

COURSE ON SPIRITISM

WORKBOOK – 2 (The Spiritist Principles)



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)



COURSE ON SPIRITISM

WORKBOOK II:

THE SPIRITIST PRINCIPLES

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FIRST EDITION 2005

This material is an adaptation of the “Systematic Study of the Spiritist Doctrine” (“*Estudo Sistematizado da Doutrina Espírita*”), edited by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation.

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This material is subject to improvement.

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“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 in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, offers this material for the implementation of Spiritism in English. The main purpose of this work is to fulfill, in the English language, the ideas of Kardec about a systematic study of Spiritism principles. Accordingly, the interested student has an opportunity to build up a main understanding 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.

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 progresses. It is estimated that each lesson should take between 1 – 1 ½ hours to be completed. The lessons are assembled as instructions in how to develop and accomplished each topic. The use of projection resources, like overhead or slide presentations during the suggested brief introductions is recommended, but not indispensable.

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.*

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OBJECTIVES:

- To discuss the evolution of humankind's idea about God throughout history.
- To identify God as a Father and Creator citing the proofs of His existence.

METHODS:

1. Start the study by using the brainstorm technique on the following question:

- What is your idea about God?



2. Instruct the group to close their eyes and think about God. Instruct them to pay attention to what comes next. Let the group write down their experience and talk about it. Listen to the group's opinion and make some comments about them.

3. Make an introduction about the human's idea of God through history.

Different Gods in Greek/Roman Paganism (Zeus - Zeus, the youngest son of Cronus and Rhea, he was the supreme ruler of Mount Olympus and of the Pantheon of gods who resided there).



Elim for Egyptians.

Tien for Chinese.

Brahma or Buddha for Indians.

Jehovah for Hebrews.

Many had an anthropomorphic view of God.



4. Present the Spiritist definition of God⁽¹⁾. Present each of the following questions, and comment on the answer given by the class. After the discussion, present them the answers given by the Spirits.

1. *What is God?*

"God is the Supreme Intelligence-First Cause of all things."

4. *What proof do we have of the existence of God?*

"The axiom, which you apply in all your scientific researches: 'There is no effect without a cause.' Search out the cause of whatever is not the work of man, and reason will furnish the answer to your question."

5. *What is to be inferred from the intuition of the existence of God which may be said to be the common property of the human mind?*

"That God exists; for whence could the human mind derive this intuition if it had no real basis? The inference to be drawn from the fact of this intuition is a corollary of the axiom. "There is no effect without a cause."

6. *May not our seemingly intuitive sense of the existence of God be the result of education and of acquired ideas?*

"If such were the case, how should this intuitive sense be possessed by your savages?"

7. *Is the first cause of the formation of things to be found in the essential properties of matter?*

"If such were the case, what would be the cause of those properties? There must always be a first cause."

8. *What is to be thought of the opinion that attributes the first formation of things to a fortuitous combination of matter, in other words, to chance?*

"Another absurdity! Who that is possessed of common sense can regard chance as an intelligent agent? And, besides, what is chance? Nothing."

9. *What proof have we that the first cause of all things is a Supreme Intelligence, superior to all other intelligences?*

"You have a proverb which says, 'The workman is known by his work.' Look around you and from the quality of the work, infer that of the workman."



"We judge of the power of intelligence by its works as no human being could create that which is produced by nature, it is evident that the first cause must be Intelligence superior to man. Whatever may be the prodigies accomplished by human intelligence, that intelligence itself must have a cause and the greater the results achieved by it, the greater must be the cause of which it is the effect. It is this Supreme Intelligence that is the first cause of all things; whatever the name by which mankind may designate it."

CONCLUSIONS:

- God is the supreme intelligence; the primary cause of all things;
- The proofs on God's existence are present in Its Creation

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, *The Spirits' Book*", questions 1, 4-9, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBSERVATION:

Remember to distribute the material for the next lesson.

OBJECTIVES:

- To cite some of God's attributes.
- To understand the meaning of God's attributes.

METHODS:

1. Introduce the theme by remembering some of human virtues: fraternity, solidarity, compassion, etc.

2. Play a dynamic on God in our lives:

Divide the group in pairs. Each person shall talk to his/her partner about three blessed facts on his/her life that he/she would acknowledge God for it. Write them down. Share them with the whole group.



3. In the previous meeting, four participants received the following tasks to be fulfilled:

FIRST PARTICIPANT

Read "The Genesis", Chapter II, items 8 – 10, study and guide your explanation addressing the following questions:

- Why do Human Beings not know the nature of God?
- Why is it said that God is eternal?

SECOND PARTICIPANT

Read "The Genesis", Chapter II, items 11 – 13, study and guide your explanation addressing the following questions:

How can one explain Gods' immutability, immateriality and its all-powerful nature?

THIRD PARTICIPANT

Read "The Genesis", Chapter II, items 14-15, study and explain why:
 God is sovereignly just and good
 God is infinitely perfect
 God is unique

FOURTH PARTICIPANT

Read “The Genesis”, Chapter II, items 24-27, study and guide your explanation through answering to the following question:

How does the Divine Providence works?

4. Finish the discussion by reading Leon Denis’ writings on Here and Hereafter⁽¹⁾:



“Providence is the superior spirit; it is the angel that watches over the unhappy; it is the unseen comforter whose inspiration warms the heart upon which despair has laid and icy finger; it is the bright beacon whose rays guide the mariner adrift upon turbulent seas. Above all, Providence is a divine love, the sublime overflow that neglects none of its offspring. What solicitude and what foresight does not this encompass? Was it not for the soul to frame its struggles and to crown its achievements that these worlds have been hung in space; that the suns were lighted; that rolling sea and fruitful land were created for? For the soul alone is this great work carried on, natural forces combined and universes hatch within nebulas.”

CONCLUSIONS:

- God is all providence.
- Providence is divine love, the sublime overflow that neglects none of its offspring.

The image contains a quote by Leon Denis in yellow text on a dark background with a nebula. The quote reads: 'May the Universe be your temple, May Conscience be your altar, May God be your image, May Charity be your law. -Leon Denis-'.

**May the Universe be your temple,
May Conscience be your altar,
May God be your image,
May Charity be your law.
-Leon Denis-**

REFERENCES:

1. Leon Denis, “Here and Hereafter”, chapter 40, page 124, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
2. Kardec, Allan. “Genesis” Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the proofs on the existence of the spirit and its survival after death.
- To name some of the scholars who researched on the existence and survival of the spirit.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator shall begin the meeting by asking the following questions (let the group discuss them):

- Are you a spirit or simply matter?
- Does life end after death?

2. The coordinator shall give an introduction on the people who researched on the current topic:

- a. Oliver Lodge
- b. William Crookes
- c. Ian Stevenson

3. Subdivide the class in four groups to study and discuss the following texts:

- GROUP I - Do Spirits exist? – Medium's Book, chapter I
- GROUP II – Oliver Lodge - Spirits existence through Mediumship
- GROUP III - William Crookes - Spirits existence through Mediumship
- GROUP IV – Ian Stevenson - Spirits survival after death by scientific research

After the groups' discussion, ask that a representative of each group present a synopsis of what they studied together.

Group I: Do spirits exist? ⁽¹⁾

1. (...) We assume then, as the ground-work of our belief, the existence, survival, and individuality of the soul, of which *spiritualism* is the theoretic and doctrinal demonstration, and *spiritism* the practical proof. Let us then, for a moment, leave out of sight the fact of spirit-manifestations, properly so called, and let us see to what conclusions we are led by inductive reasoning.

2. If we admit the existence of the soul and its individuality after death, we must necessarily also admit, 1st, that it is of a nature different from that of the body, since, when separated from the body, it enters upon a phase of existence distinct from the destiny of the body; 2d, that the soul retains, after death, its individuality and self-consciousness, and the capacity of feeling happiness and unhappiness, as otherwise it would be an inert being, and its existence would be equivalent to non-existence. These

points being admitted, it follows that the soul goes somewhere; but what becomes of it, and whither does it go? According to the ordinary belief it goes to heaven or to hell; but where is heaven, and where is hell? People used formerly to say that heaven was "up on high," and hell, "down below;" but what is "up," and what is "down," in the Universe, since we have learned that the earth is round, and that, through the movement of all the stellar bodies, what is "up" now, will be "down" twelve hours hence, and this throughout the immeasurable extent of infinite space? It is true that, by "below," we may likewise understand the "deep places of the earth;" but what has become of those "deep places," since geologists have begun to dig into the interior of the globe?...

The souls, then, that people space, are what we call *spirits*: and *spirits* are nothing but the souls of men stripped of their envelope of gross terrestrial matter. If spirits were beings part from ourselves, their existence would be merely hypothetical ; but, if we admit that souls exist, we must also admit that spirits are nothing else than souls, and, if we admit that universal space is peopled by souls, we must equally admit that spirits are everywhere. We cannot deny the existence of spirits without denying the existence of souls.

3. All this, it is true, is only a theory, though one that is more rational than other theories ; but it is something to possess a theory that is not in contradiction with reason or science, and if, moreover, this theory is corroborated by facts, it must be admitted that our position has the double sanction of reason and experience. Such corroborating facts we assert to be furnished by the phenomena of spirit-manifestation, which constitute the irrefragable proofs of the existence and the survival of the soul. With many persons, however, belief ends here; they readily admit the existence of souls, and consequently that of spirits, but they deny the possibility of holding communication with them, "because," they say, "immaterial beings cannot act upon matter." This denial proceeds from ignorance of the real nature of spirits, about which the world in general holds exceedingly false ideas, erroneously regarding them as abstract beings, as something vague and indefinite; which is a great mistake.

Let us, in the first place, consider the spirit in reference to its union with the body. The spirit is the principal being, because it is that which thinks, and which survives the body, the latter being only an envelope, a vestment, of gross matter, that the spirit throws off when it is worn out but, besides this material envelope, the spirit has a second envelope, which is semi-material, and which unites it to the first at death, the spirit casts off the first, but retains the second, to which we give the name *perispirit*.*

This semi-material envelope, which has the human form, constitutes, for the spirit, a vaporous, fluidic body, which, though invisible to us in its normal state, nevertheless possesses some of the properties of matter. A spirit is therefore not a mathematical point, an abstraction, but is a real being, limited and circumscribed, and lacking only the qualities of visibility and palpability to show its resemblance to human beings. Why then should it not act on matter? Is it because its body is fluidic? But is it not among the most rarified fluids, those which we call "imponderable," as electricity, for example, that man finds his most powerful motors? Does not imponderable light exercise a chemical action on ponderable matter? We do not understand the precise nature of the perispirit but, supposing it to be formed of electrical matter, or of something else equally subtle, why should it not have the same property of action as electricity, when under the direction of a will?

6. But let us leave out of sight, for the moment, the phenomena which, for us, render this fact incontestable, and let us admit its reality simply as an hypothesis; and considering the question from this point of view, let us ask the incredulous to prove to us, not by mere negation—for their personal opinion is no law—but by arguments based on reason, that such communications can not take place. We will place ourselves on their own ground; and, since they insist on judging of spiritist facts by the laws of matter, we invite them to draw, from the arsenal of physical science, some demonstration, mathematical, chemical, or physiological, and to prove by *a plus b* (always, however, keeping in mind the principle acknowledged, viz., that of the existence and survival of the soul),

1st That the being who thinks in us during life will no longer think after death;

2nd That, if it thinks, it will not think of those whom it has loved;

3rd That, if it thinks of those whom it has loved, it will not desire to communicate with them;

4th That, if it has the power of being everywhere, it will not have the power of visiting us;

5th That, if it can visit us, it will not have the power of communicating with us;

6th That it will not be able to act upon inert matter by means of its fluidic envelope;

7th That, if able to act upon inert matter, it will not be able to act upon an animated being;

8th That, if able to act upon an animated being, it will not direct his hand, and make it write;

9th That, being able to guide a human hand in writing, it will not be able to answer questions, and transmit its own thoughts to the questioner.

Group II: **Sir Oliver Lodge (1851-1940)**



Sir Oliver Lodge was a world-renowned physicist and a fearless champion of survival. One could not really call him a proponent of the Spiritualist Movement, but he was, surely, an avid believer in Spiritualist concepts.

Sir Oliver sought to bring together the transcendental world with the physical universe. He affirmed, with great conviction, that life is the supreme, enduring essence in the universe; that it fills the vast interstellar spaces; and the matter of which the physical world is composed is a particular condensation of ether for the purpose of manifesting life into a conscious, individual form.

Sir Oliver's first experiences in psychical research dates back to 1883 and 1884, when he was invited by Mr. Malcolm Guthrie to join his investigations in thought transference in Liverpool, England. His most notable observations in physical mediumship were made with the famous Italian medium, Eusapia Paladino. He attended four sittings with Eusapia and reported his findings in the *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, November, 1884. He accepted the reality of the phenomena observed through the medium.

In the field of mental mediumship, his greatest source of revelation and enlightenment was Boston's famous medium, Mrs. Lenore Piper. His first investigations with Mrs. Piper took place in 1889, when the medium was tested in England by the Society for Psychical

Research. He received many evidential messages from loved ones, in Spirit, which soon convinced him that the "dead" still live. His findings were published in 1890.

Nineteen years later, when close friends and associates -- Frederick Myers and Edmund Gurney -- communicated through Mrs. Piper, he made the following comments in his book, *Survival of Man*:

"The old series of sittings with Mrs. Piper convinced me of survival for reasons which I should find it hard to formulate . . . They also made me suspect -- or more than suspect -- that surviving intelligences were in some cases consciously communicating; though, more usually, the messages came, in all probability, from an unconscious stratum, being received by the medium in an inspirational manner analogous to psychometry. The hypothesis of surviving intelligence and personality -- not only surviving but anxious and able to with difficulty to communicate -- is the simplest and most straightforward and the only one that fits all the facts."

Perhaps the most convincing and challenging communications were those which came from his son, Raymond.



On December 3, 1915, Raymond (picture at right), communicating through Mrs. Leonard's mediumship, gave a complete description of this photograph. He described himself as sitting on the ground, with a fellow officer placing his hand on Raymond's shoulder. On December 7, 1915, the photograph arrived and corresponded with the description, given four days earlier, in every detail.

It is people such as Sir Oliver Lodge who, over the years, have given great credibility to a field of study and experience which has, unfortunately, been plagued by shams and charlatans. To him, we are eternally grateful.

Books written by Sir Oliver Lodge include:

Man and the Universe, 1908; Survival of Man, 1909; Reason and Belief, 1910; Life and Matter, 1912; Modern Problems, 1912; Science and Religion, 1914; The War and After, 1915; Raymond, or Life and Death, 1916; Christopher, 1918; Raymond Revised, 1922; The Making of Man, 1924; Ether and Reality, 1925; Relativity, 1926; Evolution and Creation, 1926; Science and Human Progress, 1927; Modern Scientific Ideas, 1927; Why I Believe in Personal Immortality, 1928; Phantom Walls, 1929; Beyond Physics, 1930; The Reality of a Spiritual World, 1930; Conviction of Survival, 1930; Past Years, 1932; and My Philosophy, 1933.

Source: First Spiritist Temple

Group III: **Sir William Crookes (1832- 1919)**



"I am attacked by two very opposite sects - the scientists and the know-nothings. Both laugh at me, calling me 'the frogs' dancing master'. Yet I know I have discovered one of the greatest forces in nature". Galvani, discoverer of electricity.

William Crookes was born on 17 June, 1832 in London. He studied at the Royal College of Chemistry and became one of the most important scientists of the XIX century, both in the field of Physics and in Chemistry. He combined private experimental research with business. He also edited several photographic and scientific journals. Having inherited a large fortune from his father, he devoted himself from 1856 entirely to scientific work of various kinds at his private laboratory in London. In 1861, he discovered the metallic chemical element thallium. This led him indirectly to the invention of the radiometer in 1875. He later developed a vacuum tube (the precursor of the X-ray tube). His studies of cathode rays were fundamental in the development of atomic physics. He was knighted in 1897 and received the Order of Merit in 1910. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society, becoming its president between 1913 and 1915.

Spiritist phenomena were very much in evidence at the end of the XIX century. After the events involving the Fox sisters of Hydesville, in 1854 in the United States, there appeared several mediums displaying the most incredible phenomena like, levitations, rappings, the spontaneous playing of instruments, materializations, etc. Therefore, William Crookes, as a scientist of international repute, decided to investigate Spiritualism. He was initially very skeptical about it. He explained the reasons for his inquiry: 'I consider it the duty of scientific men who have learnt exact modes of working to examine phenomena which attract the attention of the public, in order to confirm their genuineness or to explain, if possible, the delusions of the dishonest and to expose the tricks of deceivers'. By his own account Crookes had originally, 'like other men who thought little of the matter and saw little', taken Spiritualism to be superstition and trickery; he stressed that his aim would be to substitute a strictly scientific appraisal 'for the loose claims of the pseudo-scientific Spiritualists'.

He began by studying one of the most famous mediums of all time, Daniel Dunglas Home, and was soon convinced that Home was endowed with a powerful psychic force. Many believed that Crookes would expose the phenomena he witnessed, but this rapid conversion to the ranks of believers surprised the public and shocked his scientific colleagues. Yet he undertook all his experiments under strict scientific conditions, whenever that was possible. He devised instruments to preclude any possible claim of forgery. For example, he had a wire cage made and inside it, he put an accordion he had bought himself. Home just placed his hand on the cage and the instrument started to play a well-known tune.

The experiments that made him really famous were with the medium Florence Cook, at the time, only a teenager. Through her mediumship, there occurred a series of materializations of the Spirit Katie King, which lasted almost three years. Just before the Spirit stopped appearing, Crookes obtained a total of 44 photographs, among which were, according to him, 'some inferior, some indifferent, and some excellent'.

When Crookes started to report about his experiments to the scientific community, he found unrestrained hostility. He was even accused of complicity with Florence Cook, and of having an affair with her. Yet, he never changed his mind about the reality of Spirit phenomena. In his presidential address to the British Association, in 1898, he said: 'Thirty years have passed since I published an account of experiments tending to show that outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals. I have nothing to retract. I adhere to my already published statements. Indeed, I might add much thereto.'

Sir William Crookes died in London on 4 April 1919.

Sources: *Natural and Supernatural*, by Brian Inglis, Prism - Unity Press
Encyclopedia Britannica, *The Oxford Talking Dictionary*.

Group IV: **Dr. Ian Stevenson's research**



Ian Stevenson is the former head of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, and now is Director of the Division of Personality Studies at the University of Virginia. He has devoted the last 40 years to the scientific documentation of past life memories of children from all over the world and has over 3000 cases in his files. Many people, including skeptics and scholars, agree that these cases offer the best evidence yet for reincarnation.

Dr. Stevenson's research into the possibility of reincarnation began in 1960 when he heard of a case in Sri Lanka where a child claimed to remember a past life. He thoroughly questioned the child and the child's parents, as well as the people whom the child claimed were his parents from his past life. This led to Dr. Stevenson's conviction that reincarnation was possibly a reality. The more cases he pursued, the greater became his drive to scientifically open up and conquer an unknown territory among the world's mysteries, which until now had been excluded from scientific observation. Nonetheless, he believed he could approach and possibly furnish proof of its reality with scientific means.

In 1960, Dr. Stevenson published two articles in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* about children who remembered past lives. In 1974, he published his book, *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, and became well known wherever this book appeared by those people who already had a long-standing interest in this subject. They were pleased to finally be presented with such fundamental research into reincarnation from a scientific source. In 1997, Dr. Stevenson published his work entitled **Reincarnation and Biology**. In the first volume, he mainly describes birthmarks - those distinguishing marks on the skin which the newborn baby brings into the world

and cannot be explained by inheritance alone. In his second volume, Dr. Stevenson focuses mainly on deformities and other anomalies that children are born with and which cannot be traced back to inheritance, prenatal or perinatal (created during birth) occurrences. This monumental piece of work contains hundreds of pictures documenting the evidence.

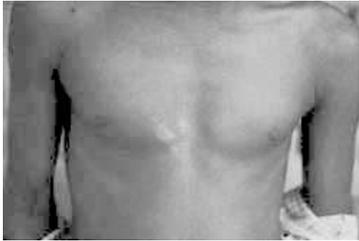


Figure 1. Hypopigmented macule on chest of an Indian youth who, as a child, said he remembered the life of a man, Maha Ram, who was killed with a shotgun fired at close range.

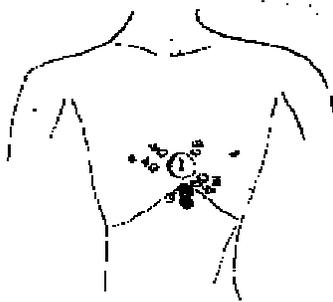


Figure 2. The circles show the principal shotgun wounds on Maha Ram, for comparison with Figure 1. [This drawing is from the autopsy report of the deceased.]

During his original research into various cases involving children's memories of past lives, Dr. Stevenson did note with interest the fact that these children frequently bore lasting birthmarks which supposedly related to their murder or the death they suffered in a previous life. Stevenson's research into birthmarks and congenital defects has such particular importance for the demonstration of reincarnation, since it furnishes objective and graphic proof of reincarnation, superior to the - often fragmentary - memories and reports of the children and adults questioned, which even if verified afterwards cannot be assigned the same value in scientific terms.

In many cases presented by Dr. Stevenson there are also medical documents available as further proof, which are usually compiled after the death of the person. Dr. Stevenson adds that in the cases he researched and "solved" in which birthmarks and deformities were present, he didn't suppose there was any other apposite explanation than that of reincarnation. Only 30% - 60% of these deformities can be put down to birth defects which related to genetic factors, virus infections or chemical causes (like those found in children damaged by the drug Thalidomide or alcohol). Apart from these demonstrable causes, the medical profession has no other explanation for the other 40% to 70% of cases than that of mere chance. Stevenson has now succeeded in giving us an explanation of why a person is born with these deformities and why they appear precisely in that part of their body and not in another.

Most of the cases where birthmarks and congenital deformities are present for which no medical explanations exist have one to five characteristics in common.

The most frequently occurring event or common denominator relating to rebirth is probably that of a child remembering a past life. Children usually begin to talk about their memories between the ages of two and four. Such infantile memories gradually dwindle when the child is between four and seven years old. There are of course

always some exceptions, such as a child continuing to remember its previous life but not speaking about it for various reasons.

Most of the children talk about their previous identity with great intensity and feeling. Often they cannot decide for themselves which world is real and which one is

not. They often experience a kind of double existence where at times one life is more prominent, and at times the other life takes over. This is why they usually speak of their past life in the present tense saying things like, "I have a husband and two children who live in Jaipur." Almost all of them are able to tell us about the events leading up to their death.

Such children tend to consider their previous parents to be their real parents rather than their present ones, and usually express a wish to return to them. When the previous family has been found and details about the person in that past life have come to light, then the origin of the fifth common denominator – the conspicuous or unusual behavior of the child - is becoming obvious. For instance, if the child is born in India to a very low-class family and was a member of a higher caste in its previous life, it may feel uncomfortable in its new family. The child may ask to be served or waited on hand and foot and may refuse to wear cheap clothes. Stevenson gives us several examples of these unusual behavior patterns.

In 35% of cases he investigated, children who died an unnatural death developed phobias. For example, if they had drowned in a past life then they frequently developed a phobia about going out of their depth in water. If they had been shot, they were often afraid of guns and sometimes loud bangs in general. If they died in a road accident they would sometimes develop a phobia of traveling in cars, buses or lorries.

Another frequently observed unusual form of behavior, which Dr. Stevenson called philiias, concerns children who express the wish to eat different kinds of food or to wear clothes that were different from those of their culture. If a child had developed an alcohol, tobacco or drug addiction as an adult in a previous incarnation he may express a need for these substances and develop cravings at an early age.

Many of these children with past-life memories show abilities or talents that they had in their previous lives. Often children who were members of the opposite sex in their previous life show difficulty in adjusting to the new sex. These problems relating to the 'sex change' can lead to homosexuality later on in their lives. Former girls who were reborn as boys may wish to dress as girls or prefer to play with girls rather than boys. Until now all these human oddities have been a mystery to conventional psychiatrists - after all, the parents could not be blamed for their children's behavior in these cases. At long last research into reincarnation is shedding some light on the subject. In the past, doctors blamed such peculiarities on a lack or a surplus of certain hormones, but now they will have to do some rethinking.

CONCLUSIONS:

- The proofs on the existence of the spirit and its survival after death reside in the spirit-phenomena and also in the studies of past lives memories.
- Throughout the last centuries, several scholars have researched on the existence and survival of the spirit. Among them, just to name a few, we find William Crookes, Ian Stevenson, and Oliver Lodge.

REFERENCES:

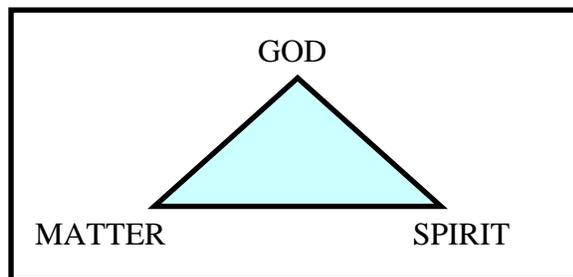
1. Kardec, Allan, "The Medium's Book", chapter 1, items 1-6, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVE:

- To establish the difference between the spiritual and the vital principle, explaining and exemplifying each.

METHODS:

1. Make an introduction about the existence of God and the two created elements of the Universe: Matter (material principle) and Spirit (intelligent principle)



2. Read the following text⁽¹⁾ with the whole class and establish the differences between spiritual and vital principle. Address the following question:

What is the evidence that there are two different principles in living beings: the spiritual and the vital principles?

“The spiritual and vital principles are by no means one and the same thing!

Commencing always with the observation of facts, if the vital principal were inseparable from the intelligent principle, there would be some sense in confounding them. But, as we see some beings who live without thinking, like plants, - beings animated with organic life, who give no manifestation of thought; as there are produced in living beings active movements independent of the act of the will; as during sleep organic life is in all its activity, whilst intellectual life does not manifest itself by any exterior sign, - we are induced to conclude that organic life resides in a principle inherent in matter, independent of the spiritual life which is inherent in Spirit. Consequently, as matter possesses vitality independent of Spirit, it is evident that this double vitality reposes upon two different principles”.

3. Divide the class in two groups, one to study the vital principle and the other one to study the spiritual principle.

Group I: **Vital Principle.**

Read carefully the following text⁽²⁾ and answer the proposed question. Feel free to discuss topics of the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the questions as complete as possible.

A) What is the vital principle, is it another element of the creation or a “transformation” of the fundamental material principal (called universal cosmic fluid)?

B) How is the vital principle necessary to sustain life maintained during an incarnation?

C) Is the vital principle found only in the material envelope (“body”) of more evolved intelligent principles (like the body of human beings) or is it also found in the other bodies (like in a plant) in nature?



“Though we say that plants and animals are formed of the same constituents as minerals, it is necessary to understand this statement in a purely material sense, as it has reference only to the body.

Without speaking of the intelligent principle, which is a question by itself, there is in organic matter a special indiscernible principle, which has never yet been defined: it is the vital principle. This principle, which is active in living beings, though extinct in

beings deprived of life by death, nevertheless gives to them characteristic properties, distinguishing them from inorganic substances. Chemistry, which decomposes and recomposes the greater part of inorganic bodies, has the power to decompose organic bodies, but has never known to reconstruct even a dead leaf, which is a conclusive proof that there is something in one which does not exist in the other.

Is the vital principle something distinct, having a separate existence before it enters the systematic unity of the generative element? Or is it only a particular state, one of the modifications of the universal cosmic fluid, which has become the principle of life, as light, fire, heat, electricity? It is in the last sense that the question is solved by the communications connected with this subject (details in Genesis, chap. VI, “General Uranography”).

But, whatever the opinion be concerning the nature of the vital principle, we know it exists as we see the effects of it. One can then admit logically that, in forming themselves from it, organic beings have assimilated the vital principle necessary to their existence as immortal beings; or, if one wishes to say that this principle has been developed in each individual through a combination of elements under the rule of certain circumstances, one sees heat, light and electricity develop themselves.

Oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon, in combining themselves without the vital principle, form only a mineral or inorganic body. The vital principal, modifying the molecular constitution of this body, gives to it special properties. In place of a mineral molecule is found a molecule of organic matter.

The activity of the vial principle is sustained during life by the actions of the organs, as is heat by the rotary movement of a wheel. As this action ceases with death, the viral principle is extinguished, as heat is when the wheel ceases to turn. But the effect

produced upon the molecular state of the body by the vital principle lives after its extinction, just as the carbonization of wood continues after the extinction of heat. In the analysis of organic bodies, chemistry finds again the constituent elements, oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, and carbon; but it cannot reconstruct them, because the cause does not exist anymore, and thus the effect cannot be reproduced, although it can reconstruct a stone.”

Group 2: Spiritual Principle.

Read carefully the following text⁽³⁾ and answer the proposed question. Feel free to discuss topics of the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the questions as complete as possible.

A) *Explain the sentence “all effects have a cause; all intellectual effects must have an intelligent cause”.*

B) *Is the spiritual principle a transformation of the universal cosmic element or an independent element by itself?*

C) *Do we know about the origin of the intelligent principle? (Yes or No; Why?).*

“The existence of the spiritual principle is a fact needing no more demonstration that does the existence of the material principle. It is sort of axiomatic truth; it affirms itself by its effects as matter by those which are peculiar to it.

According to the maxim, “all effects have a cause; all intellectual effects must have an intelligent cause”. There is no one who would not see a difference between the mechanical effect of a bell agitated by the wind and the movement of this same bell destined to give a signal, a notice, attesting by that a thought, an intention. Now, as it can occur to no one to attribute the thought to a bell, one concludes that it is moved by an intelligence of which it serves as an instrument of manifestation.

For the same reason no one thinks of attributing thought to the body of a deceased man. If a living man thinks, it is because there exists something in him that is not destroyed by his death. The difference between him and the simple bell is that the intelligence that makes the bell ring is outside of it, whereas that which makes a man act comes from within.

The spiritual principle is the corollary of the existence of God. Without this principle God would forever remain unrevealed to man; for one could not conceive sovereign intelligence reigning eternally over only animal matter, or a terrestrial monarch reigning throughout his life only over stones. As one cannot admit God to be without the essential elements of divinity, justice, and goodness, these qualities would be useless if exercised only over matter.

On the other hand, one would not be able to conceive of a God sovereignly just and good creating intelligent and sensible beings, in order to condemn them to nothingness after a few years of suffering without compensation, enjoying a view of an indefinite succession of beings who are born without having demanded the gift of life, who are endowed with the power of thought only to learn pain, and are destroyed after an ephemeral existence.

Without the survival of the thinking being, the suffering of life would be on the part of God cruelty without object. This is why materialism and atheism are

consequences of one another. Denying the cause one cannot admit the effect; denying the effect, one cannot admit the cause. Consequently materialism is not reasonable.

The idea of the perpetuity of the spiritual principle is innate in man. It is present in him through intuition and aspiration; he comprehends that there alone is compensation for the ills of life. That is why there always have been and always will be more spiritualists than materialists, more theists than atheists.

To the intuitive idea and to the power of reason Spiritism comes to add the sanction of facts, - the material proof of the existence of a spiritual being, of its survival, immortality and individuality. It points directly to and defines that which was vague and abstruse in this thought. It shows us the intelligent being acting outside of matter either during or after the life of the body.

Does the spiritual principle have its source in the universal cosmic element? Can it be only a transformation of it? A mode of existence of this element, like light, heat, electricity, etc?

If it were thus, the spiritual principle would submit to the vicissitudes of matter. It would be extinguished by disintegration, as is the vital principle. An intelligent being would have a momentary existence, like unto the body; and at death it would be annihilated, or return into the universal whole, which is the doctrine of the materialists.

The properties *sui generis* which are found in the spiritual principle prove that it has an independent existence of its own; but, if it had its origin in matter; it would not have these properties. Consequently, as intelligence and thought cannot be attributes of matter, one arrives at the conclusion that the material and spiritual elements are the two constituent principles of the universe. The individualized spiritual element constitutes the beings called Spirits, as the individualized material element constitutes the different organic and inorganic bodies of nature.

Admitting there is a spiritual being, and its source found to be outside of matter, what is its origin? From whence does it come?

Here the means of investigation absolutely fail, as in all matters relating to the beginning of things. Man can ascertain only that which is material. Upon all else he can establish only hypothesis. Whether this knowledge is beyond the compass of his present intelligence or whether it is useless or inconvenient for him to possess it now; God does not give it to him even by revelation.

That which God reveals to him by his messengers, besides that which man is able to deduce for himself from the principle of sovereign justice, which is one of the essential attributes of divinity, is that all have the same starting-point; that all are created simple and ignorant, with an equal aptitude to progress by their individual activity; that all will attain the degree of perfection compatible with the creature by their personal efforts; that all, being children of the same Father, are objects of an equal solicitude; that there is no one more favored, or better endowed than another, or excused from the labor which would be imposed upon other in order to attain the end.

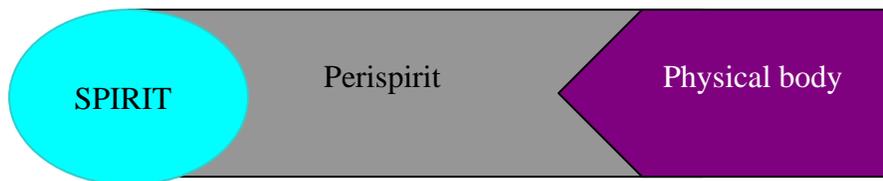
In the same way as God has created material worlds during all time, he has equally created spiritual beings for the same length of time; without this, the material worlds would have been useless. One could rather conceive of spiritual beings without material worlds, than the latter without spiritual beings. Material worlds must furnish to spiritual beings the elements of activity for the development of their intelligence.

Progress is the normal condition of spiritual beings and relative perfection the object to which they must attain. Now, as God has always created, and is always creating, there must be some spirits who have reached the highest point of the ladder of progress.

Before this world was created, worlds had succeeded to worlds, and, when sprang forth from the chaos the elements which form this globe, space was peopled with spiritual beings in all degrees of advancement, from those who were just born into life to those who through countless ages had ranked among the pure Spirits, commonly called angels.”

CONCLUSIONS:

- The spiritual being is the spirit, one of the elements of the universe created by God, whereas the material principle is the other one.
- The vital principle comes from the universal cosmic fluid. It gives vitality to material organisms.
- “The activity of the vital principle is sustained during life by the actions of the organs, as is heat by the rotary movement of a wheel.”



REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “Genesis” chapter XI, item 5, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
2. Kardec, Allan, “Genesis” chapter X, item 16-18, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
3. Kardec, Allan, “Genesis” chapter XI, item 1-5, 7-9, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.

Observation: Do not forget to distribute texts of the next lesson to participants.

OBJECTIVE:

- To understand the human soul according to the Spiritist view.

METHODS:

1. Ask participants to bring definitions of the soul from other religions or philosophies (Hinduism, Islamism, Judaism, Catholicism, etc). It is a comparative study.

2. Subdivide the class in two groups. One will discuss about the definition of spirit and the other one, the definition of soul.

Group I The Definition of Spirit.

Read the following text⁽¹⁾ and discuss the definition of spirit according to Spiritism.

23. *What is spirit?*

"The intelligent principle of the universe."

-What is the essential nature of spirit?

"It is not possible to explain the nature of spirit in your language. For you it is not a thing, because it is not palpable; but for us it is a thing."

24. *Is spirit synonymous with intelligence?*

"Intelligence is an essential attribute of spirit, but both merge in a unitary principle, so that, for you, they may be said to be the same thing."

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

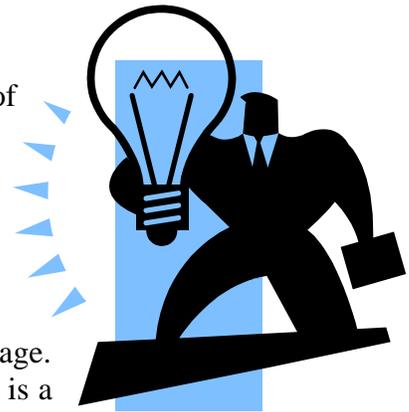
"Spirit and matter are distinct from one another; but the union of spirit and matter is necessary to give intelligent activity to matter."

-Is this union equally necessary to the manifestation of spirit? (We referred, in this question, to the principle of intelligence, abstractly considered, without reference to the individualities designated by that term).

"It is necessary for you, because you are not organized for perceiving Spirit apart from matter. Your senses are not formed for that order of perception."

26. *Can spirit be conceived of without matter, and matter without spirit?*

"Undoubtedly, as objects of thought."



27. *There are, then, two general elements of the universe - matter and spirit?"*

"Yes; and above them both is God, the Creator, Parent of all things. These three elements are the principle of all that exist - the universal trinity. But to the material element must be added the universal fluid which plays the part of intermediary between spirit and matter, the nature of the latter being too gross for spirit to be able to act directly upon it. Although, from another point of view, this fluid may be classed as forming part of the material element, it is, nevertheless, distinguished from that element by certain special properties of its own. If it could be classed simply and absolutely as matter, there would be no reason why spirit also should not be classed as matter. It is intermediary between spirit and matter. It is fluid, just as matter is matter, and is susceptible of being made, through its innumerable combinations with matter, under the directing action of spirit, to produce the infinite variety of things of which you know as yet but a very small portion. This universal, primitive, or elementary fluid, being the agent employed by spirit in acting upon matter, is the principle without which matter would remain for ever in a state of division, and would never acquire the properties given to it by the state of ponderability."



Group II The Definition of Soul.

Read the questions and answers⁽²⁾ bellow and discuss on the definition of soul according to Spiritism.

134. *What is the soul?*

"An incarnate spirit."

- *What was the soul before its union with a body?*

"A spirit."

- *Souls and spirits are, then, the very same thing?*

"Yes; souls are only spirits. Before uniting itself with a body, the soul is one of the intelligent beings who people the invisible world, and who temporarily assume a fleshly body in order to effect their purification and enlightenment."

135. *Is there in man anything else than a soul and a body?*

"There is the link which unites the soul and the body."

- *What is the nature of that link?*

"It is semi-material-that is to say, of a nature intermediate between soul and body, as it must necessarily be, in order that they may be enabled to communicate with each other. It is by means of this link that the spirit acts upon matter, and that matter acts reciprocally upon the spirit."

Man is, thus, formed of three essential elements or parts: 1st. Body, or material being, analogous to the animals, and animated by the same vital principle; 2nd. Soul, or incarnated spirit, of which the body is the habitation; 3rd.

The intermediary principle, or perispirit; a semi-material substance, which constitutes the innermost envelope of the spirit, and unites the soul with the body. This triplicity is analogous to that of the fruit, which consists of the germ, the perisperm, and the rind or shell.

136. Is the soul independent of the vital principle?

"The body is only the envelope of the soul, as we have repeatedly told you."

- Can a body exist without a soul?

"Yes; but it is only when the body ceases to live that the soul quits it, Previous to birth, the union between the soul and the body is not complete; but, when this union is definitively established, it is only the death of the body that can sever the bonds that unite it to the soul, and thus allow the soul to withdraw from it. Organic life may vitalize a body without a soul, but the soul cannot inhabit a body deprived of organic life."

- What would our body be if it had no soul?

"A mass of flesh without intelligence; anything you choose to call it, excepting a man."

CONCLUSIONS:

- The spirit is the intelligent principle of the universe.
- The soul is the name given to an incarnate soul.



REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan. "The Spirits' Book", questions 23-27, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

2. Kardec, Allan "The Spirits' Book", questions 134-136, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the interplay between the spiritual and corporeal world.
- To recognize cases of spiritual intervention in our lives.

METHODS:

1. Start by asking the class the following question:
“Have you ever had an experience in which you have done something but did not understand where it came from?” Let them talk freely in the big group or in pairs.
2. After participants have shared their experiences, tell them that tonight we will study some mechanisms of spiritual intervention. Thus, the coordinator shall give an introduction on the basics of Spirit – Incarnation – Mind.
3. The coordination coordinates a study questions and answers 456-465 of The Spirits’ Book. To make it more dynamic, show the group (on a projection screen) questions one by one. Allow participants to discuss them before you present the answer.

Topic I: Probing Human Thoughts⁽¹⁾.

456. *Do spirits see everything that we do?*

"They can do so if they choose, since they are incessantly around you. But, practically, each spirit sees only those things to which he directs his attention; for he pays no heed to those which do not interest him."



457. *Can spirits see our most secret thoughts?*

"They often see what you would fain hide from yourselves; neither acts nor thoughts can be hidden from them."

- *It would appear, then, to be easier to hide a thing from a person while living than to hide it from that same person after his death?*

"Certainly; and when you fancy yourselves to be hidden from every eye, you have often a crowd of spirits around you, and watching you."

458. *What is thought of us by the spirits who are about us and observing us?*

"That depends on the quality of the spirits themselves. Frivolous spirits enjoy the little annoyances they cause you, and laugh at your fits of impatience. Graver spirits pity your imperfections, and endeavor to aid you to cure yourselves of them."

Topic II: **Influencing Thoughts and Actions⁽²⁾.**



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 allays draw their ideas from their own minds?*

"Their ideas sometimes come from their own spirit; hut they arc often suggested to them by other spirits who judge them to be capable of understanding them, and worthy of transmitting them. When they do 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."

"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."

CONCLUSIONS:

- The spiritual world influences the material world in a greater level than we suppose.
- Because we, incarnates and disincarnates spirits, think continuously, we can communicate with one another.
- The universal cosmic fluid is the means through which our thoughts travel, and we can communicate with one another.

“We are spirits. We think continuously.”

Spirit → Continuous Thought → Cosmic Principle



We think...we communicate!

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book”, questions 456-458, edited by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

2. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book”, questions 459-465, edited by the Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To give the Spiritist view on the prohibition of mediumistic communications in the Old Testament.
- To understand why spirit communications can be means of human progress.

METHODS:

1. Watch the following segment of the movie “The Sixth Sense” (directed by M. Night Shyamalan, 1999). The segment presented should be the discussion between “Cole Sear” (the young boy interpreted by Haley Joel Osment) and his mother “Lynn Sear” (interpreted by Toni Collette) at the traffic jam when the boy reveals that he has unexpected abilities and he gives to his mother a message from his grandmother. Pay attention to elements related to life after death, communication between the material and spiritual worlds and, mainly, the purpose and usefulness of spirit communications.

2. After the movie, discuss the following questions:

A) *What was the message transmitted by “Cole Sear” to his mother “Lynn Sear”?*

B) *Was the message useful in anyway? Did it help his mother (“Lynn Sear”) overcome a difficult relationship with her mother?*

C) *If God is only love, should we logically assume that He would not permit us (incarnated spirits) to receive assistance from and to assist to those who are disincarnated?*

3. Divide the class into 2 groups and assign an advisor to each group. Each group should work on one of the following texts, reach a consensus of the best answer to the questions posed and present them to the whole class.

Group I: The prohibition of mediumistic communication.

Read carefully the following text⁽¹⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group advisor. After the discussion, answer the questions as complete as possible.

a) *Give at least two reasons why Moses prohibited mediumistic communications at his time?*



b) *Why can some segments of Moses' Law (the civil code) be questioned, while others (the Ten Commandments) cannot?*

The church does not deny the facts of spirit-manifestations; on the contrary, it admits their reality as is shown by the quotations examined in the preceding chapter^(*), but it attributes them entirely to the influence of demons. It has been said that the Gospel forbids our entering into communication with the spirits of the departed, but this is a mistake, for the Gospel says nothing upon the subject. The main argument against it, purporting to be taken from the Bible, is derived from the laws of Moses. We will continue to quote, for the examination of this branch of our subject, the statements of the same *Pastoral* in regard to this prohibition: - (...)

“Turn yourselves not away from your God, and go not seek after magicians, lest you should incur uncleanness by addressing yourselves to them. I am the Lord your God.” (“Leviticus”, chap. XIX, 31).

“If a man or a woman have a spirit of Python, or a spirit of divination, let them be punished with death; they shall be stoned, and their blood shall fall on their own heads” (Idem, chap. XX, 27).

“When you shall have entered into the land which the Lord your God will give you, take good care not to wish to imitate the abominations of those peoples; and let no one among you pretend *to purify his son or his daughter by making them pass through fire*, or consult diviners, or observe dreams and auguries, or make use of witchcraft, sorceries, or enchantments, or consult those that have the spirits of Python, or busy himself with divination, or interrogate the dead to learn the truth; for the Lord has all these things in abomination, and He will destroy, at your coming, the nations who commit those crimes.” (“Deuteronomy”, chap. XVII, 9, 10, 11, 12).

To those who bring forward these articles of that Mosaic law as obligatory, we reply in the first place, that, if this law is to be rigorously observed in regard to this particular point, it must be held to be equally binding in regard to all other points; for why should its provisions be regarded as good in what concerns evocations and bad in what concerns other matters? We must be consistent; and, if the common sense of Christendom has decided that the legislation of Moses, in many of its provisions, is no longer in harmony with the ideas and the habits of mankind, there is no reason for not admitting that it may be the same in regard to the prohibition we are now considering.

We have in the next place to remark that in regard to the prohibition in question, we must take into account the motives that prompted it, motives which had their weight in the days of Moses, but which, assuredly, are without importance at the present day. The Hebrew legislator wished to make his people break with all the customs acquired by them in Egypt, where the habit of evoking was carried to excess, as is shown by these words of Isaiah: - “The spirit of Egypt shall be annihilated in her, and I will overthrow her prudence; they shall consult their idols, their diviners, their pythons, and their magicians”. (Chap. XIX, 3).

Moreover, the Israelites were not to contract any alliance with the nations around them; and therefore, as they would have found these customs among the nations on whose territories they were about to enter and with whom they were about to fight, Moses found it necessary, for the carrying out of his plans, to instill into the minds of his people a profound aversion for all the customs which, if adopted by them, would have

constituted so many points of contact between them and their neighbors. In order to furnish a plausible basis for this aversion, it was necessary to represent those customs as being condemned by God Himself; hence the assertion, "The Lord has all these things in abomination, and He will destroy, *at your coming*, the nation which commit those crimes."

Moses was all the more justified in inscribing this prohibition among his laws, because the evocations which he forbade were neither prompted by respect or affection for the souls of the departed, nor inspired by any sentiment of piety; they were resorted to simply as a means of divination, and placed on the same footing as the auguries and portents habitually traded in by charlatanism and superstition: and assertion that is justified by the fact that, despite all his efforts, he was unable to root out a habit which had become a matter of traffic, as is shown by the following quotations from the same prophet: -

"And when they say to you, "Consult the magicians and the diviners who pronounce their enchantment in whispers," reply to them: - "Does not each people consult its own God? And do people speak with the dead concerning the affairs of the living?" (Isaiah, chap. VIII, 19).

"It is I who make manifest the falseness of the prodigies of magic; who sent madness upon those who take upon themselves to divine; who overthrow the mind of the sages and convict of foolishness their useless science." (Idem, chap. XLIV, 25).

"Let them come, the augurs who study the sky, who contemplate the stars, and who calculate the months to draw from them the predictions which they profess to give you concerning the future; let them come now, and let them save you. They have become like straw, the fire has devoured them, they will not be able to deliver their souls from the consuming flames; there will not even remain, from their burning, coals at which one can warm oneself, nor a fire by which one can sit. See what will become of all those things about which you have busied yourselves with so much labor! These *merchants* who have traded with you from your youth up will all flee away from you, some on the one hand, some on the other, without one of them being left to take you out of your troubles." (Idem, chap. XLVII, 13, 14, 15).

In this chapter, Isaiah addresses the Babylonians, under the allegorical figure of "the virgin daughter of Babylon, daughter of the Chaldeans". (v. I.) He tells them that the enchanters will not prevent the ruin of their monarchy. In the following chapter, he addresses himself directly to the Israelites.

"Come hither, ye children of a sorceress, race born of an adulterer and a prostitute! Whom have you made a mock of? Against whom have you opened your mouths and lashed out with your sharp tongues? Are you not perfidious children and bastard shoots, you who seek your consolation in your gods under every thick tree, who sacrifice your young children in the torrents under the jutting rocks? You have put your confidence in stones of the torrents; you have poured out drink-offerings in their honor; you have offered sacrifices to them. After this, shall not my indignation be kindled against you?" (Idem, chap. LVII, 3, 4, 5, 6).

These words are clear and explicit; they prove that at the time when they were written evocations were made for purposes of divination, and as a matter of traffic; they were associated with magic and sorcery, and were even accompanied with human sacrifices. Moses was therefore right in forbidding usages of such a character, and in

saying that God had them in abomination. Those superstitious practices were perpetuated until the Middle Ages; but, at the present day, human reason has condemned them, and Spiritism has come to show us that the aim of the relations of men with the world beyond the grave is exclusively moral, consolatory, and religious. As spiritist neither sacrifice young children nor pour out drink-offerings in honor of heathen gods; as they neither interrogate the stars, nor the dead, nor augurs, to learn the things of the future which God, in His wisdom has hidden from man; as they repudiate all trafficking in the faculty possessed by some of them of communicating with spirits; as they are prompted neither by curiosity, nor by cupidity, but by a sentiment of piety and by the desire to obtain instruction for themselves and to moralize and relieve the souls who are suffering in the other life, the Mosaic prohibition does not in any way apply to them: a fact which would have been apparent to those who invoke this prohibition against them, if they had acquainted themselves more correctly with the views and the action of spiritists, on the one hand, and had given a more careful study to the Mosaic prohibition, on the other. They would have seen that there is no analogy between what took place among the ancient Jews and the principles and practice of Spiritism, furthermore, they would have seen that Spirits condemns precisely the very things that prompted the Mosaic prohibition; but, blinded by the desire to find an argument against the new ideas, they have not seen how completely their argument misses the mark. (...)

The law of Moses consists of two distinct parts, viz, the *Law of God*, properly so called and applicable to all times and to all peoples; and *the Civil or Disciplinary Law*, adapted to the habits and character of the Hebrew people at the period of its promulgation. The first of these is universal and unchangeable; the other is susceptible of modification, according to the changes which take place in the views and habits of mankind, in the various phases of their development: and it could no more enter into the head of any one to suppose that men could be governed, at the present day, by the same regulations as the Hebrews in the desert, than to suppose that the Capitularies of Charlemagne could be put in practice in the France of nineteenth century. Who would dream, for instance, of reviving at the present time this article of the Mosaic law: - "If an ox strikes a man or a woman with its horn and they die of the blow, the ox shall be stoned, and no one shall eat of its flesh; but the master of the ox shall be held guiltless." ('Exodus" Chap. XXI 28, 29) Yet this enactment, which seems absurd to us, was really well adapted to the circumstances of the case in the time of Moses; or its aim was not to punish the ox while acquitting its master, but to punish the owner by the confiscation of the animal that had caused the accident, and thereby to compel him to exercise more effectual oversight over his beasts in the future. The loss of the ox was the punishment of its master's neglect, a punishment which would be among a pastoral people sufficiently severe to dispense with the need of supplementing it by the infliction of any additional penalty; but it was necessary that this punishment should not become a source of gain to anyone, and therefore it was forbidden to eat the flesh of the ox. Other articles of the law defined the cases in which the owner of an animal was responsible for injuries caused by it.

There was a reason for every provision of the civil law of Moses, even in its minutest details; but that law, substance as well as in form, was only adapted to the special circumstances of the time and the people for which it was enacted. Assuredly, if Moses came back to the Earth at the present day and had to frame a code for one of the

civilized nations in Europe, he would not give it the same laws that he gave to the Hebrews. (...)

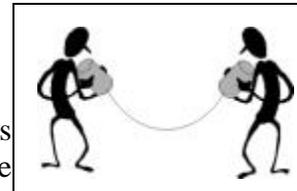
To repel communication with the world beyond the grave is to reject the admirable means of instruction that are furnished to each of us by this initiation into the future life and by the examples thus offered to our consideration. And, moreover, as experience has also shown us the good we may accomplish by turning imperfect spirits from the path of evil, and by aiding those who suffer to disengage themselves from the bonds of matter and to advance their self-improvement, to interdict those communications is to deprive the souls who are unhappy in the other life of the assistance which it is in our power to give them. The following extract, from a communication given by a spirit in reference to this point, sums up admirably the effect of evocation when practiced with a charitable aim:-

“Every suffering and sorrowful spirit who comes to you will recount to you the cause of his failure and the evil tendencies to which he succumbed; he will tell you of his hopes, his combats, his terrors; he will confide to you his remorse, his sorrows, and his despair; he will show you God, justly irritated against the wrongdoer and punishing him with all the severity of His justice(**). As you listen to him, you will be moved with compassion for him and with fear for yourselves. But as you follow the outpouring of his experiences, you will behold the God of justice keeping him in view, awaiting the repentance of the sinner, extending His arms to him as soon as he tries to advance towards Him. You will witness the progress of the repentant soul, to which you will have had the happiness and glory of contributing; you will watch his advancement with the solicitude of the surgeon who has dressed, day by day, the wounds of a patient, and with joy he feels as he witnesses the completion of his cure” (The Spiritist Society of Bordeaux, 1861).

(*) See “*Heaven and Hell*”, by Allan Kardec, Chapter 10.

(**) That is to say, the punishment of the wrongdoer, while he is subjected to it, appears to him to be due “anger” on the part of the Supreme Power; but the essence of the Spiritist Doctrine of Providential retribution is that the punishment of the wrongdoing is the direct result of the wrongdoing, that, in virtue of a spirit-faculty of which we know as yet but little, the wrongdoer is not only the cause but the instrument of his suffering, and that we are, unconsciously but nonetheless really, the makers of our own “Hell”, as Christ has declared us to be the makers of our own “Heaven”. - Translator Note.

Group 2: The higher purposes of mediumistic communication



Read carefully the following text⁽²⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your coordinator. After the discussion, answer the questions:

a) *How can one distinguish between a message from a superior spirit and one from an ignorant one?*

b) *What are the objectives of mediumistic communications when they are honorably practiced?*

It is certain that not all mediumistic communications offer the same degree of interest. Many of them are simply composed of foolishness, repetitions and trivialities. Not all Spirits have the capability of transmitting useful and profound teachings. As it happens on earth, but even more meticulously in space, the scale of beings holds an infinite number of degrees. In that scale we find the noblest intelligences, as well as the most vulgar souls. At times, however, even the inferior Spirits, by describing their moral situations, their impressions at the moment of death and their situations in the Beyond - thus initiating us in the particulars of their new existences - furnish us with precious material to determine the conditions of survival of the diverse categories of Spirits.

Thus, from our relationship with the Invisibles, we can cultivate elements for our own education, though not all should be taken into consideration. The cautious and astute experimenters must know how to separate the glitter from the gold. The truth does not always reach us in its purest state. Interaction with those from the above provides man with an ample field for the exercising of his faculties and reasoning abilities.

It is necessary to act with the utmost caution, be attentive and apply continuous examination to all. In addition, we have to guard against conscious or unconscious frauds, while ascertaining that the written messages are not a mere case of animism. In order to accomplish this it is critical to verify if the communications are superior to the medium's capabilities, by analyzing the form and depth of the messages. It is necessary to request proofs of identity from the manifesting spirits, and not to relinquish the severest control - except in cases in which the teachings make an impression, because the superior nature and exceptional amplitude of the messages are well above the faculties of the transmitter.

Once the authenticity of the communications is established, it is necessary to compare them among themselves and submit the scientific and philosophical principles they express to a severe examination; only the points where a near unanimity of viewpoint is established are accepted.

In addition to frauds of a human origin, there are also the mystifications of an occult origin. All serious experimenters know there are two kinds of Spiritism. One that is practiced negligently, without method or thought elevation, which attracts to us the fools from space, the frivolous and mocking Spirits. These kinds of spirits are numerous in the terrestrial atmosphere. The other kind of Spiritism, which has a greater circumscription, is practiced with sobriety and a respectful sentiment. It places us in contact with the advanced Spirits, who are always eager to help and to enlighten those who call upon them with a heartfelt fervor. Religions have known and designated this kind of Spiritism as the communication of the saints.

It is often asked how is it possible to distinguish from the vast number of communications, whose authors are invisible, those that originate from superior entities and should be retained. There is only one answer to this question. How do we distinguish good and bad books from authors deceased a long time ago?

How should a noble and elevated language be distinguished from one that is dull and vulgar? Do we not have a standard, a rule to appraise the thoughts - whether they come from our world or the other? Mediumistic messages are judged primarily by their moralistic effects. Countless times, these messages have improved many wicked traits and purified many consciences. That is the safest criterion of all philosophical teaching.

There are several ways to recognize and distinguish the good Spirits from the primitive souls, in our relationship with the Invisibles. The sensitive (medium) easily

recognizes the nature of the fluids, which are subtle and agreeable with the good Spirits; these fluids are violent, glacial and difficult to withstand when dealing with the bad Spirits. One of our mediums always announced in advance the arrival of a “*Blue Spirit*,” whose presence was revealed by harmonious vibrations and brilliant radiation.

Other Spirits are recognizable to certain mediums by their smell. In one case the smell is of a delicate and suave fragrance; in another it is repugnant. A Spirit’s elevation is evaluated by the purity of its fluids, the beauty of its form, and by its language.

With these kinds of investigations, the one thing that most intrigues, persuades and convinces us, are the conversations held with our relatives and friends that preceded us to the spiritual life. When incontestable proofs of identity give us the certainty of their presence; when the intimacy of the past, trust and friendship is again established among us, the revelations obtained under such conditions take on a most persuasive character.

Upon these proofs of identity, the last hesitations of skepticism forcibly dissipate, giving way to the impulses of the heart.

Is it possible, in reality, to resist the voices and the callings of those whom we shared our lives with?

Can we ignore those who watched over our first steps with tender solicitude? Should we repel the voices and callings of friends from our infancies, adolescences and virility years? Can we disregard friends that one by one disappeared into death, leaving our path in life lonelier and more desolate upon their departure?

Through trance communications they come back with attitudes, voice inflections, reminiscence evocation, and with thousands upon thousands of identity proofs - silly in their particularities for strangers, but so poignant for those interested! They give us instructions regarding problems from the Beyond, admonish and console us. The most phlegmatic men, the most erudite experimenters, such as Dr. Hyslop, could not resist the influences from beyond the grave.

The above facts show us that, unlike what some people think, we do not just find in Spiritism the so called frivolous and abusive practices. On the contrary, we find in Spiritism a noble and generous cause, which is the affection for our deceased ones, and the interest we have for their memories. Isn’t that one of the most respected aspects of human nature? Isn’t that one of the sentiments, one of the forces that elevates man above matter and establishes the difference between him and the beast?

CONCLUSIONS:

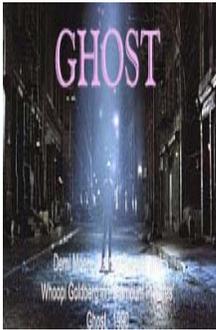
- In the Spiritist view, Moses forbade spirit communication with spirits for the fact that people at his time were abusing it.
- Spirit communications can be means of human progress, once the purpose of mediumship is exclusively moral, consolatory and religious.

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1. Kardec, Allan, “Heaven and Hell”, chapter XI: The prohibition to evoke the dead, items 3-5 and 15, translated by Anna Blackwell, revised by Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
2. Denis, Leon, “Life and Destiny”, chapter II, pages 29-30, translated by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, edited by Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2002.

OBJECTIVES:

- To define medium and mediumship.
- To understand the different types of mediumship and its characteristics.

METHODS:

1. Start the activities by showing a brief part of the movie “Ghost” (1990, directed by Jerry Zucker) in which the main character (Patrick Swayze - spirit) is walking, finds the “psychic reading” house of the medium interpreted by Whoopi Goldberg, and she begins to hear him during the psychic reading session.

2. After screening that segment of the movie, introduce the concept of medium as defined by Allan Kardec ⁽¹⁾

“Every one who is in any degree influenced by spirits is, by that very fact, a medium. This faculty is inherent in man, and is therefore no exclusive privilege; in fact, there are few persons in whom some rudiments of medianimity are not found. We may therefore assume that every one, or nearly every one, is a medium. Nevertheless, this qualification is only practically applicable to those in whom the medianimic faculty is clearly characterized, producing well-marked results and this depends upon the greater or less degree of sensitivity of the organization. This faculty does not reveal itself in all cases in the same manner: each medium has generally a special aptitude for some special order of phenomena; so that there are as great a variety of mediums as of phenomena. The principal varieties of mediums are as follows: *Physical mediums*; *Sensitive or Impressionable mediums*; *Hearing mediums*; *Speaking mediums*; *Seeing mediums*; *Somnambulists*; *Healing mediums*; *Pneumatographers*; *Writing mediums*, or *Psychographers*.

3. After the concept has been introduced, ask participants to discuss it in light of the segment presented.

4. Divide the class in two groups and give to each group the following selected texts from The Medium’s Book (Allan Kardec), chapter 14.

Group I. Types of mediumship: First Part ⁽²⁾

Read the following text extracted from the Mediums’ Book by Allan Kardec and make a brief summary of your ideas and prepare them for a brief oral presentation to the other group.

1. Physical Mediums.

160. *Physical mediums* are more especially fitted for producing physical phenomena, such as the movement of inert bodies, noises, etc. They may be divided into two categories, *Voluntary mediums*, and *Natural or Involuntary mediums*.

Voluntary mediums are those who exert their power consciously, and obtain spirit-phenomena by an act of their will. This faculty, although inherent, as we have already said, in the human species, is far from existing in all men in the same degree; but, though there are few persons in whom the medianimic faculty is absolutely null, those who are able to obtain the most startling effects-such as the levitation of heavy bodies, the transport of objects, and above all, apparitions-are rarer still. The simplest effects produced are those of the rotation of objects and the production of raps and tilts. Without attaching any great importance to phenomena of this elementary character, we cannot pass them over altogether, for they suggest interesting questions, and are always useful in convincing beginners. But we must remark that the power of producing physical effects rarely exists in connexion with the more advanced means of communication, such as involuntary writing, or inspirational speaking. Physical medianimity generally diminishes in proportion as a medium develops the higher modes of medianimic action.

161. *Natural or Involuntary mediums* are those who are influenced without their knowing it. They have no idea of their power, and the abnormal occurrences which take place around them (they do not appear to them at all extraordinary). Their peculiar faculty seems to them to be a part of themselves, as is the case with persons who are endowed with second-sight, and who have no suspicion that such is the case. Mediums of this description are well worthy of observation; and we should not neglect to collect and study all the facts that may come to our knowledge in regard to them. They are of all ages; young children often possessing this faculty in a high degree.

The faculty we are about to treat of is not, in itself, an indication of a diseased state of body, for it is not incompatible with the soundest health. A person so constituted may be sickly, but, in that case, his ill-health is due to some other cause, and medical treatment is therefore powerless to prevent the manifestation of his medianimity. This faculty may undoubtedly co-exist with some forms of organic debility, but it is never produced by them. There is no reason for dreading this faculty on the score of health; because medianimity only becomes a cause of bodily weakness when the medium uses his power too continuously, and thus makes a too lavish emission of his vital fluid, which is always injurious to his bodily health.

2. Hearing Mediums.

165. These mediums hear the voice of spirits: some times, as we have observed when speaking of pneumatophony, it is an inner voice that speaks to the interior consciousness; sometimes it is an exterior voice, clear and distinct as that of a person in the flesh. Hearing mediums are thus enabled to enter into conversation with spirits.

When they are in the habit of communicating with certain spirits, they recognise them immediately by the character of their voice. Persons who are not endowed with this faculty can communicate with spirits through the intermediacy of a bearing medium, who thus plays the part of an interpreter.

This faculty is a very agreeable one when the medium hears only good spirits, or those whom he evokes; but it is not so when, as sometimes happens, he is violently assailed by some hostile spirit, or forced, by some backward and troublesome persecutor, to listen to unpleasant or unseemly remarks. In all such cases, it is necessary to get rid of the obsessing spirit by the means which we shall point out in our chapter on *Obsession*.

3. Speaking Mediums.

166. Hearing mediums, which only transmit what is said to them by spirits, are not what are properly called *speaking mediums*, who very frequently hear nothing; the spirit merely acting upon their organs of speech, as he acts upon the hand of writing mediums. A spirit, when he wishes to communicate, makes use of the most flexible organ that he finds in the medium; from one, he borrows the hand; from another, the voice; from a third, the hearing. The speaking medium generally speaks without knowing what he says, and often gives utterance to instructions far above the reach of his own ideas, knowledge, and intelligence. Though he may be perfectly awake, and in his normal state, he rarely remembers what he has said; in short, his voice is only an instrument employed by a spirit, and by means of which a third party can converse with a spirit, as he can do through the agency of a hearing medium.

The passiveness of speaking mediums is not, however, so complete in all cases; for some of them have an intuition of what they say at the time they pronounce the words transmitted through them by the spirit. We shall return to this variety when we treat of *intuitive mediums*.

Group II. Types of Mediumship (second part) ⁽³⁾

Read the following text extracted from the Mediums' Book by Allan Kardec and make a brief summary of your ideas and prepare them for a brief oral presentation to the other groups.

4. Seeing Mediums.

167. Seeing mediums are those who are endowed with the faculty of seeing spirits. There are some who possess this faculty in their normal state and when they are perfectly awake, and who preserve an exact recollection of what they have seen. Others only see spirits when they are in a somnambulatory state, or one bordering on it. This faculty is rarely permanent; it is almost always the effect of a momentary and passing crisis. We may place in the category of seeing mediums all persons endowed with second-sight. The possibility of seeing spirits in dreams, results, undoubtedly, from a sort of medianimity; but, properly speaking, it does not constitute the seeing medium." We have already explained this variety of mediums. (See Chap. VI. *Visual Manifestations*.)

The seeing medium thinks he sees with his bodily eyes, like those who have second-sight, but it is in reality his soul that sees; which accounts for the fact that seeing mediums see with their eyes shut just as well as when they are open, and that a blind man can see spirits as well as a man possessed of eyesight. This seeing of spirits by blind men is a very interesting point; it would be important to ascertain whether this faculty is more common among the blind than among others. Spirits who had been blind during life have

told us, after their death, that, when in the flesh, they had, through the soul, a perception of certain objects, so that they were not plunged in utter obscurity.

5. Somnambulic Mediums.

172. Somnambulism may be regarded as a variety of the medianimic faculty, or rather, we should say, that these two orders of phenomena are found very frequently united. The somnambulist acts under the influence of his own spirit; it is his own soul which, in its moments of emancipation, sees, hears, and perceives, beyond the limits of the senses what he expresses he draws from himself. His ideas are generally more just than in his normal state, and his knowledge is more extended, because his soul is free; in a word, the somnambulic state is a sort of foretaste of the spirit-life. The medium, on the contrary, is the instrument of an intelligence exterior to himself; he is passive; and what he says does not come from himself. In other words, the somnambulist expresses his own thoughts, and the medium expresses those of another. But the spirit who communicates through an ordinary medium may do so through a somnambulist; the soul-emancipation of somnambulism often rendering spirit-communication even more easy. Many somnambulists see spirits perfectly, and describe them with as much precision as do seeing mediums; they converse with them, and transmit their thoughts to us; and what they say, when beyond the circle of their personal knowledge, is often suggested to them by spirits. The following is a remarkable example of the joint action of the somnambulist's own spirit and of another spirit.

6. Healing Mediums.

175. We only allude here to this variety of mediums in order that we may not seem to overlook them; for this subject requires more ample treatment than we can give to it in this place. We will now only remark that this kind of medianimity consists principally in the gift, possessed by certain persons, of healing by the laying-on of hands, by the look, by a mere gesture, without the help of medication. It will no doubt be said that this is nothing but mesmerism. It is evident that the animal-magnetic fluid has much to do with it; but when this phenomenon is carefully examined, we perceive that there is in it something more. The ordinary mesmeric treatment is a regular one, followed up according to rule and method; the medianimic treatment is quite different. Most mesmerisers would be healers, if capable of proceeding with system and judgment; while in healing mediums, the faculty is spontaneous, and some of them possess it without ever having heard of mesmerism.

The intervention of an occult power, which constitutes medianimity, becomes unmistakable under certain circumstances especially when we consider that the majority of those who may be regarded as undoubted healing mediums have recourse to prayer; for prayer is unquestionably an *invocation* as well as an *evocation* (131).

7. Pneumatographic Mediums.

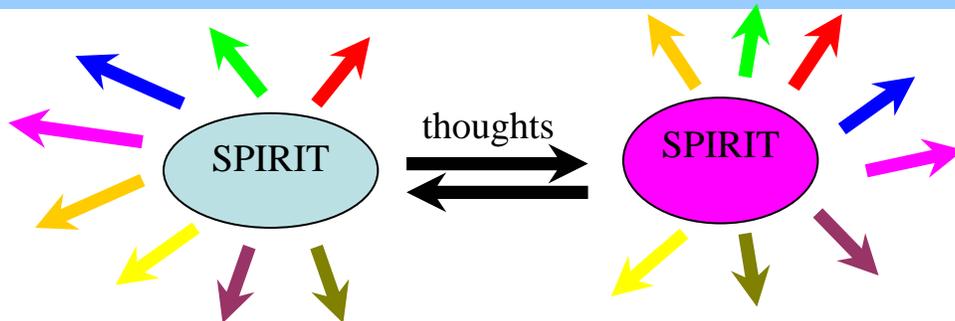
177. This name is given to mediums who obtain direct writing; a faculty which has hitherto remained an exceptional one, though it may probably be developed by exercise. As previously remarked, its practical utility is mainly limited to the evident proof thus afforded of the intervention of an occult power. Experience alone can show whether a person possesses it or not; each can try for himself, asking the aid of his spirit-

protector. According to the degree of the medium's power, he obtains simple strokes, signs, letters, words, phrases, or entire pages. It is usually sufficient to place a folded sheet of paper in the place designated by the spirit, leaving it there for a few minutes, a quarter of an hour, or a longer time, as the case may be. Concentration and harmoniousness of thought being necessary conditions of success, it would be difficult to obtain anything of the kind when the sitters have met together with no serious views, or when they are not animated by sympathetic and kindly sentiments. (See the explanation of direct writing, Chap. VIII. *Laboratory of the Invisible World*, 127 et seq., Chap. XII. *Pneumatography*.)

CONCLUSIONS:

- Every one who is in any degree influenced by spirits is, by that very fact, a medium.
- Mediumship is inherent in man, and is therefore no exclusive privilege
- The main types of mediums are as follows: *Physical mediums*; *Sensitive or Impressionable mediums*; *Hearing mediums*; *Speaking mediums*; *Seeing mediums*; *Somnambulists*; *Healing mediums*; *Pneumatographers*; *Writing mediums*, or *Psychographers*.

Law of the Mental Field



“Each creature will **assimilate** only the influences that it **attracts** to.”

Mechanisms of Mediumship by Andre Luiz/Francisco Xavier & Waldo Vieira

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1. Kardec, Allan, “The Mediums’ Book”, chapter XIV, item 159, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
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LESSON 9	SPIRITUAL INTERVENTION IN THE CORPOREAL WORLD: MORAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A FRUITFUL MEDIUMSHIP
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OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the moral requirements for our mediumship to serve higher moral purposes
- To explain how can a medium contribute to the moral advancement of society.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator shall review the main topics learned in previous lessons:
 - (i) we have a faculty called mediumship, with which we may influence and/or be influenced by those who do not possess a material (flesh) body;
 - (ii) mediumship is a faculty given by God;
 - (iii) mediumship must be employed to help our fellow human beings;
 - (iv) it comes in several different types (physical and intellectual).
2. Ask participants to brainstorm on the reasons why moral requirements must be observed in order to have a useful and fruitful mediumship.
3. Divide the class into 2 groups. Assign one of the following topics to each group.

Group 1: **Gratuitous Mediumship**

Read carefully the following text⁽¹⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the questions as complete as possible.

- A) Why is it important to establish moral standards for the practice of mediumship?
- B) Why is it important that the medium follow high moral standards?

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils,’ freely ye have received, freely give (Matthew, 10: 8).”

"Give for free what has been received gratuitously," is what Jesus told His disciples. With this recommendation it is prescribed that no one be charged for something for which nothing has been paid. Now what they had received gratuitously was the faculty of healing those who were sick, and that of expelling devils, that is to say bad spirits. God gave them this faculty gratis for the alleviation of those who suffer and as a

means of propagating faith. Jesus, then, recommended that they did not turn this into an object of commercialization, neither speculation, nor a means of livelihood.

“Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows’ houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation (Luke, 20: 45-47; also Mark, 12: 38-40 and Matthew, 23: 14).

Jesus also said: Do not make charges for your prayers; do not do as the Scribes who 'on pretext of long prayers, devoured the homes of widows,' that is to say they took possession of their fortunes. Prayer is an act of charity, an ecstasy of the heart. To charge someone for the prayers we direct to God in their name, is to transform oneself into a paid intermediary. Then prayer becomes a mere formula whose length is in proportion to the amount it cost. Moreover only one of the following can be true: either God measures or does not measure His blessings by the number of words used in a prayer. If these were necessary in large numbers, why then are so few said, or even none, for those who cannot pay? This is a lack of charity. If one word is sufficient then an excess of words is useless. How then can we charge for these prayers? This would be a corrupt practice.

God does not sell His benefits; He concedes them. How then can one who is not an agent and cannot guarantee results, charge for a petition which may produce no results? It is not possible that God makes an act of clemency, kindness and justice, asked for because of His infinite mercy, subject to the payment of a sum of money and that if the sum were not paid, or was insufficient, then the justice, kindness and clemency would be suspended. Reason, good sense and logic tell us it is impossible that God, Who is absolute perfection, could delegate to imperfect beings the right to establish a price for His justice, which is like the Sun: it exists for all, rich and poor alike. As it is considered immoral to trade in the favors of any earthly sovereign, could it then be licit to commercialize those of the Sovereign of the Universe?

Yet another drawback is presented by paid prayers which is that the one who buys them judges themselves, in most cases, to be relieved from the need to pray. They consider themselves exonerated, since they gave their money. We know that Spirits are touched by the fervor of the thoughts of those who are interested in them, but what fervor can be felt by one who arranges a third party to pray for them on payment of money? What kind of fervor has this third party when he delegates his task to another, and that one yet another and so on? Does this not reduce the efficiency of prayer to the value of currency?

Group 2: Instructions from the Spirits.

Read carefully the following text⁽²⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the questions as complete as possible.

A) Why is it important to establish moral standards for the practice of mediumship?

B) Why is it important that the medium follow high moral standards?

"If God now permits the open communication of spirits with men, it is in order to enlighten men in regard to their duties, and to show them the road which will shorten their trials by hastening their advancement; for, as fruit arrives at maturity, so must men at length arrive at perfection. But, besides the spirits of high advancement who desire your welfare, there are imperfect spirits who try to do you harm; while the first urge you forwards, the others would fain pull you back. You must therefore give your utmost attention to the work of distinguishing between them, and this you will easily do if you bear in mind that nothing hurtful can proceed from a good spirit, and that whatever is evil can only proceed from an evil one. If you turn away from the wise counsels of the spirits who desire your good, if you take offence at the home-truths they sometimes tell you, it is evident that you have evil spirits for your counselors. Pride alone prevents men from seeing themselves as they are; but, if they do not see this for themselves, others see it for them, and they are contemned, both by their fellow-men, who laugh at them behind their back, and by the spirits who have helped to lead them astray."

"A FAMILIAR SPIRIT."

"Be not alarmed by obstacles or controversies. Torment no one by persisting in the effort to enlighten him against his will; the incredulous will be persuaded by your disinterestedness, patience, and charity, more effectually than by any argument. You should especially avoid doing violence to opinion, either by your words or by any public demonstration. The greater your modesty, the sooner will you as spiritists be justly appreciated. Let no selfish motive influence your action, and seek only to possess the attractive force that comes from kindness. Spirits, by God's command, are working for the progress of all without exception; you, spiritists, must do likewise I"

"SAINT LOUIS."

"If you would receive communications from superior spirits, you must prepare yourselves for this favor by concentration of thought, purity of intention, and sincere desire to help forward the cause of progress; for selfishness is a barrier between you and them. Remember that, if God permits you to receive the inspiration of those of His children who have earned the happiness of comprehending His infinite goodness, it is in order that you may advance, and aid others to advance, on the appointed path of progress. Therefore, O mediums! it is incumbent on you to make only a good use of the faculty that has been given you. Confiding in, and emulating, our Master's kindness, let your charity, your tolerance for all about you, be inexhaustible. By scrupulously regulating your action according to your conscience, you will increase a hundred-fold your own happiness in your quickly-fleeting earthly life, and you will have prepared for yourselves a thousand-fold greater happiness in the life to come. "Let every medium, who does not feel in himself the moral strength that will enable him to consecrate his faculty to the noblest use, withdraw altogether from the work of mediumship; for he who, being favored with special light, allows himself to enter upon a wrong path, incurs the heavier retribution reserved for those who have gone willfully astray."

"PASCAL"

"Bear with me while I call your attention to the disinterestedness which, with modesty, should be the characteristic accompaniment of medianimity. God has given to mediums the faculty which enables them to be the intermediary between spirits and men, in order that they may employ that faculty in spreading the truth, but not that they make it a matter of traffic. And, in saying this, I refer, not merely to those who turn their medianimity to pecuniary account as they would any ordinary talent, and who set up as mediums just as others set up as dancers or singers, but to all who use their medianimic faculty for the furtherance of personal ends. Is it reasonable to suppose that spirits of high degree, who condemn cupidity in the ratio of their elevation, would consent to be shown off as a spectacle, putting themselves, like so many play-actors, into the hands of a contractor for spirit-phenomena? And is it in any respect more reasonable to suppose that such spirits would favor the views of vanity and ambition? God permits spirits to communicate with men in order that they may help men to raise themselves out of the mire of materiality, but not that they may serve as the instruments of mundane passions and those mediums who pervert the faculty bestowed upon them by God will be punished for such a desecration with a severity proportioned to the heinousness of their offence."

"DELPHINE DE GIRARDIN."

CONCLUSIONS:

- "Give for free what has been received gratuitously." This is the main reason why any practice of mediumship should be based on the true charity (=love in action) without any monetary or any kind of reward to the medium.
 - "If you would receive communications from superior spirits, you must prepare yourselves for this favor by concentration of thought, purity of intention, and sincere desire to help forward the cause of progress; for selfishness is a barrier between you and them."
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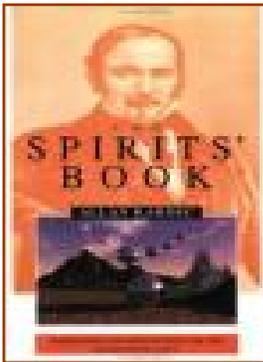
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OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the Spiritist View on Heaven and Hell
- To explain the meaning of future joys and sorrows based on the Penal Code of Life to Come by Allan Kardec in Heaven and Hell, part I, chapter 7.

METHODS:

1. Begin by introducing the Spirits' concepts of heaven, hell and purgatory as defined in *The Spirits' Book* ⁽¹⁾.

1012. Are there, in the universe, any circumscribed places set apart for the joys and sorrows of spirits, according to their merits?

"We have already answered this question. The joys and sorrows of spirits are inherent in the degree of perfection at which they have arrived. Each spirit finds in himself the principle of his happiness or unhappiness; and, as spirits are everywhere, no enclosed or circumscribed place is set apart for either the One or the other. As for incarnated spirits, they are more or less happy or unhappy,

according as the world they inhabit is more or less advanced."

-"Heaven" and "hell," then, as men have imagined them, have no existence?

"They are only symbols; there are happy and unhappy spirits everywhere. Nevertheless, as we have also told you, spirits of the same order are brought together by sympathy; but, when they are perfect, they can meet together wherever they will,"

The localization of rewards and punishments in fixed places exists only in man's imagination; it proceeds from his' tendency to materialize and to circumscribe the things of which he cannot comprehend the essential infinitude.

1013. What is to be understood by Purgatory?

"Physical and moral suffering; the period of expiation, It is almost always upon the earth that you are made by God to undergo your purgatory, and to expiate your wrong-doing."

What men call purgatory is also a figure of speech that should be understood as signifying, not any determinate place, but the state of imperfect spirits who have to expiate their faults until they have attained the complete purification that will raise them to the state of perfect blessedness. As this purification is effected by means of various incarnations, purgatory consists in the trials of corporeal life

2. Divide the class in 4 groups and assign one of the following texts to each one of them. Each group should be instructed to read the text, make a brief summary of the text's ideas and prepare a brief presentation for the rest of the class.



Group I: Define the conditions for happiness and unhappiness after the spirit's discarnation ⁽¹⁾

1. Each discarnate spirit undergoes, in the spirit world, the consequences of the various imperfections of which he has failed to cure himself during his earthly life. His state in that world, whether happy or unhappy, is the direct consequence of, and inherent in, the degree of his advancement or of his imperfection.

2. Perfect happiness belongs, exclusively, to the state of perfection, that is to say, of the spirit's complete purification. Every imperfection is at once a source of suffering and the privation of an enjoyment; and every acquisition of knowledge or of goodness brings with it an increase of enjoyment and diminishes the sources of suffering.

3. *Every imperfection of the soul produces its own inevitable share of suffering; and every good quality produces, in virtue of the same law, its own natural, certain, share of happiness.* The amount of a spirit's suffering is thus exactly proportioned to the degree of his imperfection; and the amount of a spirit's happiness is exactly proportioned to the degree of his intellectual and moral advancement.

A spirit who has still, say, ten imperfections to get rid of, suffers proportionately more than one who has only three or four; when he has succeeded in ridding himself of a quarter, or half, of those imperfections, he suffers proportionately less, and, when he has rid himself of the whole of them, he has got rid of every source of suffering, and is perfectly happy. It is just as it is upon the Earth with our bodily ailments and imperfections; he who has a complication of diseases suffers more than he who has but one disease; and if a man were perfectly healthy, it is evident that he would suffer no physical pain whatever. In the same way, the spirit who has acquired ten good qualities has a proportionally greater amount of happiness than one who possesses fewer good qualities.

4. In virtue of the law of progress – each spirit having the power to acquire the good qualities which he lacks and to rid himself of his bad ones, according to his force of will and the amount of effort he makes for that purpose – the gate of hope and happiness is open to every creature. God repudiates none of His children; He receives them all into favor as they attain to the perfection of their being, thus leaving to each of them the merit of his deeds.

5. Suffering being indissolubly connected with imperfection, and enjoyment with excellence, the soul finds its own chastisement in itself, wherever it may be, and needs no circumscribed place as the scene of its suffering. “Hell” is, consequently, wherever there are souls that suffer, as “Heaven” is, wherever there are souls that are happy.

6. The good, or the evil, that we do is the result of the good or evil qualities possessed by our spirit. Not to do all the good which we have the power to do is evidently the result of imperfection on our part; and, consequently, as every imperfection is a

source of suffering, a spirit suffers, not only for all the evil he has done, but also for the good which he might have done, but did not do, during his earthly life.

7. A spirit suffers through the evil that he has done, in order that, *his attention being concentrated on the consequences of that evil*, he may better understand its disastrous nature, and be led to amend himself.

8. The justice of God being infinite, as exact account is kept, for each soul, of the good and the evil done by it in the course of its earthly life. No evil deed, no evil thought, however slight, fails to produce its own appropriate punishment; but also, no good deed, however minute, no right feeling, however fugitive, no virtuous aspiration, however faint, is ever overlooked, or ever remains sterile, even in the case of spirits the most depraved; *for they are the commandment of its reformation and progress.*



Group II: **Explain how the spirit expiates a fault** ⁽³⁾

9. Every fault committed, every evil deed accomplished, is a debt that must be paid; if it be not paid in the present earthly life it will be paid in the next one or in subsequent ones, because all the lives of a spirit form a consecutive series, a whole, all the phases of which are a part and parcel of each other. He who pays his debt in the present life will not have to pay it in any future one.

10. A spirit undergoes the penalty of his defects both in the spirit world and in the life of the flesh. All the tribulations, all the miseries, which we suffer in the earthly life are at once the consequences of our own defects and expiations of faults that have been committed by us, either in our present life or in some of our former existences.

By the nature of the sufferings and vicissitudes that we have to undergo in our present life, we can judge of the nature of the faults committed by us in a preceding life, and of the imperfections to which those faults were due.

11. The expiation of wrongdoing varies according to the nature and the gravity of the offences committed; consequently, the same offence may entail different kinds and degrees of expiation in different cases, according as it may have been attenuated, or aggravated, by the circumstances under which it was committed.

12. In regard to the nature and duration of future punishment, there is no absolute and uniform rule; the only general law is this, viz., that *every misdeed* shall receive its just and appropriate punishment, and that *every good deed* shall receive its just and appropriate reward, *exactly proportioned to the action of which it is the consequence.*

13. The duration of punishment depends entirely on the more or less rapid self-amendment of the spirit by whom it has been incurred. No spirit is ever condemned to any *fixed* term of punishment. The only conditions required by Providence, for the releasing of a guilty spirit from the sufferings of expiation, are his sincere return to a better mind, and his hearty determination to labor steadfastly for the acquisition of wisdom and goodness.

Each spirit is thus, and always, the sole arbiter of his own condition; he may prolong his sufferings by hardening himself in evil, he may lessen them, or may put an end to them by his efforts to advance in the path of rectitude.

The sentencing of spirits to any fixed term of punishment would be open to the double objection of prolonging, in some cases, the punishment of a spirit *after* he has entered on a course of amendment, and, in other cases, of relieving a spirit from punishment *before* he has entered on that course. God, being just, punishes evil *only so long as it continues to exist*; He ceases to punish *when the evil, that had necessitated punishment, has ceased to exist*. In other words, *moral evil being, itself, the cause of a spirit's suffering*, that suffering necessarily lasts as long as the moral evil, which is its cause, continues to exist, but, as necessarily, diminishes its intensity as the spirit's moral state improves.

14. The duration of a spirit's punishment depending solely on his own delay in working out his own inner reform, it follows that, if a spirit persisted forever in remaining wicked, he would remain forever in a state of suffering, and that, consequently, in such a case, the spirit's punishment would be eternal.

15. One of the conditions inherent in a spirit's moral inferiority is *inability to foresee the end of his suffering*, and this inability leads him to believe that it will last forever. Accordingly, guilty spirits are always found to be possessed with the idea that the chastisement they are undergoing will be eternal.

16. Repentance is the first step towards improvement; but repentance, alone, is not sufficient to deliver the wrongdoer from the consequences of his wrongdoing; to affect this result, *expiation* and *reparation* are also necessary. *Repentance, expiation, and reparation* are the three conditions necessary for the effacing of a fault and the suppression of its consequences.

Repentance mitigates the sufferings of expiation, because it opens the door to hope and paves the way to rehabilitation; but it is only *reparation* that, by destroying the *cause* of our suffering, can annul the suffering which is its effect; *the granting of a free pardon to the wrong-doer would be merely the granting of a favor and not an annulling of the cause and consequences of his wrong-doing*.



Group III: Explain the purpose for the creation of spirits⁽⁴⁾

17. Repentance may begin in the spirit-life or in the life of the flesh, and at any period; if a spirit's repentance is tardy, he suffers for a longer time.

Expiation consists in the sufferings, both physical and moral, that are the results of a spirit's wrong-doing – whether in the course of the same earthly life in which he has done wrong, or in the phase of spirit-life succeeding it, or in a new earthly life – until all traces of his wrong-doing have been effaced.

Reparation consists in doing good to those whom we have wronged. He who, through lack of power or of will, does not make reparation, in a given life, for the wrongs he has done in that life, will be brought again, in a new earthly life, into contact with the parties he has wronged in that former life, and under conditions which he will himself have chosen beforehand, and which will have been contrived in such a way as to give him the opportunity of proving his devotion to them, and of enabling him to do them as much good as he formerly did them harm.

There are faults of which a man may be guilty, but which do not cause any direct and personal injury to other people; in such cases, the reparation of a fault is accomplished in

one or other of the following ways: – by doing, in a subsequent incarnation, what he ought to have done, but did not do, in a former one, whether by discharging duties which he neglected or did not see to be incumbent on him, or by fulfilling missions which he failed to fulfill in that former life, or by practicing the virtues which are the opposites of the vice in which he then indulged; that is to say, by being humble if he has been haughty; gentle, if he has been harsh; kindly, if he had been unkind; hardworking, if he has been idle; helpful, if he has been useless; temperate, if he has been dissolute; setting a good example, if he has set a bad one; and so on. It is thus that a spirit progresses by turning to profitable account the experiences and the lessons of his past existences.

18. Spirits of slight advancement are excluded from the happier worlds whose harmony would be impaired by their presence; they therefore remain in worlds of correspondingly low degree – where they expiate their faults, and purify themselves from their imperfections – until they have acquired the moral qualities which enable them to incarnate themselves in worlds of higher moral and physical development.

The conception of a circumscribed place of punishment is admissible only as referring to the worlds whose low degree of physical advancement places them, for the time being, in the category of *worlds of expiation*, around which, swarms of discarnate spirits of low degree are always found, awaiting the new existences that will allow them to repair the evil they have done and will help them to advance.

19. A spirit always possesses his free-will, and his improvement is therefore sometimes slow and his persistence in evil very tenacious. He may, if he will, persist in his wickedness for years or for centuries; but a moment always comes when his obstinacy in defying the Divine justice breaks down under the continuance of suffering, and when, despite his foolhardiness, he confesses that the power which masters him is greater than his own. With the first glimmerings of his repentance, a gleam of hope is sent, by the Divine pity, to console and encourage the returning prodigal.

No spirit ever finds himself in the condition of being permanently incapable of improvement; were it otherwise, some spirits would be fatally doomed to remain forever in a state of inferiority, and would thus escape the action of the law of progress that regulates the destiny providentially imposed on all the beings of Creation.

20. Whatever may be a spirit's inferiority and perversity, *God never abandons him*. Every spirit has his guardian angel who watches over him, takes note of every movement of his soul, and endeavors to awaken in his mind good thoughts and the desire to progress and to make reparation, in a new existence, for the evil he has done. But this protecting guardian usually proceeds in his task occultly, without bringing any pressure to bear on his ward. A spirit must work out his own betterment *through the action of his own will*, and not as a consequence of any external constraint. He does right, or he does wrong, of his free choice, and without his choice being *decisively* influenced either for good or for evil. If he takes the path of evil, he undergoes the consequences of his error as long as he continues to follow the wrong road; as soon as he takes a single step in the opposite direction, he begins, at once, to experience the beneficial effect of his change of road.

Observation. - It would be a mistake to imagine that the certainty of arriving, sooner or later, at the state of perfection and happiness for which all spirits have been created, could encourage any spirit to persevere in evil, with the idea of repenting at some future period, in the first place, because a spirit of low degree is unable to foresee any

termination of his present situation, and, in the second place, because each spirit, being the artificer of his own unhappiness, always comes to perceive in the long run, that it depends on himself to procure its cessation, that the longer he persists in evil the longer he will remain unhappy, and that, consequently, his suffering will endure forever unless he, himself, puts an end to it. *To go on sinning* is on the part of a spirit, to condemn himself, consciously and willfully, to a continuance of suffering. But if, on the contrary, the gate of hope were irrevocably closed, according to the doctrine of eternal punishment, against the suffering spirit, he would have no motive for repenting and amending, which could be of no avail for him.

The law we are considering triumphantly refutes the objection that the Divine prescience, in creating the souls that subsequently go wrong, cannot be allied to goodness, God, in creating a soul, necessarily foresees whether, in virtue of its free will, it will take the right or the wrong road; He knows that it will incur punishment if it goes wrong; but He also knows that this temporary chastisement is only a *means* for enabling it to understand its error, and for leading it into the right road, by which, sooner or later, it will reach the goal. According to the doctrine of eternal punishment, God, having known beforehand that such and such a soul would go wrong, created it with the knowledge that, by calling it into being, He was condemning it, beforehand, to endless tortures.

21. Each spirit is responsible only for his own wrong-doing; no spirit is punished for the wrong-doing of others, unless he has been the cause of their doing wrong, either by leading them astray, through his evil counsels or example, or by not helping them to do right when he had the opportunity of influencing them for their good.

For instance, he who commits suicide is always punished for so doing; but he who, by his unkindness, drives his fellow-creature to despair and to self-destruction, incurs punishment still more severe.

22. Although the punishments of the spirit-world are infinitely various, there are some which are inherent in the backwardness of the spirits, and which, being the consequences of that state of inferiority, are, in the main, the same for all spirits of that degree.

The punishment which is first experienced, especially among those who have attached themselves too closely to the earthly life while neglecting the interests of their spiritual advancement, consists in the slowness with which their soul effects its separation from the body, in the anguish which they feel on dying and which accompanies their awakening in the other life, and in the prolongation of the mental confusion so often attendant on dissolution, and which may continue for months and even for years. In the case of those, on the contrary, whose conscience is clear, who, during their earthly life, have identified themselves with the spiritual life and have detached their interests and affections from the things of this world, the separation of the soul and the body is effected rapidly and without painful shocks, the awakening into the other life is peaceful, and the mental confusion almost null.

23. Spirits of low moral advancement frequently fancy themselves to be still living the earthly life; and this illusion may last for many years, during which they experience all the wants, all the torments, and all the perplexities, incident to life in the flesh.

24. For the criminal, the incessant sight of his victims, and of the places and circumstances of his crimes, is the most harrowing of tortures.

Group IV: **Explain how to make up for a mistake** ⁽⁵⁾



25. Some spirits are plunged in utter darkness; others are in a state of complete isolation, *alone* in the midst of immensity, tormented by the ignorance in which they find themselves in regard to their whereabouts and the fate that may be awaiting them. Those who are the guiltiest are the prey of torments that are all the more overwhelming from their being unable to foresee any termination of their misery. Many are punished by being deprived of the sight of those they love. All, as a general rule, endure the sufferings they have caused others to endure, and with an intensity proportionate to the intensity of the suffering they have caused; and they continue to endure this retributive suffering until, through repentance and the desire to make reparation for the

wrongs they have done, they obtain the relief which comes of their growing perception of the possibility of putting an end, *through their own efforts*, to the suffering they have brought upon themselves.

27. The only way to avoid, or to lessen, the painful consequences that our defects may entail upon us in our future life, is to free ourselves from those defects, as far as possible, in our present life; and we must also make reparation *now*, if we would not have to make that reparation by and by, and in some way that will be far harder to bear for having been delayed. The longer we put off the work of getting rid of our defects and of making reparation for whatever wrongs we have done to others, the more painful will be the consequences of the former, and the more severely shall we have to suffer in accomplishing the latter.

28. The situation in which a spirit finds himself on his entrance into spirit-life is exactly what he has made it for himself by his action in the earthly life he has quitted. After a time, another incarnation is granted to him in order that he may expiate and make reparation for the past by undergoing again the trials of the life in flesh; and he will derive more or less profit from this new incarnation, according to the use he makes in it of his free-will. If he fails to make a good use of his new existence, he will have to begin the trial over again, under conditions more and more difficult and painful; so that *he who suffers much in the present life may be very sure that he has much to expiate*, and, on the other hand, those who enjoy a seemingly prosperous life, notwithstanding their vices and their uselessness, may be equally sure that they will have to pay dear for their defects and their wrong-doing in a future existence. It was to the purifying and reparative effects of the earthly life that Jesus alluded to when he said, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

29. The mercy of God is, undoubtedly, infinite; but it is not blind. The guilty one whom He forgives is not exonerated from the necessity of making reparation for his evil deeds; and, until he has paid his debt to justice, he continues to undergo the consequences of those misdeeds. The assertion that the mercy of God is infinite must be understood as meaning that the Divine justice is not inexorable, and that it always leaves the door open to the prodigal who has returned into the homeward road.

30. The Providential punishments of wrong-doing being temporary and subordinated to *the repentance* and reparation which depend on the free-will of the wrong-doer, those punishments are at once the chastisement of wrong-doing and the medicines which will cure

the moral malady to which that wrong-doing is due. The spirits who, in the spirit-life or in their new subjection to the trials of the life in flesh, are made to undergo those punishments, are therefore not like galley-slaves, condemned to a fixed term of punishment, but rather like patients in a hospital, who suffer both from the malady they have contracted and also from the course of treatment required for their cure (and which is often extremely painful), but who have the hope of being cured, and whose cure will be all the more rapid in proportion to the fidelity with which they follow the prescriptions of the physician who watches over them with enlightened solicitude. If, from negligence or obstinacy, they prolonged their malady, they also prolong the period of their suffering; but, in that case, this prolongation is not the fault of their physician but their own.

31. To the sufferings of the spirit-world, which wrong-doing brings upon a spirit on his return to that world, succeed the sufferings of the life in flesh; sufferings which are, at once, the consequence of man's imperfections, of his passions, of the bad use he makes of his faculties, and the expiation of the faults committed by him in his present life and in the past. It is always in the life of flesh that a spirit repairs the evil he has done in his former corporeal existences, and that he puts in practice the resolutions he has formed in the spirit-life; a fact which explains and justifies the sorrows and troubles of human life which, at first sight, seem to be undeserved and uncalled for, but which are seen to be just and necessary, when we have learned that they are both payments of debts contracted by us in the past and the indispensable condition and means of our future advancement.

32. "But would not God," it is sometimes asked, "have given proof of greater love for His creatures, if He had created them perfect, and consequently exempted from the sufferings attendant on imperfection?"

To this query we reply that, in order to have exempted the beings of the universe from suffering, God must have created them perfect to begin with, having nothing to acquire in knowledge or in goodness. Undoubtedly, He could have done so; if He had not done so, it is because, in His wisdom, He has willed that the law of progress should be the law of creation.

Men are imperfect and, as such, are subject to vicissitudes more or less painful; this is a fact that we must accept, because it exists. But to infer from this that God is neither good nor just, would be to rebel against Him.

It would evidently have been unjust to create some beings more favored than others, endowed with privileges denied to those others, and enjoying, without their having worked for it, and as a free gift on His part, a degree of happiness that those other beings could only acquire through long and painful effort, or, perhaps, could never acquire at all. But the justice of God is triumphantly vindicated by the explanation of His Providential action, which shows us that *all spirits* are created on a footing of entire and absolute equality; that they all have the same starting-point; that no spirit, at his formation, is more favored than his fellows; that the ascensional career, which has to be accomplished by all spirits, is not rendered exceptionally easy for any of them; and that the spirits who have reached the highest degree have passed upwards, as all the others are now passing, from the same point of initial imperfection, by the same path of trial and effort.

This view of creation once admitted, what could be more perfectly just than the freedom of action that is accorded to each spirit? The road of happiness is equally open to all; the goals to be reached, and the conditions for reaching it, are the same for all. God has ordained that happiness shall be *the result of effort, and not of favor*, in order that each may obtain it as the result of his own individual merits; each is free to labor diligently, or to do nothing, for his own advancement; he who works hard and quickly gains his wage sooner; he who misemploys his energies, or loses his time, is longer in gaining the promised reward, but

has only himself to thank for the delay. The choice between good and evil is free to all; gifted with free will, man is not fatally drawn to either.

33. Notwithstanding the diversity of the kinds and degrees of suffering which are undergone by imperfect spirits, the penal code of the future life may be summed up in the three following propositions:

1. Suffering is a condition of imperfection.

2. All our imperfections and all our misdeeds (which are the practical outcome of those imperfections) find their appropriate and necessary punishment in their own natural and inevitable consequences – just as every excess is punished by the malady which is caused by it, and as idleness is punished by the disgust of life to which it leads – without the need of any special sentence being passed on each particular fault of each individual.

3. Everyone has the power of freeing himself from his imperfections through the exertion of his will; everyone, therefore, is able to avoid the sufferings that are the consequence of those imperfections and to ensure his future happiness.

Such is the law of the Divine justice; “To each, according to the deeds done by his body:” a sentence which receives its execution both in the spirit-world and upon the Earth.

CONCLUSIONS:

- According to the Spiritist View, heaven is everywhere where spirits exercise and enjoy all their abilities without the trials of the material world or the pain common to undeveloped states.
- Purgatory is any place where there is physical and mental suffering. “It is almost always on Earth that you create your own purgatory and where you make up for your faults.”
- According to *The Spirits’ Book*, hell is “a life of extreme harsh trials marked by uncertainty of an end to it.”
- In the penal code of a life to come, Allan Kardec explains that (1) suffering is inherent to imperfection: (2) every imperfection brings its natural correction and consequences; (3) every human being is capable of freeing oneself from imperfections depending on one’s will.

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OBJECTIVES:

- To establish the relationship between free-will and responsibility.
- To explain the manifestations of the principle of action and reaction (or “law of cause and effect”).
- To explain “fatality”.

**METHODS:**

1. The coordinator should give an introduction about the idea that every moral decision (an “action”) causes, soon or later, a reaction. Therefore, good actions, those which favor others with whom apparently we did not have a “direct”, evident relationship, will come back to us as good “reactions”. By the same token, deleterious actions to ourselves or to others, specially the intentional ones, will return to us in the form of difficulties in a not-so-distant future. Therefore, it is important that we understand and oversee our free will and our responsibilities so we do not fear reaping our actions.

2. The coordinator shall ask class to brainstorm on the following questions: What is free-will? Do we have free-will? What is fatality?

3. Next, present The Spirit’s Book questions 843-847, 850-852. Show each question. Allow participants to ask for the answer. Then, show the answer and comment on them.

Part I: Free – Will ⁽¹⁾

843. Has man freedom of action?

"Since he has freedom of thought, he has freedom of action. Without free-will man would be a machine."

844. Does man posses freewill from his birth?

"He possesses free-will from the moment when lie possesses the will to act. In the earliest portion of a lifetime free-will is almost null; it is developed and changes its object with the development of the faculties. The child, having thoughts in harmony with the wants of his age, applies his free-will to the things which belong to that age."

845. Are not the instinctive predispositions that a man brings with him at birth an obstacle to the exercise of his free-will?

"A man's instinctive predispositions are those which belonged to his spirit before his

incarnation. If he is but little advanced, they may incite him to wrongdoing, in which he will be seconded by spirits who sympathize with that wrong-doing; but no incitement is irresistible when there is a determination to resist. Remember that to will is to be able."

846. Has not our organism an influence on the acts of our life, and if so, does not this influence constitute an infringement of our free-will?

"Spirits are certainly influenced by matter, which may hamper them in their manifestations. This is why, in worlds in which the body is less gross than upon the earth, the faculties act more freely; but the instrument does not give the faculty. In considering this question, you must also distinguish between moral faculties and intellectual faculties. If a man has the instinct of murder, it is assuredly his spirit that possesses this instinct, and not his organs. He who annihilates his thought, in order to occupy himself only with matter, becomes like the brute, and still worse, for he no longer endeavors to preserve himself from evil, and it is this which constitutes his culpability, because he does so of his own free-will."

847. Does aberration of the mental faculties deprive man of free-will?

"He whose intelligence is deranged by any cause whatever is no longer master of his thoughts, and thenceforth is no longer free. Mental aberration is often a punishment for the spirit who, in another existence, has been vain or haughty, or has made a bad use of his faculties. He may be re-born in the body of an idiot, as the despot may be re-born in the body of a slave and the hard-hearted possessor of riches, in that of a beggar; but the spirit suffers from this constraint, of which he is fully conscious; and it is in this constraint that you see the action of matter."

850. Does not social position sometimes place obstacles in the way of free action?

"Society has, undoubtedly, its exigencies. God is just, and takes everything into account; but He will hold you responsible for any lack of effort on your part to surmount such obstacles."

Part II. Fatality ⁽²⁾

851. Is there a fatality in the events of life, in the sense commonly attached to that word—that is to say, are the events of life ordained beforehand, and, if so, what becomes of freewill?

"There is no other fatality than that which results from the determination of each spirit, on incarnating himself, to undergo such and such trials. By choosing those trials he makes for himself a sort of destiny which is the natural consequence of the situation in which he has chosen to place himself. I speak now of physical trials only: for, as regards moral trials and temptations, a spirit always preserves his freedom of choice between good and evil, and is always able to yield or to resist. A good spirit, seeing (1 man hesitate, may come to his aid, but cannot influence him to the extent of mastering his will. On the other hand, a bad spirit that is to say, a spirit of inferior advancement may trouble or alarm him by suggesting exaggerated apprehensions; but the will of the incarnated spirit retains, nevertheless, its entire freedom of choice."

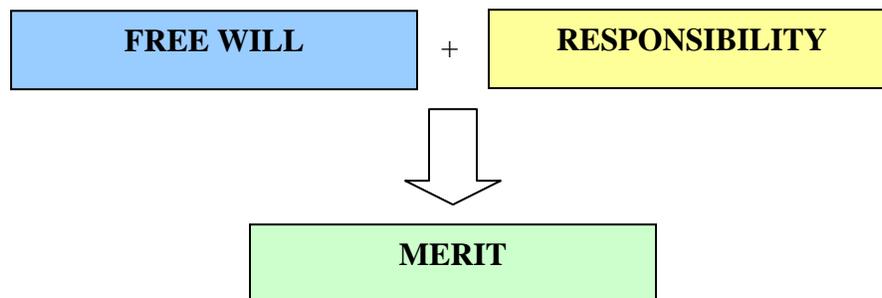
852. *There are persons who seem to be pursued by a fatality independent of their own action. Are not their misfortunes, in such cases, the result of predestination?*

"They may be trials which those persons are compelled to undergo because they have been chosen by them in the spirit-state; but you often set down to destiny what is only the consequence of your own faults Try to keep a clear conscience, and you will be consoled for the greater part of your afflictions.

The true or false view we take of the things about us causes us to succeed or to fail in our enterprises; but it seems to us easier, and less humiliating to our self-love, to attribute our failures to fate, or to destiny, than to our mistakes. If the influence of spirits sometimes contributes to our success, it is none the less true that we can always free ourselves from their influence, by repelling the ideas they suggest when they are calculated to mislead, us.

CONCLUSIONS:

- Every human being has the right to think, thus he also has free will. Without free will, humans would be machines.
- Without free will, humans cannot construct their destiny.
- Freedom and responsibility come together and are increased as the spirit evolves.
- According to The Spirits' Book, fatality is the one that the Spirit chose before incarnating.



REFERENCES:

1. Kardec. Allan, "The Spirit's Book" questions 843-847 and 850, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

2. Kardec, Allan, "The Spirit's Book" questions 851 and 852, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To characterize the Spiritist understanding of forgiveness.
- To cite and explain the three conditions which are necessary for the reparation of an offense.

METHODS:



1. Start the class with the first sequence of the movie *Les Misérables* (1998, directed by Bille August).

Les Misérables is set in the Parisian underworld. The protagonist, Jean Valjean (Liam Neeson), is sentenced to prison for 19 years for stealing a loaf of bread. After his release under parole, Valjean is supposed to present himself to the parole office, but, instead, Valjean robs monsignor Myriel (Peter Vaughan), a saint like bishop. Valjean is caught by the police, which bring him back to be recognized by monsignor Myriel and for him to press charges. However, monsignor Myriel forgives Valjean and instructs him to reform himself.

2. After presenting this segment, ask the class what they think about forgiveness and repentance.

3. Read together the two texts below and answer the respective questions.

Text I: **Path for reparation** ⁽¹⁾

Based on the text, answer and discuss the following question:

What are the three necessary conditions to repair a mistake in the spiritist view?

16. Repentance is the first step towards improvement; but repentance, alone, is not sufficient to deliver the wrongdoer from the consequences of his wrongdoing; to affect this result, expiation and reparation are also necessary.

Repentance, expiation, and reparation, are the three conditions necessary for the effacing of a fault and the suppression of its consequences.

Repentance mitigates the sufferings of expiation, because it opens the door to hope and paves the way to rehabilitation; but it is only reparation that, by destroying the cause of our suffering, can annul the suffering which is its effect; the granting of a free pardon to the wrong-doer would be merely the granting of a favor and not an annulling of

the cause and consequences of his wrong-doing.

17. Repentance may begin in the spirit-life or in the life of the flesh, and at any period; if a spirit's repentance is tardy, he suffers for a longer time.

Expiation consists in the sufferings, both physical and moral, that are the results of a spirit's wrong-doing – whether in the course of the same earthly life in which he has done wrong, or in the phase of spirit-life succeeding it, or in a new earthly life – until all traces of his wrong-doing have been effaced.

Reparation consists in doing good to those whom we have wronged. He who, through lack of power or of will, does not make reparation, in a given life, for the wrongs he has done in that life, will be brought again, in a new earthly life, into contact with the parties he has wronged in that former life, and under conditions which he will himself have chosen beforehand, and which will have been contrived in such a way as to give him the opportunity of proving his devotion to them, and of enabling him to do them as much good as he formerly did them harm.

There are faults of which a man may be guilty, but which do not cause any direct and personal injury to other people; in such cases, the reparation of a fault is accomplished in one or other of the following ways: – by doing, in a subsequent incarnation, what he ought to have done, but did not do, in a former one, whether by discharging duties which he neglected or did not see to be incumbent on him, or by fulfilling missions which he failed to fulfill in that former life, or by practicing the virtues which are the opposites of the vice in which he then indulged; that is to say, by being humble if he has been haughty; gentle, if he has been harsh; kindly, if he had been unkind; hardworking, if he has been idle; helpful, if he has been useless; temperate, if he has been dissolute; setting a good example, if he has set a bad one; and so on. It is thus that a spirit progresses by turning to profitable account the experiences and the lessons of his past existences.

Text II: Forgive others so that God may forgive You ⁽²⁾

Based on the text, answer and discuss the following question:

What is the spiritist view on forgiveness?

1. Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy (Matthew, 5: 7).
2. For if you forgive men, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew, 6: 14 & 15).
3. Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. Then came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but until seventy times seven (Matthew, 18:15, 21 & 22).
4. Mercy is a complement to mildness, because the person who is not merciful cannot be mild and pacific. Mercy consists of being able to forget and forgive all offence. Hate and rancor denotes a Spirit without any elevation or magnanimity. Being able to

forget offences is the mark of an elevated soul, which does not perturb itself with the blows it may be dealt. The one is always anxious, of a dark susceptibility and full of bitterness; while the other is calm, full of sweetness and charity.

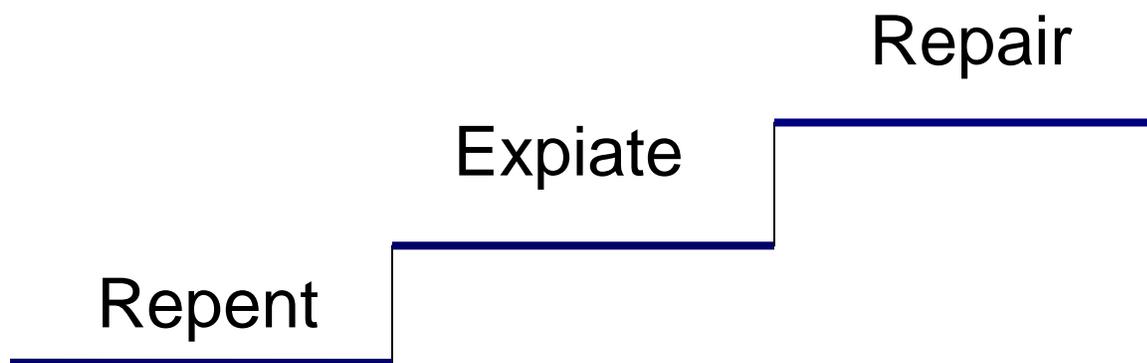
Woe to those who say they will never forgive! If these people are not already condemned by mankind, then God will surely condemn them. What right has a person to demand forgiveness for their own faults if they are unable to forgive those of others? Does not Jesus teach that mercy must have no limits when He says that each one must forgive their brothers and sisters not merely seven times, but seventy times seven?

However, there are two very different ways of forgiving: the first is noble and great, truly generous without any hidden thoughts, which delicately avoids hurting the self-esteem and susceptibility of the adversary, even when that same adversary has no justification for his or her acts. The second, on the other hand, is when someone who has been offended, or thinks they have been offended, imposes humiliating conditions on the supposed adversary, making felt the weight of the pardon, which can only cause further irritation instead of calming; where, upon offering a hand to the offended, this is not done with benevolence, but rather with ostentation, so that the person may say to others - look how generous I am! In these circumstances a sincere reconciliation is quite impossible for either one. No, here there is no generosity, only a form of satisfying pride.

In every dispute the one who shows him or herself to be more conciliatory, who demonstrates more disinterest, charity and real greatness of soul will always attract sympathy from those who are impartial.

CONCLUSIONS:

- We are capable of forgiving one another and ourselves as well.
- The noble way of forgiving relies on the true generosity of not hurting the feelings of the adversary.
- The three conditions to make up for a fault are repentance; expiation and reparation.



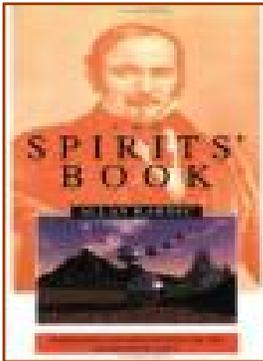
REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, "Heaven and Hell", chapter VII, items 16 and 17, translated by Anna Blackwell, revised by Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.

2. Kardec, Allan, "The Gospel explained by Spiritism" chapter 10, items 1-4, translated by J. A. Duncan, edited by Alan Kardec Study Group.

OBJECTIVES:

- To define the moment of union between soul and body.
- To identify the Spirit's condition between the moment of conception and birth.
- To correlate Divine Justice in the forgetfulness of the past.

METHODS:

*1. Project to the whole class each of the following questions⁽¹⁾ and ask for their answers before showing the answer presented in *The Spirit's Book*.*

344. At what moment is the soul united to the body?

"The union begins at the moment of conception, but is only complete at the moment of birth. From the moment of conception, the spirit designated to inhabit a given body is united to that body by a fluidic link, which becomes closer and closer up to the instant of birth; the cry then uttered by the infant announces that he is numbered among the living."

345. Is the union between the spirit and the body definitive from the moment of conception? Could the spirit, during this first period of that union, renounce inhabiting the body designed for him?

"The union between them is definitive in this sense namely, that no other spirit could replace the one who has been designated for that body. But, as the links which hold them together are at first very weak, they are easily broken, and may be severed by the will of a spirit who draws back from the trial he had chosen. But, in that case, the child does not live."

346. What becomes of a spirit, if the body he has chosen happens to die before birth?

"He chooses another body."

- What can be the use of premature deaths?

"Such deaths are most frequently caused by the imperfections of matter."

347. What benefit can a spirit derive from his incarnation in a body which dies a few days after birth?

"In such a case, the new being's consciousness of his existence is so slightly developed that his death is of little importance. As we have told you, such deaths are often intended mainly as a trial for the parents."

350. *When a spirit is definitively united to an infant body, and it is thus too late for him to refuse this union does he sometimes regret the choice he has made?*

"If you mean to ask whether, as a man, he may complain of the life he has to undergo, and whether he may not wish it were otherwise, I answer, Yes; but if you mean to ask whether he regrets the choice he has made, I answer, No, for he does not remember that he has made it. A spirit, when once incarnated cannot regret a choice which he is not conscious of having made; but he may find the burden he has assumed too heavy and, if he believes it to be beyond his strength, he may have recourse to suicide."

351. *Does a spirit, in the interval between conception and birth, enjoys the use of all his faculties?*

"He does so more or less according to the various periods of gestation; for he is not yet incarnated in his new body, but only attached to it. From the instant of conception confusion begins to take possession of the spirit, who is thus made aware that the moment has come for him to enter upon a new existence; and this confusion becomes denser and denser until the period of birth. In the interval between these two terms, his state is nearly that of an incarnated spirit during the sleep of the body. In proportions as the moment of birth approaches, his ideas become effaced, together with his remembrance of the past, of which when once he has entered upon corporeal life, he is no longer conscious. But this remembrance comes back to him little by little when he has returned to the spirit-world."

353. *The union of the spirit and the body not being completely and definitively consummated until birth has taken place can the fetus be considered as having a soul?*

"The spirit who is to animate it exists, as it were, outside of it; strictly speaking, therefore, it has no soul, since the incarnation of the latter is only in course of being effected; but it is linked to the soul which it is to have."

355. *Are there, as is indicated by science, children so constituted that they cannot live, and if so, for what purpose are they produced?*

"That often happens. Such births are permitted as a trial, either for the parents or for the spirit appointed to animate it."

356. *Are there, among still-born children, some who were never intended for the incarnation of a spirit?*

"Yes, there are some who never had a spirit assigned to them, for whom nothing was to be done. In such a case, it is simply as a trial for the parents that the child arrives."

- *Can a being of this nature come to its term?*

"Yes, sometimes; but it does not live."

- *Every child that survives its birth has, then, necessarily a spirit incarnated in it?*

"What would it be if such were not the case? It would not be a human being."

360. *Is it rational to treat the fetus with the same respect as the body of a child that has lived?*

"In the one, as in the other, you should recognize the will and the handiwork of God, and these are always to be respected."

2. Read the following text ⁽²⁾ and comment about the forgetfulness of the past.

“Is there not, in the forgetfulness of our past existences, and especially when they have been painful, a striking proof of the wisdom and beneficence of Providential arrangements? It is only in worlds of higher advancement, and when the remembrance of our painful existences in the past is nothing more to us than the shadowy remembrance of an unpleasant dream, that those existences are allowed to present themselves to our memory. Would not the painfulness of present suffering, in worlds of low degree, be greatly aggravated by the remembrance of all the miseries we may have had to undergo in the past? These considerations should lead us to conclude that whatever has been appointed by God is for the best, and that it is not our province to find fault with His works, nor to decide upon the way in which He ought to have regulated the universe.

The remembrance of our former personality would be attended, in our present existence, with many very serious disadvantages. In some cases, it would cause us cruel humiliation in others, it might incite us to pride and vanity in all cases, it would be a hindrance to the action of our free-will. God gives us for our amelioration just what is necessary and sufficient to that end, viz., the voice of our conscience and our instinctive tendencies. He keeps from us what would be for us a source of injury. Moreover, if we retained the remembrance of our own former personalities and doings, we should also remember those of other people a kind of knowledge that would necessarily exercise a disastrous influence upon our social relations. Not always having reason to be proud of our past, it is evidently better for us that a veil should be thrown over it. And these considerations are in perfect accordance with the statements of spirits in regard to the existence of higher worlds than ours. In those worlds in which moral excellence reigns, there is nothing painful in the remembrance of the past, and therefore the inhabitants of those happier worlds remember their preceding existence as we remember to-day what we did yesterday. As to the sojourns they may have made in worlds of lower degree, it is no more to them, as we have already said, than the remembrance of a disagreeable dream.”

CONCLUSIONS:

- The union between soul and body begin at conception, but is only complete at birth.
- “From the instant of conception confusion begins to take possession of the spirit, who is thus made aware that the moment has come for him to enter upon a new existence; and this confusion becomes denser and denser until the period of birth.”

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book”, questions 344-347, 350, 351, 353, 355, 356, 360, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book” comment after question 394, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To identify reincarnation as a form of God's Justice and Mercy.
- To understand the objectives of reincarnation and how reincarnation can explain the diversity of moral and intellectual levels in the world.
- To understand the consequences of the reincarnationist view in our life of the reincarnationist thought.

METHODS:

1. The coordinator should make a brief review of the previous lessons, linking the previous knowledge about reincarnation with the current lesson in which reincarnation will be studied more deeply.

2. Divide the class into 3 groups. Assign a text and a coordinator to each group and instruct them to read and debate over the best answer for each of the questions posed.

Group I: Justice of Reincarnation.

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

A) Why is reincarnation a form of God's Justice and Mercy?

171. *What foundation is there for the doctrine of reincarnation?*

"The justice of God, and revelation; for, as we have already remarked, an affectionate father always leaves a door of repentance open for his erring children. Does not reason itself tell you that it would be unjust to inflict an eternal privation of happiness on those who have not had the opportunity of improving themselves? Are not all men God's children? It is only among selfish human beings that injustice, implacable hatred, and irremissible punishments are to be found."

All spirits tend towards perfection, and are furnished by God with the means of advancement through the trials of corporeal life; but the divine justice compels them to accomplish in new existences, that which they have not been able to do, or to complete, in a previous trial. It would not be consistent with the justice or with the goodness of God to sentence to eternal suffering those who may have encountered obstacles to their improvement independent of their will, and resulting from the very nature of the conditions in which they found themselves placed. If the fate of mankind were irrevocably fixed after death God would not have weighed the actions of all in the same scales, and would not have treated them with impartiality.

The doctrine of reincarnation -that is to say, the doctrine which proclaims that men have many successive existence- is the only one which answers to the idea we form to ourselves of the justice of God in regard to those who are placed, by circumstances over which they have no

control, in conditions unfavorable to their moral advancement; the only one which can explain the future, and furnish us with a sound basis for our hopes, because it offers us the means of redeeming our errors through new trials. This doctrine is indicated by the teachings of reason, as well as by those of our spirit-instructors. He who is conscious of his own inferiority derives a consoling hope from the doctrine of reincarnation. If he believes in the justice of God, he cannot hope to be placed, at once and for all eternity, on a level with those who have made a better use of life than he has done but the knowledge that this inferiority will not exclude him for ever from the supreme felicity, and that he will be able to conquer this felicity through new efforts, revives his courage and sustains his energy. Who does not regret, at the end of his career that the experience he has acquired should have come too late to allow of his turning it to useful account? This tardily acquired experience will not be lost for him; he will profit by it in a new corporeal life.

Group 2: Objectives of a reincarnation and the moral and intellectual diversity in the world

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

- A) What are the objectives of reincarnation?
- B) How can reincarnation explain the diversity of moral and intellectual levels in the world?

“When the soul, having attained to the human state, has achieved its autonomy and moral responsibility and acquired the sense of duty, it has not therefore attained its final end, nor finished its evolution. Its real task, far from being achieved, is now beginning, and fresh labors await it. The struggles of the past are but a prelude to those the future holds in reserve. Its rebirths on earth in carnal bodies will follow in constant succession. Each time, it will take up again with rejuvenated organs the work of self-perfection that death had interrupted, to carry it on, and progress still a little further. The soul, an eternal traveler, must thus gravitate from sphere to sphere towards righteousness and infinite reason, ever acquiring higher rank, ever growing in science, wisdom, virtue and love.

Each of our terrestrial existences is but an episode of our immortal life. No soul in this short space of time could rip itself of all its vices and errors, of all the coarse desires that are so many vestiges of its past lives, so many proofs of its origin.

The plurality of existences can alone explain the diversity of character, the variety of aptitudes, the disproportion of moral endowments - in a word, all the disparities that we notice about us.

Were it not for this law, one might vainly wonder why some possess talent, nobility and fine minds, while to others folly, vice, passions, and vulgar instincts are allotted.

What could one think of a God, who while granting us but one corporeal life, should have bestowed upon us such unequal gifts, and should have allotted to mankind, whether civilized or uncivilized, possessions of such different value and so divergent a spiritual level?

Were it not for the law of reincarnation, iniquity would rule the world. While the influences of environment, heredity and educational differences have their importance, yet they do not suffice to explain these anomalies. We notice that members of the same

family, of the same flesh and blood, brought up with the same ideas, differ in many ways. Frequently have good men fathered monsters - did not Marcus Aurelius beget a Commodus? - and, again, are not many celebrated and admirable men descendants of parents who were not only obscure but morally worthless?

If all took its rise in this present life how could we account for so great an intellectual discrepancy, for so many degrees of vice and virtue, for so many social ranks ? An impenetrable mystery would surround precocious genius and those powerful minds whose youth assimilates science without effort, while others grow pallid with plodding, to remain ingloriously mediocre all their days.

This enigma is resolved by the doctrine of multiple lives. Those who excel by their intellect or virtue are those that have lived more, labored more, and acquired thereby greater experience and facility.”

Group 3: Consequences of the reincarnationist thought.

Read carefully the following text⁽³⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the question as complete as possible.

- A) What are the consequences in our life of the reincarnationist thought?
- B) What are the benefits of the reincarnationist thought to us and humankind ?

“This [reincarnation] being understood, we find some order established in the prevailing chaos and are able to see daylight ahead. The aim of life is rendered more intelligible: we at least know what we are, and whether we go.

Henceforth material pleasure will cease to be our object, and an ardent endeavor towards self-improvement will take its place. The supreme aim is perfection: the road that leads to it is the road of self-improvement. The road is long, and progress is infinitely slow. The distant end appears to recede as one approaches it, but as each successive stage is gained, some reward is reaped for each difficulty overcome; a reward which takes the form of an enriched experience and an enlarged capacity.

Our destinies are all identical. There are no privileged nor cursed beings. All must trudge the same tremendous road: and all, despite a thousand obstacles, are called upon to share in the same ultimate destiny. We are free to be sure! Free to accelerate or to delay our progress; free to steep ourselves in vulgar enjoyment; free to squander away entire existences in vice and sloth; but sooner or later the sense of duty will awaken, then will pain quicken our apathy, and we shall find ourselves obliged to take up our burdens and move on.

Between one soul and another, there is but the difference of a degree – a difference that the future will find opportunity to erase. In making use of our free-will, we have not all traveled the same road, thence arises the intellectual and moral disparity amongst men. But we, all of us, children of the same Father, must perforce gather closer to Him in the succession of our lives; and so finally resolve ourselves into one family: the great family of spirits, with which the whole universe is peopled.

The world has no longer room for such conceptions as an eternal Paradise or an endless Hell. In the great workshop of space we find nothing but active beings pursuing

their education and striving by their own endeavor to fit themselves for the universal harmony. By these deeds each prepare his own place, and the consequences of these deeds revert to him, binding and enthralling him. When his life has been the plaything of passion and sterile of good results, the being is lowered and his good standing accordingly sinks. To wash these stains away he must seek reincarnation in worlds of trial, that suffering may purify him. This purification accomplished, his evolution will begin again. There are no eternal trials; but the trials must be in just proportion to the sins committed.

We have no other judge and no other executioner than our conscience; but when this conscience is liberated from the bonds of matter, it becomes imperious and persistent. In the moral as in the physical order there is nothing beyond cause and effect, these are ordained by a sovereign, immutable and unerring law. That which we may ignorantly deem an injustice of fate is but the reparation exacted for past transgressions. Human fate is the settlement of the debt contracted by ourselves unto the law.

Our actual life is therefore the direct and inevitable outcome of our anterior lives, just as our future life will be the resultant of our present actions. When the soul comes to animate a new body it brings with it, at each rebirth, the accumulation of its qualities and defects, all the good and evil harvests that we sown in the past. So, in the succession of our lives, we construct our moral edifice with our own hands, we build up our future, we prepare the environment in which we are to be reborn, the site that we are to occupy.

With the law of reincarnation, sovereign justice shines upon the worlds. Each being in possession of reason and conscience becomes the contriver of his fate. He forges or shatters at will the chains that rivet him to matter. The pitiful condition of some men is thus explicable, for each guilty life must be redeemed. The hour tolls when the proud soul must be born again in humble or servile condition, when the idle spirit must submit to painful labor. He, who has caused another to suffer, will in his turn likewise suffer.”

CONCLUSIONS:

- All spirits are destined to perfection and God gives all of them the means to achieve it.
- God in His all mercy and love has established the law of reincarnation as the means to achieve perfection.
- Reincarnation is the only way to explain the future and bring us hope, because it offers us the means to make up for mistakes and go through new experiences.
- Many are the facts that prove reincarnation, among them are the mediumistic communications; the experiences of memory regression; and the manifestation of multiple personalities.

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Spiritist’s Book”, chapter IV, item 171, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. Denis, Leon, “Here and Hereafter” chapter 11 (segment), translated by George G. Fleurot, revised by Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
3. Denis, Leon, “Here and Hereafter” chapter 12 (segment), translated by George G. Fleurot, revised by Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus in John 3, 1-12.
- To differentiate reincarnation from resurrection.
- To cite the characteristics among incarnation in superior and inferior worlds.

METHODS:*1. Let us read the following excerpt from the New Testament ⁽¹⁾ and discuss it:*

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ²He came to Jesus at night and said, "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

³In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again."

⁴"How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!"

⁵Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

⁷You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' ⁸The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

⁹"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

¹⁰"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? ¹¹I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹²I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?"

2. Let us now proceed with a discussion on the difference between reincarnation and resurrection.

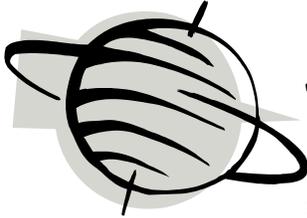
Accordingly with the Webster's dictionary:

Resurrection: act of rising from the dead.

Reincarnation: rebirth in new bodies or forms of life, especially: a rebirth of a soul in a new human body.

3. Our next step is to understand the characteristics of incarnation in superior and inferior worlds. For that purpose, let us read and discuss the following questions and answers extracted from The Spirits' Book ⁽²⁾.

Part I: **Incarnation in Different Worlds**



172. Do we accomplish all our different corporeal existences upon this earth?

"Not all of them, for those existences take place in many different worlds. The world in which you now are is neither the first nor the last of these, but is one of those that are the most material, and the furthest removed from perfection."

173. Does the soul, at each new corporeal existence, pass from one world to another or can it accomplish several existences on the same globe?

"It may live many times on the same globe, if it be not sufficiently advanced to pass into a higher one."

- *We may, then, re-appear several times upon the earth?*

"Certainly."

- *Can we come back to it after having lived in other worlds?*

"Assuredly you can; you may already have lived elsewhere as upon the earth."

176. Can spirits come to this world, for the first time, after having been incarnated in other worlds?

"Yes; just as you may go into other ones. All the worlds of the universe are united by the bonds of solidarity; that which is not accomplished in one of them is accomplished in another."

- *Some of those who are now upon this earth are here, then, for the first time?*

"Many of them are so; and at various degrees of advancement."

- *Is there any sign by which we can know the spirits who are here for the first time?*

"Such knowledge would not be of the slightest use to you."

178. Can spirits live corporeally in a world relatively inferior to the one in which they have already lived?

"Yes; when they have to fulfill a mission in aid of progress; and in that case they joyfully accept the tribulations of such an existence, because these will furnish them with the means of advancement."

181. Have the human beings who inhabit the other worlds bodies like ours?

"They undoubtedly have bodies, because it is necessary for the spirit to be clothed with matter in order to act upon matter; but this envelope is more or less material according to the degree of purity at which each spirit has arrived, and it is these gradations of purity that decide the different worlds through which we have to pass; for in our Father's house are many mansions, and therefore many degrees among those mansions. There are some who know this, and possess the consciousness of this fact, while upon the earth; and there are others who have no such intuition."

182. *Can we obtain any exact knowledge of the physical and moral state of the different worlds?*

"We, spirits, can only reply according to the degree at which you have arrived; that is to say, that we must not reveal these things to all, because some are not in the state which would enable them to understand such revelations, and would be confused by them."

186. *Are there worlds in which the spirit, ceasing to inhabit a material body, has no longer any other envelope than the pen spirit?*

"Yes, and this envelope itself becomes so etherealized that, for you, it is as though it did not exist. This is the state of the fully purified spirits."

- *It would seem, from this statement, that there is no clearly marked line of demarcation between the state of the latter in-carnations and that of pure spirit?*

"No such demarcation exists. The difference between them growing gradually less and less, they blend into one another as the darkness of night melts into the dawn."

187. *Is the substance of the perispirit the same in all globes?*

"No; it is more or less ethereal. On passing from one world to another, a spirit clothes himself with the matter proper to each, changing his envelope with the rapidity of lightning."

188. *Do the pure spirits inhabit special worlds, or are they in universal space without being attached to any particular globe?*

"The pure spirits inhabit certain worlds, but they are not confined to them as men are confined to the earth; they possess, in a higher degree than any others, the power of instantaneous locomotion, which is equivalent to ubiquity."

CONCLUSIONS:

- According to scientific findings, resurrection is an impossible fact, because it gives the idea of the restoration of a perished body, which cannot happen.
- In reincarnation, the spirit is linked to a brand new body.
- Incarnation in different worlds of the Universe is correlated to the level of evolution of the spirit. The materiality of the spirit's body diminishes in proportion to the spirit's purification. In worlds more evolved than the Earth, the spirit's body is less dense and thus less susceptible to life's trials.

REFERENCES:

1. The New Testament, John, 3: 1-12, New International Version, copyright International Bible Society.

2. Kardec, Allan, "The Spirit's Book", questions 172, 173, 176, 178, 181, 182, 186-188, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To interpret the meaning of the sentence: “In my father's house are many mansions”.
- To identify and explain the different categories of inhabited worlds and their main characteristics.

METHODS:

1. Begin this session with an introduction about the universe. Prepare a presentation about its galaxies (Milky Way and others), solar system and the Earth. Explore the immensity of it.

After the introduction read together with the class the following text⁽¹⁾.

IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE ARE MANY MANSIONS

1. “Let not your heart be troubled: Ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also” (John, 14: 1 - 3).


THE DIFFERENT STATES OF THE SOUL IN ITS SPIRITUAL WANDERINGS


2. The house of the Father is the Universe. The 'different mansions' are the worlds which circulate in infinite space and offer the Spirits who incarnate on them dwelling places which correspond their progress. Independently from the diversity of the different worlds, the words of Jesus also refer to the fortunate or wretched states of the soul in the spirit world. Conforming to whether the soul is more or less purified and detached from material lies, the ambient in which it finds itself will vary infinitely: in the aspects of things, in the sensations it feels and in the perceptions it has. While some cannot leave the ambient where they live, others raise themselves and travel all over space and the other worlds. While some guilty Spirits wander in darkness, there are others who have earned happiness, and these rejoice in a state of shining brightness while they contemplate the sublime spectacle of the great infinity. Finally, while inferior

Spirits are tormented by remorse and grief, frequently isolated without consolation, separated from those who were the object of their affections and punished by the iron gauntlet of moral suffering, the just Spirit, together with those he loves, enjoys the delights of an indescribable happiness. Also in that sense there are many mansions, although they are not circumscribed or localized.

3. As a result of Spirit teaching, we know that the conditions of the various worlds differ one from the other, with respect to the degree of elevation or inferiority of their inhabitants, amongst whom are those inferior to the inhabitants of Earth, both physically and merrily; some in the same category, yet others which are more or less superior in every aspect. In the inferior worlds, existence is all material, passions are sovereign and morality is almost nil. At the same time as the soul is progressing the material influences diminish, to such an extent that in the elevated worlds life is, by way of saying, all spiritual.

4. In the intermediate worlds good is mixed with evil, one or the other predominating according to the degree of advancement of the majority of the inhabitants. Although it is not possible to make an absolute classification of the different worlds, we can at least divide them in general terms by virtue of the state in which they are in, and the destiny they bring with them, based on the most predominant features upon each planet in the following manner: primitive worlds, destined to receive the initial incarnations of the human soul; worlds of tests and atonements, where evil predominates; regenerating worlds, where souls who still have to atone may absorb new strength by resting from the fatigue of fighting; blessed worlds, where goodness outweighs evil; celestial or divine worlds, inhabited by purified Spirits, where only goodness exists.

Earth belongs to the category of worlds of tests and atonements, which is why mankind lives encompassed by such misery.

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

2. Also, read together question and answer 55 of the Spirits' Book⁽²⁾.

55. Are all the globes that revolve in space inhabited?

"Yes; and the people of the earth are far from being, as you suppose, the first in intelligence, goodness, and general development. There are many men having a high opinion of themselves who even imagine that your little globe alone, of all the countless myriads of globes around you, has the privilege of being inhabited by reasoning beings. They fancy that God has created the universe only for them. Insensate vanity!"

God has populated the globes of the universe with living beings, all of whom concur in working out the aims of His providence. To believe that the presence of living beings is confined to the one point of the universe inhabited by us is to cast a doubt on the wisdom of God, who has made nothing in vain, and who must therefore have assigned to all the other globes of the universe a destination more important than that of gratifying our eyes with the spectacle of a starry night. Moreover, there is nothing in the position, size, or physical constitution of the earth to warrant the supposition that it alone, of the countless myriads of globes disseminated throughout the infinity of space, has the privilege of being inhabited.

3. After discussing the previous text, bring the following exercises:

Read carefully each sentence and mark the right alternative.

1. Official Science sees the plurality of the inhabited worlds as:
 - a. () A hypothesis with theoretical fundament already proved
 - b. () A hypothesis not demonstrated experimentally.
 - c. () A hypothesis demonstrated experimentally.
 - d. () A hypothesis without theoretical fundament.
 - e. () A hypothesis in which Science is not in charge of.
 - f. () All the above are false.

2. The belief in the plurality of the inhabited worlds is a basic principle of Spiritism that is based on the teachings of:
 - a. () Moses.
 - b. () Allan Kardec
 - c. () Superior Spirits
 - d. () Jesus
 - e. () The Promised Consoler
 - f. () All of the above.

3. The Earth is one of the planets in the Solar System. The latter is constituted by asteroids, 9 planets and a 5th order star, the Sun. The Sun provides light and heat and is one of the Milk Way' stars. Thus:
 - a. () It is likely that there is life in our neighboring planets.
 - b. () It is unlikely that there isn't life in our neighboring planets.
 - c. () If there is life on Earth and in the other planets of the Solar System, it is likely that there is life in the several stellar systems of the Milk way.
 - d. () All of the above are true.
 - E. () only the first alternative is true.

4. Our planet is a world:
 - a. () Destined to the firsts human reincarnations.
 - b. () It is in its way to the category of regeneration.
 - c. () Where Good and evil are equal standing.
 - d. () With the most morally advanced civilization in the Solar System.

Correlate the right with the left columns:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Primitive Worlds | () Worlds where good rules over evil. |
| 2. Happy Worlds | () Worlds in which souls replenish themselves |
| 3. Expiation and Trial Worlds | () Intermediary Worlds |
| 4. Regeneration Worlds | () Superior Worlds |
| 5. Celestial Worlds | () Primitive Worlds |
| 6. Worlds where passions rule | () Worlds that are destined to the first incarnations of the human soul. |
| 7. Worlds where there is a mixture of vices and virtues. | () Places where pure spirits inhabit |
| 8. Worlds where good rules over evil. | () Worlds where evil rules. This is Earth's current stage. |
-

CONCLUSIONS:

- “In my father's house are many mansions” means that the universe contains many worlds that serve as “houses” for the habitation of spirits.
- Each world is more or less evolved according to the spirits who inhabit them.
- There is an infinite cooperation among worlds and the spirits who inhabit them.



REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan. “The Gospel According to Spiritism”, chapter 3, items 2 – 5, translated by J. A. Duncan, edited by Alan Kardec Study Group.
2. Kardec, Allan. “The Spirits’ Book”, question 55, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To define transitory worlds.
- To clarify the purpose of the transitory worlds.
- To understand the difference between the spiritual colonies and the transitory worlds.

METHODS:

1. Begin by presenting the following text⁽¹⁾ and making a review/discussion of the plurality of the inhabited worlds.

“According to the statements of spirits, the earth, as regards the physical and moral qualities of its inhabitants, is one of the least advanced of all the globes of our solar system. It is stated that Mars is at a point even lower than that of the earth, and Jupiter to be greatly superior to the earth in every respect.

The sun is not a world inhabited by corporeal beings, but is a place of meeting for the spirits of a higher order. From thence, they send out the radiations of their thought towards the other worlds of our solar system, which they govern through the instrumentality of spirits of a less elevated degree, to whom they transmit their action by the intermediary of the universal fluid. As regards its physical constitution, the sun would appear to be a focus of electricity; and all the other suns seem to be identical with ours in nature and function.

The size of planets, and their distance from the sun, have no necessary relation with their degree of advancement for Venus is said to be more advanced than Earth, and Saturn is declared to be less advanced than Jupiter.

The souls of many persons well known on Earth are said to be reincarnated in Jupiter, one of the worlds nearest to perfection; and much surprise has been felt on hearing it stated that persons who, when here, were not supposed to merit such a favor, should have been admitted into so advanced a globe. But there is nothing in this fact that surprises us. If we consider, first, that certain spirits who have inhabited this planet may have been sent hither in fulfillment of a mission which, to our eyes, did not seem to place them in the foremost rank. Secondly, they may have had, between their lives here and in Jupiter, intermediary existences in which they have advanced; and thirdly, that there are innumerable degrees of development in that world as in this one, and that there may be as much difference between these degrees as there is, amongst us, between the savage and the civilized man. It no more follows that a spirit is on a level with the most advanced beings of Jupiter because he inhabits that planet than it follows that an ignoramus is on a level with a philosopher because he inhabits the same town.

The conditions of longevity, also, are as various in other worlds as they are on our earth and no comparison can be established between the ages of those who inhabit them. A person, who had died some years previously, on being evoked, stated that he had been incarnated for six months in a world the name of which is unknown to us. Being questioned as to his age in that world, he replied, "that is a point which I am

unable to decide; because, in the first place, we do not count time in the same way as you do, and, in the next place, our mode of existence is not the same as yours. Our development is much more rapid in this world; for, although it is only six of your months since I came here, I may say that, as regards intelligence, I am about what one usually is at the age of thirty in your earth."

Other spirits have given a great number of similar replies. And these statements contain nothing improbable. Do we not see upon our earth a host of animals that acquire their normal development in the course of a few months? Why should not men do the same in other spheres? Moreover, it is to be remarked that the degree of development acquired by a man at the age of thirty upon the Earth may be only a sort of infancy in comparison with what he is destined to arrive at in worlds of higher degree. Short-sighted indeed are they who look upon our present selves as being in all respect the normal type of creation: and to suppose that there can be no other modes of existence than our present one, is, in sooth, a strange narrowing of our idea of the possibilities of the divine action."

2. Discuss with the class the definition of wandering/errant spirits⁽²⁾

226. *Would it be correct to say that all discarnated spirits are errant?*

"Yes, as regards those who are to be reincarnated; but the pure spirits who have attained to perfection are not errant; their state is definitive."

230. *Do spirits progress in the state of erraticity?*

"They may make a great advance in that state, in proportion to their efforts and desires after improvement, but it is in the corporeal life that they put in practice the new ideas they have thus acquired."

3. Discuss with the class the definition of Transitory Worlds⁽³⁾

234. *As has been stated, are there worlds which serve as stations and resting places for errant spirits?*

"Yes; there are worlds which are specially adapted for the reception of wandering beings. Worlds which they may temporarily inhabit; a sort of camping-ground in which they may stay for a while, and rest after a too lengthened erraticity - a state that is always somewhat wearisome. Those worlds constitute intermediary stations between the worlds of other orders, and are graduated according to the nature of the spirits who are to come into them, and who will find in them the conditions of a rest more or less enjoyable."

- *Can the spirits who occupy these worlds quit them at pleasure?*

"Yes, they can leave them for any other region to which they may have to go. They are like birds of passage alighting on an island in order to rest and recover strength for reaching their destination."

235. *Do spirits progress during their sojourns in the transitional worlds?*

"Certainly; those who thus come together do so with a view to their instruction, and in order more readily to obtain permission to enter a higher region, and thus to advance their progress towards the perfection which is their aim."

236. *Are the transitional worlds of a special nature, and destined to be forever the sojourn of wandering spirits?*

"No; their position in the hierarchy of worlds is only temporary."

- *Are they, at the same time, inhabited by corporeal beings?*

"No; their surface is sterile. Those who inhabit them have no corporeal wants."

- *Is this sterility permanent, and does it result from anything special in their nature?*

"No; their sterility is only transitional."

- *Such worlds are, then, void of everything like the beauties of nature?*

"The inexhaustible richness of creation is manifested by beauties of immensity that are no less admirable than the terrestrial harmonies which you call the beauties of nature."

- *Since the state of those 'worlds is only transitory, will the state of our Earth, at some future time, be of that character?*

"Such has already been its state."

- *At what epoch?*

"During its formation."

Nothing in nature is useless. Everything has its purpose, its destination. There is no void every portion of immensity is inhabited. Life is everywhere. Thus, during the long series of ages which preceded man's appearance upon the earth, during the vast periods of transition attested by the superposition of the geologic strata, before even the curliest formation of organized beings, upon that formless mass, in that arid chaos in which the elements existed in a state of fusion, there was no absence of life. Beings who had neither human wants nor human sensations found therein a welcome refuge. The will of God had ordained that the earth, even in that embryonic state, should be useful. Who, then, would Venture to say that, of the innumerable orbs which circulate in immensity, one only, and one of the smallest of them all, lost in the crowd, has the exclusive privilege of being inhabited? What, in that case, would be the use of the others? Would God have created them merely to regale our eyes? Such a supposition, of which the absurdity is incompatible with the wisdom that appears in all His works, becomes still more evidently inadmissible when we reflect on the myriads of heavenly bodies which we are unable to perceive. On the other hand, no one can deny the grandeur and sublimity of the idea that worlds in course of formation, and which are still unfitted for the habitation of material life, are, nevertheless, peopled with living beings

appropriate to its condition-an idea which may possibly contain the solution of more than one problem as yet obscure.

4. Propose the following questions to the class and discuss with them their answers:

- 1) Why are there transitional worlds?
 - 2) What kind of spirits does live in those worlds?
 - 3) Why aren't there incarnated spirits in those worlds?
 - 4) Are transitional worlds and spiritual colonies the same thing?
-

CONCLUSIONS:

- “There are worlds which are specially adapted for the reception of wandering beings.”
- Transitory worlds may be a temporary inhabitation for those beings; “a sort of camping-ground in which they may stay for a while, and rest after a too lengthened erraticity - a state that is always somewhat wearisome.”
- Spiritual colonies are different from transitory worlds because the first correspond to the groups of disincarnates that exist in the spirit realm linked to this or that planet.



REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book” comment after question 188, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
2. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book” questions 226 and 230, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.
3. Kardec, Allan, “The Spirits’ Book” questions 234 – 236, edited by Brazilian Spiritist Federation, translated by Anna Blackwell.

OBJECTIVES:

- To understand what is a planet of trials and expiations.
- To explain why Earth is a planet of trials and expiations.
- To infer about Earth's future.

METHODS:

1. Divide the class into 4 groups. Assign one of the following texts to each group. Instruct them to read the text and prepare answers to the proposed questions for presentation to the other groups at the end of the class.

Group 1:**Primitive and advanced worlds**

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

A) Name all the characteristics of primitive and advanced worlds.



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“In qualifying inferior and superior worlds there is nothing absolute. A world is relatively inferior or superior only in relation to those other worlds which may be above or below it on the scale of progression. In taking the Earth as a comparison, we may get an idea of what an inferior world like by supposing us inhabitants to be similar to the primitive races or members of the barbaric nations, examples of which are still to be found amongst us today, these being the remnants of the primitive state of this planet.

In the most backward worlds the inhabitants are, to a certain extent, rudimentary creatures, having human form but devoid of all beauty. Their instincts have not yet softened to any sentiment of delicacy or benevolence, nor have they acquired any notions of justice or injustice. Brute force is the only known law. Without either industry or inventions, they pass their time in conquest of food. However, God does not abandon even one of His creatures; at the bottom of the darkest intelligence lurks a seed, sometimes more, sometimes less developed, of a vague intuition of a Supreme Being. This instinct is enough to make them superior one from the other and to prepare their ascension to a more complete life, for they are not degraded beings, but children who are growing.

In between the inferior and elevated levels are innumerable others. From the pure Spirits, dematerialized and brilliant with glory, it is impossible to recognize the primitive beings they once were; just as from the adult it is difficult to recognize the embryo.

In worlds which have reached a superior level, the moral and material state is very different from that which exists on Earth. As everywhere, the form is always human, but it is more beautiful, more perfected and above all else, purified. The body possesses nothing of the earthly materiality and consequently is not subject to the same necessities, sicknesses or deteriorations which the predominance of matter provokes. Due to the higher refinements, the senses are able to capture perceptions which the gross matter of this world obstructs. The specific lightness of body permits rapid and easy locomotion; instead of dragging painfully over the ground the body floats, as it were, above the surface or glides through the air with no effort apart from that of desire, just as the angels are depicted as doing, or as the manes in the Elysian fields. According to his wishes Man keeps the features of his past migrations and shows himself to his friends as they knew him, except for the fact that he now radiates divine light, and is transfigured by interior impressions which are always of an elevated nature. In the place of countenances discolored and dejected by suffering and passions, life and intelligence sparkle with splendor which painters have shown through the halo or aureole of the saints.

Very advanced Spirits suffer only slight resistance to matter, thus allowing body development to be extremely rapid, making infancy short and almost non-existent. With the absence of worry and anguish, life is proportionally longer than on Earth. In principle, longevity is in proportion to the degree of advancement of each world. Death in no way conveys any horror of decomposition; far from causing terror, it is considered a happy transformation because there is no doubt as to the future. During life the soul, being no longer constricted by compact matter, expands itself and delights in a lucidity which places it in an almost constant state of emancipation and allows completely free thought transmission.

In these blissful worlds relationships between peoples and individuals are always friendly, never perturbed by ambition to enslave their neighbor or make war. There are no masters or slaves; none privileged by birth, only moral and intellectual superiority which establishes all conditions and which ultimately gives supremacy. Authority receives and deserves the respect of everyone, as it is only given to those who merit it and is therefore always exercised with justice. Man does not try to elevate himself above another but only above himself, by striving for perfection. His objective is to ascend to the category of pure Spirit, although this desire is never a torment but rather a noble ambition which induces him to study ardently in order to become an equal. In these worlds, all the delicate and elevated sentiments of human nature find themselves exalted and purified. Hate is unknown, as are petty jealousies and the covetousness of envy. The ties of love and brotherhood bind all humanity each to the other so that the strong help the weak. Through a greater or lesser degree of intelligence, Man acquires possessions of a smaller or larger quantity. However, nobody suffers from want as no one needs to make atonement. In short, evil does not exist in these worlds.”

Group 2:

Worlds of trials and purifications

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

A) Why is Earth a planet of expiation and trials?

“What more is there to say about worlds of atonements that you don't already know, since you have only to look at the one in which you live? The great number of superior intelligences amongst your inhabitants indicates that the Earth is not a primitive world, destined to receive beings who have recently left the hand of the Creator. The innate qualities which they bring with them constitute a proof of their having already lived and achieved a certain degree of progress. But the number of vices to which they are subject also shows their great moral imperfections. This is why God has placed them in an ungrateful world, in which they can make atonement through and the suffering of the miseries of life, until they deserve to ascend to happier planets.



in an heavy work

Nevertheless, not all the Spirits who have incarnated on Earth came to atone. The races which are called savage were formed from Spirits who had only just left their infancy, and who found themselves, as it were, on an educational course for development through contact with more advanced Spirits. Later came the semi-civilized races, made up of the same Spirits as they traveled along their paths to progress. In general, these are the indigenous races on Earth, who will raise themselves little by little through the centuries, some of whom have already managed to reach an intelligent state equal to the more enlightened.

The Spirits who are in atonement are, if we may use the term, the exotic ones of the Earth; they have already lived on other worlds where they were excluded for persisting in wickedness, or for having been the cause of perturbation to the good people in those worlds. They therefore had to be exiled for a time to an ambient of more backward Spirits, so receiving the mission of helping them to advance as they bring with them more developed intelligences and the germ of the knowledge they have acquired. This then is how Spirits under punishment are found amongst the most intelligent races, and why the misfortunes of life seem so very bitter for them. This is because they have a higher degree of sensitivity and so are more highly tested by contrarities and sorrows than the primitive races whose moral sense is still obtuse.

Consequently, the Earth offers an example of a world of atonement and although the variety is infinite, they all have one thing in common: they all serve as places of exile for those Spirits who rebel against the Law of God. This means that these Spirits have at one and the same time to fight against the perversity of man and the inclemency of nature, which is doubly arduous, but which will develop the qualities of heart and intelligence simultaneously. God then, in all His goodness, allows punishment to become something which will benefit the spirit.”

SAINT AUGUSTIN (Paris, 1862)

Group 3:

Humankind's route to happiness: moral progress

Read carefully the following text⁽³⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the question as complete as possible.

- A) Why is moral progress fundamental for the future of humankind?
- B) What is the nature of Spirits who will inhabit Earth?



“The vast proportion of intellectual progress which has been accomplished is a great step, and marks the first phase of humanity; but alone, it is impotent to regenerate it. So long as man will be governed by pride and selfishness he will use his intelligence and his knowledge for the profit of his passions and personal interests. For this reason he applies them to the perfection of means for injuring others and of destroying them.

Moral progress alone can assure the happiness of men upon the Earth by putting a rein upon their bad passions. It alone can make harmony, peace, and fraternity reign between them.

It is this which will break down the barriers between them, which will destroy the prejudices of caste, silence the antagonisms of sects, by teaching men to regard themselves as brothers called to aid one another, and not to live at the expense of one another.

It is moral progress, seconded by the progress of intelligence, which will lead men to one belief established upon the eternal truths, not subject to discussion; and for this accepted by all.

The unity of belief will be the most powerful bond of union, the most solid foundation for universal fraternity, which has always been broken by religious antagonisms, which divides people and families, which makes one see in a neighbor a person to avoid - one to combat, exterminate - instead of a brother whom we should love.

In order that man shall be happy upon the Earth, it is necessary that it be peopled with good spirits, incarnate or discarnate, who desire only good. This time has arrived; a great emigration is being accomplished at this moment among those who inhabit it. Those who return evil for evil, and in whom the desire to do right is not felt, being unworthy of the transformed state of the Earth, will be banished from it, because they will bring only trouble and confusion, and would be an obstacle to progress. They will go to expiate their hardness of heart, some into inferior worlds, and others with terrestrial races behind them in development, which will be the equivalent of inferior worlds, where they will carry their acquired knowledge, and where it will be their mission to teach undeveloped beings this knowledge. They will be replaced by better spirits, who will make justice, peace, and fraternity rule among them.

The Earth, according to the intelligence gained from the spirits, must not be transformed by a cataclysm which would suddenly annihilate a generation. The present generation will gradually disappear, and the new one succeeds in the same manner without anything having been changed in the natural order of things.

All externally will pass along as is usual, with this difference alone, which is an important one, that a part of the spirits which are incarnated here now will no more be incarnated here. The children who will then be born, instead of being underdeveloped and inclined to evil, will be more advanced spirits inclined towards righteousness.

It acts then much less upon a new corporeal generation than upon the new generation of spirits. It is undoubtedly within this context that Jesus understood things when he said: "I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened." Thus, those who will expect to see the transformation brought about by supernatural or miraculous effects will be disappointed."

Group 4: The current status of our planet

Read carefully the following text⁽⁴⁾. Feel free to discuss topics addressed by the text with your group instructor. After the discussion, answer the question as complete as possible.

- A) What characterizes the epoch of transition in which we currently live?
- B) How the selection between the good and bad spirits will occur in our planet?

"The present epoch is a transition one; the elements of the two generations are mingling together. Placed at the intermediary point, we assist at the departure of one and at the arrival of the other. Each one signalized itself by its own proper character.

The two generations which follow each other have views and ideas totally opposed to one another. By the nature of the moral disposition, but more particularly by the intuitive and innate disposition, it is easy to distinguish to which of the two each individual belongs.

The new generation, being the founder of the era of moral progress, is distinguished generally by a precocious intelligence and reasoning powers, joined to the innate sentiment of goodness and of spiritualist beliefs, which is the unmistakable sign of a certain degree of anterior advancement. It will not be composed exclusively of eminently superior spirits, but of those who, having progressed already, are predisposed to embrace all the progressive ideas, and apt to second the regenerative movement.

That which distinguishes, on the contrary, undeveloped spirits is, firstly, the revolt against God by refusing to recognize any power superior to humanity; then the instinctive propensity to the degrading passions, to the anti-fraternal sentiments of selfishness, of pride, of the attachment for all that which is material; sensuality, cupidity and avarice.

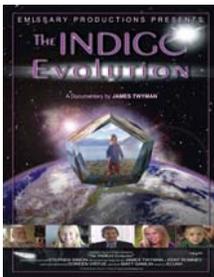
These are the vices of which the Earth must be purged by the removal of those who refuse to amend, because they are incompatible with the reign of fraternity, and as good men will suffer always by contact with them. When the Earth shall have been delivered from them, men will march without hindrance towards that better future which has been reserved for them here below as the recompense for their efforts and perseverance, looking forward to purification still more complete, which will open to them the entrance to superior worlds.

By this emigration of spirits it is not necessary to understand that all undeveloped spirits will be expelled from Earth, and condemned to live in inferior worlds. Many, on the contrary, will return here – those who have yielded to temptation by the force of circumstances and example; those who appeared to be much worse than they really were. Once delivered from the influence of matter, and the prejudices of the corporeal world, the greater part of them will see things in an entirely different light than when living, as we have numerous examples of it. In this they are aided by benevolent spirits who are interested in them, and who try to enlighten them by showing them the wrong in the way they have pursued. By our prayers and exhortations we can ourselves contribute to their improvement, because there is a perpetual connection, an unbroken chain, between the dead and living.

The transformation is very simple, entirely a moral one, which is according to the laws of nature.”

CONCLUSIONS:

- Worlds of trials and expiations are the ones where evil still predominate.
- Earth is at its final stages of being a world of trial and expiations.
- New generations have been coming to install a new era of moral progress on Earth.
- “The new generation, being the founder of the era of moral progress, is distinguished generally by a precocious intelligence and reasoning powers, joined to the innate sentiment of goodness and of spiritualist beliefs, which is the unmistakable sign of a certain degree of anterior advancement.”



*OBSERVATION: Nowadays, many researchers and educators have given the name of Indigo, Crystal and Rainbow children to this new generation of humankind. We recommend that the coordinator and the study group watch the movie **Indigo** and **Indigo Evolution** to get to know of it.*

REFERENCES:

1. Kardec, Allan, “The Gospel accordingly to Spiritism”, chapter 3, items 8 – 10, translated by J. A. Duncan, edited by Alan Kardec Study Group.
2. Kardec, Allan, “The Gospel accordingly to Spiritism”, chapter 3, items 13-15, translated by J. A. Duncan, edited by Alan Kardec Study Group.
3. Kardec, Allan, “Genesis”, chapter XVIII, items 18, 19, 27, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.
4. Kardec, Allan, “Genesis”, chapter XVIII, items 28, 29, Spiritist Alliance for Books, 2003.

Coordinator, do not forget to give next lessons assignments to participants.

OBJECTIVE:

- To review some of the fundamental concepts of the Spiritism that were discussed throughout the past 18 lessons.

METHODS:

1. Ask for volunteers and assign one or more topics from the list below to each volunteer. Instruct them to prepare a 10 - 15 minutes presentation. They may use any kind of audio-visual resource that they consider necessary; examples: overhead transparencies, presentations of part of a movie, slide show, readings of extracts from a book. During their presentation they should cover the objectives of each topic and use the reference cited.

Topic 1: Existence and Survival of the Spirit: Origin and Nature of the Spirits.**Objectives:**

The existence of the Creator (God) and 2 created elements: The material (cosmic principle) and the Spirit (intelligent principle).

To establish the difference between the spiritual and the vital principle, explaining and exemplifying each.

References:

“Genesis”, by Allan Kardec, chapter X, item 16-18

“Genesis”, by Allan Kardec, chapter XI, item 1-5, 7-9

Topic 2: The Promised Consoler by Jesus: The Third Divine Revelation in the Occident.**Objectives:**

Understand and give the meaning of “The Promised Consoler by Jesus”

Explain the relationship between Spiritism and the Promised Consoler (also called the third revelation).

References:

Chapter 1, The Gospel Explained by the Spiritist Doctrine, “I did not come to abolish the law”.

“Genesis” by Allan Kardec, chapter 1, items 26-28 and 45.

Topic 3: Spiritual Intervention in the Corporal World: Communicability from the Spirits.

Objectives:

Interpreter according with Spiritism the prohibition of mediumship communications found in the Old Testament.

Identify in spiritual communications as a means of human progress.

References:

Heaven and Hell, by Allan Kardec, chapter XI: The prohibition to evoke the dead, items 3-5 and 15.

Life and Destiny by Leon Denis, chapter II, pages 29-30.

Topic 4: Spiritual Intervention in the corporeal world: Moral requirements for a fruitful mediumship.

Objectives:

What are the requirements for our mediumship to serve higher moral purposes?

How can a medium contribute to the moral advancement of the society?

References:

“The Gospel According to Spiritism”, by Allan Kardec, chapter XXVI, items 1-4.

“The Medium’s Book”, by Allan Kardec, chapter XXXI, item 11.

Topic 5: Divine Justice: The Principle of Action and Reaction.

Objectives:

Establish the relationship between free-will and responsibility.

Explain the manifestations of the principle of action and reaction (or “law of cause and effect”).

Explain “fatality”.

References:

“The Spirits’ Book”, by Allan Kardec, questions 843-847 and 850-852.

Topic 6: Reincarnation as a form of God’s Justice and Mercy.

Objectives:

To identify reincarnation as a form of God’s Justice and Mercy.

To understand the objectives of reincarnation and how reincarnation can explain the diversity of moral and intellectual levels in the world.

To understand the consequences in our life of the reincarnationist thought.

References:

The Spirits’ Book”, by Allan Kardec, chapter IV, item 171.

“Here and Hereafter” by Leon Denis, chapter 11.



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

Workbook 3 – The Moral Laws