



COURSE ON SPIRITISM

WORKBOOK 5B:

Fundamental Principles of the Spiritist Teachings

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This material is an adaptation of the “Systematic Study of the Spiritist Doctrine”, edited by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation.

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This material is subjected to improvement.

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“A regular course on Spiritism would be given in order to develop the principles of Science and to promote the fondness for serious studies. This course would have the advantage of laying the foundation for the unit of principles, of forming enlightened followers, capable of spreading the spiritist ideas, and developing a great number of mediums. I consider this course of a nature to exercise capital influence on the future of Spiritism and its consequences.”

Allan Kardec

“Posthumous Works” - Project, 1868

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INTRODUCTION AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

It is with great pleasure that the Spiritist Society of Baltimore (SSB), an educational non-profit organization established at the city of Baltimore, Maryland, offers this material for the dissemination of Spiritism in English. The main purpose of this work is to fulfill, in the English language, Kardec's ideas about a systematic study of Spiritism principles. Accordingly, the interested student has an opportunity to build up a fundamental understand of the scientific, moral and philosophic aspects of Spiritism, as well as a scholar of Spiritism, with knowledge acquired after many years of study, should also find interesting references in this material.

The material presented herein is an adaptation of the "Systematic study of Spiritism" as assembled by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation (BSF). This source was selected because of many years of experience with its use by SSB and of its widespread and unquestionable efficacy in disseminating Spiritism in Brazil. However, this work is not a direct translation of the material available in Portuguese. Great care was taken in order to adapt all lessons to the bibliography available in English at the time of its publication. With this in mind, and scrupulously adhering to Kardec's work, many lessons of the original BSF work were combined as well as new lessons were included. All references used are clearly cited at the end of each lesson.

The lessons are assembled as instructions in how to develop and accomplished each topic. A coordinator should be assigned to each lesson, carefully review the material in advance and use the instructions to address each topic. This material should be used in a regular study setting and many lessons were planned to be worked by students divided in teams. As much emphasis as possible was given to build active lessons that would involve and demand the participation of all students. This should foster friendship among all class members and allow all students to participate and to develop their knowledge as the course progress. It is estimated that each lesson should take between 1 – 1 ½ hours to be completed. The use of projection resources, like overhead or slide presentations during the suggested brief introductions is recommended, but not indispensable.

As in every human activity, no matter how simple or complex, it is necessary to establish since the beginning rules and regulations that will: (1) help guide the work in order that the objectives are attained and (2) to clarify all expectations and to assign responsibilities so that all fell as part of a team. In the next section, we show the rules and regulations for our study section at SSB, which is discussed with everyone who intends to coordinate lesson. Of course, these are guidelines and each Spiritist group should make the necessary adaptations.

Finally, we offer a special thanks to Mr. Jorge Godinho, BSF member, for his distinctive friendship and to all of our spiritual Mentors and Guides who supported us throughout this endeavor.

With Love to all,
The SSB family.

Sample of rules and regulations for coordinators

The Spiritist Society of Baltimore, Inc. (SSB) is an educational non-profit organization that offers spiritual, psychological and material assistance to all in need. One of its services is the study group meetings in which Spiritism is thoroughly studied as recommended by Allan Kardec. Each meeting comprises of a 1 ¼ hour-study session, followed by a passes session. The coordinators of these meetings have two major responsibilities: (1) to guarantee participant's study and understanding of Spiritism as contained in Kardec's books; (2) the organization of the study group meeting. The SSB may appoint coordinators that will take turns in the conduction of the meetings. It is essential that each coordinator follows the rules and regulations contained in this memorandum in order to guarantee an optimal level of achievement from participants.

Each coordinator shall:

1. Be committed to the two major responsibilities stated above.
2. Study the topic above and beyond its goals in order to be a good coordinator. Be a faithful facilitator of Spiritism. Please, do not emit personal opinions as they are not the focus of the study. Instead, make efforts to facilitate the understanding of the Superior Spirits' statements contained in Kardec's works. If during the study group session you are not sure of something, it is always better to say you will search for the answer and will bring it to them next week.
3. Run spell check on the text and also in any presented material, like power point presentations. Also, check special pronunciation at Merriam Webster Dictionary online (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>).
4. Study the meaning of the main spiritist vocabulary that will be studied on that day.
5. Print and distribute to participants a copy of the lesson to be studied.
6. Arrive at least 15-30 minutes prior to the beginning of the study session. The coordinator is responsible for the room set up. Both the study session and the passes service shall have a proper environment.
7. Welcome participants and begin the study meeting with a prayer.
8. Choose a volunteer for the initial reading and final prayer.
9. Be the primary responsible for welcoming newcomers and assisting anyone who is in need of counseling and/or spiritual treatment.
10. Please, incentive participants to kindly speak English only before, during and after the meeting.

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Now, continue your Course on Spiritism by studying its sequence
compiled in the

**Workbook 5B – The *Fundamental Principles of*
*the Spiritist Doctrine***

Lesson 23**Irregular Mediunistic Activity:
Abuses, Dangers and Inconveniences****OBJECTIVES:**

1. To understand what is considered abuses, danger and inconvenience in mediumship.
2. To explain the reasons why mediumship is not a cause of mental diseases.

METHODS:

1. Brainstorm on the following:
 - What are the inconveniences and dangerous of mediumship.

Coordinator shall analyze the expressed opinions. Then, ask the whole class to read and discuss the following text. At the end, Coordinator will summarize the main difficulties and dangers of medianimity and compare with the opinions obtained from the brainstorm.

All Class:

Read carefully the following text⁽¹⁾, analyzing its implications and consequences.

1. Is the medianimic faculty an indication of a morbid state of health, or is it simply abnormal?

"It is sometimes abnormal, but not morbid. Some mediums are very robust; those who are weakly are so from other causes."

2. Does the exercise of the medianimic faculty cause fatigue?

"A too prolonged exercise of any faculty causes fatigue it is the same with medianimity, especially when employed for the obtaining of physical manifestations, which necessarily occasions fatigue, because it is a loss of fluid that is only to be restored by rest."

3. Is the proper exercise of medianimity (we do not speak of its abuse), injurious to health?

"There are cases in which the physical or moral state of a medium may render it prudent, or even necessary, to abstain from exercising it, or, at least, to exercise it with great moderation. A medium is generally warned, when this is the case, by his own feeling; and he should always abstain from using his medianimity when he is conscious of fatigue in so doing."

4. Is the exercise of medianimity more likely to be injurious to some persons than to others?"

"I have already said that this depends upon the physical and moral state of the medium. There are persons whose temperament renders it necessary to avoid all causes of over-excitement; and mediumship may be of the number.

5. *Can the exercise of medianimity produce madness?*

"No more than anything else may produce it, when there is a predisposition to brain-disease. Mediumship will not produce madness, where the germ of madness does not exist; but, where that germ exists (which is easily known), commonsense should suffice to show you the necessity of avoiding every kind of mental excitement."

6. *Is it imprudent to develop the medianimic faculty in children?*

"It is not only imprudent, but very dangerous to do so: for the frail and delicate organization of childhood would be too much shaken, and the youthful imagination too much excited, by such attempts; parents should therefore keep these ideas from their children, or, at least, should only speak of them in reference to their moral aspect."

7. *Yet there are children who are mediums by nature, not only for physical manifestations, but also for writing and for visions; is there danger for such as these?*

"No; where a child's faculty is spontaneous, it belongs to his temperament, and his constitution is prepared for its exercise; it is a very different thing when you attempt to develop medianimity artificially, and thus subject the child's nervous system to overexcitement. It is also to be remarked that a child who is naturally subject to visions is generally but little impressed by them; they appear so natural to such a child, that he pays but little heed to them and easily forgets them; and in after-years, if these visions recur to his memory, he is not apt to be painfully affected by the remembrance of them."

8. *At what age may we attempt to develop the faculty of medianimity without danger?*

"There is no rule in regard to age; it depends partly on the physical, and still more on the moral, development of the individual; there are children of; say, a dozen years of age, who would be less affected by the attempt than many grown persons. I am now speaking of medianimity in general; but physical medianimity is that which is most likely to cause fatigue to the organism. Writing, however, in the case of a child, has another danger, owing to his inexperience, viz., the mischief which might result to his health, if he took to writing when alone, and should thus make an amusement of it."

222. Practical spiritism, as we shall see more clearly the more we know of it, demands our utmost tact and discretion to avoid being taken in by deceitful spirits; if grown people are in danger of being deceived by these, children and young persons are evidently, on account of their inexperience, still more exposed to this danger. We know, too, that concentration of thought and feeling is absolutely necessary for obtaining the concentration of serious and benevolent spirits. An evocation made rightly and jokingly is a profanation which gives easy access to mocking and maleficent spirits; and as we cannot expect a child to possess the seriousness necessary for such an act, it is to be feared that he would make a mere amusement of it if left to himself.

Even under the most favorable conditions, it is highly desirable that a child who is endowed with the medianimic faculty should only exercise it under the eyes of

experienced persons, who may inspire him, by their example, with the sentiment of respect that should always preside at the evocation of souls who have quitted the earthly life. The question of age, as I have said, is subordinate to conditions of temperament as well as of character; and you should not only avoid forcing the development of this faculty in children, where it is not spontaneous, but its exercise, in every case, should be conducted with very great circumspection, and should neither be excited nor encouraged even on the part of grown persons, if they are weak in body or in mind.

Those who show the slightest symptoms of mental eccentricity or weakness should be dissuaded from its exercise by every possible means; for there is, in such persons, an evident predisposition to insanity, which any and every species of excitement would tend to develop. Spiritist ideas are not more likely to produce cerebral excitement than any others; but madness brought on by spiritist ideas would take its character from them, just as it would assume the character of religious mania, if it had been brought on by the excitement attendant on an excess of devotional practices, and spiritism, in such cases, would naturally, though unjustly, be held responsible for that result. The best thing to be done, with every one who shows a tendency to fall under the influence of a fixed idea, is to direct his attention to something altogether different from that idea, so as to give rest to the organs which are the seat of the excitement (See Introduction to The Spirits' Book, Part 12.)

CONCLUSIONS:

The study will be accomplished if the class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Mediumship is not a cause of mental diseases because mediums do not experience mental diseases more often than the general population. On the contrary, a well-developed and understood mediumship can be an antidote to mental diseases.
2. Children should not have their mediumship developed unless it appears spontaneously.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "The Mediums Book", chapter XVIII, items 221 and 222.

Lesson 24**Loss and Interruption of Mediumship****OBJECTIVES:**

- To cite the reasons why mediumship can be lost or interrupted.
- To justify why the interruption of mediumship is not always a punishment.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator should debate with the whole class the following topics:

- a) If a person is regularly and correctly practicing mediumship, can this ability be interrupted? If yes, under which circumstances could this happen?
Use questions 1 - 4 from item 220 of the Mediums book to base your discussion.
Do not show this item to the class because it will be used by group I.

2. Divide the class into 2 groups.

Group I. **Interruption and loss of Mediumship.**

Read the text⁽¹⁾ and address the following exercise.

- a) What are the main reasons for the loss and interruption of mediumship?
- b) What should be the attitude of a medium in face of others who insist to favor him/her with gifts, favors, privileges, money, even in name of gratitude for benefits received through mediunistic activities?
- c) Can a medium's protector spirit abandon him/her? Why?

220. The medianimic faculty is subject to intermittence and temporary suspension, both as regards writing and all other modes of spirit-manifestation. In regard to this subject the questions addressed by us to spirits have elicited the following replies:

1. Can the medianimic faculty be lost?

"That often happens, whatever may be the specialty of the faculty; but the interruption is more frequently of short duration, and ceases with the cause that produced it."

2. Is that cause of the exhaustion of the medium's fluid?

"Whatever may be the faculty possessed by a medium he can do nothing without the sympathetic concurrence of spirits; when he obtains nothing, it is not always his faculty that is at fault, for it often happens that spirits will not, or cannot, make use of him."

3. What are the causes that lead spirits to abandon a medium?

"Good spirits are mainly influenced, in regard to a medium, by the use he makes of his faculty. We abandon the medium who uses his faculty for frivolities, or for the furtherance of ambitious designs, or if he refuses the exercise of his faculty for the convincing of those who seek his aid, or who need to witness our manifestations in order to acquire conviction. God has not granted this faculty to a medium merely for his own pleasure, and, still less, to sub serve his ambition, but as a means of aiding his own advancement and that of his fellow-men. If a spirit sees that a medium no longer sub serves his intentions, and does not profit by his instructions and advice, he withdraws from him, and seeks some one more worthy of his assistance."

4. Is not the place of the spirit who withdraws often filled by another? And, if so, how are we to understand the suspension of the medium's faculty?

"There is no lack of spirits who ask nothing better than to communicate, and who are quite ready to take the place of those who withdraw; but, when the spirit who leaves a medium is a good one, he sometimes quits him only for a moment, depriving him, for a certain time, of all Communication, in order to give him a lesson, and to show him that the exercise of his faculty does not depend on himself; and should not be regarded by him as a thing to be vain of. This temporary powerlessness also serves to prove to the medium that he writes under an influence foreign to himself. As, were it otherwise, there would be no discontinuance of the impulsion. "But this interruption of the medianimic faculty is not always a punishment; it is sometimes due to the spirit's solicitude for the health of his medium, to whom he wishes to give a rest that he sees to be necessary to his physical well-being; and, when this is the case, he allows no other spirits to take his place."

5. Nevertheless, we sometimes see mediums of great moral worth, and who are in no need of rest, abandoned by their spirit-friends, and much distressed by these suspensions of their faculty, which they are quite unable to account for?

"In such cases, the suspension occurs as a trial of their patience and constancy; it is for the same reason that spirits rarely assign any fixed time for the duration of such interruptions of medianimity. Such suspensions, moreover, are sometimes useful by giving the medium time for thinking over the communications already made to him. It is by the use a medium makes of our instructions that we recognize those who are really worthy of our assistance; we cannot regard as such the experimenters who regard our manifestations only as an amusing curiosity."

6. In such a case, should the medium still endeavor to write?

"Yes, if the spirit advises him to do so; but if he tells him to abstain, he should cease the attempt, until some sign from the spirit announces the end of the suspension."

7. Is there any way of abridging such a trial?

"Resignation and prayer are the only means to which you can resort under such circumstances. All you can do to make the attempt each day, but only for a few minutes at a time, as it would be unwise to lose time and strength in fruitless efforts. The attempt should be made simply with a view to ascertaining whether the faculty is recovered or not."

8. The suspension of the medianimic faculty does not, then, always implies the withdrawal of the spirits who habitually communicate with the medium?

"Certainly not the medium is only in the position of one who is suffering from an attack of blindness, but who is none the less surrounded by his friends, although he does not see them. The medium therefore can, and should, continue to communicate *by thought* with his familiar spirits, and may feel assured that he is heard by them. The loss of medianimity deprives the medium of ostensible communication with his spirit friends, but it cannot deprive him of mental communication with them."

9. The interruption of the medianimic faculty, then, does not necessarily imply displeasure on the part of the spirits who usually communicate through a medium?

"By no means, for, on the contrary, it may be a proof of their consideration and kindness for him."

10. How can we find out when such interruptions are caused by their displeasure?

"Let the medium examine his conscience; let him ask himself what use he has made of his faculty, what good others have derived from it, *what profit he himself has derived from the counsels he has received from his spirit friends*, and he will hardly have much difficulty in ascertaining that point."

11. When the medium finds himself unable to write, may he not have recourse to some other medium?

"That depends on the cause of the interruption. A spirit, after having given you counsel, often leaves you for some time without communications, in order that you may not get into the habit of consulting us incessantly, and especially in regard to the details of your earthly life; when we have left a medium on this account, he will get nothing satisfactory through the aid of any other medium. And these suspensions are sometimes intended to sub serve yet another end, viz., to prove to you that spirits are free agents, and are not to be made to come at your beck and call; and for the same reason, those who are not mediums, do not always succeed in learning all that they desire to know."

12. To what end has Providence endowed certain individuals with special medianimic faculties?

"Mediumship is a mission, and should always be exercised as such. Mediums are the interpreters between spirits and men."

13. But there are some mediums who only use their faculties with reluctance?

"They are imperfect mediums; they know not the worth of the favor accorded them."

14. If mediumship is a mission, why is it not the exclusive privilege of good men, and why is this faculty so often possessed by persons who are far from estimable, and who make a bad use of it?

"It is given to them precisely because they need it for their own improvement, and in order that they may be open to good counsels; if they do not profit by the gift, they

must bear the consequences of their unfaithfulness. Did not Jesus address his teaching especially to sinners?"

15. When those who have an earnest desire to write as mediums, find themselves unable to do so, should they conclude that there is a want of kindly feeling towards them on the part of spirits?

"No, for this faculty may be lacking in their organization, just as may be that of poetry or of music; but the lack of this faculty may be compensated by the possession of some other one, equally valuable."

Group II: Example of mediumship wrongly used.

Read the following text⁽²⁾ and prepare an answer to the following questions:

- a) Give a general summary of the text to the whole class.
- b) Does the text describe a mediunistic meeting? What was the nature of the questions directed to the spirits by this mediunic group? Were these questions in accord with a higher degree of spirituality?
- c) Did the superior spirits completely abandon the mediunistic group? How did the superior spirit try to lead the group to a different path?
- d) What kind of consequences do you foresee for this mediunistic group, during this life time and afterwards?

Introduction: Andre Luiz and Hilario are spirits who, in the spiritual realm, are taking a rapid course on mediunship. In order to accomplish this, they asked for the help of Aulus, another spirit who is very proficient on this theme. All three of them are about to attend a mediunistic meeting. The text conveys their experiences at this meeting.

"Nightfall had come when we entered a narrow room where a group of people was praying. We saw various entities in a lamentable condition amidst, the incarnate. Their appearance was inferior to the men and women that participated in the reunion.

Aulus introduced us to Cassio, an amiable protective Spirit, and the only one there that appeared to be morally superior. His spiritual isolation was evidenced by the fact that the discarnate and incarnate of the assembly could not perceive his presence, or be aware of his thoughts. Though discouraged, Cassio manifested in answer to our mentor's appeals:

"So far no progress has been made, even though we made repeated calls for a renovation. We surrounded Quintino with the best resources, putting books and articles at his reach and generating uplifting conversations, but all in vain. Our friend is not yet aware of the great responsibilities that he assumes as head of a group of this kind."

Aulus tried to comfort him with a silent but understanding gesture. We were invited to observe.

The room was filled with dense, disagreeable fluids. Two mediums communicated with some companions from our plane. My first impression was that they were paid as the group's servants for undignified services. Diverse entities in the same condition, servile and meddlesome, formed a crowd around them.

Trance communication was common there. The mediums, out of their bodies, fed on the peculiar emanations of those present.

Raimundo, one of the communicating Spirits, under the kind eye of the director of the Center, conversed with a lady whose indiscretions and impudence inspired pity.

“Raimundo,” she said, “I need money. For months the Institute that owes me has not paid me. What do you say with regard to the delay?”

“Wait, dear sister,” recommended the entity, “we will act in your behalf.”

The conversation continued: “My situation requires urgent solution. You should be more forceful. Go to the office of the director and eliminate the difficulties. Do you want the addresses of the people you need to influence?”

“No, no! I know them and where they live.”

“I noticed, Raimundo, that you are distracted. You are not working promptly on my behalf.”

“That is not true. I have done as much as I can.”

And, while the lady lowered her voice and chatted, a mature gentleman directed his attention to Teotonio, the other communicating Spirit, declaring calmly: “Teotonio, how long should I wait?”

He appeared surprised by the question. He was silent and humble but the questioner added firmly: “I have been waiting four months to get the job that was promised to me. Couldn’t you solve my problem?”

“What would you like me to do?”

“I know that the manager of the company is against me. Influence him and make him give me a job.”

In the meantime, another lady also solicited Raimundo’s attention.

“Dear friend, I am relying on your valuable assistance. My daughter has accepted a marriage proposal from a shameless individual. This has created an alarming situation at home. My husband cannot stand this man and our daughter’s annoyance torments us. Couldn’t you do something to get him away from our home?”

Raimundo answered, respectfully, while Quintino immediately called for a prayer, so that the discarnates could increase their forces in order to respond to the group’s trust and reply to the services solicited. The arrangements and conversations continued between those communicating and the clients of the house, but I did not pay any further attention, considering all of this to be trivial.

I’ve seen obsessors and entities involved in evil doings under afflictive circumstances and enmeshed in tremendous conflicts, but nowhere did I feel so much compassion as I felt there. Here were healthy and clear-headed people communicating with the spiritual world as if it were a system for criminal exploitation and based on the principle of least effort.

Could those men and women have the impudence to request from incarnate companions the kind of services they were requesting from Spirits? Aren’t they abusing prayer and mediumship to escape the problems that surrounded them? Don’t they have enough knowledge to use their brain, tongue, eyes, ears, hands and feet in ennobling lessons? What were they doing with their faith? Could we justify a worker who turns over his or her share of work to others for the world’s improvement?

Aulus detected my bitter reflections and kindly hurried to comfort me.

“Any study of mediumship, even one as quick as ours, would not be complete if we did not investigate the misguided psychic region in which lazy Spirits, incarnates and discarnates, feed off each other. This is a product of ignorance that exists in churches throughout the world. They abuse prayer as much as they despise the opportunities that dignified work gives. They search for undeserved favors and transitory advantages, thus giving into indolence that crystallizes their childish wishes.”

“Will they continue this way indefinitely?” I asked.

“Andre, your question surprises me. You possess enough experience to know that pain is the great minister of Divine justice. Our lives are a great battle of evolvment. Whoever flees from the sacrificial task now encounters pain later. The Spirit may feel confident in inactivity, criminally mobilizing the will. One day, however, his torment will arrive and force him to understand the imperatives of progress. You can’t flee from eternity because time, the benefactor of work, is also the executioner of inertia.”

Hilario, who reflected nearby in silence and preoccupation, asked:

“Why do our incarnate brothers lend themselves to such practices in which little effort is required of them? There are so many lessons for spiritual improvement and so many calls for dignified mediumship in the doctrinal directives of Spiritism! Why is there so much disequilibrium?”

Aulus thought a moment and answered.

“Hilario, what we see here is not what the Spiritist Doctrine prescribes. We are witnessing the mediumistic phenomena managed by idle minds, which are attracted by inferior exploitation and thus worthy of our great pity. We cannot ignore that the mediumistic phenomenon involves people and churches everywhere. On the other hand, it is understandable that our friends, while on Earth, prefer to communicate with discarnates who remain bound to the sensorial field of physical life without a wider vision of the realities of the Spirit.

“It is easier for the common individual to work with equals or subordinates, since working with superiors requires goodwill, discipline, a timely correction of their actions, and a firm desire to improve.

“We know that there are no miracles at death. Each person awakens beyond the grave in the spiritual situation that he or she created. The vulgar individual feels better with entities that flatter his passions and stimulate his or her appetites. This is because, when we are before evolved companions, who have already learned to sublimate their personal impulses, dedicating themselves incessantly to goodness, we feel obliged to educate ourselves.”

“But isn’t this an abuse of the incarnate individual? Isn’t it a crime for him to take advantage of inferior discarnates?” asked Hilario.

“Without a doubt,” confirmed Aulus.

“Does this crime remain unpunished?”

Aulus observed with a good humored expression and responded:

“Don’t be too preoccupied. When errors originate from well-intentioned ignorance, the Law provides the necessary resources to enlightenment because genuine charity, in any circumstance, is always venerable. If the abuse is deliberate, however, punishment is inevitable.”

He directed his glance at the director of the reunion and to the intermediaries of the communicating mediums, and added:

“Teotonio, Raimundo and discarnate Spirits like them are in reality not the ones who take control but the ones controlled. Fascinated by Quintino’s requirements and the mediums that collaborate in such an unfortunate venture, they are apprentices who continue in their mentor’s path.

"If the director and the mediums in this group do not dedicate themselves to goodness, the Spirits that their work has enslaved will surprise them when they discarnate, asking for orientation and help. Probably later, in another epoch, all of them, the victims, will be reunited in the same family on Earth as parents and children. By correcting their attitudes, they shall achieve the complete liberation of their debts."

With our silent admiration, the mentor concluded: “Each noble deed receives the payment due to it, and each unhappy venture pays its price.”

Aulus, then, invited us to depart. The atmosphere did not lend itself to further study and we had already learned there the lesson that we could receive.

CONCLUSIONS:

The study will be accomplished if the class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. If a spirit sees that a medium no longer serves his intentions, and does not profit by his instructions and advice, he withdraws from him, and seeks some one more worthy of his assistance.
2. But this interruption of the medianimic faculty is not always a punishment; it is sometimes due to the spirit's solicitude for the health of his medium, to whom he wishes to give a rest that he sees to be necessary to his physical well-being;
3. Mediumship is a mission, and should always be exercised as such. Mediums are the interpreters between spirits and men.

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1. Kardec, Allan, “The Medium’s Book”, second part, chapter I, item 200 (segment), edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. Xavier, F. C., “In the Domains of Mediumship”, dictated by the spirit Andre Luiz, edited by Spiritist Alliance for Books (SAB), 2005.

Lesson 25**Mediumistic Development: Need for Methodology.****OBJECTIVES:**

- To explain why it is important to have methodology in a mediumship meeting;
- To understand the basic rules of this methodology.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator shall give a brief 10 minute introduction on the reasons why it is important to educate our mediumship. See lesson 18 (Workbook V)

2. Subdivide the class in two groups and ask them to study their texts and prepare a short presentation on them:

Group I:**Spirit Evocations**

Read carefully the following text⁽¹⁾ and answer (as complete as possible) the proposed question. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor.

a) Explain the following sentence: “In order that a given spirit may be enabled to communicate, there must be, between him and the medium, a fluidic harmony which it is sometimes neither easy nor possible to establish”.

b) Cite some reasons why communication with a particular spirit may not be achievable.

c) Explain why in many cases it is better to make an open evocation to our Guardian-Spirit, rather than to evoke a particular spirit by name.

203. Every one who aspires to become a medium naturally wishes to communicate with the spirits of those who are dear to him; but he must moderate his impatience on this point, for communication with a given spirit is often impeded by physical difficulties which render it impossible for a beginner. In order that a given spirit may be enabled to communicate, there must be, between him and the medium, a fluidic harmony which it is sometimes neither easy nor possible to establish; it is only as a medium's faculty becomes developed, that he gradually acquires the necessary aptitude for entering into relation with whatever spirit may present himself. It may happen, also, that the particular spirit with whom he desires to correspond is not able to control the conditions in such a manner as to make it possible for him to manifest himself; even though he may be present; or he may not be able, or may not have the permission, to come just when the appeal is addressed to him. It is therefore better for beginners not to be too persistent in their demands for any particular spirit, to the exclusion of all others; for it often happens that the spirit thus sought after is not the one with whom the necessary fluidic connection can be most easily established, however great may be the affectional sympathy between the

parties. Before attempting to obtain communications from any given spirit, we must therefore secure a sufficient development of the medianimic faculty; and, to this end, it is well to begin by making a general appeal to all our friends in the spirit-world, and especially to our Guardian-Angel.

For this general evocation, no sacramental formula is needed; and whoever should pretend to give such a formula would lay himself open to a charge of charlatanism, for spirits attach no importance to any set forms. All evocations should nevertheless be made in the name of God, and in some such terms as the following, or in any similar ones: "I pray Almighty God to permit a good spirit to communicate with me by writing (or otherwise, as the case may be), and I also beg my Guardian-Angel to have the kindness to assist me, and to keep away evil or troublesome spirits" or "I pray Almighty God to permit the spirit of So-and-so to communicate with me". In evoking individual spirits other than our personal friends and relations, we should always be careful to address ourselves only to those whom we know to be good and sympathetic, or who may be supposed to have some special motive for coming to us. In such cases, our evocation may be made in words like these: "In the name of Almighty God, I beg the spirit of So-and-so to communicate with me"; or "I pray Almighty God to permit the spirit of So-and-so to communicate with me"; or any other words of a similar character. We repeat it, the formula is nothing; a reverent and kindly frame of mind is everything. All present having united in the act of evocation, whatever may have been the form or mode employed, it is well to wait quietly for the spirit to manifest himself by the writing of some message, or by giving some other token of his presence. When the faculty of the medium is typtologic, it is necessary to formulate the first questions in such a way as that the spirit may be able to answer them by "yes" and "no"; as, for example, "Are you here, So-and-so?" "Will you answer me?" or, in case of doubt, "Will you give me your name?" "Whom do you come for?" "Do you want the alphabet?" And so on. (See, for fuller details and practical counsels, Part Second, Chap. XXV, Evocations.)

It is possible that the spirit whose presence is most desired may come, or it may be some other spirit who comes; perhaps it may be a stranger, perhaps the guardian-angel of the medium or of some other person present. The spirit who comes, makes himself known, usually, though not always, by giving his name; but then comes up the question of identity, one of the difficulties of practical spiritism requiring the greatest amount of experience for dealing with, and there are few beginners who are not exposed to deception on this head. (See, for a fuller consideration of this point, Part Second, Chap. XXIV, Identity of Spirits.)

Group II: **A Disobsession Meeting**

Read carefully the following text⁽²⁾ and answer (as complete as possible) the proposed question. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor.

a) Why a mediunistic meeting requires mediums with different aptitudes (like counselors, trance mediums, pass-givers, etc), rather than mediums with the same abilities?

“The members of the team, whose number should never exceed fourteen, must above all, keep their thoughts elevated with a correct mental attitude, before, during and after each task.

There should be no concerns about accessories or special clothing. They must understand that they are in that place in order to exercise a fraternal mandate of trust.

There is no place for blind faith in the Spiritist Doctrine. However, in the work of disobsession one must avoid unnecessary research, vain questions, criticism and unreasonable expectations.

Every member of the team will assume specific tasks. For example in a group of fourteen members there will be 2 - 4 counseling mediums, 2 - 4 pass-givers, and 4 - 6 trance mediums.

Pass givers and counselors, in addition to their specific tasks, will also function as positive elements of protection and safety for the trance mediums whenever these are being utilized. It is important to understand that each member of the group could be compared to fluidic batteries or lamps which may or may not be switched on to produce the effects of energy or light for the benefit of those who are in a state of spiritual darkness. This explains the need for all members of the group to maintain an elevated level of vibrations, so that those who are spiritually ill may open themselves to return to a state of equilibrium and discernment.

The incarnated components of the group must not give way to sleep during the disobsession work to avoid unnecessary out of body experiences. It is worth mentioning that in this type of work there should not be any mediumistic activities or experiments other than those related to the disobsession chore.

CONCLUSIONS:

The study will be accomplished if the class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Mediumistic meetings are not moments of curiosity, vanity or personal re-encounters with departed ones. They are moments of serious, but charitable, work.
2. Harmony of intentions among the group participants is necessary for a productive meeting.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Medium’s Book”, second part, chapter XVII, item 203, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. Xavier, F.C. and Vieira, W., “Disobsession”, chapter 20, edited by the Spiritist Alliance for Books (SAB), translated by Jussara Korngold, 2005.

OBJECTIVES:

- To inform what are the aims of the mediumistic education meetings.
- To cite how the candidate to mediumistic development will learn which mediumistic faculty he/she possess.
- To cite the necessary conditions for a secure development of mediumistic abilities.

METHODS:

1. Give a brief and general introduction about the education of mediumship based in the following text⁽¹⁾.

222. Practical spiritism, as we shall see more clearly the more we know of it, demands our utmost tact and discretion to avoid being taken in by deceitful spirits; if grown people are in danger of being deceived by these, children and young persons are evidently, on account of their inexperience, still more exposed to this danger. We know, too, that concentration of thought and feeling is absolutely necessary for obtaining the concentration of serious and benevolent spirits. An evocation made rightly and jokingly is a profanation which gives easy access to mocking and maleficent spirits; and as we cannot expect a child to possess the seriousness necessary for such an act, it is to be feared that he would make a mere amusement of it if left to himself.

Even under the most favorable conditions, it is highly desirable that a child who is endowed with the medianimic faculty should only exercise it under the eyes of experienced persons, who may inspire him, by their example, with the sentiment of respect that should always preside at the evocation of souls who have quitted the earthly life. The question of age, as I have said, is subordinate to conditions of temperament as well as of character; and you should not only avoid forcing the development of this faculty in children, where it is not spontaneous, but its exercise, in every case, should be conducted with very great circumspection, and should neither be excited nor encouraged even on the part of grown persons, if they are weak in body or in mind.

Those who show the slightest symptoms of mental eccentricity or weakness should be dissuaded from its exercise by every possible means; for there is, in such persons, an evident predisposition to insanity, which any and every species of excitement would tend to develop. Spiritist ideas are not more likely to produce cerebral excitement than any others; but madness brought on by spiritist ideas would take its character from them, just as it would assume the character of religious mania, if it had been brought on by the excitement attendant on an excess of devotional practices, and spiritism, in such cases, would naturally, though unjustly, be held responsible for that result. The best thing to be done, with every one who shows a tendency to fall under the influence of a fixed idea, is to direct his attention to something altogether different from that idea, so as to

give rest to the organs which are the seat of the excitement (See *introduction to The Spirits' Book*, Par. 12.)

2. Divide the class into 2 groups. All groups will read the same text. Analyze the answers to the questions with all the groups after they have finished with the text.

Single Group: **The mediunistic meeting**

Read the following text⁽²⁾ and answer these questions.

1. Give a brief summary of the text. Describe the main characters of the text, where they are, what is happening, etc.

2. Explain the sentence: “A succinct exam of the inter-cranial life will be sufficient, as it is there that we find the keys of communication between the mental and the physical world.”

3. According to the text, is it possible that less evolved spirits invade the cerebral field of a good medium? Explain.

Introduction: Andre Luiz and Hilario are spirits who, in the spiritual realm, are taking a rapid course on mediumship. In order to accomplish this, they asked for the help of Aulus, another spirit who is very proficient on this theme. All three of them are about to attend a mediunistic section. The text conveys their experiences at this meeting.

“Let us get acquainted with our mediumistic team,” said Aulus.

Stopping near an incarnate companion in charge of directing the tasks, he said:

“This is our brother Raul Silva, the director of this group, who is totally devoted to fraternity. Accurate in his duties and of ardent faith, he brings to the group a deep comprehension and goodwill. Because of the love with which he conducts his task, he is a faithful instrument of discarnate benefactors, who find in his mind a crystal mirror that reproduces their instructions without distortion.”

He then directed his attention to a young lady and, pointing her out, explained:

“This is our sister Eugenia, a docile medium who promises to have a brilliant future in the expansion of goodness. She is an excellent instrument of transmission that assists disoriented discarnate Spirits. With a clear intuition allied to her moral base, she has the advantage of remaining conscious during the communications and so benefits our field of action.”

He stopped on the left side of a young man who appeared about 30 years old, and said:

“Here we have our friend Anelio Araujo. He has been gradually progressing in clairvoyance, clairaudience and psychography.”

Then, approaching a nice companion, he notified us:

“This is our collaborator Antonio Castro, a well-intentioned young man who has a promising future in our activities. Being an unconscious medium, he still requires great vigilance on our part. He departs from his physical body with ease and achieves valuable tasks, but he requires greater study and wider experiences to express more clearly his personal observations. At times, he behaves as a child when separated from his body, compromising our activities. When he lends his body to demented or suffering entities,

he requires our assistance, as he usually yields his body to the will of the communicating Spirit. As you know, it is his obligation to assist us in containing them, so that our fraternal efforts do not result in injury to his physical body. He is, nonetheless, a valuable assistant in our studies.”

Moving along a little more, the mentor stopped in front of a respectable lady who had been in ardent prayer, and exclaimed:

“I would like to introduce our sister Celina, a devoted companion of our spiritual ministry. She is 50 years old and has made significant victories in her moral battles. She has been a widow for almost twenty years, dedicated to her children with admirable valor, overcoming thorny obstacles and dark days of renunciation. She was able to heroically withstand the assault from ignorant and unfortunate legions of Spirits that surrounded her husband, whom she married in order to fulfill a sacrificial task. She witnessed the persecution of evil geniuses to which she did not surrender. In fulfilling her obligations, her conduct has been irreproachable.

“She refined her mediumship, perfecting it with the flames of moral suffering, as you would mold heated iron with raps on an anvil. She is not a simple instrument of psychic phenomena, but a dedicated worker in constructing spiritual values. She is a clairvoyant, a clairaudient, and an unconscious trance medium, as well as a medium of out of body experiences. She enters these states with the same spontaneity with which she breathes, while staying true to her responsibilities. This makes her a valuable collaborator. She is diligent and humble, finding her greatest happiness in fraternal love. Distributing her time between obligations and edifying studies, she is like a battery assimilating beneficial spiritual energies. Because of that, she is less vulnerable to the forces of darkness.”

It was true that standing next to her we enjoyed a sensation of peace and comfort. Most likely because of the current of indefinable happiness that inundated us, Hilario asked:

“If we were to make a psychoscopic^(A) analysis of Celina, would the conditions we are visualizing about her now be faithfully registered?”

“Perfectly,” responded Aulus immediately. “Such an observation would ratify her emanations of kindness and understanding, faith and good humor. Just as scientific studies on Earth catalogue the chemical elements that form dense matter, in our field of rarefied matter it is possible to analyze the type of subtle forces that are emitted by each being.

“In the future, human beings will be able to examine emissions of optimism and confidence, sadness and desperation, and fix their density and limits just as they can now separate and study uranium atoms. These mental principles are immeasurable and worthy of special attention in the future of humankind, as with photons currently studied by the scientists engaged in deciphering the constitution of light.”

After a brief interval the mentor added:

“A psychoscopic analysis determines the nature of our thoughts, and through this it is very simple to recognize our merits as well as our weaknesses.”

The mentor invited us to participate in a detailed examination of the encephalic field of sister Celina, pointing out:

“In no mediumistic process can we forget that it is through the brain that the mind manifests. Surely, you already possess advanced knowledge regarding the corporeal body, so we don’t need to discuss technical details about it.”

Caressing her hair, which showed strands of gray, he added:

“A succinct exam of the inter-cranial life will be sufficient, as it is there that we find the keys of communication between the mental and the physical world.”

Centering our attention on a small lens that Aulus gave us, our friends’ brain appeared similar to a powerful radio station with thousands of microscopic antennae and conductors, resistors and connections. They were used by specialized brain cells, functioning as detectors and stimulants, transformers and amplifiers of sensations and ideas whose vibrations shone within as incessant rays, illuminating a miniscule sky.

The mentor observed with us the marvelous labyrinth in which the epiphysis or pineal gland was shining like a tiny blue sun, and said:

“We are not going to point out minor things related to the brain or the nervous system in general, as you are already familiar with these through your knowledge of human nature.”

At that instant I was amazed by a beam of light formed by the cortical cells vibrating with the magnetic flow of thoughts.

“Let us remember,” continued the mentor, “that the delicate encephalic apparatus unites millions of cells, which function as if they were workers in a hierarchical order within the harmonious governmental structure.”

And enumerating distinct regions of this prodigious thinking kingdom, he declared:

“There is no need to digress. The experiences acquired through the soul constitute a marvelous synthesis of perception and sensitivity in our condition of free Spirits. These experiences, however, are located in the corporeal body as controllers of the manifestations of individuality, and are perfectly analyzable. That is how the incarnate soul possesses, in the physical brain, the special centers that govern the head, the face, the eyes, the ears and limbs.

“The brain also governs the centers of speech, language, sight, audition, memory, writing, taste, swallowing, tact, smell, of registering hot and cold, pain, and muscular equilibrium. It is also controls the inner values of the mind, the connection with the exterior world, imagination, esthetic and artistic taste and many others treasured by the experiences of the soul, which conquers its own individuality, little by little, effort upon effort. This work in favor of its sublimity is possible through the avenues of progress and perfection that Earth offer.”

A brief pause occurred spontaneously and, because Hilario and I did not want to interrupt, the mentor continued:

“We cannot study mediumistic faculties without a correlative study of the personality. Therefore, it is of great importance that we consider the cerebral centers, where thought and will operate. The cerebral centers influence all mediumistic phenomena, from pure intuition to objective materialization. Through their work of love and sacrifice, wise and benevolent Spirits use these centers as do humans when, as mediums, they maintain superior ideals of kindness and service. They are also available, however, to inferior and animalized entities through the lamentable process of obsession”

“But,” interrupted Hilario wisely, “is it possible that less evolved intelligences could invade an illuminated cerebral field such as that of our sister Celina?”

“We cannot forget,” said the mentor, “that Celina is an incarnate soul on a long trial, and as an apprentice, she is far from mastering all her lessons.”

He meditated for a moment, and then philosophized good-humouredly:

“On a hundred mile trip, many surprises can occur in the last mile.”

Then placing his paternal right hand over the forehead of the medium, he continued:

“Our sister is a testimony to goodwill, outstanding faith, charity and patience. Like all of us, she is not yet able to free herself from her past debts. We are a vast legion of fighters seeking to overcome the enemy that inhabits our interior nature or our very world, enemies symbolized by our past habits of living with an inferior nature. Such habits place us in tune with the inhabitants of the shadows, and in evident harm to our equilibrium.

“Our friend Celina, as well as all of us, must take care not to abandon our obligation that keeps us receptive to the light. To do so would be to yield to vanity and disenchantment, misleading us to consider them as acquired rights and unjustifiable misfortunes. If this occurs to her, it would certainly interrupt her noble ascension. Many mediums suffer losses of this type. After a promising and brilliant beginning, they claim possession of spiritual resources that do not belong to them, or they fear the prolonged afflictions along their pathways, and so become sterile and useless. This can lower their moral level and, yielding to inertia, they may cultivate primitive impulses. Incessant work in righteousness would make them forget such inferior impulses.”

Then, smiling, he added:

“We have not yet conquered the supreme victory over ourselves. The soil does not produce without the help of the plough or the hoe. Without working and struggling to perfect our potential, we would be permanently threatened by hazardous weeds, which would multiply easier when the best quality soil is abandoned.

Then, looking straight at us as if to emphasize the weight of the responsibilities with which we were vested, he concluded:

“Our present spiritual achievements are similar to small glimmering lights over the shadows of our past. We need great caution when planting the seeds of righteousness, so that the winds of evil do not sweep them away. That is why the mediumistic task, considered a tool for superior intelligences, is not easily attained. Through the fragile channel which lends itself to the passage of the light, we are attacked by the heavy waves of darkness and ignorance that become agitated and dense around us.”

The mentor became quiet. He, too, was now connected to the magnetic field of the friends who followed silently, ready to commence the meeting.

Appendix:

(A) Explanation given by Aulus (extract, chapter 1, “In the domains of Mediumship”). Psychoscopic analyzes = Analyze with a psychoscope, an instrument “designed to observe the soul and define its vibrations at the same time that it studies physical matter,” (...) “In our supervisory task, we are able to classify without difficulty the probabilities of the different groups of psychic services that exist in the world. By analyzing the psychoscopy of a person or a group of workers, it is possible to deduce their potential and

qualify the category of their status. According to the radiation they project, we can plan the work they are capable of achieving.” (...) “We are all subject to examination by the superior planes in the same manner that we currently investigate the planes below ours. If the spectroscope permits the individual to investigate the nature of the chemical elements found at enormous distances by analyzing the luminous waves that they emit, with greater facility we will identify the values of a human by the rays one emits. We can know of one’s morals, sentiments, education and character through a brief observation.”

CONCLUSIONS:

The study will be accomplished if the class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. “The cerebral centers influence all mediumistic phenomena, from pure intuition to objective materialization. Through their work of love and sacrifice, wise and benevolent Spirits use these centers as do humans when, as mediums, they maintain superior ideals of kindness and service. They are also available, however, to inferior and animalized entities through the lamentable process of obsession”.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Medium’s Book”, part second, chapter XVIII, items 222, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

2. Xavier, F. C., “In the Domains of Mediumship”, chapter 3, dictated by the spirit Andre Luiz, edited by Spiritist Alliance for Books (SAB), 2005.

LESSON 27**Mediumistic Development: Psychic Adaptation.****OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand the importance of mental and psychic adaptation in the mediumistic practice.
- To explain how one can help a beginner medium to educate his/her mediumship.

METHODS:

1. Coordinator begins by asking pairs to discuss on the following question:
“How can one help a beginner medium to educate his/her mediumship?”

2. Then, the whole class read together the following text⁽¹⁾. The coordinator shall make comments and bring highlights of the text as the class is reading and discussing it out loud.

Introduction: Andre Luiz and Hilario are spirits who, in the spiritual realm, are taking a rapid course on mediumship. In order to accomplish this, they asked for the help of Aulus, another spirit who is very proficient on this theme. In this passage, Aulus discourses about mediumship.

“Undoubtedly,” agreed Aulus, “mediumship is one of the most intriguing fields in the world today. As humans approach the era of the Spirit, they will require cooperation of many so that they are ready for enlightenment.”

The instructor Aulus, with his amiable and noble countenance, had admitted us into a brief course about mediumship at the request of Minister Clarencio.

Our mentor dedicated years of study to this specialized work, so in him we found the teacher we needed. As he spoke of the human needs, he fixed his firm and lucid attention on us, not unlike an older brother or tender father. Hilario and I could hardly contain our admiration. It was a privilege to hear him discuss the topic that brought us together and we were filled with admiration for him.

Allied within him was a rich cultural essence and the greatest capacity of love. He spoke of the course humanity had to take with the warmth of a benevolent and wise doctor, who would do the work of a nurse in order to assist in the cure of others.

Aulus had been interested in mediumistic experiments since 1779 when he met Mesmer^(A), the well-known magnetizer, in Paris during the time the latter conducted research that would result in the renowned proposals he introduced. He also witnessed the accomplishments of Allan Kardec in codifying Spiritism. He was close to Cahagnet, Balzac, Théophile Gautier and Victor Hugo, ending his days in France after decades dedicated to mediumship and magnetism. In the spiritual world, he continued his observations, working towards his mission to educate. He has dedicated himself to the task of the spiritualization of Brazil for over thirty years.

Aulus provided us with the knowledge of his memories and experiences. He commented optimistically regarding a new field of action and he agreed to clarify his ideas for us. Marveling at him as we did, however, we had trouble responding to his questions.

“We are familiar with some aspects of spiritual interchange.” I told Aulus. “Our desire, however, is to further our knowledge of this complex subject. Previously, we made cursory studies of psychography^a, trance communication and materialization. In spite of this, our knowledge is still insignificant compared to the many facets of mediumship.

The mentor, kindly, assented to elucidating us. He cooperated in several departments and would give us which he humbly considered “simple notations.”

To begin, Aulus invited us to listen to a friend speak about mediumship to a small group of students -- incarnates and discarnates -- and whose precise words he considered opportune and valuable. We immediately accepted and, having no time to waste, we quickly followed him.

In the vast section of the Ministry of Communications we were introduced to the instructor, Alberio, who was about to commence his dissertation. We sat down among dozens of companions, in attentive and silent expectation. As with many other mentors that I knew, Alberio went up to the lectern unceremoniously, as if he were simply a brother who was going to converse with us fraternally.

“My friends,” he said with assurance, “as we continue our studies, let us consider that the mind is the basis of all mediumistic phenomena.

“We recognize that the universe, which extends itself into the infinite with millions of suns, is the externalization of divine thought whose essence we receive as eternal wisdom, inasmuch as our spiritual evolvment allows. From the superstructure of the heavenly bodies to the sub-atomic infrastructure, everything is contained in the mind of God, just as fish and aquatic plants are contained in the immense ocean.

“We are children of the Creator and from Him we inherit the faculty of creating, developing, nurturing and transforming. The conceptual dimensions in which we find ourselves circumscribe our lives, and we recognize our insignificance compared to the glory of the Spirits that have already reached an angelic state. Yet we all radiate the active energy of our own thoughts, establishing the psychic ambient correlating to our individuality.

“Each world possesses a field of electromagnetic tension within a gravitational force that maintains its equilibrium. Similarly, each soul finds its place with life forces that have affinity with its mental halo; that is to say in the sphere of the individuals it needs to make adjustments or for spiritual advancement.

“Each planet makes its revolutions in the orbit to which it is assigned by the laws of equilibrium without exceeding them, just as each conscience evolves within the spiritual group that influences its actions. We are a vast group of intelligences, synchronized in one vibratory grade of perception, integrating billions of souls that are humankind on Earth. Each world harbors a family of the universal humanity and we are but one of these families.

^a N.T.: Psychography: Involuntary or unconscious writing, as by a medium." Funk and Wagnalls, New Comprehensive International Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedia Edition.

“Up to now, we perceived only the expressions of the life that touches us, limited by our understanding. Depending on our brothers in our trajectory toward evolvement, like the worlds that move in space influenced by the stars surrounding them, we act and react upon each other through the mental energy with which we become renovated. We are constantly creating, feeding and destroying forms and situations, landscapes and things in the structuring of our own destinies.

“Our mind is, in this manner, a nucleus of intelligent forces generating a subtle plasma that, upon exteriorizing incessantly away from us, offers objective resources to the images of our own imagination under the command of our personal designs. The idea is an entity organized by our spirit, to which our thoughts give form or shape and our will imprints movement and direction. From the conjunction of our ideas our own personal existence results.”

The orator made a small pause that no one dared to interrupt, and later proceeded:

“All living beings breathe in the psychic wavelength that is unique to them, within the dimensions that are characteristic to them, or in the frequency that is particular to them. That psyche does not depend on the central nervous system once it is flowing from the mind. It is, then, the one that conditions all the phenomenon of organic life within itself.”

“Upon examining animic values as a faculty of communication between the Spirits, in whichever sphere they find themselves, we cannot lose sight of the mental world of the agent and of the receiver. The receiver’s intelligence is colored by the thoughts in which it lives. The sender’s intelligence submits to the limits and to the interpretations of the thoughts that it is capable of producing.

“Backward discarnate⁽²⁾ natives, communicating with wise individuals, who are still attached to the physical body, can only offer to them trivial subjects concerning their primitive experiences on Earth. Conversely, wise people without their physical body, entering into a relationship with backward natives attached to their African habitat, will not succeed in giving them their immediate cooperation, unless they could assist them with their mental interests, as in helping a herd of bovine or in curing an illness of the material body. For this reason, a backward native would not feel happy in the company of a wise person; likewise, a wise person would not be detained by a backward native for lack of that nourishment, almost imponderable, which we could classify as vibrational compensations.

“It is a law that our greatest happiness is received from those with whom we can exchange mental values similar to our own. This is comparable to a tree that produces better when situated among the same species with which it can germinate.

“In mediumship, we cannot overlook the phenomenon of synchronization. We attract Spirits that have affinity with us and to which we are also attracted. If it is true that each person gives according to what he or she has, then it is unquestionable that each one receives according to what he or she gives.

“The mind is the basis of all mediumistic manifestations in whatever manner they are expressed. Therefore, it is indispensable that we use moral and cultural treasures to expand our thinking. The values expressed in them make it possible to fixate the light that descends toward us from the highest realms, through the genius of wisdom and love that oversees our experiences.

“Those that compared our mental world to a mirror were right: we reflect the images around us, and we direct toward others the images that we create. And, since we cannot escape the imperative of attraction, we shall only present clarity and beauty if they exist in the mirror of our interior life.

“Mental reflections either favor our procrastination or compel us to go forward. Each person lives in the heaven or hell that one builds for oneself in the innermost recesses of one’s heart and mind, independently of the physical body. Observing life in its glorious eternity, death is solely a transition between two types of a similar experience, in the indestructible today.

“We encounter mediumship wherever human beings develop. Sanctifying missions and battles of destruction, noble tasks and evil obsessions, all have their origin in the reflections of the individual or in the collective mind, combined with the sublime or degrading forces of the thoughts that nurture them. Therefore, let us learn to cultivate our desire for education and perfect ourselves each day. We are all mediums, no matter what we do.

“Psychic strength is natural to all individuals, but mediumistic perfection without the refinement or purification of the individual is not possible. It is counterproductive to intensify the movement of energy without disciplining our impulses and it is dangerous to possess this ability without knowledge of its proper use.

“The mirror buried in the mud does not reflect the splendor of the Sun. An agitated lake does not reflect the image of the star that exists in the infinite. Let us elevate our level of knowledge with appropriate study and let us purify our emotions through the constant exercise of superior virtues. We need to do this if we wish to receive the message of the great souls.

“Mediumship in itself is not enough. It is essential to know what type of mental wavelength we are assimilating to, so that we can recognize the quality of our work and evaluate the direction taken.”

Alberio continued to make valuable comments and later responded to complicated questions asked by several apprentices. As for my part, I received plenty on which to meditate. With a few words of appreciation, Hilario and I said goodbye to our instructors. Aulus promised to meet with us on the following day.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Thoughts are continuous irradiations from the spirit which emanate and envelop the physical body. The thoughts of each individual will determine his/her point in the infinite moral/intellectual scale of life.
2. Moreover, these thoughts will determine the qualities of the person as a medium.

REFERENCES:

1. Xavier, F. C., “In the Domains of Mediumship”, chapter 1, dictated by the spirit Andre Luiz, edited by Spiritist Alliance for Books (SAB), 2005.

APPENDIX:

A. (From Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mesmer>, accessed June/2006). Franz Anton Mesmer (May 23, 1734 – March 5, 1815) discovered what he called animal magnetism and others often called mesmerism. The evolution of Mesmer's ideas and practices led James Braid (1795-1860) to develop hypnosis in 1842. Mesmer was born in the village of Iznang, Swabia (Austria). After studying at the Jesuit universities of Dillingen and Ingolstadt, he took up the study of medicine at the University of Vienna in 1759. In 1766 he published a doctoral dissertation with the Latin title “De planetarum influxu in corpus humanum”, which discussed the influence of the Moon and the planets on the human body and on disease (medical astrology). Evidence assembled by Frank A. Pattie suggests that Mesmer plagiarized his dissertation from a work by Richard Mead (1673-1754). Soon after receiving his degree, Mesmer married a wealthy widow and established himself as a physician in Vienna. He lived on a splendid estate and patronised the arts. When court intrigue prevented the performance of *Bastien und Bastienne*, the first opera composed by the twelve-year-old musical prodigy Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Mesmer offered his own gardens for the production. Mozart later immortalized his former patron by including a joking reference to Mesmer in his opera *Così fan tutte*.



In 1774 to produce an "artificial tide" in a patient, Mesmer had her swallow a preparation containing iron, and then attached magnets to various parts of her body. She reported feeling streams of a mysterious fluid running through her body and was relieved of her symptoms for several hours. Mesmer did not believe that the magnets had achieved the cure on their own. He felt that he had contributed animal magnetism, which had accumulated in his own body, to her. He soon stopped using magnets as a part of his treatment.

In 1775 Mesmer was invited to give his opinion before the Munich Academy of Sciences on the exorcisms carried out by Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), a priest and healer. Mesmer said that while Gassner was sincere in his beliefs, his cures were due to the fact that he possessed a high degree of animal magnetism. This confrontation between Mesmer's secular ideas and Gassner's religious beliefs marked the end of Gassner's career as well as, according to Henri Ellenberger, the emergence of dynamic psychiatry.

The scandal which followed Mesmer's unsuccessful attempt to treat the blindness of an 18-year-old musician, Maria Theresa Paradis, led him to leave Vienna in 1777. The following year Mesmer moved to Paris, rented an apartment in a part of the city preferred by the wealthy and powerful and established a medical practice. Paris soon divided into those who thought he was a charlatan, who had been forced to flee from Vienna, and those who thought he had made a great discovery.

In his first years in Paris, Mesmer tried and failed to get either the Royal Academy of Sciences or the Royal Society of Medicine to provide official approval for his doctrines. He found only one physician of high professional and social standing, Charles d'Esclon, to become a disciple. In 1779, with d'Esclon's encouragement, Mesmer wrote an 88-page book “*Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal*”, to which he appended his famous 27 Propositions. These propositions outlined his theory at that time.

According to d'Eslon, Mesmer understood health as the free flow of the process of life through thousands of channels in our bodies. Illness was caused by obstacles to this flow. Overcoming these obstacles and restoring flow produced crises, which restored health. When Nature failed to do this spontaneously, contact with a conductor of animal magnetism was a necessary and sufficient remedy. Mesmer aimed to aid or provoke the efforts of Nature. To cure an insane person, for example, involved causing a fit of madness. The advantage of magnetism involved accelerating such crises without danger.

Mesmer treated patients both individually and in groups. With individuals he would sit in front of his patient with his knees touching the patient's knees, pressing the patient's thumbs in his hands, looking fixedly into the patient's eyes. Mesmer made "passes", moving his hands from patients' shoulders down along their arms. He then pressed his fingers on the patient's hypochondriac region (the area below the diaphragm), sometimes holding his hands there for hours. Many patients felt peculiar sensations or had convulsions that were regarded as crises and supposed to bring about the cure.

By 1780 Mesmer had more patients than he could treat individually and he established a collective treatment known as the baquet. An English physician, who observed Mesmer, described the treatment as follows:

“In the middle of the room is placed a vessel of about a foot and a half high which is called here a "baquet". It is so large that twenty people can easily sit round it; near the edge of the lid which covers it, there are holes pierced corresponding to the number of persons who are to surround it; into these holes are introduced iron rods, bent at right angles outwards, and of different heights, so as to answer to the part of the body to which they are to be applied. Besides these rods, there is a rope which communicates between the baquet and one of the patients, and from him is carried to another, and so on the whole round. The most sensible effects are produced on the approach of Mesmer, who is said to convey the fluid by certain motions of his hands or eyes, without touching the person. I have talked with several who have witnessed these effects, who have convulsions occasioned and removed by a movement of the hand...”

In 1784, without Mesmer requesting it, King Louis XVI appointed four members of the Faculty of Medicine as commissioners to investigate animal magnetism as practiced by d'Esilon. At the request of these commissioners the King appointed five additional commissioners from the Royal Academy of Sciences. These included the chemist Lavoisier, the physician Joseph-Ignace Guillotin, the astronomer Jean Sylvain Bailly and the American ambassador Benjamin Franklin.

The commission conducted a series of experiments aimed, not at determining whether Mesmer's treatment worked, but whether he had discovered a new physical fluid. The commission concluded that there was no evidence for such a fluid. Whatever benefit the treatment produced was attributed to "imagination." In 1785 Mesmer left Paris. His activities over the next twenty years are largely unknown.

Among Mesmer's followers was Armand-Marc-Jacques Chastenet, Marquis de Puységur (1751-1825), who discovered induced or artificial somnambulism.

(II) Mesmer's propositions:

From (accessed June/2006):

[http://web.archive.org/web/20040710162753/http://www.unbf.ca/psychology/like ly/readings/mesmer.htm](http://web.archive.org/web/20040710162753/http://www.unbf.ca/psychology/like%20ly/readings/mesmer.htm)

1. A responsive influence exists between the heavenly bodies, the earth, and animated bodies.

2. A fluid universally diffused, so continuous as not to admit of a vacuum, incomparably subtle, and naturally susceptible of receiving, propagating, and communicating all motor disturbances, is the means of this influence.

3. This reciprocal action is subject to mechanical laws, with which we are not as yet acquainted.

4. Alternative effects result from this action, which may be considered to be a flux and reflux.

5. This reflux is more or less general, more or less special, more or less compound, according to the nature of the causes which determine it.

6. It is by this action, the most universal which occurs in nature, that the exercise of active relations takes place between the heavenly bodies, the earth, and its constituent parts.

7. The properties of matter and of organic substance depend on this action.

8. The animal body experiences the alternative effects of this agent, and is directly affected by its insinuation into the substance of the nerves.

9. Properties are displayed, analogous to those of the magnet, particularly in the human body, in which diverse and opposite poles are likewise to be distinguished, and these may be communicated, changed, destroyed, and reinforced. Even the phenomenon of declination^(a) may be observed.

10. This property of the human body which renders it susceptible of the influence of heavenly bodies, and of the reciprocal action of those which environ it, manifests its analogy with the magnet, and this has decided me to adopt the term of animal magnetism

11. The action and virtue^(b) of animal magnetism, thus characterized, may be communicated to other animate or inanimate bodies. Both of these classes of bodies, however, vary in their susceptibility.

12. Experiments show that there is a diffusion of matter, subtle enough to penetrate all bodies without any considerable loss of energy.^(c)

13. This action and virtue may be strengthened and diffused by such bodies.

14. Its action takes place at a remote distance, without the aid of any intermediary substance.

15. It is, like light, increased and reflected by mirrors.

16. It is communicated, propagated, and increased by sound.

17. This magnetic virtue may be accumulated, concentrated, and transported.

18. I have said that animated bodies are not all equally susceptible; in a few instances they have such an opposite property that their presence is enough to destroy all the effects of magnetism upon other bodies.

19. This opposite virtue likewise penetrates all bodies: it also may be communicated, propagated, accumulated, concentrated, and transported, reflected by mirrors, and propagated by sound. This does not merely constitute a negative, but a positive opposite virtue.

20. The magnet, whether natural or artificial, is like other bodies susceptible of animal magnetism, and even of the opposite virtue: in neither case does its action on fire

and the needle [of a compass] suffer any change, and this shows that the principle of animal magnetism essentially differs from that of mineral magnetism.

21. This system sheds new light upon the nature of fire and of light, as well as on the theory of attraction, of flux and reflux, of the magnet and of electricity.

22. It teaches us that the magnet and artificial electricity have, with respect to diseases, properties common to a host of other agents presented to us by nature, and that if the use of these has been attended by some useful results, they are due to animal magnetism.

23. These facts show, in accordance with the practical rules I am about to establish, that this principle will cure nervous diseases directly, and other diseases indirectly.

24. By its aid the physician is enlightened as to the use of medicine, and may render its action more perfect, and can provoke and direct salutary crises^(d), so as to completely control them.

25. In communicating my method, I shall, by a new theory of matter, demonstrate the universal utility of the principle I seek to establish.

26. Possessed of this knowledge, the physician may judge with certainty of the origin, nature, and progress of diseases, however complicated they may be; he may hinder their development and accomplish their cure without exposing the patient to dangerous and troublesome consequences, irrespective of age, temperament, and sex. Even women in a state of pregnancy, and during parturition, may reap the same advantage^(e).

27. This doctrine will finally enable the physician to decide upon the health of every individual, and of the presence of the diseases to which he may be exposed. In this way the art of healing may be brought to absolute perfection.

Footnotes:

(a) Declination: The needle of a compass points toward the north magnetic pole declining slightly downward through the bulge of the round earth.

(b) Virtue: The word here means "special power" or "power for good."

(c) Subtle matter: There are, in fact, particles rather like this called neutrinos. Furthermore, radiation is used to treat cancer. Some people, therefore, are still impressed by claims that some sort of "universal" rays or particles can be "accumulated" to produce curative effects.

(d) Crisis: Medical practitioners believed that some diseases rose to a crisis point after which "the fever broke" and the patients recovered, unless the crisis had killed them. Under some conditions, it was thought safest to bring on the crisis early.

(e) Women: The authorities in Paris had complaints that many young single women attended Mesmer's clinic. It was generally suspected there was some sort of sexual attraction in what went on there. The Government investigation was probably more motivated by moral concerns than by an appetite for scientific accuracy.

Lesson 28**Signs of Mediumship.****OBJECTIVES:**

- To identify precursor signs of mediumship
- To characterize a true mediumship.
- To explain what is unproductive mediumship

METHODS:

1. The coordinator should brain storm the audience about the following topics:
 - *What are the precursor signs of mediumship? Can it appear without any precursor signs?*
 - *Why are signs and symptoms like irritability, sadness, fear, nightmares, anguish and others sometimes correlated with mediumship development?*
 - *Is the appearance of mediumship related to any specific condition?*
2. Divide the class into 2 groups. Each group will read the assigned paper and discuss the proposed questions.

Group I:**Unproductive mediumship**

Read the following text⁽¹⁾ and answer these questions.

- Identify some precursor signs of mediumship as mentioned in the text.
- Explain what unproductive mediumship is. How to avoid it?
- Why does study and charitable work form the foundation of mediumship development?

200. We shall here treat specially of writing-mediums, because there is not only the most common sort of medianimity, and the one which is the simplest and most convenient, but also because it is the one which gives the most satisfactory results, and is most sought after. Unfortunately, we have as yet no-diagnosis which can indicate, even approximately, the possession of this faculty; the physical signs which some persons have supposed to indicate its existence are altogether uncertain. It is found in children and in old people, in men and in women, independently of health, or of intellectual and moral development; it has nothing to do with a person's temperament; there is but one way of ascertaining its existence, viz., by actual experiment.

We can obtain writing, as we have seen, indirectly, by means of planchettes, etc, or directly, by the hand; to this latter method, as being the easiest and the most generally employed, we shall confine our remarks. Not with standing the simplicity of the operation, which consists, as we have seen, in holding a pencil upon a sheet of paper,

without any preparation, and just as we do in ordinary writing, several conditions are indispensable to success. (...)

205. In order to avoid a waste of effort, it is well for beginners to ask, through some more fully developed medium, for the advice and assistance of some serious and advanced spirit; but it must be remarked that, when we inquire of spirits whether such and such a person is a medium or not, they almost always answer affirmatively, which does not prevent the attempts of many would-be mediums from being unsuccessful; a fact which is easily explained. In the first place, you ask a spirit a general question, and he gives you a general answer; in the next place, nothing, as we have seen, is so elastic as the medianimic faculty, which may assume the greatest variety of forms, shades, and degrees. A man, therefore, may be a medium, without being aware of it; and in some mode quite different from that which he may be seeking after. To the vague question: "Am I a medium?" the spirit may answer "Yes;" but to the more precise question: "Am I a writing-medium?" he may answer "No." We must also take into account the character of the spirit interrogated; for some spirits are so careless or so ignorant that they answer at random, like giddy mortals; for which reason, we should endeavor to address ourselves only to enlightened spirits, who, in general, willingly reply to such questions, and point out the best method of succeeding, if success be possible.

210. The first indication of the possession of the faculty of writing under spirit dictation is usually a sort of shuddering in the arm and hand; little by little, the hand is moved, as though writing, by an impulsion which it is unable to control. It often happens that, at first, only a few strokes are made; letters are then gradually formed, and words begin to appear; and at length the writing is produced with the rapidity and clearness of a running hand. In every case, the hand must be abandoned entirely to the extraneous impulsion which is acting upon it, and which should neither be resisted nor assisted.

Some mediums write quickly and easily from the beginning, and even, as just remarked, on their very first attempt; but this is comparatively rare: others are long in getting beyond strokes and pot-books. Spirits tell us that a long course of training is needed, in the latter case, to bring the hand of the medium under their control. When these exercises are unduly prolonged or degenerate into ridiculous scrawling, the medium may be sure that some spiteful or mocking spirit is amusing himself at his expense, for good spirits never cause any waste of labor; in such cases, he should appeal with increased fervor to his guardian-angel, in order to attract the good influences that will help him to get rid of the persecution. If; despite these efforts, no improvement takes place, he should cease to hold the pencil. The attempt may be renewed every day; but it is well to stop whenever anything equivocal occurs, in order to give a summary check to the satisfaction of the frivolous or hostile spirits who are so apt to interfere with beginners.

To these remarks a spirit adds the following: - "You should also state that there are mediums who cannot get beyond strokes and pot-hooks. If; after some months of trying, a medium obtains nothing more significant than these, than letters strung together without meaning, or than a mere "yes" or "no", it is useless to persist in spoiling paper to no purpose; they are mediums, it is true, but unproductive mediums. And, in all cases, the first communications obtained should only be considered as exercises that the medium has been made to go through with by secondary spirits; for which reason, but slight importance should be attached to them, the spirits employed for such work being, so to say, mere writing-masters, who are set, by higher spirits, to get the medium's hand into

train. For you must not suppose that such preparatory exercises are ever conducted by elevated spirits and there is always danger that, if the medium is not animated by a serious purpose, the spirits of lower degree who are thus employed about him may remain with him and attach them selves to him. Almost all mediums have passed through this phase of trial in the course of their development; it is for them to win for themselves the sympathy of spirits of a higher order, who may gradually take the place of the others."

Group II: Mediumship as a trial

Read the following text⁽²⁾ and answer these questions.

- Explain this affirmative: "mediumship is not a sign of moral superiority but merely an opportunity to acquire it".
- What is mediumship as a trial? Give its main characteristics.
- How would you classify the mediumship of the characters described in the text: productive, unproductive, trial or obsession?
 - o Pedro
 - o Raul Silva

Introduction: Andre Luiz and Hilario are spirits who, in the spiritual realm, are taking a rapid course on mediumship. In order to accomplish this, they asked for the help of Aulus, another spirit who is very proficient on this theme. All three of them are about to attend a mediunistic section. The text conveys their experiences at this meeting.

"A small row of people came to seek assistance from the Center. One was a young man named Pedro. He appeared anguished, speaking words that I could not hear clearly. Brother Clementino, consulted by Aulus, told the mentor:

"Since today's activities are for study, we will permit the manifestation."

I realized that our mentor intended to let us witness an important demonstration. Invited by the instructor, we approached the young patient who was assisted by his gray-haired mother. On the supervisor's approval, the guards let an evidently mentally unstable Spirit into the reunion. He suddenly crossed the safety lines that would normally prevent him from entering, frenetically shouting the young man's name.

His eyes were fixed on the patient; he observed nothing other than him. As he reached Pedro, our incarnate brother suddenly screamed and collapsed. The elderly woman rushed to break her son's fall.

Under the guidance of Clementino, Raul Silva quickly determined that the young man be isolated and brought to a bed in the adjoining room. Celina was put in charge. Along with her, we accompanied the patient with some concern.

In the room, various tasks continued without interruption while we got ready to provide the required treatment. Pedro and the obsessor that dominated him now appeared joined with one another. They were two contestants, intent on a fierce fight.

Pedro's collapse had all the classic symptoms of an epileptic attack. His face was transfigured by an indescribable paleness, his muscles contracted, his teeth clenched, and his head was flexed back. His arms flailed like two twigs of a tree in a storm.

Celina and the patient's loving mother helped to lay him on the bed. When they were about to pray, the rigidity of his body gave way to strange convulsions and his eyes rotated continuously. The pale face turned reddish like that which appears on congested faces. He had difficulty breathing and his sphincter relaxed. The insensitive persecutor appeared to have taken possession of the patient's body. Only we heard him speak harsh words as Pedro's sensory functions became inhibited.

Celina, caressing the patient, could sense both the gravity of the illness and the presence of the unfortunate visitor; however, she remained alert and ready to offer whatever assistance was needed. In vain, she tried to establish a communication with the executioner. He continued to scream, heedless of our pleas to remain calm.

"I will get even! I will get my revenge! I will extract justice with my own hands." He screamed angrily.

He would have said more injurious words but Pedro, still in convulsions, prevented him from using his vocal cords to pronounce them. The young man was completely linked to the executioner, who had suddenly taken control. His cerebral cortex appeared wrapped in a dark fluidic mass. We could recognize in the young man an evident incapacity to exercise control over himself. Aulus, caressing his perspiring forehead, expressed with obvious compassion:

"This is a case of complete possession manifested as epilepsy."

"Is our friend unconscious?" – asked Hilario with interest and respect.

"Yes, he is a sick terrestrial man who is, for now, without a connection to his carnal brain. The cells of the cortex are suffering an attack of toxic magnetic emissions. The motor centers are disorganized. The entire cerebellum is impregnated with deleterious fluids. The avenues of equilibrium appear completely perturbed.

"Pedro does not possess the means to govern himself, nor the awareness to register his own disquieting actions. This, however, occurs in the realm of dense matter, because in that of Spirit, he stores the particulars of his situation. This enriches the value of his experiences."

I observed the scene and, wanting to learn more, I asked:

"We are in the presence of an incarnate and a discarnate attached to one another. Notwithstanding their painful suffering, is it proper to describe this as a mediumistic trance?"

Without interrupting the assistance he was giving to Pedro, the mentor responded:

"Yes, this is an epileptic seizure according to the medical definition; however, it is also a minor mediumistic trance. The two unbalanced minds are strongly united by the hatred they feel for one another."

And, upon continuing his observance of the two unfortunates in convulsions, he added:

"Prior to the present reincarnation, which is a blessing for him, Peter was in the lower zones. For many years, he and his adversary engaged in an ongoing duel in the purgatory zones. Today, the situation improved. Even though their encounters are less frequent, the young man's perispiritual body remains injured in critical areas."

Meanwhile, Celina found it difficult to reach the obsessor via the spoken word. Assisted by our mentor, she made an emotional prayer imploring divine compassion for the two unfortunate companions. The words of our venerable friend emitted vibrations of

luminous forces that emanated from her hands and offered relief to the participants in the conflict.

As if he had breathed an anesthetic substance, the persecutor loosened himself from the victim, who then fell into a profound and restorative sleep. Guards and auxiliaries accompanied the slightly dazed obsessor to an isolated emergency room. And while Celina gave magnetized water to the patient's mother, who was still crying and frightened, we returned to our cordial conversation.

"In spite of the patient's condition, can we consider Pedro a medium?" – asked Hilario, expectantly.

"Due to the passiveness with which he receives his discarnate enemy, this idea is justifiable. We must consider, however, that above all he is a Spirit in debt who must redeem himself."

"But wouldn't he be able to face his own psychic development?"

The mentor smiled and observed:

"To develop means to improve, to increase, to intensify. Pedro must develop his personal resources through his spiritual improvement. Solid walls are not constructed over an insecure base. He will need, first of all, to cure himself. After this, then..."

"If this is so," objected my colleague, "won't his presence in this spiritist center be fruitless?"

"By no means. Here he will receive the strength to restore himself, just as fertilizer restores a scrawny plant. Day by day, in contact with friends oriented in the Gospel, he and his rival will assimilate valuable lessons and gradually modify their thinking. Once both personalities improve, the mediumistic faculty may then surface. As both sufferers absorb those healthy and renovating thoughts, they will improve. Since the thoughts of each act upon the other, this will intensify their recuperation."

Examining these complex problems, and noting our thoughtful attitude, the mentor continued:

"Valuable mediumistic gifts, naturally, are not improvised. They require great effort, sacrifice, will and time. And without love or dedication, the creation of meritorious mediumistic groups is not possible."

Returning his attention toward the sleepy patient, Aulus continued:

"Our friend is controlled by a significant number of debts from the past and it is divine law that no one can advance toward the future without paying them. Pedro's trials are expressed through his mediumship. For this reason, he should be treated as a sick person who requires warmth and assistance."

He immediately checked Pedro's forehead, as if desiring to retrieve the information needed to complete the lesson, and stood by him in careful observation. After a few moments of silence, he said:

"Although their struggle comes from deep in the past, we do not have sufficient time for a complete review. We can, however, immediately recognize the avenger of today as the victim of yesterday. During the middle of the last century, Pedro was a doctor who abused his mission to cure. An in-depth mental analysis would no doubt find him taking part in numerous dishonest ventures.

"The persecutor who today controls his personality was a former blood brother whose wife Pedro tried to seduce. To do this, he not only jeopardized his brother both in

business and socially, he also succeeded in relegating him to a hospice. There his brother remained for years, confused and helpless, awaiting death.

“Upon discarnating, he found his brother with his wife. His distress turned to hate. He pursued them in life, waited for them beyond the tomb, where the three of them would reunite and initiate the anguishing process of regeneration.

“The wife, who had less culpability, was the first to return to the physical world. She received the former delinquent doctor as her own son, thereby purifying the love in her soul. The former brother who had been double-crossed did not have the strength to change and so he tortures Pedro, completely controlled by his hatred.”

Responding with patience to our expression of amazement, he added:

“We live in the hell that we create for others. No one can elude justice. Reparations can be delayed, but they are inevitable.”

The lesson was simple; we were amazed, however, by the terrible situation of the fatigued and sad patient. Always inquisitive, Hilario considered:

“If Pedro is a tortured medium, what could he accomplish in this group?”

The mentor smiled as he responded:

“Chance does not operate in superior designs. We do not meet each other without reason. Our friend most probably has affectionate ties from the past here and their duty is to assist him. If he cannot be of value to the group, he can and must receive the fraternal assistance imperative for his improvement and elevation.”

“Will his cure be quick?” I inquired.

“Who could know that?” responded Aulus serenely. Weighing his words, he continued:

“That will depend upon him and his former victim. The assimilation of principles that restore good thoughts is crucial to a higher vision of life. All dark dramas of obsession are generated in disturbed minds. If he perseveres in applying himself sincerely to the consoling doctrine taught here, converting to goodness, it will surely shorten the length of his expiation. This will, in turn, change his adversary’s mental state, who will be induced to improve by the exposure to his practice of renunciation, humility and faith.

“Even after the possession ends, Pedro will still suffer imbalances. Minor secondary epilepsy will emerge in him for some time by simply recalling the violent battles that he had sustained. Eventually, though, his whole perispiritual body will be readjusted.”

“And will this task take long?” inquired Hilario quite affected.

Our mentor replied:

“Who can penetrate the conscience of others? With the strength of the will it is possible to achieve the solution to many enigmas and lessen pain. The matter, however, is an intimate one. Let us be sure that the seeds of light are never lost. If the mediums going through tremendous trials today were to persist in cultivating better destinies, they would be transformed into valuable workers, which would bring about reincarnations of growth and progress.”

And with our admiration, he concluded:

“The problem is to learn without becoming disillusioned and to serve without giving up.”

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. We are all mediums, but not all of us are writing-mediums.
2. “Writing-medium, is not only the most common sort of medianimity, but also the one, which is the simplest and most convenient, and because it is the one which gives the most satisfactory results, and is most sought after”.
3. Good spirits never cause any waste of labor.

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Lesson 29**Mediumistic Development: The importance of Jesus' Gospel on Mediumistic Education.****OBJECTIVES:**

- To explain how to educate one's mediumship.
- To understand the importance of Jesus' Gospel on mediumistic education.

METHODS:

1. Coordinator writes the following sentence on the board (or computer screen):
The Spiritist Mediumistic Education
2. Then, ask the whole class to brain storm addressing the questions below. The coordinator should encourage students' participation without either correcting or giving them clues about the topic that will be studied later on.

What is the Spiritist Mediumistic Education?	What is the role of Jesus' teachings on mediumship?

3. Divide class in groups and ask them to study the following text⁽¹⁾ and complete the table that follows the text.

All Class:**Gratuitous Mediumship**

7. Mediums today (since the Apostles also possessed mediumship) have equally received a faculty gratis from God. This is of being interpreters of the Spirits for the instruction of mankind, to show them the pathway of goodness, conducting them along by means of faith. Not to sell words which do not belong to the mediums, seeing that they are not fruits of *their conception, nor of their research, nor of their personal work*. God wants the light to reach everyone. He does not want the poorest to be deprived of it so they can say they have no faith because they could not pay for it, nor that they did not have the consolation of receiving encouragement and testimony of affection from those they weep for, because they were too poor. This is why mediumship is not a privilege, and is to be found in all places. To make someone pay for it is to turn it away from its providential objective.

8. Those who understand the conditions in which good Spirits communicate, the feeling of repugnance they have towards everything which shows selfish interest, and

know how little it takes to drive them away, could never accept that Superior Spirits are at the disposal of the first who comes along and evokes them, at so much per session. Simple good sense rejects such an idea.

Would it not also be profanity to evoke for money those we respect or those who are dear to us?

Beyond doubt communications can be obtained in this manner. But who can guarantee their sincerity? Spirits of a frivolous, deceitful, mocking nature, and all the bank of inferior Spirits who are not at all scrupulous, always come running ready to reply to whatever is asked with no regard for the truth. Those then who desire serious communications should before all else ask with seriousness, and following this, should inform themselves of the nature of the sympathies the medium may have with the beings from the Spirit world. Therefore the first conditions necessary to attract the benevolence of the good Spirits are humility, devotion, abnegation, and total disinterest, both *moral and material*.

9. Besides the moral question an effective consideration also presents itself which is no less important. This refers to the actual nature of the faculty itself. Serious mediumship cannot be, and never ever will be a profession; not just because it would be morally discredited and rapidly become mere fortunetelling; but because there is a material obstacle in opposition. Mediumship is a faculty which is essentially unstable, elusive, and variable, whose permanency no one can count upon. It is a very uncertain source for anyone wishing to exploit it, and can fail at the moment it is most needed. A talent acquired by study and work is another matter, and is for this very reason a skill which can be legitimately used to advantage. But mediumship is neither an art nor a skill; therefore it cannot become a profession. It only exists through the cooperation of the Spirits. If they are absent there is no mediumship. The aptitude can exist, but the exercise of it would be annulled.

Also there is not a single medium in the world who can guarantee the obtaining of a spiritual phenomenon at any given moment. So then to exploit mediumship is to make use of something which does not really belong to that person. To state the contrary is to deceive the person being charged. What is more, it is not they themselves whom the exploiter commands, but rather the concourse of Spirits, the souls of the dead, whose cooperation they put a price on. This idea causes instinctive repugnance. It was the trafficking, the exploitation by charlatans that degenerated into abuse, the ignorance, the incredulity and the superstition which motivated its prohibition by Moses. Modern Spiritism, understanding the serious nature of this question, has completely discredited this exploitation, so elevating mediumship to the category of a *mission*. (See "The Mediums' Book", 2nd part, chapter 28 and also heaven and hell, 1st part, chapter 11).

10. Mediumship is something sacred which should be practiced in a saintly and religious manner, and if there is one type of mediumship which requires this condition even more absolutely than the others, it is that of healing. A doctor gives the fruits of his study, which were often gained at the cost of painful sacrifices. A magnetizer gives his own fluids, sometimes even his health. A price can be put upon these. A curing medium however, retransmits healing fluids from the good Spirits, and consequently has no right to sell them. Jesus and His Apostles, although poor, did not charge for the cures they obtained.

So then, those who lack the necessary means of financial support can seek their funds wherever they like, except within mediumship, and if necessary only dedicate their spare time to this work after material needs have been satisfied. The Spirits will take into consideration the devotion and sacrifices, whereas they will turn away from those who expect to turn them into a ladder for material ascension.

4. The coordinator should guide the completion of the table by comparing the previous answers given by the students at the brain storm activity.

What is the Spiritist Mediumistic Education?	What is the role of Jesus' teachings on mediumship?	What have you learned about the Spiritist Mediumistic Education?

CONSLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. The medium should not charge for his/her activities because he/she is only an instrument of the communicating spirit and does not really own the information that he/she is conveying.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan. "The Gospel Explained by Spiritism", chapter 26, items 7 - 10, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

Lesson 30**The Influence of the Medium in the Communication.****OBJECTIVES:**

- To explain the proper behavior for the medium to avoid influencing in the communications.
- To explain what mediumship passivity is.
- To define mechanical, semi-mechanical and intuitive mediums.

METHODS:

1. This is the last lesson to specifically address the topic of mediumship. Therefore, the coordinator should begin with a general overview of different topics that were previously studied in relation to mediumship. Particularly, the coordinator should address:

Mediumship and thought: affinity and attunement.
Attraction and repulsion of superior and inferior spirits.
Types of mediumship: Intellectual and physical mediumship.

2. Brainstorm with the class the main concepts that will be discussed in this lesson: influence of mediums in the communication, passivity and types of mediums. Do not give the explanation of these themes in the brain storm.

3. Divide the class into 2 groups.

Group I: Mechanical, Semi-Mechanical and Intuitive Mediums

Read the following text⁽¹⁾ and answer these questions.

- a) Define mechanical, semi-mechanical and intuitive mediums.
- b) In which kind of mediums can the medium influence the communication?

Explain.

c) What is the importance of this knowledge in my life if I am not part of a mediumistic group?

Mechanical Mediums.

179. If we observe the movements of a table, a planchette, etc, we cannot doubt that a direct action is exercised by the communicating spirit on these objects. They are sometimes shaken so violently that they get away from the medium's hands; they sometimes turn towards, or touch, some particular person or persons in the circle; at other times, their movements testify joy, affection, or anger. In the same way, when a pencil is held in the medium's hand, it is sometimes thrown forcibly to a distance, or the hand itself is agitated convulsively, and strikes the table angrily, while the medium himself is perfectly calm, and surprised at finding that he is not master of his movements. Occurrences of this kind, however, always denote the presence of imperfect spirits; spirits

of high degree are calm, dignified, and gentle; when not met with suitable respect, they retire, and their place is taken by others of lower rank. A spirit, therefore, can express his thoughts directly, through an object of the movements of which the hand of the medium is only the fulcrum, or indirectly, by his action on the hand itself.

When a spirit acts directly on the medium's hand, he gives to it an impulsion altogether independent of its owner's will, causing it to write on uninterruptedly as long as he has any thing to say, and to stop when he has finished.

The most interesting and valuable characteristic of this mode of medianimity is the unconsciousness of the medium in regard to what he is writing, and of which he has often not the remotest idea; this absolute unconsciousness constitutes what are called *passive* or *mechanical* mediums, and is an exceedingly precious faculty, because it excludes all doubt as to what is written being independent of the medium's mind.

Intuitive Mediums.

180. A spirit can also transmit his thought through the intermediacy of the soul of the medium himself. The disincarnate spirit does not, in this case, cause the medium to write by acting on his hand; for he neither holds nor guides it, but acts directly upon the incarnate soul, with which he temporarily identifies himself. The soul of the medium, under this impulsion, directs his hand, and the hand moves the pencil. We have, in this place, to take note of a very important point, viz., that the disincarnate spirit does not substitute himself for the medium's soul, for the soul cannot be displaced; but he *dominates it* without the medium's being aware of his action, and impresses it with his will. And yet the part played, in such a case, by the medium's soul, is not simply passive; for it is the medium's soul that receives and transmits the thought of the disincarnate spirit, and he is therefore aware of what he is writing, although the thoughts are not his, and is what we call an *intuitive medium*.

"If this be the case," it may be objected, "there is nothing to prove that the medium is not writing his own thoughts instead of those of another spirit." We reply that, in fact, it is sometimes very difficult to ascertain this point. But we may add that we cannot refuse to recognise the fact of suggestion when thoughts are expressed which have never before arisen in the medium's mind, which flow into it spontaneously as he writes, and which are often not only contrary to his ideas and convictions, but notably beyond his knowledge and intellectual capacity. The part played by a *mechanical* medium is that of a machine. The *intuitive* medium, on the contrary, acts as a dragoman, or interpreter, and, in order to transmit a thought, must necessarily understand it; but still, this thought is not *his* thought, for it only *passes through* his brain.

Semi-mechanical Mediums.

181. In the case of purely mechanical mediums, the movement of the hand is independent of the will; with the intuitive medium, that movement is voluntary. The semi-mechanical medium participates in the qualities of both the others; he feels an impulsion that is given to his hand, independently of his will, but, at the same time, he knows, as he goes on, what he is writing. With the mechanical medium, the thought *follows* the act of writing; with the intuitive medium, it *precedes* it; with the semi-mechanical medium, it *accompanies* it. These last-named mediums are the most common of all.

Group II: **Mediumship Passivity**

Read the following text⁽²⁾ and answer these questions.

a) What should the medium do in order to not interfere in the spiritual communications?

b) Define mediumship passivity.

c) What is the importance of this knowledge in my life if I am not part of a mediumistic group?

6. When a spirit communicates through a medium, does he transmit his thought directly, or does he use the incarnated spirit of the medium as his intermediary?

"The medium's spirit acts as the interpreter of the communicating spirit, because he is linked with the body, which, in such cases, plays the part of speaker, and also because there must be a conductor between you and the disincarnate spirits who communicate with you, just as, for the transmission of a telegraphic message, there must be a wire connecting the points of transmission and of reception, and, at the ends of the wire, an intelligent person who transmits, and another who receives, the message conveyed by the electric fluid."

7. Does the spirit of the medium exercise an influence over the communications which he transmits from other spirits?

"Yes. If he is not in sympathy with them, he may alter their replies and assimilate them to his own ideas and propensities; *but he does not influence the spirits themselves*: he is only an inexact interpreter."

8. Is it for this reason that certain spirits have a preference for certain mediums?

"Yes. Spirits seek for interpreters in sympathy with themselves, and able to transmit their thought correctly. When there is no sympathy between them, the spirit of the medium becomes an antagonist and produces resistance; he is an unwilling interpreter, and, as such, is often an unfaithful one. The same thing occurs among yourselves, when a message is conveyed through a careless, hostile, or unfaithful messenger."

9. We see that such may be the case with intuitive mediums, but we do not see how it can be so with mechanical mediums.

"You do not rightly understand the part that is played by a medium. There is, in this matter, the action of a law which you have not yet discovered. You must remember that, in order to effect the movement of an inert body, the spirit requires a certain quantity of animalized fluid which he borrows from the medium, for the purpose of lending a momentary vitality to the material object he wishes to make use of; and which he thus renders momentarily obedient to his will. In the same way, in order to transmit an intelligent communication, he must have an intelligent intermediary, and this intermediary is furnished him by the spirit of the medium."

- This explanation appears to be hardly applicable to what are called "talking tables," for it would seem to imply that, when *inert objects*, such as tables, planchettes, etc, give intelligent answers, the spirit of the medium is a mere cipher.

"Such an inference would be erroneous. A disincarnate spirit can lend a momentary, factitious life to an inert body, but it cannot give it intelligence; no inert body was ever intelligent. It is therefore the spirit of the medium that receives the thought, without being aware of it, and transmits it by successive steps through various intermediaries."

10. It would seem from these explanations, that the spirit of the medium is never completely passive?

"He is passive when he does not mingle his own ideas with those of the communicating spirit, but he is never an absolute nullity his co-operation as an intermediary is always necessary, even in what you call mechanical medium-ship."

11. Is there not a greater probability of the spirit's thought being correctly transmitted by a mechanical medium than by an intuitive one?

"Undoubtedly there is; and, therefore, for some kinds of communications, a mechanical medium is to be preferred; but when you are sure of the genuineness of the faculty of an intuitive medium, it is of little importance. Everything in this matter depends upon circumstances; what I wish to impress on your mind is the fact that less precision is necessary in some sorts of communications than in others."

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. "With the mechanical medium, the thought *follows* the act of writing; with the intuitive medium, it *precedes* it; with the semi-mechanical medium, it *accompanies* it. These last-named mediums are the most common of all".

2. Mediumship passivity refers to the fact that the medium should not try to edit the content of the spirit communication. In case of spirits in need of assistance, the medium should contain the spirit to avoid physical disturbances.

REFERENCES:

1. Karde, Allan, "The Medium's Book", second part, chapter XV, item 179, 180 and 181.

2. Idem, chapter XIX, item 223, questions 6-11.

Lesson 31**Emancipation of the Soul: Sleep and Dreams****OBJECTIVES:**

- To establish the difference between sleep and dreams.
- To study the importance of sleep and dreams to the incarnate soul.

METHODS:

1. In pairs, share your personal experiences on the importance of sleep and dreams.
2. The coordinator should ask the whole class to read question and answer 402 of *The Spirits' Book* and discuss it altogether.

402. *How can we ascertain the fact of a spirit's liberty during sleep?*

"By dreams. Be very sure that, when his body is asleep, a spirit enjoys the use of faculties of which he is unconscious while his body is awake. He remembers the past, and sometimes foresees the future: he acquires more power, and is able to enter into communication with other spirits, *either in this world or in some other.*

"You often say, 'I have had a strange dream, a frightful dream, without any likeness to reality' You are mistaken in thinking it to be so; for it is often a reminiscence of places and things which you have seen in the past, or a foresight of those which you will see in another existence, or in this one at some future time. The body being torpid, the spirit tries to break his chain, and seeks, in the past or in the future, for the means of doing so.

"Poor human beings! How little do you know of the commonest phenomena of your life! You fancy yourselves to be very learned, and you are puzzled by the most ordinary things. To questions that any child might ask, 'What do we do when we are asleep?' 'What are dreams?' you are incapable of replying.

"Sleep effects a partial freeing of the soul from the body. When you sleep, your spirit is, for the time being, in the state in which you will be after your death. The spirits who at death are promptly freed from matter are those who, during their life, have had what may be called intelligent sleep. Such persons, when they sleep, regain the society of other spirits superior to themselves. They go about with them, conversing with them, and gaining instruction from them; they even work, in the spirit-world, at undertakings which, on dying, they find already begun or completed. From this you see how little death should be dreaded, since, according to the saying of St. Paul, you 'die daily.'

"What we have just stated refers to spirits of an elevated degree of advancement. As for those of the common mass of men, who, after their death, remain for long hours in the state of confusion and uncertainty of which you have been told by such, they go, during sleep, into worlds of lower rank than the earth, to which they are drawn back by old affections, or by the attraction of pleasures still baser than those to which they are

addicted in your world; visits in which they gather ideas still viler, more ignoble, and more mischievous than those which they had professed during their waking hours. And that which engenders sympathy in the earthly life is nothing else than the fact that you feel yourselves, on waking, affectionately attracted towards those with whom you have passed eight or nine hours of happiness or pleasure. On the other hand, the explanation of the invincible antipathies you sometimes feel for certain persons is also to be found in the intuitive knowledge you have thus acquired of the fact that those persons have another conscience than yours, because you know them without having previously seen them with your bodily eyes. It is this same fact, moreover, that explains the indifference of some people for others; they do not care to make new friends, because they know that they have others by whom they are loved and cherished. In a word, sleep has more influence than you think upon your life.

"Through the effects of sleep, incarnated spirits are always in connection with the spiritworld; and it is in consideration of this fact that spirits of a higher order consent, without much repugnance, to incarnate themselves among you. God has willed that, during their contact with vice, they may go forth and fortify themselves afresh at the source of rectitude, in order that they, who have come into your world to instruct others, may not fall into evil themselves.

Sleep is the gate opened for them by God, that they may pass through it to their friends in the spirit-world; it is their recreation after labor, while awaiting the great deliverance, the final liberation, that will restore them to their true place.

"Dreams are the remembrance of what your spirit has seen during sleep; but you must remark that you do not always dream, because you do not always remember what you have seen, or all that you have seen. Your dreams do not always reflect the action of your soul in its full development; for they are often only the reflex of the confusion that accompanies your departure or your return, mingled with the vague remembrance of what you have done, or of what has occupied your thoughts, in your waking state. In what other way can you explain the absurd dreams which are dreamed by the wisest as by the silliest of mankind? Bad spirits, also, make use of dreams to torment weak and timid souls.

"You will see, ere long, the development of another kind of dream, a kind which is as ancient as the one you know, but one of which you are ignorant. The dream we allude to is that of Jeanne Darc,¹ of Jacob, of the Jewish prophets, and of certain Hindus ascetics - a dream which is the remembrance of the soul's experiences while entirely freed from the body, the remembrance of the second life, of which I spoke just now.

"You should carefully endeavor to distinguish these two kinds of dreams among those which you are able to recall: unless you do this, you will be in danger of falling into contradictions and errors that would be prejudicial to your belief."

(Kardec's comments): Dreams are a product of the emancipation of the soul, rendered more active by the suspension of the active life of relation, and enjoying a sort of indefinite clairvoyance which extends to places at a great distance from us, or that we have never seen, or even to other worlds. To this state of emancipation is also due the remembrance which retraces to our memory the events that have occurred in our present existence or in preceding existences the strangeness of the images of what has taken place in worlds unknown to us, mixed up with the things of the present world, producing the

confused and whimsical medleys that seem to be equally devoid of connection and of meaning.

The incoherence of dreams is still farther explained by the gaps resulting from the incompleteness of our remembrance of what has appeared to us in our nightly visions - an incompleteness similar to that of a narrative from which Whole sentences, or parts of sentences, have been omitted by chance, and whose remaining fragments, having been thrown together again at random, have lost all intelligible meaning.

3. In a big circle, the coordinator will present questions 400, 401, 403-412 of The Spirits' Book to participants, asking them to answer them. After discussing each question, the coordinator will present the answer given by the Superior Spirits as written in The Spirits' Book by Allan Kardec.

400. Does the incarnated spirit reside willingly in his corporeal envelope?

"You might as well ask whether a prisoner willingly remains locked up in prison. The incarnated spirit aspires incessantly after his deliverance; and the grosser his envelope, the more desirous he is to be rid of it."

401. Does the soul take rest, like the body, during sleep?

"No; a spirit is never inactive. The bonds which unite him to the body are relaxed during sleep; and as the body does not then need his presence, he travels through space, and enters into more direct relation with other spirits."

403. Why do we not always remember our dreams?

"What you call sleep is only the repose of the body, for the spirit is always in motion. During sleep he recovers a portion of his liberty, and enters into communication with those who are dear to him, either in this world, or in other worlds; but as the matter of the body is heavy and gross, it is difficult for him to retain, on waking, the impressions he has received during sleep, because those impressions were not received by him through the bodily organs."

404. What is to be thought of the signification attributed to dreams?

"Dreams are not really indications in the sense attributed to them by fortune-tellers; for it is absurd to believe that a certain kind of dream announces the happening of a certain kind of event. But they are indications in this sense - viz, that they present images which are real for the spirit, though they may have nothing to do with what takes place in his present corporeal life. Dreams are also, in many cases, as we have said, a remembrance; they may also be sometimes a presentiment of the future, if permitted by God, or the sight of something which is taking place at the time in some other place to which the soul has transported itself. Have you not many instances proving that persons may appear to their relatives and friends in dreams, and give them notice of what is happening to them? What are apparitions, if not the soul or spirit of persons who come to communicate with you? When you acquire the certainty that what you saw has really taken place, is it not a proof that it was no freak of your imagination, especially if what you saw were something which you had not thought of when you were awake?"

405. *We often see in dreams things which appear to be presentiments, but which do not come to pass,- how is this?*

"Those things may take place in the experience of the spirit, though not in that of the body; that is to say, that the spirit sees what he wishes to see because he goes to find it. You must not forget that, during sleep, the spirit is always more or less under the influence of matter; that, consequently, he is never completely free from terrestrial ideas, and that the objects of his waking thoughts may therefore give to his dreams the appearance of what he desires or of what he fears, thus producing what may be properly termed an effect of the imagination. When the mind is much busied with any idea, it is apt to connect everything it sees with that idea."

406. *When, in a dream, we see persons who are well known to us doing things which they are not in any way thinking of, is it not a mere effect of the imagination?*

"Of which they are not thinking? How do you know that it is so? Their spirit may come to visit yours, as yours may go to visit theirs; and you do not always know, in your waking state, what they may be thinking of. And besides, you often, in your dreams, apply to persons whom you know, and according to your own desires, reminiscences of what took place or is taking place, in other existences."

407. *Is it necessary to the emancipation of the soul that the sleep of the body should be complete?*

"No; the spirit recovers his liberty as soon as the senses become torpid. He takes advantage, in order to emancipate himself, of every moment of respite left him by the body. As soon as there occurs any prostration of the vital forces, the spirit disengages himself from the body, and the feebler the body, the freer is the spirit."

(Kardec's comment): It is for this reason that dozing, or a mere dulling of the senses, often presents the same images as dreaming.

408. *We sometimes seem to hear within ourselves words distinctly pronounced, but having no connection with what we are thinking of,-what is the cause of this?*

"Yes, you often hear words, and even whole sentences, especially when your senses begin to grow torpid. It is sometimes the faint echo of the utterance of a spirit who wishes to communicate with you."

409. *Often, when only half-asleep, and with our eyes closed, we see distinct images, figures of which we perceive the minutest details, - is this an effect of vision or of imagination?*

"The body being torpid, the spirit tries to break his chain. He goes away and sees; if the sleep were deeper, the vision would be a dream."

410. *We sometimes, when asleep, or half-asleep, have ideas which seem to us to be excellent, but which, despite all the efforts we make to recall them, are effaced from our memory on waking,-whence come these ideas?*

"They are the result of the freedom of the spirit, who emancipates himself from the body, and enjoys the use of other faculties during this moment of liberty; and they are often counsels given you by other spirits."

- *What is the use of such ideas and counsels, since we lose the remembrance of them, and cannot profit by them?*

"Those ideas often belong rather to the world of spirits than to the corporeal world; but, in general, though the body may forget them, the spirit remembers them, and the idea recurs to him at the proper time, in his waking state, as though it were an inspiration of the moment."

411. Does the incarnated spirit, when he is freed from matter and acting as a spirit, know' the epoch of his death?

"He often has the presentiment of it. He sometimes has a very clear foreknowledge of it; and it is this which gives him the intuition of it in his waking state. It is this, also, which enables some persons to foresee the time of their death with perfect exactness."

412. Can the activity of the spirit, during the repose or the sleep of the body, cause fatigue to the latter?

"Yes, for the spirit is attached to the body, as the captive-balloon is fastened to the post; and, just as the post is shaken by the movements of the balloon, so the activity of the spirit reacts upon the body, and may cause it to feel fatigued."

413. The emancipation of the soul during sleep would seem to indicate that we live simultaneously two lives; the life of the body, which is that of exterior relation, and the life of the soul, which is that of occult relation,-is this so?

"During the emancipation of the soul, the life of the latter takes precedence of the life of the body; this, however, does not, strictly speaking, constitute two lives, but rather two phases of one and the same life, for a man does not live a double life."

CONCLUSION:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

- Dreams are not random brain function but are in fact an imperfect representation of the soul's experience during the body's rest.
- These experiences vary accordingly with the soul's moral elevation: from the most mundane to the most sublime.
- By examining our dreams we can learn more about our true feelings and tendencies.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "The Spirit's Book", questions 400 - 412, translated by Ana Blackwell, Brazilian Spiritist Federation.

Lesson 32**Lethargy, Catalepsy and Apparent Death****OBJECTIVES:**

1. To study and compare the main phenomena of the emancipation of the soul.
2. To understand the gospel passages described in Luke 7:11-17, Mathew 9:18-26 and John 11:1-44.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator shall give the definition (according with the general dictionary), of **Lethargy, Catalepsy** and **Apparent Death**. Brain storms these definitions with the whole class.

2. Divide the whole class into 3 groups. All groups read and discuss the common text followed by its specific text. Then, all groups answer these questions:

Questions to all groups:

1. Define death and apparent death.
2. Can death be reversed, i.e., is there resurrection?
3. In cases of apparent death, how can this appearance be reversed?
4. Summarize the bible text that your group read (each group gives its summary).
5. Why can we say that, in the passage that you read, the person assisted by Jesus was not dead?
6. What is the objective of Jesus in reversing these apparent deaths: self-congratulation or an act of mercy?

Text I. Common Text to all Groups.

Read the following text⁽¹⁾.

422. In lethargy and catalepsy, the patients generally see and hear what takes place around them, but are unable to manifest their impressions. Is it through the eyes and ears of the body that these impressions are received?

"No; they are received by the spirit. The spirit is conscious, but cannot express himself."

-Why can he not express himself?

"The state of the body prevents him in doing so; and this peculiar state of his bodily organs proves that man consists of something more than a body, since the body no longer works, and yet the spirits acts."

423. *Can a spirit, in a state of lethargy, separate himself entirely from his body, so as to give to the latter all the outward appearances of death, and afterwards come back and inhabit it?*

"In lethargy, the body is not dead, for it still accomplishes some of its functions. Its vitality is latent, as in the chrysalis but is not annihilated; and a spirit is united to his body as long as it remains alive. When once the links which keep them together are broken by the death and desegregation of the bodily organs, the separation is complete, and the spirit never again comes back to his body. When one who is apparently dead comes to life again it is because the process of death was not entirely consummated."

424. *Is it possible, by means of timely help, to renew the ties which were ready to break, and to give back life to a person who, but for this help, would have definitively ceased to live?*

"Yes, undoubtedly; and you have proofs of this every day. Mesmerism often exercises, in such cases, a powerful restorative action, because it gives to the body the vital fluid which it lacks, and which is necessary to keep up the play of the organs."

(Kardec's comments): Lethargy and catalepsy proceed from the same cause, viz., the temporary loss of sensibility and power of motion, from some as yet unexplained physiological condition. They differ in this respect, viz, that, in lethargy, the suppression of the vital force is general and gives to the body the appearances of death, whereas, in catalepsy, that suppression is localized, and may affect a more or less extensive portion of the body, while leaving the intelligence free to manifest itself a fact which does not allow it to be confounded with death. Lethargy is always natural catalepsy is sometimes spontaneous, but it may be produced and dissipated artificially by mesmeric action.

Group I: **Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman**⁽²⁾

Mathew 9:18-26

¹⁸While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live".

¹⁹Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

²⁰Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

²²Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

²³When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, ²⁴he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. ²⁵After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶News of this spread through all that region.

Group II. **The Death of Lazarus**⁽²⁾

John 11:1-44

¹Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. (...) ³So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

⁴When he heard this, Jesus said, “This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.” ⁵Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus; ⁶and yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days. ⁷Then he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” (...)

¹¹After he had said this, he went on to tell them, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.” (...)

¹⁷On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. (...) It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. ³⁹“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.”

⁴⁰Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” ⁴¹So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. ⁴²I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

⁴³When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” ⁴⁴The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Group III. **Jesus Raises a Widow’s Son⁽³⁾**

Luke 7:11-17

¹¹Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹²As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out - the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

¹⁴Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” ¹⁷This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

CONCLUSION:

1. In catalepsy, the body is not dead; it continues to function, at least partially. However, the spirit receives the impressions of what happen around the body. The spirit remains in a state of awareness, though it lacks the power of self-expression.

2. As long as a spirit is connected to the body, there is life. It is only when the ties that bind the two break, as the result of actual death, that the separation is really complete. From this point onward, the spirit will never again return to that body.

3. Catalepsy is believed to proceed from the temporary loss of consciousness and power of motion due to a still unexplained physiological condition. In which, there is intellectual activity, that prevents this state from being confused with death.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "The Spirits' Book", questions 422 – 424, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. The Holy Bible, The New International Version.

Lesson 33**Emancipation of the Soul:
Somnambulism, Trance and Second Sight****OBJECTIVES:**

- To know the difference between somnambulism and trance
- To give the characteristics of second sight
- To determine the relationship between these three phenomena and mediumship

METHODS:

1. The coordinator should begin by giving the dictionary definitions of somnambulism, trance and second sight.

2. Read and discuss each of the following questions⁽¹⁾ with the whole class.

425. Is there any connection between natural somnambulism and dreaming?

"In somnambulism the independence of the soul is more complete, and its functions are more developed, than in dreaming, and it has perceptions that it has not in dreaming, which is an imperfect somnambulism.

"In somnambulism, the spirit is entirely freed from the action of matter; the material organs, being in a sort of catalepsy, are no longer receptive of external impressions.

"This state most frequently occurs during sleep, because the spirit is then able to absent itself from the body which is given up to the repose that is indispensable to matter. When somnambulism occurs, it is because the spirit of the sleeper, intent upon doing something or other that requires the aid of his body, makes use of it in a manner analogous to that in which spirits make use of a table, or other material object, in producing the phenomena of physical manifestations, or of a human hand, in giving written communications. In the dreams of which a man is conscious, his organs, including those of memory, are beginning to awaken; and, as they only receive and transmit to the spirit imperfectly the impressions made on them by exterior objects or action, the spirit, who is then in a state of repose, only perceives these impressions through confused and often disconnected sensations, which, in many cases, are still further confused by being mingled with vague remembrances of his present life and anterior existences. It is easy, therefore, to understand why somnambulists do not remember their visions, and why the greater number of the dreams you remember have no rational meaning. I say the greater number, for it sometimes happens that dreams are the consequence of a precise remembrance of events that have occurred in one of your former lives, or even a sort of intuition of the future."

426. Is there any connection between what is called mesmeric somnambulism and natural somnambulism?

"They are the same thing; the only difference between them being that one of them is artificially produced."

428. *What is the nature of somnambulic clairvoyance?*

"We have told you that it is soul-sight."

430. *Since the clairvoyance of the somnambulist is that of his soul or of his spirit, why does he not see everything, and why does he so often make mistakes?*

"In the first place, spirits of low degree do not see and comprehend everything, for, as you know, they still share your errors and your prejudices; and, in the next place, as long as they remain more or less attached to matter, they have not the use of all their spirit-faculties. God has given the faculty of clairvoyance to man for a serious and useful purpose, and not to inform him of what it is not permitted to him to know; and this is why somnambulists do not know everything."

431 *What is the source of the somnambulist's innate ideas, and how can he speak correctly of things of which he is ignorant in his waking state, and which are even above his intellectual capacity?*

"A somnambulist may possess more knowledge than you give him credit for; but this knowledge is latent in his waking state, because his envelope is too imperfect for him to be able to remember all he knows as a spirit. But, in point of fact, what is he? Like all of us, he is a spirit who has been incarnated in matter for the accomplishment of his mission, and his going into the somnambulic state rouses him from the lethargy of incarnation. We have repeatedly told you that we re-live many times. It is this changing of our existences that causes him to lose sight, in a new connection with matter, of what he may have known in a preceding one. On entering into the state which you call a crisis, he recalls what he has formerly 'known, but not always with completeness. He knows, but he cannot tell whence he derives his knowledge, nor in what way he possesses it. The crisis over, his reminiscences fade from his consciousness, and he re-enters the obscurity of corporeal life."

(Kardec's comment) Experience shows us that somnambulists also receive communications from other spirits, who tell them what they are to say, and supply what is lacking on their part. This supplementing of their insufficiency is often and especially witnessed in medical consultations the spirit of the clairvoyant seeing the malady, and another spirit indicating the remedy required. This double action is often patent to bystanders, and is also frequently revealed by such expressions on the part of the somnambulist as, "I am told to say," or, "I am forbidden to say," etc. In the latter case, it is always dangerous to persist in the effort to obtain a revelation refused by the clairvoyant, because, by doing so, we open the door to frivolous and unscrupulous spirits, who prate about everything without any regard to veracity.

439. *What difference is there between trance and somnambulism?*

"Trance is a more refined somnambulism. The soul, when in trance, is still more independent."

440. *Does the soul of the ecstatic really enter into higher worlds?*

"Yes; he sees them, and perceives the happiness of those who are in them; but there are worlds that are inaccessible to spirits who are not sufficiently purified."

441. *When a person in trance expresses the desire to quit the earth, does he speak sincerely and is he not retained by the instinct of self-preservation?*

"That depends on the degree of the spirit's purification. If you realize that your future condition is going to be better than your present one, you will naturally try to loosen your physical bonds."

442. *If the ecstatic were left to himself, might his soul definitively quit his body?*

"Yes, he might die; and it is therefore necessary to call him back by everything that may attach him to the lower life, and especially by making him see that, if he breaks the chain which keeps him here, he will have taken the most effectual means of preventing his staying in the world in which he perceives that he would be happy."

443. *The ecstatic sometimes professes to see things which are evidently the product of an imagination impressed with earthly beliefs and prejudices. What he sees, therefore, is not always real?*

"What he sees is real for him; but, as his spirit is always under the influence of terrestrial ideas, he may see it in his own way, or, to speak more correctly, he may express it in a language accommodated to his prejudices, or to the ideas in which he has been brought up, or to your own, in order the better to make himself understood. It is in this way that he is most apt to err."

444. *What degree of confidence should be accorded to the revelations of persons in a state of trance?*

"The ecstatic may very frequently be mistaken, especially when he seeks to penetrate what must remain a mystery for man; for he then abandons himself to his own ideas, or becomes the sport of deceiving spirits, who take advantage of his enthusiasm to dazzle him with false appearances."

445. *What inductions are to be drawn from the phenomena of somnambulism and of trance? May they not be considered as a sort of initiation into the future life?*

"It would be more correct to say that, in those states, the somnambulist may obtain glimpses of his past and future lives. Let man study those phenomena; he will find in them the solution of more than one mystery which his unassisted reason seeks in vain to penetrate."

446. *Could the phenomena of somnambulism and trance be made to accord with theoretic materialism?*

"He who should study them honestly, and without preconceived ideas, could not be either a materialist or an atheist."

447. *Is there any connection between the phenomena of what is designated as second-sight and those of dreaming and somnambulism?*

"They are all the same thing. What you call second-sight is also a state in which the spirit is partially free, although the body is not asleep. Second-sight is sight of the soul."

448. Is the faculty of second-sight a permanent one?

"The faculty of second-sight is permanent, but its exercise is not. In worlds less material than yours, spirits free themselves from matter more easily, and enter into communication with one another simply by thought, without, however, excluding the use of articulate speech. In those worlds, second-sight is, for the greater part of their inhabitants, a permanent faculty. Their normal state may be compared to that of lucid somnambulism among you; and it is for this reason that they manifest themselves to you more easily than those who are incarnated in bodies of a grosser nature."

449. Does second-sight occur spontaneously, or through an exertion of the will of those who possess that faculty?

"It generally occurs spontaneously; but the will, nevertheless, often plays an important part in producing this phenomenon. Take, for example, the persons who are called fortune-tellers, some of whom really have that power-and you will find that the action of their will helps them to this second-sight, and to what you call vision."

450. Is second-sight susceptible of being developed by exercise?

"Yes; effort always leads to progress, and the veil which covers things becomes more transparent."

- Is this faculty a result of physical organization?

"Organization has undoubtedly a great deal to do with it; there are organizations with which it is incompatible."

451. How is it that second-sight appears to be hereditary in certain families?

"This proceeds from similarity of organization, which is transmitted, like other physical qualities; and also from the development of the faculty through a sort of education, which, also, is transmitted from one generation to another."

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Somnambulism, trance and second sight are varieties of experience that spring from one and the same cause. They are, like, dreams, natural phenomena and have existed throughout the ages. History shows they have been known, and often abused, from remotest antiquity. More importantly, they furnish explanations for innumerable facts that our superstitious prejudices have led us to believe are supernatural.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, *The Spirits' Book*", questions 425, 426, 428, 430, 431, 439 – 451, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

Lesson 34**Obsession: Definition and Causes****OBJECTIVES:**

- To give the Spiritist definition of obsession.
- To analyze the main causes of obsession.

METHODS:

1. Coordinator should begin the study by giving the medical and the dictionary definitions of the term obsession and discussing them with the class. Fell free to use the material in the appendix section.

2. Form two groups to read the following cases and text⁽¹⁾. After reading and discussing the text, each group should address the following questions:

- a. What are the main causes of obsession?
- b. What are the features of the bad actions of the obsessing spirits onto their victims?
- c. How can addictions such as alcoholism, drugs, vanity, trigger obsessions?
- d. Explain how spirit influences can induce organic diseases (from minor indispositions to major sicknesses; from minor mood alterations to serious behavioral deviations)?
- e. Can madness be considered obsession? Why?
- f. Are there collective obsessions? Explain.
- g. Case Study: Read the following real examples and decide if they do or do not represent cases of obsession.

Case A: Divaldo P. Franco.

The Brazilian medium Divaldo P. Franco reports that during some 20 years, a spirit followed him in several of his activities, always with anger and rage towards him and especially towards any charitable activity that Divaldo was involved with. This spirit tried to convince Divaldo of stopping his activities; moreover, this spirit once influenced an unknown man on the street to slap Divaldo's face for no obvious reason.

Questions:

Was Divaldo being obsessed by this spirit? How about the man on the street that slapped Divaldo's face for no reason: was him being obsessed?

Case B: Maria Gertrudes.

Maria Gertrudes is a medium with the exceptional ability to paint under the influence of spirits. When her painting mediumship began to manifest, only a single spirit, the painter Joseph M. W. Turner wanted to paint through her; he did not allow any other spirit to use her mediumship. Mrs. Gertrudes did not accept this influence and

talked with Mr. Turner about Jesus' Gospel and told him she would allow him to paint through her only if for a higher, charitable purpose and with other painters.

Questions:

Was Mrs. Gertrudes being obsessed by Mr. Turner? Why did she insist in the charitable use of her mediumship (without any monetary compensation for her)? Why did she insist that other spirits also be allowed to paint?

Text for discussion: Obsessions.

45. Bad spirits increase most abundantly around the Earth on account of the moral inferiority of its inhabitants. Their wrongdoing in a measure is the cause of the plagues to which humanity is exposed here below. Obsession, which is one of the effects of this action, like maladies and all tribulations of life, must then be considered as a trial or expiation, and accepted as such.

Obsession is the persistent action which a bad spirit exercises over an individual. It presents many different characters, from the moral influence without any distinct exterior signs, to complete disturbance of the organism and of the mental faculties. It destroys all mediumistic faculties. In hearing and psychographic mediumship an obstinate spirit manifests to the exclusion of all others.

46. Just as maladies are the result of physical imperfections which render the body accessible to pernicious exterior influences, obsession is always that of a moral imperfection, which gives place to a bad spirit. To a physical cause one opposes a physical force; to a moral cause it is necessary to oppose a moral force. In order to preserve one's self from maladies, one must fortify the body; in order to guarantee one's self against obsession, one must fortify the soul: hence for the obsessed the necessity for working for his own betterment, which is often sufficient to cure obsession without external aid. This aid becomes necessary when obsession degenerates into complete subjugation and possession; for then the patient sometimes loses his volition and free will.

Obsession is nearly always due to a vengeance, exercised by a spirit, and which most often has its source in connections which the obsessed has had with it in a previous existence. In case of grave obsession the obsessed is enveloped and impregnated with a pernicious fluid, which neutralizes the action of the salutary fluids, and repels them. It is necessary to remove this fluid. Now a bad fluid cannot be repelled by a bad fluid. By an action similar to that of a healing medium in a case of illness, it is necessary to expel the bad fluid by the aid of a better one.

The latter, which is mechanical action, does not always suffice. It is necessary, above all, to act upon the intelligent being, to whom it is necessary to speak with authority, and this authority is given only to moral superiority. The greater the latter is, the greater the authority.

That is not all, however. It is necessary to lead the perverse spirit to renounce his bad designs; to awaken within him a desire to do good and true repentance, by the aid of cleverly directed instructions, by the evoking of particular spirits to aid him in his moral education. Then one can have the double satisfaction of delivering an incarnated being and of converting an imperfect spirit.

The task is rendered easier if the obsessed, comprehending his situation, joins his will and prayers with yours. It is not thus when the latter, seduced by the deceiving spirit,

is deluded in regard to the qualities of his ruler, and delights in the error into which the latter plunges him; for then, far from seconding, he repels all assistance. Such are cases of fascination always vastly more obstinate than the most violent subjugation (see “The Mediums’ Book,” chap. 23).

In all cases of obsession prayer is the most powerful auxiliary to act against the obsessing spirit.

47. In obsession the spirit acts exteriorly by the aid of its perispirit, which he mingles with that of the incarnate. The latter finds himself bound as if in a network, and constrained to act against his will.

In taking possession of a human organism, the free spirit substitutes itself, as it were, for that of the incarnated one, instead of acting exteriorly; he chooses a home in his body, although its owner does not leave it entirely, which can take place only with death. The possession is then only temporary and intermittent, for a discarnate has not the power to take exclusive possession of a human organism, only when the molecular union of the perispirit and body can be performed at the moment of conception (chap. XI, n° 18).

The spirit in momentary possession of the body uses it as his own. He speaks through its mouth, sees with its eyes, moves its arms as he had done in life. It is not as in mediumship when the incarnate speaks the thoughts of a discarnate, which are transmitted through him. It is the latter who speaks; and, if one has known him in life, one recognizes him by his language, voice, and gestures, even to the expression of his face.

48. Obsession is always due to the influence of a malevolent spirit. Possession can be taken of a human being by a good spirit, who desires to speak in order to make a deeper impression upon his auditors, borrows the medium’s body, as the latter loans it to him voluntarily as he would lend his coat. This is done without any trouble or bad effect; and during this time the medium’s spirit is free as in a state of emancipation, and he frequently remains beside his substitute in order to listen to him.

When the spirit in possession is a bad one, all is otherwise; he does not borrow the body, but forcibly takes possession of it if the owner has not the moral force to resist him. He does it for malice towards the latter, whom he tortures and torments in every way, desiring to kill him either by strangulation, or by throwing him in the fire or other dangerous places. Using the limbs and organs of the unhappy patient, he blasphemes, injures, and maltreats those who surround him, – delivers him to eccentricities of action, which have the character of an insane person.

Cases of this kind, of different degrees of intensity, are very numerous; and many cases of insanity have had no other cause. Often it is joined to pathological disorders which follow the course of time, and against which medical treatment is powerless as long as the first cause exists. Spiritism, by giving a knowledge of the source of a part of human suffering, indicates the means for curing it. This remedy is to act upon the author of the evil, who, being an intelligent being, must be treated intelligently.

49. Obsession and possession are mostly individual cases, but sometimes they are epidemic. When a troop of undeveloped spirits take up their abode in a locality, it is as when a troop of enemies come to surround it. In this case the number of individuals attacked by them can be many.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Our lives suffer a constant, unrelenting, spiritual influence. However, it depends of our free will if we will subdue ourselves to the negative or to the positive influences around us.
2. Obsession constitutes a spiritual phenomenon when we surrender, in higher or lower degree, our free will to the manipulation of an evil spirit. Spiritual persecution or temptation does not constitute obsession.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "Genesis" chapter 14, items 45-49, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.

APPENDIX

1. From Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obsessive-compulsive_disorder, agugust/2006).

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a psychiatric disorder, more specifically, an anxiety disorder. OCD is manifested in a variety of forms, but is most commonly characterized by a subject's obsessive (repetitive, distressing, intrusive) thoughts and related compulsions (tasks or rituals) which attempt to neutralize the obsessions.

The phrase "obsessive-compulsive" has worked its way into the wider English lexicon, and is often used in an offhand manner to describe someone who is meticulous or absorbed in a cause. Such casual references should not be confused with obsessive-compulsive disorder. It is also important to distinguish OCD from other types of anxiety, including the routine tension and stress that appear throughout life. A person who shows signs of infatuation or fixation with a subject/object, or displays traits such as perfectionism, does not necessarily have OCD, a specific and well-defined condition.

To be diagnosed with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, one must have either obsessions or compulsions alone, or obsessions and compulsions, according to the DSM-IV-TR diagnostic criteria. The Quick Reference to the diagnostic criteria from DSM-IV-TR (2000) describes these obsessions and compulsions:

Obsessions are defined by:

Recurrent and persistent thoughts, impulses, or images that are experienced, at some time during the disturbance, as intrusive and inappropriate and that cause marked anxiety or distress.

- a. The thoughts, impulses, or images are not simply excessive worries about real-life problems.
- b. The person attempts to ignore or suppress such thoughts, impulses, or images, or to neutralize them with some other thought or action.
- c. The person recognizes that the obsessional thoughts, impulses, or images are a product of his or her own mind.

Compulsions are defined by:

- a. Repetitive behaviors or mental acts that the person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession, or according to rules that must be applied rigidly.
- b. The behaviors or mental acts are aimed at preventing or reducing distress or preventing some dreaded event or situation; however, these behaviors or mental acts either are not connected in a realistic way with what they are designed to neutralize or prevent or are clearly excessive.

In addition to these criteria, at some point during the course of the disorder, the sufferer must realize that his/her obsessions or compulsions are unreasonable or excessive. Moreover, the obsessions or compulsions must be time consuming (taking up more than one hour per day), cause distress, or cause impairment in social, occupational, or school functioning (Quick Reference from DSM-IV-TR, 2000).

Lesson 35**Obsession: Causes and Levels of Severity****OBJECTIVES:**

- To characterize obsession according with its degrees of severity.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator should refresh the audience with the definition of obsession discussed in the previous lesson. Then, rapidly points to the class that this lesson will deal with the degrees of severity of obsession, as well as, the interaction between incarnated and disincarnated in obsessions. The introduction should be brief because of the scope and extension of this lesson.

2. Divide the class in groups. All groups will read the same material. They should read the following text⁽¹⁾ and answer these questions.

- a. What is obsession?
- b. Define simple obsession, fascination and subjugation.
- c. What is the importance of this topic if I am not directly participating in a mediunistic meeting?

237. Among the difficulties incident to practical spiritism, we must place in the first rank, obsession, that is to say, the empire exercised by certain spirits over certain men. Obsession is always the work of inferior spirits, ambitious of keeping human beings under their power; superior spirits desire no such tyrannical influence, but content themselves with giving good advice and combating the evil influence of lower spirits; if we fail to give heed to them, they retire. Bad spirits, on the contrary, attach themselves obstinately to the human being over whom they obtain a hold; identifying themselves with his spirit, and leading him as you lead a child.

Obsession presents various characters which it is very important to distinguish, as they result both from the degree of restraint exercised by the obsessor, and from the nature of the effects produced by his action. The word obsession is a generic term, designating a phenomenon, of which the principal varieties are: Simple Obsession, Fascination, and Subjugation.

238. Simple obsession exists when a maleficent spirit imposes himself on a medium, mixing himself up, against the medium's will, with all the communications received by the latter, or preventing him from communicating with other spirits, by substituting himself for those who are evoked.

A medium is not necessarily obsessed because deceived by a lying spirit; the best medium is exposed to such deception, especially in the beginning of his development, while still deficient in experience; just as, among ourselves, the most honest men, and especially when they first enter into business, are liable to be taken in by a rogue. A medium may be deceived without being obsessed; obsession consists in the tenacity of

the hold that has been taken by the spirit, rendering it difficult or impossible to get rid of him.

In simple obsession, the medium is aware that he has to do with a deceptive spirit, a fact which the obsessor rarely tries to conceal; for he usually does not attempt to hide either his evil intentions, or his determination to be troublesome. The medium, in such a case, easily recognizes the deceit, keeps on his guard, and is rarely taken in. This sort of obsession is merely disagreeable, and has no other inconvenience than that of placing an obstacle in the way of the communication which it is wished to maintain with spirits of higher degree, or with those who are united to us by affection. In this category may be placed all cases of physical obsession, such as the obtrusive and obstinate manifestations of spirits who spontaneously annoy people with the sound of blows and other noises phenomena of which we have already treated in our chapter on Spontaneous Physical Manifestations.

239. Fascination is a much more serious evil. It is an illusion which is produced by the direct action of a spirit on the medium's thought, and which paralyses his judgment with regard to the communication he receives. The fascinated medium cannot believe himself to be deceived. The obsessing spirit artfully inspires him with a blind confidence, which prevents him from seeing the absurdity of what he writes, even when this is clear to every one else; a delusion which may go so far as to make him regard with admiration the most ridiculous nonsense. It would be a serious error to suppose that this species of obsession is confined to mediums who are merely ignorant and wanting in judgment; intellectual and learned men, who are highly intelligent in other respects, are not exempt from it, which proves that this aberration is the effect of some exterior action to which they are exposed.

We have said that fascination is much more serious than simple obsession, because, through the illusion caused by it, the obsessing spirit leads his victim as though he was blind, making him accept the most ridiculous statements and theories as truth, and, in some cases, exciting him to actions of the most insensate, compromising, and even dangerous character.

The difference between simple obsession and fascination is easily understood, as is also the different quality of the spirits by whom they are produced. In obsession, the spirit who attaches himself to us is only importunate and annoying from his tenacity; he is a being we are impatient to be rid of. In fascination, it is quite otherwise, for, in order to compass his ends, the evil spirit must be adroit, cunning, and hypocritical, imposing upon his victim, and getting himself accepted, with the aid of a false semblance of virtue, and a lavish employment of words and phrases, such as "charity," "humility", "the love of God," etc, which men are apt to regard as credentials, though the tenor of his communications show a degree of inferiority which only the fascination he exercises over his medium can prevent the latter from perceiving. A spirit of this class, therefore, dreads the presence of clear-sighted judges who would see through his deceptions, and directs his efforts especially to inspiring his victim with the determination to avoid every one who could undeceive him. By so doing, he avoids contradiction, and is always able to prove himself, in the eyes of his unfortunate medium, to be in the right.

240. The third degree of obsession, viz., subjugation, is a constraint which paralyses the will of its victim, and makes him act in spite of himself, reducing him to a state of absolute bondage. Subjugation may be moral or corporeal. In the first case, the

subjugated medium is often drawn on to do things which are foolish or reprehensible, but which he is deluded into regarding as wise and proper; it is a species of fascination, but one which is exercised on the will as well as on the mind. In the second case, the spirit acts on the material organs of his victim, provoking involuntary movements or acts; as is shown in the case of writing mediums, by an incessant desire to write, even at the most inopportune moments. We have seen a medium, thus enslaved, who, for want of a pen or a pencil, made movements with his linger, as though writing, wherever he happened to be, even in the streets, upon the doors and walls.

Corporeal subjugation sometimes goes still further, and forces its victims to do the most extravagant things. We knew a man, neither young nor handsome, who, under the influence of an obsession of this nature, was constrained, by an irresistible impulse, to throw himself on his knees before a young girl for whom he felt no admiration, and to make her an offer of marriage. At other times, he was forced by a violent pressure on his back and loins, to kneel down, in spite of his strenuous efforts to the contrary, and to kiss the ground, in public places, and in the presence of the crowd. This man passed for mad among his acquaintance; but, most certainly, he was not mad; for he was fully conscious of the absurdity of what he was thus made to do against his will, and suffered horribly in consequence.

3. Case Studies. With the whole class, present the following cases and debate with them the questions and these topics:

- Obsession from disincarnate spirits to an incarnated.
- Obsession from an incarnated being towards another incarnated being.
- Obsession from a disincarnate spirit towards another disincarnate spirit.
- Obsession from an incarnated being towards a disincarnated spirit.
- Mutual obsession between 2 spirits (incarnated or disincarnated).
- Self-obsession.

Case A: A mediunistic group

A mediunistic group, meeting in a spiritist center and dedicated to fraternal help and assistance received a message through psychography from a spirit claiming to be the group's spiritual mentor. During several meetings this spirit dictated a book that he called "The New Spirit's Book" and that it contained a complete revision of the entire fundamentals of the Spirit Doctrine. Of course, the spirit urged the group to publish the book as soon as possible. Also, he praised this group on several occasions and that they would be very famous because such an important work was bestowed upon them.

Questions:

- Was this mediunistic group being obsessed by this spirit? Yes, No and Why.
- If yes, what kind of obsession is this: simple obsession, fascination or subjugation?
- How is it possible that a mediunistic group, with good intentions and dedicated to charity could be obsessed?

Case B: Jesus drives out an evil spirit⁽²⁾

³¹Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. ³²They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority. ³³In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, ³⁴“Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” ³⁵“Be quiet!” Jesus said sternly. “Come out of him!” Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him. ³⁶All the people were amazed and said to each other, “What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!” ³⁷And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

Questions:

- How should we understand the expression “In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit”? What kind of obsession is this: simple obsession, fascination or subjugation?

Case C: Death of a relative

It is very common that in the event of the death of a loved one, for example a husband, a wife, children or a family member, the surviving family forgets any moral fault of the dead person and begins an idealization process, considering the one who died possessing all moral attributes of perfection. So, during many years, the one who died is constantly invoked through thoughts or even prayers. However, instead of wishing calm and equilibrium to the one who died, the family keeps worrying about their own material existence. For example: the family worries about how they will survive without the material support of the father or even fights over the left inheritance.

Questions:

- If a familiar spirit is constantly invoked, especially for earthly matters without any desire of moral progress, would this constitute obsession? Of what kind (simple obsession, fascination or subjugation)?

Case D: In the Domains of Mediumship⁽³⁾

Andre Luiz, Hilario and their mentor Aulus are spirits who are visiting an hospital in the spiritual realm. They are accompanied by Dr. Abelard, the spirit in charge of the hospital. They are about to visit Mr. Liborio, an spirit receiving treatment.

“We reached the simple bed where Liborio lay. His absent and glassy eyes revealed a lack of interest in our presence. His appearance was that of a person crazed under the influence of occult scourging. One of the guards came toward us and said to Abelard that the hospitalized patient was in anguish. Aulus rechecked him in a fatherly manner and immediately advised:

“The constant thought of the incarnate sister that our friend is spiritually attached to is tormenting him. They are both attuned to the same wavelength. It is a case of reciprocal persecution. The benefits that he previously received in the group are now jeopardized by the suggestions that she makes from afar.” (...)

“Yes,” agreed the mentor. “As long as they do not modify their spiritual disposition and establish new noble habits of thought, they will find themselves

succumbing to a mutual enslavement, in which the obsessor and the obsessed nurture one another with reciprocal energies. They fear separation because they have an habitual affinity to one another. This impedes the double recuperation that we wish for them.”

Questions:

- Observe that the text refers to an “incarnate sister” who is obsessing this spirit. In a previous chapter, Andre Luiz described how this spirit was obsessing this same person. In other words, the incarnated person and the disincarnated spirit (Liborio) were mutually obsessing each other. (a) How is this possible? (b) What kind of obsession is this: simple obsession, fascination or subjugation?

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Obsession is a mental link between less evolved spirits, incarnated or disincarnated.
2. Superior spirits do not violate our free will, therefore, they never impose their will and never produce obsession.

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2. The Holy Bible - The New Testament, Luke, chapter 4, 31-37, The New International Version.
3. Xavier, F. C., “In the Domains of Mediumship”, dictated by Andre Luiz (spirit), chapter 14 (segment), Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2005.

Lesson 36**The Obsessive Process: Obsessor and Obsessed****OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand how the obsessive process is established
- To characterize the obsessor and the obsessed

METHODS:

1. Coordinator begins with a 10-min introduction on the dictionary definition versus the Spiritist definition of Obsession.

2. Divide the class in three groups:

Group I. The Obsessive Process

Read, discuss and prepare a 5-min summary on the following text⁽¹⁾.

Insanity due to obsession looms high among the many disorders that plague mankind nowadays. Hunted by untold inner troubles, obsessed people have been deplorably overlooked by most psychiatrists and psychologists who, stubbornly attached to their materialistic outlook, deny the presence of discarnate entities as intruding personalities in the roots of several mental diseases.

On the other hand, many Christians, enlightened by Spiritist teachings set out to help the mentally sick believing that most mentally deranged people are victims of obsession and need only spiritual treatment, overlooking the indispensable medical care. Both extremes are wrong and should be avoided. Of course, all of us, spirits in evolution, carry the causes of our mental and physical derangements with us. Since pain is in itself a process of spiritual refinement for the ever-unfolding soul, we infer that suffering arises from the spirit's misuse of life resources granted to him by the Superior Powers that supervise life. Such resources should of course be used positively, as tools to help his evolution.

Man is created to perfection. Any hindrance he himself brings into the process acts like chains holding him back. Divine Law establishes that only through love can we find peace and reach the final target of happiness. Wholesome in its essence, love is the foundation of life and also the power that drives us to our noblest accomplishments.

Whenever we allow inferior passions to take hold of our will, our sense of proportion is blinded; the love in us loses its positive drive and becomes insane, making us prisoners of the forces of darkness.

That is why when treating mentally deranged patients; love should be listed among the most precious therapies. Treated with love, the mentally sick achieve remarkable recoveries. At the same time, while love helps a sick person towards recovery, hatred hinders him, and acts in just the opposite way. Jealousy, deceit, pride,

lust, avarice – all children of selfishness – will tie the rebellious spirit to the wheels of an inevitable redeeming suffering.

There is no exception on earth. No excuse will prevail upon the law of cause and effect. In every sufferer we will always find an indebted spirit striving for its own redemption. His toils should drive us to meditation on God's Laws and direct us towards Service to our fellow men.

In the multitude of people who suffer from what modern psychiatry classifies as insanity, there are many obsessed persons atoning for errors committed in past incarnations, and criminals that cheated human justice and avoided just reparation. They are the murderers, thieves, and crooks of all kinds who come back linked to those they murdered, defrauded, or abandoned but could not discard forever because of the infallible natural law of cause and effect. They died, but were not destroyed. They changed their physical garments, but are still the same spiritual individuals.

Divine Laws find them where they are, and curb them. And the links of responsibility they forged in the consciously forgotten past again join victim to criminal, creditor to debtor, in the same redeeming process.

Tied down by their karmic chains, they toss and turn, struggling in a continuous energy consuming effort which drives them insane, until the lights of love and forgiveness succeed in breaking the chains apart, setting them free so that they may begin to help one another.

Unless love conquers hate and forgiveness surpasses affront, they will keep on fighting and chasing one another, hurting themselves endlessly in a maze of horrors where they brutalize themselves, stepping into the lowest possible savagery.

Group II. **The Obsessor**

Read, discuss and prepare a 5-min summary on the following text⁽¹⁾.

A spirit that perturbs a person, generally considered as an inferior, earthbound entity or obsessor, is, in reality, someone who was caught up in the net of his own suffering. While in the physical body, he lived under the pressure of events that led him to rebellion and to the consequent repression of many conflicting emotions from which even death could not liberate him.

Unable to meet the responsibility for his failures he simply transfers it to someone else who, for one reason or another, interfered negatively with the mechanics of such failures. It is much more convenient for him to find reasons for his misery in imaginary criminals than to admit the heavy load of personal responsibility that must stay where it belongs, that is, on his shoulders, for according to the law of cause and effect the consequences of what we do return to us inevitably.

After death he wanders in the mist of unconsciousness, his centers of discernment dulled by the dense vibrations that the many dissipations and follies of physical life created around him. His reasoning is never lost, though; and he could overcome his confused state if he so wished. But, because he is revolted and wants to find a scapegoat, he attaches himself, by way of attunement, to the person who, in the past, had got involved in his troubles.

But the obsessor's mind is a troubled and confused one. Although he tries to dodge responsibility he, at the same time, carries along deep inside himself what we may call the source of his guilt that works as actual plugs through which he connects himself with the mind of the person he considers his offender. This is the mechanics of many obsessive mental disorders that may flow into irreversible subjugations.

Cases of violent, obstinate, domineering aggression may occur, and the sick person falls helplessly under the mental and physical power of the obsessor.

Taken to rescue circles, the obsessor is nursed back into mental lucidity and is shown the way back to the happiness he thought he had lost forever.

The circle members gently help him understand the lofty plans of Creation, and encourage him to leave those who have hurt him to the judgment of the Universal Consciousness, which no one is ever to escape.

Leaving the past behind, he now undertakes his own rehabilitation through the many opportunities that come and go with time, this marvelous friend of everybody.

In other cases, the entity's mind was for so long focused on a destructive idea that it produced serious lacerations in the delicate tissues of the perispirit; his spiritual balance is then greatly affected, and he is unable to participate consciously in the process of his own liberation from the obsession process. When this happens, the Spirit Instructors work upon the psychic centers of the entity, leading him into a state of hypnotic sleep, or resort to other methods of similar efficiency in order to give the damaged centers a chance to be restored.

In most rescue séances it is possible to use the age regression technique in the spirit patient, leading him to review past situations to which he is connected in order to show him that the responsibility for his troubles is his own and nobody else's. Only then is he able to understand his mistake and see that his attitude is working as a disturbing agent to his spiritual reality, hindering his progress and ascent.

There are obsessor that, for a time, give themselves up to the fascination of cruelty and indulge themselves in it, blinded and maddened by despair and helplessness. Then they linger for a long time in their insanity, while their consciences, excited by lower impulses, change the direction of their thoughts and focus them on a single object: their victim. They make a sad mistake, though, because, by tormenting the one they consider an enemy, they actually become enemies of themselves, since the evil we do comes back to us, sooner or later.

Such entities – who eventually will be caught in the subtle nets of Divine Laws – build up vicious organizations in the Dark Regions of the Lower Planes from where they spread their influence throughout many places of suffering and perturbation on the earth plane, attuning also to idle minds, and to guilty, stubborn, rebel and indifferent persons. They establish a close relationship with these minds, starting serious, long, obsessive processes that sometimes last for a whole lifetime on the earth plane, and continue in the Spirit World after the obsessed's death.

These inferior earthbound entities organize themselves in bands and fight for leading positions as they would on the earth plane, in actual battles in which they annihilate themselves. Their motivation is a powerful ambition that ends up in an empty ephemeral illusion. They lack the strength to control themselves but are always tormented by the lust for power.

Their evil, degraded minds, in molding the subtle tissues of their astral bodies, completely alter their appearance the better to frighten those submitted to them. In their insanity, they believe themselves to be small gods competing with the True God. Some of them still carry in their subconscious, the old religious myth of Hell and its Devils, and they mold their spirit bodies to suit the thought forms they are firmly focused on.

Many of them, poor brothers who went astray from the road to redemption, become unconscious instruments of Divine Justice that they pretended to ignore and to affront. They also obsess other discarnate entities like themselves, who in turn become obsessors of incarnate people, setting up a very complex circle of communal living, exploiting one another physically and psychically.

Every obsessor, however, is a brother of ours in the spiritual rearguard, where most of us have also been in the past. They need compassion and mercy; prayer and positive thoughts from all who are devoted to rescue work. We must offer them the opportunity for renewal, and point out to them the luminous road they must travel, guided by the lights of their spiritual discernment, in order to free themselves from the suffering through which they atone for their past errors.

Group III.

The Obsessed

Read, discuss and prepare a 5-min summary on the following text⁽¹⁾.

There are obsession and obsessed only because there are spiritual debts demanding reparation. Every obsession is, therefore, a moral problem in which the Spirit got entangled because of his deliberate disrespect of the ethical, legal, and spiritual aspects of life. Nobody can escape a guilty conscience; wherever the debtor is, there is also the debt and the collector. It is the law!

In the fulcrum of every obsession lies the imperative need for settlement between debtor and collector. Undoubtedly, the Divine Law has many ways to reach those who infringe its supreme codes. Because of this it is not absolutely necessary that offender and victim be confronted and that the latter demand reparation. If it had to be so, the natural order of things would be reversed and the vicious Circle of debt-collection-debt would culminate in a disintegration of the moral balance. Since every fault represents a disturbance of the general harmony – regardless of the particular individuals involved in it is to this general harmony that the transgressors are called back. However, because of the special conditions that bind together the persons involved in a same problem, the Spirits usually return to the same place where they once failed, and are reunited so that through forgiveness and love they may retrace their steps and take up the interrupted journey, providing one another with the means needed for the reparation which will lead to happiness.

But because most Spirits are still immersed in primitive emotions which seem to them more pleasant than noble ones, they sometimes become confused and are deceived by the false idea that they can take justice in their own hands; in doing so they fail and, in their turn are caught by Divine Justice.

When a Spirit reincarnates, he brings with himself in the form of strong perispiritual matrixes –whatever he will need to carry on his evolution. Such coded programs fix themselves in the tissue that will form the material structure he will use to

be able to meet his needed trials and expiations. If he devotes himself to good and consequently attains moral worth, he will disarticulate the conditioning factors of the imposed programs of suffering and reestablish the harmony in the psychosomatic centers. These will then generate balanced agglutinating vibrations that will fix themselves in the physical, body as health, peace, and joy.

If, however, due either to indifference or for mere pleasure, the Spirit chooses the pathways of futility, or stagnates in indolence, in due course he will automatically activate a warning mechanism which will disturb his health, and by means of a psychic attunement to the molecular maladjustment of the physical body, create the favorable conditions for the vaccine-germs in the body to proliferate and give rise to this or that disease.

In some other cases, because the resources the Spirit brought to his incarnation – in the form of vitalizing energies – were not properly renewed, but on the contrary were wasted, the inner reserves burst and the consequent lowering of the vibratory range throws the non-vigilant Spirit into another evolutionary sphere, and he then attunes to vicious, persecuting, or wicked entities thus starting long obsession processes.

In other mental derangements the disharmony which starts in the very beginning of the incarnation continues little by little, wearing off the stored specific energies and predisposing the Spirit to the crisis that will lead to neurosis, psychosis, or to the many forms of mental imbalance throwing him into the cruel and narrow corridor of madness.

Experiments carried out by Dr. Ladislau von Meduna, at the Interacademic Center of Psychiatric Research of Budapest, detected fundamental differences between the brain of an epileptic person and that of a schizophrenic one, and proved that the two diseases cannot coexist. Therefore, in the very beginning of his incarnation the Spirit imprints in the encephalon the karmic conditions needed for him to repay his debts to the Cosmic Conscience. However, in his effort towards inner spiritual renewal – since every good or bad physical and mental condition comes from within the Spirit can restore the cellular structure, exception only when he is within an expiatory process.

When madness seizes a person, it is because the Spirit possesses in himself the favorable conditions for its manifestation. The predisposition to this or that particular state is inherent in him. Outside agents like the manifold moral traumas, complexes, and repressions – which are responsible for its breakout – had already been planted in the individual's physiological and psychological constitution. This way the Spirit will be forced to meet his duty.

There are, of course, more complex causes of madness, but all of them are connected with the law of "cause and effect". This is why the Christian teachings contained in the Spirits' Doctrine are so excellent. Supported by the most effective preventive psychotherapy, and based on wise and valuable optimistic concepts, they invite us to harmony and cordiality; and if we accept the invitation and live by them, we will achieve self-balance and spiritual renewal thus accomplishing the main objective of reincarnation: to attain happiness.

In spiritual obsession the patient is also the agent of his own cure. It is obvious that he will need the charitable cooperation of someone who will help him awaken to a new vision of things and of the life along which he is progressing; but one should not transfer to Counselors, healers, or mediums in general the total responsibility for the results of the treatment of obsession. It is true that some temporary cures can be obtained

without the patient's cooperation, but these can be considered as additional concessions from God. The problem, however, will return later, unexpectedly, when the debtor should be better prepared to accomplish his moral and spiritual adjustment to Divine Law.

Therefore, the obsessed, even the one under the most severe stage of subjugation, must be enlightened by means of luminous messages sent to his subconscious by efficient counseling, encouraging the spiritual awakening on which his self-renewal will depend. We must both counsel the obsessor – the spiritual parasite, and enlighten the host--the incarnate entity who yields to the invading entity – so that the latter may offer his personal contribution to the cure, rising himself up morally and spiritually and, consequently enlarging his vibrational dimension which will place him in a higher vibratory range, free from the inferior influence of the lower ranges. Once in this new position, he will be able to help both himself and those who were left behind, marching along side by side with them, like a generous brother, a bearer of the blessings of health and hope.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. Our current obsessors were, commonly, victims of our part mistakes who were incapable of forgiveness.
2. The obsessed today was, in general, the obsessor of yesterday.
3. Both, obsessed and obsessor deserve our special compassion and care to overcome this tragic situation.

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2. Idem, Foreword (segment).
3. Idem, Foreword (segment).

Lesson 37**Obsession: The Effects of Obsession in the Perispirit****OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand the effects of obsession in the spiritual body (perispirit).

METHODS:

1. The coordinator begins conducting a review on obsession by asking participants to summarize what they have learned in previous lessons about the following concepts:

- a. Obsessor
- b. Obsessed
- c. Common obsession
- d. Fascination
- e. Subjugation

2. In a big group, read the following excerpt ⁽¹⁾. After reading the passage, discuss and answer the following questions:

- a) How does reincarnation induce genetic predispositions?
- b) Explain how hatred can affect the spirit body and the perispirit.
- c) How does obsession affect spirit body and the perispirit?

It is natural that reincarnation finds the matrix of its needs of reparation in the genes and chromosomes of the being. Therefore, the individual will be reborn in families that will provide him the genetic map, the organic resources for that purpose.

The perispirit molds the body that the spirit needs by equipping it with neurotransmitters that are capable of reflecting the indispensable trials for one's equilibrium.

In that manner, each evolving individual on Earth has the body that is necessary for his evolution.

Exception to serious psychoneurotic process such as autism, schizophrenia and others, the individual's attitude will help recover his mental health, or maintain him in alienation, or even aggravate his problem.

We should never forget that any individual with a psychological disturbance of behavior (as much as for other suffering-generating problems) is the debtor in process of repairing his past. One is a guilty consciousness that searches for tranquility.

Therapeutic mechanisms must reach the integral, spiritual being in order to succeed. These mechanisms help the individual change his inner attitude and mental conduct. Therefore, he feels renewed and proceeds in a useful existence. Otherwise, continuous recidivisms will lead the patient to psychological deterioration with irreversible pathology.

The genesis of a psychological disturbance relies in the inner Self. Thus, it is imperative to evaluate the behavior of those who were one's victims, or the ones that dictated and participated to one's hideous whims. There, we will find an obsessive process that is derived from those unbalanced minds that interact with the reincarnated guilty consciousness.

Hatred mental discharges penetrate the neurotransmission of the nervous system and stimulate the excessive elimination of substances or induce alterations that are significant in the psychopathological processes.

In addition, during sleep, as the soul is partially emancipated, the patient (debtor) reencounters one's victims, one's accomplices. Then, the individual runs back to the body, transforming the unfortunate memories in expressions of fear that are transferred into agoraphobia, obsessive compulsive disorder and others.

The reminiscences of the living individual's burial in a previous reincarnation, while in a non-diagnosed cataleptic state, generate fearful claustrophobic mechanisms and deeply alter the individual's behavior.

Besides, due to the level of guilt, the patient opens one's doors of perception, and captures telepathic messages of one's spiritual adversaries. This state ends up increasing one's inner panic and mental disturbance in regard to equilibrium and objective reality. The individual also loses one's senses, clear discernment, notion of reasoning, and gets into a state of alienation that moves one away from the process that maintains one's evolutive experience.

One cannot overlook the generating causes of behavioral disturbances as traditionally accepted by Psychological Sciences. However, one cannot discard the causes of spiritual nature that are present in the patient's life due to reincarnation process. In addition, the disincarnate spirits may tune in the patient's vibration in virtue of their past wrongdoings.

In any alienating manifestation, despite its endogenous or exogenous causes, the spiritual being is responsible for one's own problematic, once one is under moral evolutive process. However, the individual needs help from Science and Spiritism in order to eradicate one's imbalance through adequate therapies and inner transformation, which is a decisive step for one's own improvement.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. We are not slaves of our bodies or genetic imprint, but "each evolving individual on Earth has the body that is necessary for his evolution".
2. "Exception to serious psychoneurotic process such as autism, schizophrenia and others, the individual's attitude will help recover his mental health, or maintain him in alienation, or even aggravate his problem".

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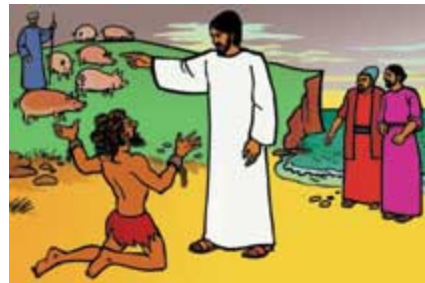
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Lesson 38**Obsession and Madness****OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand madness according to medicine and spiritism.
- To interpret according to spiritism the cases of subjugation reported in the Gospel (Mark 1:21-27 and 9:14-29; Matthew 9:32-34 and 12:22-28).
- To identify Christ's authority when dealing with obsessors and obsessed.

METHODS

1. The coordinator should make an introduction based in the idea that in the New Testament we find many descriptions of Jesus dealing with demons or evil-spirits. Some of these cases are not clearly obsessive, for example a man who is blind, but very serious cases of obsession can have physical manifestations in body of the obsessed. On the contrary, there are many cases of "possession by the Holy Spirit", which are associated as a good thing in the Bible. Introduce this theme and instruct the class that the focus of this lesson in to understand these "possessions" according with the Spiritist Doctrine.



understand these "possessions" according with the Spiritist Doctrine.

This is a list of "demon" possessions
(from Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insanity>, accessed August/2006).

- a) Matthew 4:23-25: Demon-possessed persons are healed by Jesus (also Luke 6:17-19).
- b) Matthew 7:21-23: Many will drive out demons in Jesus' name (also Mark 16:17; Luke 10:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7).
- c) Matthew 8:14-17: Jesus heals many demon-possessed ones (also Mark 1:29-39; Luke 4:33-41).
- d) Matthew 8:28-34: Jesus sends a herd of demons from two men into a herd of pigs (also Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39, both referring to only one man).
- e) Matthew 9:32-34: Jesus makes a dumb man speak, the Pharisees say it is by the power of Beelzebub (also Mark 3:20-22).
- f) Matthew 10:1-8: The Twelve Apostles given the authority to drive out evil spirits (also Mark 3:15; 6:7; 6:13; Luke 9:1; 10:17).
- g) Matthew 11:16-19: "this generation" says that John the Baptist was possessed by a demon (also Luke 7:31-35).
- h) Matthew 12:22-32: Jesus heals a possessed blind and dumb man (also Luke 11:14-23; 12:10; Mark 3:20-30).
- i) Matthew 12:43-45: Jesus tells an allegory of nasty spirits coming back home, that is to the human body where they have lived before (also Luke 11:24-26).

j) Matthew 15:21-28: Jesus expels a demon from the body of the daughter of a Canaanite woman (also Mark 7:24-30).

k) Matthew 17:14-21: Jesus heals a lunatic by driving out a demon from him (also Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-49).

l) Mark 1:21-28: Jesus expels a nasty spirit from a man (also Luke 4:31-37).

m) Mark 16:9: Jesus had driven seven demons out of Mary Magdalene (also Luke 8:2).

n) Luke 7:21: Many people are cleansed from evil spirits by Jesus.

o) Luke 13:10-17: Jesus expels a spirit of disease from the body of a woman on the Sabbath.

p) Luke 13:32: Jesus will continue to cast out demons even though Herod Antipas wants to kill him.

q) John 7:20: A crowd of Jews that wants to kill Jesus says he is demon-possessed.

r) John 8:48-52: The Jews say Jesus is a Samaritan and demon-possessed.

s) John 10:20-21: Many Jews say Jesus is raving mad and demon-possessed, others say he is not.

t) Acts 16:16-24: Paul and Silas imprisoned for driving a future-telling spirit out of a slave girl.

u) Acts 19:11-20: Handkerchiefs and aprons touched by Paul cured illness and drove out evil spirits.

v) Acts 19:13-20: Seven sons of Sceva drove out evil spirits by saying: "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out."

x) Revelation 18:2: The Whore of Babylon is a home for demons, evil spirits and unclean birds.

This is a list of references to "possession" by the Holy Spirit

Acts of the Apostles: 1:8, 2:4, 2:17-18, 2:38, 4:8, 4:31, 6:3-5, 7:55, 8:15-19, 8:39, 9:17, 10:19, 11:12-16, 11:28, 13:9, 16:6-7, 19:2-6, 20:23, 21:11, 23:8-9.

Group I:

Those Possessed by an Evil Spirit

In your group, read and discuss the text⁽¹⁾ and address the following questions.

- a) What is the relationship between subjugation and possession?
- b) Do the passages from the Gospel constitute examples of simple obsession, fascination or subjugation?
- c) In the Gospel it is very common to find the expressions "impure spirit", "demon" or "evil spirit". To whom are these words alluding to?
- d) In Mark 9:13-28, we find the story of an epileptic boy. What was the cause of those crises?
- e) Jesus freed obsessors and obsessed when He cured a blind and mute man. But the pharisees alleged that He did so by order of the devil. Comment these passages.
- f) Identify Jesus authority when dealing with obsessors and obsessed. Why could He drive out evil spirits with a simple verbal command?

29. They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. (Mark, 1: 21 to 28).

30. While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.” (Matthew, 9: 32 to 34).

31. When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him. “What are you arguing with them about?” he asked. A man in the crowd answered, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not.” “O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied, “how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me.” So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth. Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has he been like this?” “From childhood,” he answered. “It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us.” “If you can?” said Jesus. “Everything is possible for him who believes.” Immediately the boy’s father exclaimed, “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!” When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the evil spirit. “You deaf and mute spirit,” he said, “I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.” The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, “He’s dead.” But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up. After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, “Why couldn’t we drive it out?” He replied, “This kind can come out only by prayer.” (Marc, 9: 14 to 29).

32. Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. All the people were astonished and said, “Could this be the Son of David?” But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, “It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.” Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. (Matthew, 12: 22 to 28).

33. The deliverance of those possessed by evil spirits figure, with the cures, among the most numerous acts of Jesus. Among the facts of this nature there is one that is reported above in number 30, where the proof of his obsession is not evident. It is probable that then, as now, they attributed to the influence of demons all maladies, of which the cause was unknown, mainly to dumbness, epilepsy, and catalepsy. But there are some cases of it where the action of undeveloped spirits is very evident. They have with those to which we have been witness such a striking analogy, that one recognizes with them all the symptoms of this kind of affection. The proof of the participation of an occult intelligence in similar cases is from the fact that a number of radical cures have been made in some spiritist centers, solely by the evocation and enlightenment of the spirit obsessors, without magnetism or medicine, and often in the absence and at a distance from the patient. The immense superiority of Christ gave to him such authority over imperfect spirits, then called demons, that it was sufficient for him command them to retire; for they could not resist his will (Chap. XIV, item 46).

34. The narrative of the evil spirits having been sent into the herd of swine is contrary to all probability. Incidentally, it would hardly be explainable the presence of such a numerous amount of pigs in a country wherein that animal was seen as horrendous and useless for nutritional purposes. An evil spirit is no less a human spirit still, though imperfect enough to do evil after death as he did it before; and it is contrary to the laws of nature that he can animate the body of an animal. One sees there the amplification of a real common fact of the ignorance and superstition, or perhaps an allegory to characterize the impure inclinations of certain spirits.

35. Obsession and possession by evil spirits seem to have been very common in Judea in the time of Jesus, which gave him the opportunity of curing many. The undeveloped spirits had no doubt invaded this country, causing an epidemic of the disease (chap. XIV, n° 49).

Without being epidemic, the obsession of individuals is extremely frequent, and presents itself under various aspects which a profound knowledge of Spiritism makes easily recognizable. The health of the individual is often sadly affected by it, either by aggravating organic affections or causing them. Obsessions will some day be inevitably ranged among pathological causes requiring by their special nature special curative means. Spiritism, by making known the cause of the evil, opens a new way for the art of curing, and furnishes to science the means of success where it fails only by a lack of knowledge of the original cause of the evil (“The Mediums Book,” chap. 23).

36. Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of exorcising demons by demons. Even the good he did was, according to them, the work of Satan. They did not reflect that it would make no sense for the Devil to expel his own self. It is well known that the Pharisees of that time already considered all transcendental faculties as supernatural and consequently, as the work of the devil. According to them, Jesus himself received from the Devil such powers. This same doctrine is that which the Church upholds today against spiritual manifestations.

Group II.

Obsession

In your group, read and discuss the text^(2,3) and address the following questions.

a) In what situation can an obsession lead to madness?

- b) Is madness always the result of some brain disorder?
- c) What is the relationship between subjugation and possession?
- d) The persistent action of an obsessor can cause physical lesions in the organism of the obsessed. Are these lesions reversible or irreversible?

Text A⁽²⁾

6. Could corporeal subjugation be carried to the extent of producing madness?

"Yes; a species of madness of which the cause is unknown to the world in general, but which has no connexion with ordinary madness. Among those who are treated as *mad* there are many who are only *subjugated*, and whose treatment ought to be exclusively moral; but such patients are often made really mad by the physical treatment to which they are subjected. When your doctors understand spiritism, they will be able to distinguish between these two classes of madness; and they will then cure many more patients than they now do".

Text B⁽³⁾ Subjugation

Deep and important teachings were thus conveyed to us in all the case histories we were examining. Divine Justice was present everywhere, regardless of time and space limitations, telling us that only a clean heart can give us the peace of mind we need to attempt for higher spiritual commitments. The Spirit is the sole builder of his happiness, and the sole agent of the many possibilities that lie before him requiring enlightened discernment to act righteously.

Inside that particular room in the hospital, four patients provided us with an excellent opportunity for observation and learning. Spirits in different phases of development were gathered there, pressed by similar difficulties, in quest for the liberation we all wish for when we are conscious of the Codes of the Supreme Justice and want to find happiness and attain fulfillment.

While my mind pondered over these living lessons I had before me, I saw Bezerra approach the girl Esther and say sympathetically:

"In fact, the motive of our visit to this hospital is this young lady here, whom we will now examine."

We gathered round the girl, and he went about explaining to us:

"Unlike the cases we have just examined, the cause of Esther's *madness* is a spirit subjugation that will drive her to irreversible schizophrenia if Divine Help does not come to her rescue immediately."

"In the other cases we have observed," he continued, "obsession was a consequence of the patient's own alienation. Here, however, we have a psychic derangement as a result of obsession. Many are the reasons that have brought us to her sickbed. Prayers offered in her behalf are coming now from different sources: from her dear Mother, from the members of Dr Albuquerque's weekly Home Prayer Meeting, from our friends at the 'Francis of Assisi Spiritist Society', and from devoted mediums like Joel and Rosangela."

"We must remember", Bezerra proceeded, "that although the Divine Law is one of perfect Justice, it does not exclude God's Mercy which can be reached by anyone who asks for it through prayer. A prayer is divine in its substance. Special mechanisms in Higher Spheres pick up its vibrations and change them into some sort of response which is, then, sent back to the Earth plane. In this universe of vibrations and continuous interchange,

no call for help goes unanswered. Those who dwell in hate and anger attune to minds charged with similar emotions, establishing a strong link with them. Those who cherish hope and love attune to the powerful sources of peace and harmony, building up ties that favour optimism and good health."

"Sometimes," he added, "we are surprised to see how some very fragile people can bear heavy burdens of agony and suffering unwaveringly. We hear of others who resist dramatic situations, and of many who dwell in peace although heartbroken by adversity. They all get their strength from Higher Spheres through prayer and meditation, withdrawing into themselves thus expanding their psychical antennas through which they pick up the divine answers to their pleas."

"Of course," Bezerra went on, "they also suffer, because they are also atoning for past errors. But they do not shelter pessimism or sickness. Wherever they are hope shines in them, and joy is around them, confirming their communion with God. This is why Jesus taught us to love one another, pray for one another, and particularly for our adversaries, and those who persecute us. Prayer does not only help those for whom it is offered, but also the one who prays, because, working as an interphone between him and the Divine Sources of Love, it establishes a continuous interchange."

Here Bezerra fell silent for a few moments, and went closer to the obsessed girl. Then he went on:

"It's not as though our Esther were deserted here. No. Nobody and nothing is ever forgotten. There are very subtle mechanisms working in the name of God, even when unsolicited. There are superior minds that watch, inquire, and listen as workers of the Unlimited Goodness."

"Her story is a sad one," Bezerra continued, "In a previous incarnation, Esther and her present father were associated in serious crimes. Now, though in a different context, she suffers the consequences of her past acts."

"But", he added encouragingly, "considering the helpful resources at hand together with the good hearts that are mobilizing their own spiritual achievements to intercede for her, her *karmic maps* will be altered, making it possible for her to attain reparation by other means than constricting suffering."

"The law demands that the transgressor atones for his fault, but it does not want him tortured. Those who shrink from good work are forced to ponder under the pressure of suffering. When they refuse the work through which they shall gain their peace of mind, they deliver themselves to pain which will then program the circumstances of redemption... So, in order to answer our brothers' prayers, the Lord uses us as a channel through which help will reach her."

The wise instructor made another pause, then continued:

"The entity that now torments Esther is not directly connected with her present life. He is using her to reach her father whom he thinks he hates. Because she carries a stained conscience, she suffers and causes her father to suffer too, and, at the same time, through suffering she atones for the crimes they committed together in a past life."

"The entity is able to use her because he finds in her the proper karmic conditions which provide attunement. Her mediumship, which may later become an instrument of evolvment, makes it possible for him to reach her by means of the laws of affinity."

"Let's now examine the mental cliches from her past incarnation recorded in the coronal center so that we may be able to better understand the problem and give her a more effective help."

We all concentrated as much as possible on the sleeping girl's coronal center while brother Melchiades assisted her spirit form which lay by her physical body. The girl's psycho-physical system was being most cruelly treated by the obsessor. The perturbed entity insulted her with coarse language and hit her continuously with his closed fists. Immersed in heavy fluids he could not see us and when suddenly his victim escaped his eyes, he grew angrier. Brother Melchiades gently dispersed the heavy fluids that oppressed Esther, speaking kindly to her. Though she could not quite understand what was happening, she registered the help as a pleasant sensation of peace and rest. Thanks to the anesthetic help given to her by the kind spirit nurse, she sank into sleep, resting spiritually also.

"We must not dislodge the obsessing entity now", said Bezerra. "We need her father's contribution in order to appease his enemy, win his friendship and respect, and then set her free. This will be tried presently."

He made another pause, then continued:

"The first thing we must do to help her is to try to attenuate the disorderly flow of recollections which is being released into her conscious mind as a consequence of the process of subjugation she is under. In the few moments she escapes from the obsessor, her troubled mind, like a whirlpool revives painful past memories that disturb her, driving her into a total psychic confusion due to the mixing memories of both past and present, because she is unable to think logically. Let us observe the process."

Again we concentrated on the girl's spiritual centers of memory. As we did so, living pictures began to appear as if we had been transported to the very locations where the events had taken place. The fact took me by surprise and I was about to start asking questions when *I heard* Bezerra warn me telepathically to pay full attention to the phenomenon and forget curiosity.

Here is what we saw in her mind, as if a moving picture were unrolling itself before our eyes

It was nighttime. In a shadowy living room of a luxurious house, a graceful young lady talked to an emaciated and severe looking priest. The man acted politely and sounded cunning. They were discussing a plan to embezzle the wealth of a dying lady who was expected to leave her property to someone else. The ambitious young lady used the best of her charm on the priest to win him to her cause. She told him that only after she had obtained legal possession over the lady's riches would she consent to carry on their love affair. We could see that she despised him, but the man, deeply in love, did not seem to notice the criminal use the lady was trying to make of him.

Suddenly the scenery changed and the scenes followed one another violently. We saw the lady now somewhat older and aggressive, tormented by inferior spirit entities. The priest was now dressed as a Monsignor, a title that seemed to please his vanity greatly. He was still linked to her, and she still controlled him. We could also perceive that she carried the agony of a distressing frustration in spite of all the wealth she had managed to acquire. Soon the first scenes would come back again to disappear at once in a whirl of perturbing shapeless impressions.

We returned to the physical environment of the hospital room.

"So we have seen," Bezerra concluded, "where the causes of her present troubles lay. We will come back here tomorrow bringing Joel along, in astral projection, so that we can help Esther and her father. With that our work will be properly initiated to be continued in-the rescue seances where we will take our unfortunate brother, the obsessor.

"Every obsessive problem," Bezerra affirmed, "has its own characteristics and demands specific treatment. But the roots are always found in the depths of the suffering Spirit. Let's go now. We've done enough for today."

Brother Melchiades gently placed Esther-spirit side by side with Esther-body, both resting peacefully. The spirit obsessor was also helped through passes by brother Melchiades. He dozed off and soon went to sleep. We left the hospital premises now involved in a new psychosphere. The intercessory prayers had brought invaluable help there, in the name of Jesus, our Lord, the Great Healer. This fact alone had been enough to renew the entire atmosphere.

Outside we could see the beautiful Botafogo beach shining in the soft moonlight, under a starry sky. Soon a new day would come, bringing with it blessed opportunities for all.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. For lack of better terminology and/or understanding, the Hebrew at Jesus' times interpreted many physical illness and spiritual obsessions as "demon possessions".
2. Today, these "demon possessions" are better interpreted as subjugations by obsessing spirits.
3. In no passage do we see Jesus mistreating any of the "demons" that He expelled.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "Genesis" chapter XV, items 29 – 36, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
2. Kardec, Allan, "The Medium's Book", chapter 23, item 254, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
3. "Obsession" by Divaldo P. Franco, dictated by the spirit Manoel P. De Miranda, chapter 13 (extract), Leal editor, 2004.

Lesson 39**Obsession: Prophylaxis and Treatment****OBJECTIVES:**

- To understand how to prevent obsessions.
- To describe the therapeutic mechanism to treat obsessions.

METHODS

1. The coordinator begins by asking if anyone can define **obsession** and **disobsession** in the light of Spiritism. Also, ask if anyone has ever met someone who underwent an obsession.

2. In order to understand about prevention and treatment of obsessions, the class will read the following 2 texts in a big group. After reading it, answer the following questions:

- a. How can we prevent obsessions?
- b. What are the therapeutic mechanisms of disobsession?

Text I. Occult Influence of Spirits on Our Thoughts and Actions⁽¹⁾.

459. *Do spirits influence our thoughts and our actions?*

"Their influence upon them is greater than you suppose, for it is very often they who direct both."

460. *Have we some thoughts that originate with ourselves and others that are suggested to us?*

"Your soul is a spirit who thinks. You must have observed that many thoughts, and frequently very opposite ones, come into your mind reference to the same subject, and at the same time. In such cases, some of them are your own, and some are ours. This is the cause of your uncertainties, because you have thus in your mind two ideas that are opposed to each other."

461. *How can we distinguish between the thoughts which are our own and those which are suggested to us?*

"When a thought is suggested, it is like a voice speaking to you. Your own thoughts are generally those which first occur to you. In point of fact, this distinction is not of much practical importance for you, and it is often better for you not to be able to make it. Man's action is thus left in greater freedom. If he decides for the right road, he does so more spontaneously; if he takes the wrong one, he is more distinctly responsible for his mistake."

462. *Do men of intelligence and genius always draw their ideas from their own minds?*

"Their ideas sometimes come from their own spirit; but they are often suggested to them by other spirits who judge them to be capable of understanding them, and worthy of transmitting them. When they not find the required ideas in themselves, they make an unconscious appeal for inspiration; a sort of evocation that they make without being aware of what they are doing."

(Kardec's comment): If it were useful for us to be able to distinguish clearly between our own thoughts and those which are suggested to us, God would have given us the means of doing so, as he has given us that of distinguishing between day and night. When a matter has been left by Providence in a state of vagueness, it has been left so because it is better for us.

463. It is sometimes said that our first thought is always the best, is this true?

"It may be good or bad according to the nature of the incarnated spirit. It is always well to listen to good inspirations."

464. How can we ascertain whether a suggested thought comes from a good spirit or from an evil one?

"Study its quality. Good spirits give only good counsels. It is for you to distinguish between the good and the bad."

465. To what end do imperfect spirits incite us to evil?

"To make you suffer as they do themselves."

- Does that lessen their own sufferings?

"No; but they do so from jealousy of those who are happier than themselves."

- What kind of sufferings do they wish to make us undergo?

"Those which result from being of an inferior order, and far removed from God."

466. Why does God permit spirits to incite us to evil?

"Imperfect spirits are used by Providence as instruments for trying men's faith and constancy in well-doing. You, being a spirit, must advance in the knowledge of the infinite. It is for this end that you are made to pass through the trials of evil in order to attain to goodness. Our mission is to lead you into the right road. When you are acted upon by evil influences, it is because you attract evil spirits to you by your evil desires, for evil spirits always come to aid you in doing the evil you desire to do; they can only help you to do wrong when you give way to evil desires. If you are inclined to commit murder, you will have about you a swarm of spirits who will keep this inclination alive in you; but you will also have others about you who will try to influence you for good, which restores the balance, and leaves you of your decision. It is thus that God leaves to our conscience the choice of the road we decide to follow, and the liberty of yielding to one or other of the opposing influences that act upon us.

467. Can we free ourselves from the influence of the spirits who incite us to evil?

"Yes; for they only attach themselves to those who attract them by the evil nature of their thoughts and desires."

468. *Do spirits, whose influence is repelled by our will, renounce their temptations?*

"What else can they do? When they see that they cannot accomplish their aim, they give up the attempt; but they continue to watch for a favorable moment, as the cat watches for the mouse."

469. *By what means can we neutralize the influence of evil spirits?*

"By doing only what is right, and putting all your trust in God, you repel the influence of inferior spirits, and prevent them from obtaining power over you. Take care not to listen to the suggestions of spirits who inspire you with evil thoughts, stir up discord among you, and excite in you evil passions. Distrust especially those who flatter your pride, for, in so doing, they attack you on your weakest side. This is why Jesus makes you say in the Lord's Prayer, 'Let us not succumb to temptation, but deliver us from evil.'"

Text II.

Obsession: Therapeutic Options.

Obsession is a consequence of a moral imperfection, which because of the law of "cause and effect" attracts obsessor and obsessed to one another. Thus, the obsessed needs to work on his/her own moral betterment to rid him of the obsession and the obsessing spirit. However, special help may be needed when obsession progress into subjugation or possession, because in that case, the obsessed loses its willpower and free-will.

As explained in Genesis by Allan Kardec, "in obsession the spirit acts exteriorly by the aid of its perispirit, which he mingles with that of the incarnate. The latter finds him/her bound as if in a network, and constrained to act against his will". In that case, it is necessary to substitute the ill fluids by healthy ones, which can be obtained through the passes technique.

Passes, as taught by the spirit doctor Andre Luiz, is a therapeutic tool without adverse effects. Both obsessor and obsessed are ill spirits and therefore would benefit from the passes technique.

Besides the passes technique, which is a magnetic action, obsession may need to be treated at the level of spirit counseling. During a "desobsession section", a counselor talks with the obsessing spirit through a medium. This allows the spirit to present the nature of his/her problem and the moral debt that he believes has been occurred upon him. At the same time, the spirit receive beneficial vibrations from the medium, the group in the session and the superior spirits who command the whole section. During the section, the counselor advises the spirit that renouncing his/her evil plans will confer to him more peace and happiness. Moreover, in many instances, it is shown to the obsessor spirit that in previous reincarnation he was the perpetrator of similar or even more serious crimes than the one that he is now demanding reparation. Through this action of love as taught by Christ's Gospel, it is possible to ask evil spirits to forfeit their ways and return to their path of enlightenment. However, if the obsessed individual does not work on his moral betterment, other evil spirits will soon resume the obsessive process.

In all cases of obsession, prayer is the most powerful way of treating it. To cultivate fraternal love and compassion is what can truly cure and prevent obsessions.

3. Finish this study with a special intercessory prayer for obsessed and obsessing spirits.

CONCLUSIONS:

The lesson will have been accomplished if the whole class can satisfactorily conclude that:

1. "By doing only what is right, and putting all your trust in God, you repel the influence of inferior spirits, and prevent them from obtaining power over you. Take care not to listen to the suggestions of spirits who inspire you with evil thoughts, stir up discord among you, and excite in you evil passions. Distrust especially those who flatter your pride, for, in so doing, they attack you on your weakest side. This is why Jesus makes you say in the Lord's Prayer, 'Let us not succumb to temptation, but deliver us from evil.'" (adapted from The Spirit's Book, question 469).

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, The Spirits' Book", questions 459 – 469, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

APPENDIX:

Coordinator: Do not forget to distribute the material for next lesson.

Lesson 40**Review of Current Workbook****OBJECTIVES:**

- To review the main aspect of the Spiritist Ideas studies in this workbook.
- To integrate the Spiritist knowledge of this workbook with previous ones.

METHODS:

1. Ask for volunteers and assign one or more topics from the list below to each. Instruct them to prepare a 10 - 15 minutes presentation. They may use any kind of audio-visual resource that they consider necessary; for examples: overhead transparencies, presentations of part of a movie, slide show, readings of extracts from a book, etc. During their presentation they should cover the objectives of each topic and use the references cited. Their presentation should attain the objectives of each topic as shown, highlighting the underlying logic reasons and moral consequences of the spirit doctrine.

Topic I:

Mediumistic Development: Need for Methodology (Lesson 25).

Topic II:

Signs of Mediumship (Lesson 28).

Topic III:

Emancipation of the Soul: Sleep and Dreams (Lesson 31).

Topic IV:

Obsession: Definition and Causes (Lesson 34).

Topic V:

Obsession: Causes and Levels of Severity (Lesson 35).

Topic VI:

The Obsessive Process: Obsessor and Obsessed (Lesson 36)

Topic VII:

Obsession: Prophylaxis and Treatment (Lesson 39).