

Life in the Spirit World
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A point of great curiosity and, at the same time, of many misconceptions is the existence in the postmortem. In the Spiritist understanding, that is the period between incarnations and among different strands of thought and religious, there are a wide range of interpretations regarding this stage. Some consider as a certainty both the infernal areas with all the sort of suffering and paradisiacal places with all sorts of pleasures and / or supreme tranquility where happiness rules.

According to personal belief, some fear death while others go toward it.

Regardless of what they believe, conventional versions do not seem like a viable reality, because these situations do not resemble a kind of life, that is, they do not represent conditions that would give margin to individual improvement through experiences. One might question if the Creator of such a system would stipulate only a condition of improvement that would be the expression on Earth only. It is compatible with the idea of the randomness of the aggregation of matter in this conformation.

In the infernal zones some beings would work to inflict suffering on others, while in the paradisiacal regions there would also be a need for some beings to work to offer pleasure and satisfaction to others. The work, therefore, would still exist in these postmortem versions, although limited to some. So, who would be the workers and who would be the victims in one case and the elected in the other?

Thus, the need to find something rational drives us to seek more realistic understandings, that is, in both conditions, before and after death. Personal improvement through work and study for all should be possible. Thus, some would envision an end to suffering while others would not remain in perpetual inactivity.

No, it is not easy to understand another condition of existence, and, because of this difficulty, we try to simplify as much as possible and are subject to the most diverse misconceptions.

However, the difficulty encountered in understanding this issue may be due to our own imagination that disregard any similarity between the condition of life on Earth and that related to the postmortem. So, we should ask ourselves the following question: Why cannot be similar? In fact, there is no reason not to be.

In this context, what would be the occupation of disembodied spirits?

To answer this question, it would not be enough to describe it, but, for the improvement of understanding and acceptance, it is necessary to present a more elaborated reasoning.

Given the diversity of trends, preferences, and beliefs that we observe in humankind, it would not be possible to assume that all could coexist peacefully in a paradisiacal place given that it is not found on Earth. Even within the same household peace rarely prevails. If there were harmony between people, paradise would be right here.

It is observed that people who migrate from one location to another due to difficulties encountered in their places of origin tend to replicate the same behavioral pattern rather than adapting to local costumes, often reaching to the imposition of their own costumes. It is easily conceived of the impossibility of a paradise where souls would gather and do stuff. Thus came the idea of a paradise where nothing is done, the image of souls sitting on lawns with lakes or in the clouds.

The idea of hell, in turn, does not differ much. What is suffering for some may not be for others. Therefore, hell is portrayed as a very hot place, with fire burning everywhere, because this situation can be considered as suffering for anyone.

Thus, we perceive that both extremes cannot represent reality, not even as an approximation to reality.

In this restricted point of view, those considered to be more evolved, such as the so-called angels, saints, or any other denomination according to personal belief, are believed to exclusively care for human beings, spending their existence caring for their devotees or worshippers.

It is interesting to note that there is a tendency to consider that loved ones, after they part, also devote their existence to care for their loved ones on earth. According to this way of thinking, life in the postmortem would consist of solving problems, assisting, and even avoiding difficulties for others.

We must agree that none of these approaches seem very interesting to be occupied for all eternity.

Allan Kardec, the Encoder of the Spiritist Doctrine, in his questioning to the spirits responsible for the information, asks about the concerns of the disembodied souls [1]. The answer could not be deeper and, at the same time, simpler; they said that spirits “contribute to the harmony of the universe, performing the wills of God...” [1].

We realize, by this statement, that spirits have very important occupations and, as we can imagine, the harmony of the universe is not something trivial and demands lots of work.

Unless the universe is considered to be on its own, both materially and in relation to its inhabitants, paradise in eternal idleness does not exist, much less for the evolved ones to whom might be responsible for the most significant work.

In the continuation of the answer presented before, we observed two very interesting peculiarities. The first is that, as we can imagine, the task demands “a continuous work” [1], the second is that, although it is continuous work, it is not painful “like life on Earth, because there is no body fatigue, nor the anguish of needs” [1].

Thus, as we see, the more evolved spirits do not remain in idleness or simply watch over the inhabitants of the Earth as caretakers. However, there remains one point to be addressed, the situation of less evolved spirits.

Kardec also questions about the less evolved spirits and the answer is very interesting. They say that “everyone has duties to perform” [2].

It is commonly considered that God is responsible for the creation of everything and everyone, including the elect and the not elected ones. The elected would only be the usufructuary of the divine benefits, while others would provide the means for their satisfaction.

According to Creation as presented by Spiritism we are all responsible for maintaining the universe in which we live in, with each one doing what it fits according to one’s own capacity and field of action. With each one contributing, we are all participants in this great work. Thus, no one can be considered as elected, but aware of the task to be performed, providing a more mild and dignified life for those who find themselves in a lower hierarchical level in common human’s point of view. Those, in turn, aware that they have a task to perform in the Creation would be respected for what they are and much happier.

A question arises: What task is each one’s task?

Many think that they have or desire some fundamental and important role for the progress of humankind and, if it is not, it is not worth any effort. However, although all roles are important and essential, most tasks do not attract any attention. A good example is that of the cleaning teams, although essential for a healthy environment are little recognized and valued. Although a healthy environment in terms of hygiene is a basic need, many people do not live-in adequate locations.

Similarly to the cleaning service, a number of activities are important and essential to people’s lives. Some of these activities may make a difference to the lives of specific individuals and, therefore, are essential for them.

The Spiritist Doctrine brings the information that salvation, not in the theological sense opposing to eternal suffering but as essential for spiritual health, is only possible when living in the solid foundations of charity. Unfortunately, however, this statement is often interpreted as donation of inputs, material goods and care activities in general which, despite the great importance, it does not necessarily characterize charity in the sense that “without charity there is no salvation” as presented by Spiritism [3].

It is not intended to minimize the importance of donations and volunteer work, on the contrary, they are extremely meritorious and essential for those in need. However, this text seeks to improve

the understanding of what charity is and our response to so many other situations that we face on a day-to-day basis.

For institutions which the main activity is social assistance, the evaluation of the work developed is related to the number of people attended and the quality of the care in its most varied expressions.

However, in the case of institutions which main activity is spiritual improvement, such as religious and spiritist centers, social assistance activity should be a secondary objective, what does not mean that it should be disregarded or small, but it should not be the evaluation metric of the effectiveness of the institution.

For spiritist centers in particular, the evaluation of effectiveness should be the number of consciousnesses that have been freed or, at least, weakened the ties that keep people trapped in sufferings of various hues and, consequently, linked to a world in the condition of proofs and atonements such as planet Earth. In this approach, the evaluation of didactic practices and their adaptation to Spiritism's Pentateuch would be more relevant.

Although it seems to be only a mental exercise, understanding the occupation of the unbodied spirits gives opportunity to the improvement of all procedures related to institutions and ourselves as spiritists, because it will guide our existence as incarnated souls.

The main point is that, like all spirits, regardless of the level of evolvement, contribute to the maintenance of the harmony of the Universe despite being consciously or not. We all have duties to fulfill, whether aware of it or not.

For most of the earthly humankind, interrelationship with God is based on unconscious processes. For this reason, the "prophets" have always been necessary, in addition to the great revelations in the advents of Jesus and Spiritism.

The revelation brought by Jesus came to the present day through the descriptions of his teachings, better known as The Gospel, by the so-called Evangelists. Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John are the most known because they have been recognized by the Catholic Church, but these are not the only ones.

The Spiritism, in turn, is a revelation that was presented to humankind by those entrusted on doing so, that is, it is neither an account nor an interpretation, but the teachings were registered in their purest form as brought by the spirits. Spiritism is also known as the Doctrine of Spirits, for they were the ones who introduced it to the world. Allan Kardec has encoded the teachings in the form of books that are available to everyone, so we can no longer cry out for ignorance or difficulties in understanding. The responsibility of the study and dissemination of Spiritism increases considerably when compared to the disseminators of the teachings of Jesus after his bodily death, because the later are based on what is available, that is, reports from people who did not necessarily hear directly from Jesus.

Some of what has been said may not please many, however, with an open mind, it is easy to understand that a great deal of Jesus' teachings has changed over the years and even the very understanding of the Gospel. Regarding this issue, we find some alerts in the Spiritism's Pentateuch: "Within Christianity you will find all the truths. The errors in which has become enrooted are all human origin" [4] and "Dearly beloved, the time has come in which, when explained, all fallacies will become truths. We shall teach the exact meaning of the parables and show the strong correlation existing between what was and what is now" [5]. The first warning is from the Spirit of Truth (spirit) and the second from John the Evangelist (spirit).

From a pragmatic analysis of what was presented, it is verified that the social assistance in an institution or individually, despite the fact of its extreme importance, solves or minimizes problems and issues punctually and limited in time. On the other hand, it can be conceived that the liberation of consciousnesses from archaic atavisms that keep humanity trapped in the limitations of the material form, believing that everything is summed up between birth and death, seeking the unique satisfaction of material needs and senses exerts a much deeper action, with beneficial effects that last for eternity.

In the Spiritism's Pentateuch there are important alert with respect to what has been presented: "As for those of the common mass of men, who, after their death, remain for long hours in the state

of confusion and uncertainty of which you have been told by such, they go, during sleep, into worlds of lower rank than the earth, to which they are drawn back by old affections, or by the attraction of pleasures still baser than those to which they are addicted in your world; visits in which they gather ideas still viler, more ignoble, and more mischievous than those which they had professed during their waking hours” [6].

References

1. Allan Kardec; The Spirits Book, question 558.
2. Ibidem; question 559.
3. ___; The Gospel According the Spiritism, Chapter XV.
4. Ibidem; Cap. VI, item 5.
5. Ibidem; Cap. VIII, item 18.
6. ___; The Spirits Book, question 402.