritist Union Review] by the Escola de Conselho Moral de Porto Rico [Moral Advice School of Puerto Rico] is in circulation, and it pays a special homage to Allan Kardec. Requests for the 24-page magazine shall be sent to Librería Fraternal Espírita at Calle Acosta 6 – Caguas – 00725 Puerto Rico – phone (787) 746-4750.



“Spiritism without the Gospel is nothing more than a systematization of ideas in transposition of mental activity, without any greater effectiveness in the building of the human future.”

Emmanuel



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• SWEDEN

The Internet is nowadays one of the main venues for the dissemination of Spiritism in the world. Recently another new page was posted in Swedish and in English. Responsible for this initiative is a Spiritist group called "Andarna", which in Swedish means Spirits. At this site, www.andarna.se, information is available on the Doctrine codified by Kardec, as well as names of books, Spiritist personalities, works for children's evangelization, etc. Correspondence should be sent to the president of the organization, Mr. Franklin Santana Santo, at Killinggränd, 27 – 175 45 – Järfälla – Sweden; phone: 46 (0) 08 580 17463, or email at ord@andarna.se, in the following languages: Swedish, English, or Portuguese.

BOOK REVIEW

LIVING AND LOVING

Dictated by the spirit Joanna de Ângelis to medium Divaldo Pereira Franco, *Living and Loving* is one of those books that seem to have the right words for the right moments. A pocket book, easy to carry, it is a repository of hope to those who are living through difficult moments, and similarly good for those who are in a state of bliss. It contains twenty messages which comments in the light of Spiritism for topics such as "The presence of love", "Permanent Tolerance", "Silence and Conscience", "Emotional Stability", "Error and Atonement", "Always in Peace" and "Discernment and Action".

In this book Joanna de Ângelis gives us a true lesson in optimism, stimulating the reader to assume a healthier posture in life, as clearly described by her in the chapter on ways of looking at things.

"May your attitude reflect the inner peace you must achieve, cultivate and express in your daily activities.

"When you find yourself at the head of an important position, receive kindly those who seek your help.

"Do not leave a negative mark on the road you march along or on the people you meet on the way because, when you walk back, you will meet them again.

"For your own benefit, fight your bad tendencies and try to overcome them.

"Each day is a new opportunity that life grants you; some day you will be asked to account for your deeds."

The spirit author talks about the necessity to look at life with good eyes, specially when we look at people who share the pathway with us. She explains why:

"The Earth is both a school and a hospital for unhealthy souls. Nobody living on Earth now is an exception from this rule; it is useless to seek the company of angels since they are not incarnate on Earth now. All people on this planet bear the same characteristics as yourself; they

suffer, they have their own limitations, they want to live in peace and they dream with happiness."

Joanna calls our attention to the important role of prayers in the process of self-knowledge and to conquer inner peace. And she reminds us that prayer is the nourishment of the soul the same as bread is for the body.

"To pray is to open oneself unreservedly to God.

"To pray is not just to list a number of requests and supplications; instead it should be a thanksgiving for the gift of life.

"When you pray you establish a link with the whole creation."

Living and Loving has 128 pages of teachings and wonderful images of natural landscapes. It was translated by Ely Donato and is published by Livraria Espírita Alvorada Editora. To order please write to them at Rua Jayme Vieira Lima, 104 – Pau da Lima – 41235-000 Salvador-BA – Brazil – fax (71) 393-2855. www.mansaodocaminho.com.br.

FROM OUR FELLOWS

REFLECTIONS FOR THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR

Assaruby Franco de Moraes

"Gather your courage and decision and go forward like an imposing phalanx! Set to work! The plough is ready! The soil awaits, now is the time to plough!" – Erastus (The Gospel According to Spiritism – Ch. 20, Item 4).

This year I want to recoup the time I lost, when I did not do things that were close to my heart.

I will seek the laughter of children, and I will forgive the troubled laughter of those who hurt me thinking that I will reciprocate.

I will understand my neighbor better, and will greet him/her good morning even if he/she distrust me because no one else greets them.

I will ask that sorrowful lady if her grandchild is okay, and if she needs anything. How can I know if I can be of help if I don't ask her?

I will find out if the father has kissed his child today, if he counseled him/her, and if he knows of their emotions.

This year I will talk to the homeless person who talks to me in the street so that he knows that I see him as a human being, and it might be that he needs me more than the alcohol he consumes! I will do a silent prayer for that woman who stands in the corners of the streets, because as much as her, I also need to be invited to the banquet of the Lord.

This year I promise I will not gather rocks and stones to throw at others because it is as much hurtful to throw them as it is to have them been thrown at me. I will extend my hands beyond the length of

my arms to touch infinite hopes because worse than crying is the lack of a glimpse of hope.

This year I will study more because I expect to grow and share with others the treasure of knowledge that will not be lost to rust or moths since it represents an acquisition of the immortal soul.

I expect to encounter good friends, who will partake with me in the comforting journey towards happiness, the building of a better world, to live with mutual respect, to live in peace.

I want to work a lot, and I want my brothers and sisters in Christ to also work, as it will be good to see the dignity of this effort consolidating homes, lives, and the future.

I will try to be a person of good will, not for the glory of the world, but to merit to walk next to our higher model, our Master Jesus, to be one more person to try to fulfill the expectations He has of his flock. I know it is certain that I will not achieve all this, but if I don't start now I will not get there any time soon!

I have decided to ask for forgiveness whenever necessary, without shame, and I know it will happen many times considering how petty and clumsy I still am. But whenever needed I will also forgive, and may God permit it to be many times because there is nothing better than to forgive, it is similar to a beacon of light in the darkness.

Certainly I will smile more times because I intend to expand my capacity to love and be happier. I will give more and better, all that I can give. It might be little, but this little with God represents a lot.

This year I expect to be stronger, to understand better the messages life sends me, to exchange more tears for smiles, to accept things because I understand them and not as an imposition.

And thus, may God permit in His infinite goodness that we meet at the end of this year, jubilant for having had an ideal in common, achieving our objectives, being a little bit better, and thus contributing for a better world.

IN THE SPIRITIST MOVEMENT

• SPIRITIST STUDIES AT A SHOPPING CENTER

Every Wednesday the BarraShopping, the largest shopping center in Rio de Janeiro, opens the doors of its ecumenical center to those interested in the study of Spiritism. There are lectures at four different times under the coordination of different Spiritist organizations. After each lecture magnetic passes are given to an increasingly growing public.

BarraShopping is located at Av. das Américas, 4.666, Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. More information at (21) 2436-4166, 3342-6229, and 2437-5947.

• **LAR FABIANO DE CRISTO**

The efforts of the Lar Fabiano de Cristo (LFC) in the area of social mobility merited once more public recognition, this time by a Spiritist periodical in Belgium. The Belgian Spiritist Review in the last semester of 2004 carried an article with information that shows the dimension of the work accomplished by LFC, which currently supports approximately 100 thousand families, maintaining projects whose purpose is to offer resources so that within a period of up to five years they can turn from a situation of social high risk. "This work has been adopted as a model recommended by Unesco for the developing countries", declares the magazine, published by the Belgian Spiritist Union (Rue Maghin, 43 à – B 4000 Liège – Belgium – phone (0) 4 227 6076; <http://users.skynet.be/usb>).

More details on the activities of the Lar Fabiano de Cristo can be obtained at www.lfc.org.br, where addresses for the Unidades de Promoção Integral do LFC – operating in almost all states in Brazil – and affiliated organizations are also posted.

• **“SLIDE PROJECT”**

With the purpose of offering to Spiritist lecturers presentations that are more dynamic and attractive, the Sociedade Espírita Mãos Unidas [Spiritist Society United Hands] is carrying out an initiative that gathers professional artists and specialists in various areas to transform into images the stories narrated in Spiritist books. Named “Projeto Slide” [Slide Project], the endeavor enables the projection onto screens of images relating to the following books: “Há dois mil anos” [Two Thousand Years Ago], “Cinqüenta anos depois” [Fifty Years Afterwards], “Nosso lar” [Nosso Lar], “Missionários da luz” [Missionaries of Light], “Obreiros da vida eterna” [Workers of Eternal Life], “Libertação” [Liberation], “Entre a Terra e o Céu” [Between Earth and Heaven], and “E a vida continua” [Life Goes On], all psychographed by Chico Xavier, as well as other children’s stories.

More information can be obtained with Américo Luiz Sucena at americosucena@uol.com.br.

• **SPIRITIST VADE MECUM**

A catalog with 2.032 words, referred in 506 Spiritist books, sorted alphabetically by topic and title, with the indication of authorship, publishing houses, editions and pages, is available at www.vademecumespirita.com.br. The site is an electronic version of the book Vade Mecum Espírita, which in Brazil has reached its 7th edition. It can be ordered through the website or by phone at (11) 3106-6889, and 3106-5478, or by fax at 3106-7443. The “Vade Mecum” page, organized in 1999, has gotten more than 136.270 hits.

• **MORE BOOKS BY CHICO XAVIER**

The collection of books psychographed by Chico Xavier was brought up to 412 till the time of his disincarnation. However, this left out approximately 6 to 8 unpublished ones, according to his adopted son, Eurípedes Humberto. The information was published in the booklet *O Mestre e o Apóstolo* [The Master and the Apostle], edited by *Divulgação Espírita Cristã (DEC)* [Christian Spiritist Dissemination], in a special edition for the bicentenary of Allan Kardec’s birth. The publication carries the poem “Ide e pregai” [Go and Preach], by Maria Dolores, received by Chico at a public meeting on 25 September 1999, at the Grupo Espírita da Prece [Prayer Spiritist Group], of Uberaba, and excerpted from the book “Missão cumprida” [Mission Accomplished], which will become the 413th book, still unpublished, by the medium.

The booklet’s cover shows an artistic composition with faces of Jesus, Kardec, and Chico Xavier. On the first page, there is a message excerpted from the book “Opinião espírita” [Spiritist Opinion], psychographed by Francisco Cândido Xavier and Waldo Vieira, under the title *O Mestre e o Apóstolo* [The Master and the Apostle], focusing the “luminous coherence between the Christ and the Apostle who restored his voice.”

The booklet is distributed for free by DEC, at Caixa Postal 176 – 38412-970 Uberlândia-MG – Brazil.

• **“SPIRITIST MOMENT FOR CHILDREN”**

Recognized throughout the Spiritist Movement for the high doctrinal content of its messages and its production quality, “Momento Espírita” [Spiritist Moment] is aired at radio stations all over Brazil. Recently it turned out a version for children called “Momento Espírita para crianças” [Spiritist Moment for Children]. It is comprised of 11 wonderful stories presented in a CD more than one hour long with music by Rosy Greca. The CD in Portuguese belongs to the Federação Espírita do Paraná [Spiritist Federation of Parana] and can be ordered for R\$ 15,00 [Fifteen Reais, Brazilian currency] at Livraria Mundo Espírita: Praça Osório, 399 – Centro – 80020-010 Curitiba-PR – Brazil – phone (41) 225-2739 – Internet: livraria@mundoespirita.com.br.

• **ESPERANTO ON THE RADIO**

A collection of programs in Esperanto is available at the site “Esperanto Radio Arkivo.” Produced in different places all over the world, such as China, Poland, Cuba, the Vatican, Italy, and Brazil, the programs can be heard in their totality at <http://radioarkivo.org>.

• **GOOD PEOPLE**

To help individuals of the communities around Spiritist Centers into developing human values for a life with more balance and happiness — without the intention of turning them into Spiritists but simply into good people — is the goal of Projeto Plenitude [Plenitude Project], at the Associação de Divulgadores do Espiritismo do Ceará (ADE-CE) [Association of Disseminators of Spiritism in Ceara (ADE-CE)], in the northeast region of Brazil. The purpose is to enable implementation of this project by any Spiritist group or center. For the building of the bases, format and structure, the ADE-CE is creating a discussion group in the Internet composed of psychologists and others interested and capable to deal with such ideas and initiatives. To get in contact with those responsible for the project visit logos@secrel.com.br, or at phone (85) 3249-6812, with Saara Nousiainen, current president.

First, training sessions with monitors for these workshops will be carried out, and then followed by subsequent jointly meetings with directors of the organizations to establish the practical conditions for their implementation. Self-help materials show the numerous resources that can be utilized in a practical way to motivate human beings into becoming more complete and better persons wherever they are.

• **TAPES IN ESPERANTO**

The Fitoteca Circulante Bezerra de Menezes [Mobile Tape Library Bezerra de Menezes], distributor of Spiritist and spiritualist materials in the form of tapes for the visually impaired, will soon launch works taped in Esperanto, thus amplifying the opportunities to countries around the world. The Tape Library does not charge, requiring only a registration form to be obtained at souzalima.an@ig.com.br, or www.fergs.com.br/bancodados/fitoteca.html.

Subscribers don’t have to pay to return the borrowed materials since the returns are cost-exempt when mailed through Cecograma, a special postal service for the visually impaired. The time to return the tapes starts ticking upon receipt, and varies from two to six weeks.

Correspondence to the Fitoteca Circulante Bezerra de Menezes shall be mailed to the care of Antônio N. de Souza Lima, at Rua Altamar Dutra, 1.156 apartamento 201 – Salinas – 95595-000 Cidreira-RS – Brazil – phone (51) 681-5632, and fax 3337-0457.



“If you aspire to obtain an adequate solution to the trials that hurt you, do not follow the route of desperation.”

Emmanuel