

Jacira Jacinto da Silva
Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

THE FREETHINKING
COLLECTION:
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
1ST SERIES

Spiritism, ethics and morals

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Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

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THE FREETHINKING COLLECTION:
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



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PRESENTATION

“(…) freethinking elevates the dignity of man; through it he becomes an active, intelligent being, rather than a machine of beliefs.”

Allan Kardec (Spiritist Magazine, February 1867)

The CEPA - International Spiritist Association* and the Centre for Spiritist Research and Documentation (CPDoc) have the honor of presenting to both spiritist and non spiritist readers *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century*.

The first series of *The Freethinking Collection* aims to present, in a summarized way, but without prejudice to conceptual precision, the theoretical positions of the

* CEPA is the acronym, both in Spanish and Portuguese, for the previous name of the International Spiritist Association. CEPA used to stand for Confederación Espírita Panamericana. Its initials also created a word that reminded us of the symbolism suggested by the Spirits and used in the Prolegomena within *The Spirit's Book*.

so-called secular and freethinking spiritism, which has been developing in several countries in the Americas and in Europe, during recent years.

Edited in four languages - Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French - it aims to disseminate lay and free thinking spiritism as comprehensively as possible.

This perspective has been characterized by being an alternative look at spiritism, which was founded by Allan Kardec in 1857, as published in his masterful work *The Spirit's Book*, and its institutionalization and popularization in various regions of the planet.

As it spread, spiritism was subjected to processes of absorption and syncretism with the set of religious beliefs and practices specific to the historical and cultural context of each country and of each era.

In some countries, such as Brazil for example, the historical and cultural process of a catholic nature faced by spiritism resulted in the formation of another Christian religion, to the detriment of the principles of rationality and freethinking proposed by Allan Kardec for spiritism.

This phenomenon of syncretism has occurred with spiritism in several countries making it a minor religion, shifting it from its natural epistemological positioning, and causing it to lose its potential

to open perspectives in the fields of knowledge, especially in the areas of science and philosophy.

Hence the need for spiritists gathered around the CEPA and CPDoc, for a rereading of spiritist thought in an attempt to rescue the generous proposal of Allan Kardec, who sought to build a spiritualist, lay, freethinking, humanistic and progressive philosophy. These are fundamental characteristics so that spiritism could walk along the progress of knowledge, ethics, and spirituality in the contemporary world.

The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century intends to present to the reader some fundamental topics of spiritism from the perspective of this rereading, with the aim, therefore, of clarifying spiritist readers in general and those who are interested in these subjects.

The collection presents and elaborates, in this 1st series, a set of fundamental themes, which will allow a comprehensive and full-fledged understanding vis-à-vis the hegemonic thought prevailing in the spiritist movements of Brazil and the world. This gaze is proposed within the greatest spirit of otherness possible.

All topics were elaborated with a method that seeks clarity, conciseness, and precision with the aim

of providing fundamental introductory information on spiritism and the spiritist movement, from a lay and freethinking perspective.

The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st Century also aims to offer scholars and communicators of spiritism, as well as those engaged in the organization of courses, conferences and coordination of study groups, references, and support material to be used in didactic activities carried out by spiritist associations in general.

We believe that this initiative will contribute to a healthy debate on important issues of spiritism, as reflected in the transcendental spiritualist philosophy founded by Allan Kardec.

The authors of this 1st Series - Fundamental Themes - from *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st Century* are intellectuals originally from the spiritualist movements of Argentina, Brazil, Spain, and Venezuela who developed the following topics:

- **Spiritism in the lay and free thinker perspective**
Milton Rubens Medran Moreira (Brazil) and Salomão Jacob Benchaya (Brazil)
- **The immortality of the soul**
David Santamaría (Spain)

- **Mediumship: exchange between two worlds**
Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis (Brazil) and Yolanda Clavijo (Venezuela)
- **Reflections on the idea of God**
Ricardo de Moraes Nunes (Brazil) and Dante López (Argentina)
- **Reincarnation: a revolutionary existential paradigm**
Mauro de Mesquita Spínola (Brazil)
- **The evolution of spirits, matter, and worlds**
Gustavo Molfino (Argentina) and Reinaldo Di Lucia (Brazil)
- **Spiritism, ethics, and morals**
Jacira Jacinto da Silva (Brazil) and Milton Rubens Medran Moreira (Brazil)
- **Allan Kardec: founder of spiritism**
Matheus Laureano (Brazil) and Wilson Garcia (Brazil)

Spiritism, in the words of the important Brazilian writer and spiritist philosopher José Herculano Pires, remains as the “great unknown”. The shadows of misunderstanding fall upon it, preventing its original

brilliance from being appreciated as a philosophical proposal which reveals the horizons of the Spirit over modern thought, emphasizing the importance of reason and facts.

The Freethinking Collection: Spiritism for the 21st century aims, therefore, to shed some light on the spiritist philosophical proposal, with the purpose of illuminating its understanding by spiritists and non-spiritists as well as rescuing its revolutionary potential contribution to a new vision of the human being and the world.

This is a bold but necessary task.

Ademar Arthur Chioro de Reis

Mauro de Mesquita Spínola

Ricardo de Moraes Nunes

Organizers

CEPA - INTERNATIONAL SPIRIT ASSOCIATION

In *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century*, CEPA unfolds, in the various volumes that make up the 1st Series, the fundamental themes of spiritism. In the series that will follow, current issues of equal importance for societal living will be addressed.

CEPA - International Spiritist Association, was founded in Argentina in 1946. It was strongly influenced by the freethinking tradition that arose in the Spanish spiritist movement, shortly after the mid-19th century advent of the Spiritist Philosophy in France, under the direction of Allan Kardec.

Argentine spiritists, whose main characteristic was the defense of the progressive, secular, and freethinking character of spiritism, played a leading

role in the basis of thought that always guided CEPA members.

Since its founding, CEPA, initially called the Pan American Spiritist Confederation, has been working for the construction and consolidation of the philosophical and scientific nature of spiritism, as proclaimed by its founder Allan Kardec.

As an interpreter of spiritism in its original form, CEPA defines it as **“a science dealing with the nature, origin and destiny of spirits, as well as their relationships with the bodily world”** and as **“a spiritualist philosophy of moral consequences”**.

Its nature today is that of an International Spiritist Association, comprised by individuals and spiritist institutions from different continents. It is characterized by being an alliance of people and institutions sharing the same freethinking ideal, not compatible with vertical and authoritarian organizations within the spiritist movement.

Its main objectives are:

- (a) promote and disseminate the knowledge provided by spiritism, based on the thinking of Allan Kardec, under a lay, freethinking, humanist, progressive and pluralistic vision.
- (b) promote and support efforts for the permanent updating of spiritism.

- (c) promote integration between spiritists and spiritist institutions of all continents, sharing these same objectives.

Valuable scholars and thinkers gathered around CEPA have been expanding the scope of the Spiritist Philosophy, adding their efforts to restore its original progressive sense, unfortunately minimized when it is mistakenly read as a religious doctrine.

Spiritism free of adjectives is a universalist philosophy with liberating potential, and thus the reason for CEPA's commitment to its earliest postulates, upholding the historical context in force at the time of its birth.

The association of people around the study of spiritism, in its purest expression, has served for the aggrandizement of the spiritist philosophy, which can serve everyone, regardless of their beliefs and visions of the world.

In honor of the work and dedication of the authors, I leave an affectionate invitation for the reader to study and critically analyze their contributions, as a true freethinker.

Jacira Jacinto da Silva,
President of CEPA

CPDOC - SPIRITIST RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTER

CPDoc is one of the oldest working spiritist research centers in Brazil. Its main objective is the development and dissemination of studies and research of spiritist themes, using the appropriate methodology for each topic as well as the contributions of the various areas of knowledge. It seeks to contribute to the improvement of knowledge, as a whole and of spiritism specifically.

CPDoc was born in Santos (Sao Paulo, Brazil) in 1988, the result of the dream of young people interested in reinforcing their spiritist studies. It has participants from several Brazilian states and other countries. The works are published through its website, in books, in the press, and they are discussed in various events, especially at the Brazilian

Symposium of Spiritist Thought as well as at the Congresses and Conferences of CEPA, which it joined in 1995.

To date, CPDoc has in its collection the following books published or to be published:

- **Magnetismo e vitalismo e o pensamento de Kardec**, by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis
- **Um Blues no meio do caminho**, by Paulo Cesar fernandes
- **Centro espírita: uma revisão estrutural**, by Mauro de Mesquita Spinola
- **Teleco**, by Geraldo Pires de Oliveira
- **Igualdade de direitos e diferença de funções entre o homem e a mulher**, by Marissol Castello Branco
- **Mecanismos da mediunidade: Processo de comunicação mediúnica**, by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis
- **Criminalidade: educar ou punir?**, by Jacira Jacinto da Silva
- **Ensaio sobre o Humanismo Espírita**, by Eugênio Lara
- **Os espíritos falam: Você ouve?**, by Wilson Garcia

- **Doca e o menino – O laço e o silêncio**, by Wilson Garcia
- **Perspectivas contemporâneas da reencarnação (several authors), organized** by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis and Ricardo de Moraes Nunes
- **Os livros dos espíritos**, by Luís Jorge Lira Neto
- **Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century** (several authors), organized by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis, Ricardo de Moraes Nunes and Mauro de Mesquita Spinola

The CPDoc also offers online courses presenting spiritism within a secular and freethinking vision, using modern distance learning techniques.

All those interested in research can participate in the CPDoc if they know the fundamentals of spiritism and are hosted by a member of the group.

Information, published articles, CPDoc-promoted events, and online courses are available on the group's website:

<http://www.cpdocespirita.com.br>.

Wilson Garcia
President of CPDoc

PREFACE

When Kant formulated in the late 18th century his well-known appeal to the empire of reason, that is, *Sapere aude* or *Dare think!* he was bringing forward the most accurate summary of the spirit of the Enlightenment as the expression of the revisionist will of the whole cultural heritage at his time and of a renewing momentum that would challenge the ideological assumptions and the system of beliefs that sustained up to then the Western scaffolding. Hence comes the metaphor of the light underlying in the Spanish and Portuguese terms of *Ilustración* and found in the French *Esprit des Lumières*, the English *Enlightenment*, the German *Aufklärung*, or the Italian *Illuminismo*.

The enlightened thinking had as core idea an extraordinary trust in progress, in the human possibility of mastering and changing the world, and in the exaltation of the ability of reason to discover natural laws and guide scientific research.

On this premise, it claimed ownership of inviolable natural laws, including freedom from absolute power and refusal of dominant religious forms relying on the punishing God of the Bible, and superseded by a deistic and tolerant version. The theses of Enlightenment found an expression in politics, through a liberal-democratic proposal, based on the severability of powers under a social contract of all individual wills as the basis of sovereignty and law; in economics, by furthering the free initiative of trade and industry, and in education, as the engine for the advancement of individuals and the society as a whole.

Cognizant of this overreaching event and some other previous occurrences, the authors of this book, Jacira Jacinto da Silva and Milton Medran Moreira, have taken them as essential data to examine the origin and the doctrinarian layout of Spiritism, based on the groundbreaking work of the great French thinker, Allan Kardec. Failure to understand it as such caused many followers to assume its emergence in France in the middle of the 19th century as kind of magic, mystic or supernatural revelation.

Nothing more appropriate and timely than the serious, objective approach in this book, taken by this couple of notable scholars of the Kardecist doctrine, as well as salient jurists, in order to produce in its essential characteristics, the Spiritist concept of morals

and ethics. Indeed, a very complex matter that they manage to convey in a comprehensible wording for all readers. Renowned lay, humanist and progressive thinkers, unmistakably identified with the principles and values of Spiritism, Jacira and Milton have utilized the most legitimate sources to substantiate their considerations and proposals, beginning, naturally, with Kardec and his capital work, *The Spirits' Book*. The authors refer to it frequently, particularly in the third part, on *Moral Laws*, properly labelled by them as a *treaty of ethics*, acknowledging its full force and effect. The authors also quote well-qualified Spiritist writers from different times, namely Manuel Porteiro, Gustavo Geley, Herculano Pires, Deolindo Amorim, Jaci Régis, David Grossvater, Ney Lobo, Dora Incontri, Ademair Chioro dos Reis, Reinaldo Di Lucia, Paulo Henrique de Figueiredo, *et alii*.

Aware of the difference between ethics and morals from the perspective of the philosophic reflection, our authors have opted to deal with them as equivalent terms for the key purpose of establishing that Spiritism – a scientific philosophy able to produce evidence and offer reflections on immortality and continued evolution of human beings in successive reincarnation processes – is topped with an appeal to conscious transformation for the practice of good, solidarity and love, against the backdrop of a historical and

spiritual process where moral and social progress are interrelated and permanently impregnated.

This incredible work that forms part of the Free-Thinking Collection sponsored by CEPA is a most valuable contribution to understand the authentic moral and ethical dimension of the Spiritist proposal, reasserting its lay, open-minded, autonomous, humanist, and progressive proposal.

As every good book, this one will be read now with pleasure and consulted always with great benefit.

Jon Aizpúrua

*Venezuelan psychologist, economist, university lecturer,
former chairman of CEPA.*

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To the Executive Council of the International Spiritist Association (CEPA), for its unconditional support to the Free-Thinking Collection – Spiritism for the 21st Century;

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1

BACKGROUND

Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

This book, the creation of which I share with Jacira Jacinto da Silva, is intended to voice the Spiritist thought with a lay, free-thinking, progressive, humanist, pluralist and genuinely Kardecist approach. This work will focus on ethical and moral issues and their links to the Spiritist philosophy.

1.1 Morals – Convention, reason or revelation?

For all Spiritist, either religious or lay, the moral or ethical content of Spiritism is anyway of utmost importance. There are no differences for that matter:

Spiritism calls the human being upon continued

and progressive moral transformation. Even its pioneer, as noted hereafter, conceived it as a **philosophy of moral consequences**.

The *Free-Thinking Collection*, including this booklet, is intended, therefore, to make some distinctions as to the theoretical basics embraced by each of these two segments. The theme of this work, *morals and ethics*, is an attempt at proving that, while assimilated by most of its followers as a religion (unlike the segment that releases this collection), Spiritism has an ethical-moral content nailed down in philosophical positions of a strong historical tradition.

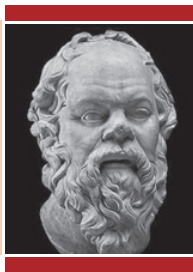
To brief readers on multiple reflections on morals and its basics, I thought about making some questions that have always puzzled human beings and continue somewhat present when dealing with this topic.

Let us go to the questions:

Does the human act, to be considered right or wrong, rely only on human conventions, as postulated, for instance, by Sophists, in the so-called classic period of Greek Philosophy?

Or, as Socrates (469-399 before Christ) advocated as opposed to Sophist relativism, good is of a rational nature, depending on knowledge and basically on *self-knowledge*, whereas evil results from lack of

For Socrates (469-399 a.C), unlike the Sophists, good and evil are mere human conventions of a rational nature.



knowledge? In the latter case, it is worth mentioning that virtuousness is identified with wisdom and vice with ignorance.

Acknowledging that the sense of good and evil is of a rational nature (and not merely conventional, as the Sophists said), there is the need to make a couple of additional questions:

When such awareness of good and evil became seated in the so-called human reason?

Furthermore: How and by whom was it introduced?

Putting all this together, we are driven to some other queries:

Can the human reason grasp the issue of good and evil?

Are human beings able for that? Or is it of a divine origin and within the divine jurisdiction?

Is it determined by supra-human forces, gods, spirits, revelations to be obeyed, no matter how contrary or inapprehensible can it be by the human reason?

In the history of the Greek-Roman-Jewish-Christian civilization where we are inserted, such topics were continuously assessed for the purposes of human conduct, with the above-mentioned assumptions being more or less predominant.

To date it is possible to approach ethics and morals as genuine reasoning, or as standards resulting from revelations, or as the result of human convention (or normative positivism, for instance), or overlapped to any positive standards, present in human conscience and an integral part of a universal order. We will delve into it further out, when dealing with natural law, or *iusnaturalism*, and its ties to Spiritism.

To date, for many, moral issues are dictated by religion; therefore, religion is ultimately responsible for determining what is right and what is wrong. The relationship of these persons with the divine is completely heteronomous, opposed to human autonomy, as labelled by philosophy. Peoples still exist around the world with civil and criminal laws, family and social customs, including dress, food, and sex codes, contemplated in their sacred books.

1.2 Christianity and morals

Christianity, the guiding principle of Western civilization, has exhibited over the course of its history different views of good and evil, and therefore, ethics and morals of human conduct, their source and nature.

In the Patristic period, in the first centuries of Christianity, with Saint Augustine (354-430) as its primary mentor, it was understood that humankind was the heir of sin (disobedience prompted the eviction of the first couple from Paradise). Humans lacked any reason to ponder on the moral rightness or wrongness.

If they were to get free from the original sin and be saved, humans needed to blindly obey the Catholic Church precepts. As the interpreter of divine revelation, the Catholic Church would tell what was right or wrong (or sinful).

For early Christians, the original sin deprived humans from the power of distinguishing between good and evil.



For Augustine, the entire universe comprised two realities: the *civitas divina*, or divine city, inhabited by God, his angels and saints, and the *civitas terrena*, i.e. the Earth, which held the *societas impiorum*, or society of the impious, sort of extension of the *civitas diabolis*, or the devil's city. As a result, humankind had no authority whatsoever to legislate on good and evil. The State, again, did not exist as a sovereign power. The only sovereignty resided in God, exercised by the Church (theocracy). Earthy governments had a duty of obedience to the Church.¹

The Patristic theological current was followed by another, less pessimistic and stringent current in relation to human beings, Scholastics. It occurred in the Middle Ages, when Christian theology, inspired in Aristotle's philosophy (384-322 before Christ), adopted some basics intended to match faith and reason. Its main character was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), regarded as *Doctor of Church*, like Saint Augustine.

During that period, although the Church, with all its earthy powers, encompassed virtually all the sources of knowledge, the fundamentals of State were being outlined as a sovereign entity that ruled human relations. Theology gave room to philosophy, even when the latter was taken as the servant of the former (*Philosophia ancilla theologiae*).

According to Thomas Aquinas, God was the only lawmaker of morals, enacted as *lex aeterna*. That is, perennial, immutable law, effective for the entire humankind forever and ever. Concomitantly, though, he acknowledged the existence of a natural law, sown by God in the human mind and containing the principles of the eternal law, beyond human reason. Surely, only below eternal and natural laws, both of them of a divine nature, human laws might be enacted.

Anyhow, eternal and natural laws took precedence over human laws. Thus, in case of conflict between human laws and eternal and natural laws, the latter ones ought to prevail. On this line of argument, in the event of conflict between natural laws and eternal laws, construed by the Church, humans should always abide by the latter.²

Again, even after the finding of a rational critical component in humans, natural laws were prioritized; faith governed reason and ruled human conduct.

Right now, the reader may wonder: *"What all that has to do with ethics and morals adopted by Spiritism, as a philosophy that showed up some time later, in the 19th century?"*

As a matter of fact, it is mostly related. In order to comprehend the true ethical or moral nature of the Spiritist philosophy, a humanist and evolutionist

doctrine, there is the need to track the Western vision –from its origin before Jesus, in the ancient Greece, throughout Christianity and ending up in the Enlightenment, which stepped out of the shadows of the Middle Ages and paved the way for Spiritism. Eventually, Spiritism emerged from a non-religious, lay perspective, based on a rational philosophy, from the core idea of the reality of spirits and their predominance over matter.

DID YOU KNOW?

The ideas of the European Enlightenment are of the essence to understand the lay, non-religious nature of the Spiritist morals.

1.3 The Enlightenment and lay morals

In fact, the Enlightenment marked a new way of human thinking that would characterize the modern age. The Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries gave a new stance to morals. Honestly religious in the Middle Ages, morals acquire now a lay, human nature. Setting aside the issue of the existence or not of God, it is understood that ethical values –termed axiology in philosophy– come from the very human conscience instead of God.

Multiple approaches, but all of them focused on humankind (therefore, the label of *humanism* for this movement) try to explain the origin and nature of human morals.

For some, morals are contained in the so-called natural laws, already addressed by Greek philosophers. Hence, they were called *iusnaturalism*, that is, the existence of a natural law that should govern all the rules of positive law of the people, the legislated one.

For others, the Empirists, morals are based on human interest as the quest of happiness, far away from grief.

Finally, for most philosophers during the Enlightenment, also reviving the theses from Greek philosophers, morals are a consequence, even an imposition, of reason. Rationalism partnered with Empirism, a modern philosophical synthesis, with Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) as its major representative, ended up detaching morals from religion to place them predominantly in the conscience of human beings and their creative experience.

Precisely that became the main focus of modern thinking, where Spiritism is inserted.³

Understandably, this historical recount of the philosophical thinking in the Western and Christian

*Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)
detached morals from religion
to place them in the domain of
conscience.*



culture looked necessary for our brief analysis on ethics and morals from the perspective of Spiritism, a doctrine born in the 19th century, when the ideas of the Enlightenment were settling down in Europe.

Thus far, we have knowingly made no distinction between ethics and morals. Are these terms synonyms?

We will try to tackle it in the next chapters, specifically based on the Spiritist proposal systematized by Allan Kardec when releasing *The Spirits' Book* in 1857.

2 MORALS AND ETHICS – THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH SPIRITISM

Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

2.1 The ethical and moral dimension of Spiritism

"Spiritist science and philosophy find their complement in the Spiritist ethics. Knowledge of the basics of this doctrine is not enough. They need to be interrelated and integrated into our lives as part of a process that prompts us to permanent moral transformation both in the inner, personal domain and the family and social environment".

The above excerpt from *The fundamentals of Spiritism* by Jon Aizpúrua⁴, reminds us of the concept

laid down by Allan Kardec in the conclusion of *The Spirits' Book*.

There, Kardec warned about multiple levels of adherence to the Spiritist proposals. First one is just to believe in the manifestations of spirits, that is, accepting Spiritism as an *experimental science*. Second one is the ability to perceive that such spiritual manifestations involve moral consequences. Finally, third one leads the subject to practice or try to practice such morals.⁵

Here it goes still another significant remark by Kardec in the *Gospel according to Spiritism*, a work intended to make a connection between the moral message of Jesus of Nazareth and that inherent in the Spiritist doctrine:

*"The true Spiritist can be recognised by their moral transformation and by the efforts they employ in order to dominate their bad instincts."*⁶

We can see from these fundamental concepts that Spiritism, while its founder classified it as "*science that deals with nature, the origin and destiny of spirits and their relationships with the material world,*"⁷ only assumes an effective identity and dimension of doctrine from its ethical and moral consequences, particularly from concrete human actions in line with such values.

Kardec, by way of preamble of the above concept, wrote in the same book:

*"Spiritism is at the same time, a science of observation and philosophical doctrine. As a practical science, it consists of relationships that can be established with the spirits; as philosophy, it includes all the moral consequences resulting from such relationships."*⁷

2.2 Morals and ethics and their meaning

Allan Kardec frequently used the terms *moral consequences*, or just *morals*, to underline the practical effects of human actions, necessarily stemming from the Spiritist knowledge. Instead of these terms, he could use the term ethics to define the set of values (axiology) that drives human beings in their evolution through their rational and cognitive development.

In fact, the assessment of these values in the theoretical field has resulted in the classical designation of ethics, the matter at issue of philosophers of all times, from the ancient Greece to date.

We would dare say, apropos this theoretical corroboration, that ethics is speculative, the study subject of human nature and actions in the world. In this regard, morals, viewed as the guide of human

conduct, either licit or illicit, are regulatory. In brief, ethics is the reflection of morals.

Also, the term *morals* refers to people's uses and customs, culture, distinctive behaviors resulting from their own beliefs, myths, religious traditions, historical time and geographical location. Take, for instance, its etymology: *mos/mores*, that is, *custom* in the Latin language.

Certainly, Kardec was aware of these semantic nuances by comparing or contrasting the terms *ethics* and *morals*. Thus, affording relevance to common features of both terms, we opted for the term *morals*, perhaps to make it more comprehensible for everyone. Note that the purpose of his clearly pedagogic work was to reach all the levels of human comprehension. Again, Kardec did it at a time in Western history when all standards were in transit from the religious domain, the *Christian morals*, to a concept derived from humanist ethics, based on reason, in human experience and empowerment.

In the next chapter, Jacira Jacinto da Silva, coauthor of this work, makes some other considerations about the meaning of ethics and morals. She underlines that morals in Spiritist terms may be confused under no circumstances whatsoever with *moralism*. The latter is a twisted view of the true human, natural ethics

resulting from universal values and supported by reason. *Moralism* is expressed in stringent impositions of what should or should not be done. The morals of Spiritism were identified by Allan Kardec and his spiritual interlocutors in the *natural laws*. *The Spirits' Book* devotes to this subject matter the entire third part, entitled Divine or natural law, divided into 11 chapters and containing 278 questions.

2.3 Matching divine or natural law with natural legislation

Precisely the term *divine* or *natural law*, referred to by the founder of Spiritism on the issue of morals in *The Spirits' Book*, is appropriate to resume the brief historical journey of human thinking in the Western culture, started in the previous chapter, in an attempt at answering the questions made from the outset. adas al comienzo de aquel momento histórico.

We already noted that modernity, led by the Enlightenment, moved the ethical appraisal of human conduct from the domain of faith and religious revelation to reason and human conscience.

This also holds true for Law, the human science based on the moral standards of people concerning rulemaking on what is construed as licit or illicit by

the State, prescribing and even imposing sanctions on the offenders.

Nevertheless, while such value judgment on righteousness or wrongness relied on traditions, customs and religious revelations, this time, from a clearly humanist viewpoint, it is based on reason.

The author of this chapter dealt with this topic in the book *Law and Justice – The Spiritist view*.⁸ Here, I briefly recorded the emergence in the 17th century of the School of Natural Law, led by Dutch Huige de Groot. He championed law based on human nature, consistent with universal ethics, apart from any religious revelation or positive laws, for that matter.

This was not news. The idea came from ancient Greeks, upheld by the Stoics, and also by Romans, with Cicero as a feverous supporter. Meanwhile, it earned the status of school of thought, by the force of modern rationalism. The School of Natural Law or *iusnaturalism* postulates that everyone should obey the action lines ingrained in human reason, whether or not standardized.

According to Huige de Groot, natural law would retain its validity even if God did not exist or even if not dealing with human questions.

In this regard, I wrote in the above-mentioned book:

According to Huige de Groot, natural law would retain its validity even if God did not exist or even if not dealing with human questions.



"Precisely this law precept, which is in nature and no more retained by gods, but by humankind, will result in the major movements marked by the Enlightenment in the 18th century, ending in the French Revolution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Spiritism, emerging in France in the 19th century, amidst the brand-new culture of modernity, philosophically and entirely assimilated that concept. Allan Kardec devoted the whole third part of *The Spirits' Book*, entitled *Divine or natural law*, to ethical and moral questions. Unlike Thomas Aquinas, who arranged them into a hierarchy, Kardec took divine law and natural law as synonyms.

"Natural law is the law of God. It is the only law that is truly necessary for human beings to be happy. It shows them what they should or should not do, and they only suffer misfortune when they depart from it."⁵ (question 614).

Further, in question 621, he declares peremptorily that such law is written in human conscience.

Alas! With such fundamental concepts, Spiritism moves the entire issue of good and evil, of righteousness and wrongness, from the field of revelation to the field of reason, construed as the ability of human conscience to know the natural law and abide by it.

Note that we refer to a pre-Freudian period. Then, reason overturned faith and control over human actions virtually ceased.

Back then, Psychology was taking its first steps and Sigmund Freud (1837-1885) had not cleared yet the vast world of the unconscious. Such aspects are taken into account in modern, humanist and progressive Spiritism. They are an invitation to put reason together with emotion and contribute enormously to fully comprehend the physical, social, rational and psychic dimensions of human beings.

Following this parenthesis, let us go back in history and locate again the adherence of the newborn Spiritist philosophy to the rationalist theories of morals and law.

By identifying in natural law the presence of God, ingrained in human reason, to such an extent of taking the divine law and the natural law

as synonyms, Spiritism reasserts its purely rational nature, instead of religious. Moreover, by envisaging the spirit as the *intelligent principle of the universe*, (*The Spirits' Book*, question 23), the philosophy shared by Kardec and his spiritual interlocutors created what thinker Maurice Herbert Jones labelled as *spirit-centered humanism*, that is, its source, origin and gradual development lie on the immortal spirit.

Maurice Herbert Jones (1929-2021), of Porto Alegre Spiritist Cultural Centerr: "Spiritism has adopted the spirit-centered humanism."



"Thus, just like a late flower in the spring of the Enlightenment, born on the soil fertilized by Rousseau's and Pestalozzi's Romanticism, Spiritism emerged, seeking, with its "spirit-centered humanism," to dialectically settle the conflict between the medieval thought centered on God and the organocentric humanism of the Renaissance -and the Enlightenment."⁹

The presence of natural law on human conscience, rather than a divine granted grace, as purported by Thomas Aquinas, to help humans

understand part of God's mysterious laws –as they, in their wider dimension, would be in the domain of faith, not of reason– bears witness to the immense potential of spirits, the divine spark, in the ongoing process on the way to perfection.

In the same article, Maurice Herbert Jones, gave a superb summary of the morals conceived by Spiritism.

"The big problem of ethics as the rational study of morality boils down to knowing if being good is desirable and, if so, how can human beings be persuaded into being good. Spiritism answers to this tricky question with the idea of evolution and, above all, with the principles of reincarnation and causality that offer a very rich, rational substratum for the conscious adoption of a behavioral model grounded on racial and social tolerance, thus outlining Socrates' dreamed of natural ethics, capable of building a morality system independent from theological beliefs."

To this clever synthesis we could add: natural law, as conceived by Spiritism, seated in the conscience of the rational being, emancipated from theological coercion and inspired by the natural law of the Enlightenment, is stimulated by the conviction of constituting the way to happiness. The revolutionary statement in the aforementioned question 614 of *The Spirits' Book*, according to which human beings are

unhappy only when they depart from natural law, breaks with the Jewish-Christian tradition according to which human beings are the *heirs of sin*, therefore, they would be doomed to eternal condemnation, released only by the grace of a redeemer and only after meeting certain requirements of ritual order and submission to faith.

To the contrary of that pessimistic view of theology, spirit-centered humanism, adopted by the Spiritist philosophy, visualizes for spirits, created *simple and ignorant* a destiny of happiness, to be built by them, through liberating knowledge, prompting them to practice natural ethics.

It is worth mentioning that only the practice of good leads to happiness.

DID YOU KNOW?

Inspired in the ideas of the Enlightenment, Spiritism moved the issue of morals from the scope of faith to the sphere of reason.

2.4 What about the Spirits' lesson?

Since knowledge of natural law is deep-rooted in the essence of humankind, one wonders at this point in time, what is the value, then, of the moral lesson of spirits, claimed by the doctrine as its backbone?

This revealing feature ascribed to Spiritism is relevant indeed, to such an extent of being designated *the third revelation* in Allan Kardec's primary works, in company with those of Moses and Jesus.

It is an appropriate question. Kardec, in dealing with the spirits' statement about divine or natural law being written *in the conscience* (*The Spirits' Book*, question 621), immediately asked:

"Since humans carry God's law in their conscience, why does it have to be revealed to them?"

Apparently, there is a contrast between reasonability and revelation.

The questions made throughout the elementary work of the Spiritist philosophy face this probable contradiction, justifying the necessity of incarnated spirits to be constantly emboldened and reminded of what they carry in their conscience for the purpose of their moral upgrade. Question 622 explains: *"In every year individuals have received this mission. They are high order spirits who have incarnated with the purpose of enabling humankind to progress."*

Naturally, some hurdles slow down the ultimate moral progress destined for human beings by vocation. The main ones, according to spirits in question 785, include pride and selfishness.

Curiously, such obstacles to moral progress come precisely from intellectual progress, also destined for spirits.

While incarnated spirits advance intellectually, *"[p]rogress itself seems at first glance to double the intensity of these two vices by developing ambition and the love of wealth."*

Initially, this makes them proud and selfish. Meanwhile, research in quest of knowledge casts light on the spirits, causing them to learn about the excellence of modesty and solidarity. Furthermore, Kardec's interlocutors affirm: *"It is thus that everything is related in the moral world as well as in the physical, and that good is brought out of evil itself."*

Of note, the evolution process of spirits in successive reincarnations is complex, necessarily painful and slow. It requires, besides the indispensable individual task, the assistance of those who have passed through the stages that linger long for some others. In this way, they can understand better their troubles. Compassion is of the essence in the practice of love, solidarity and education.

Therefore, *revelations*, either in the context of religions or retrieved from multiple experiences of humankind in the areas of science, of philosophy, of

the lessons of history in multiple fields of expertise, should be regarded by humankind as appropriate, in accordance with their degree of development and moral progress.

Revealing means discovering, being able to read and interpret the great book of nature. Such learning will hardly occur without the assistance of masters and guides. In any case, this does not replace the learner's central role.

2.5 Is Spiritism the third revelation?

Designating Spiritism as the *third revelation* could be a good metaphor, consistent with the Western and Christian culture where we are immersed.

The Old and New Testaments offer allegories and lessons translating a very rich historical and cultural experience. In this context, Spiritism features Jesus of Nazareth as the guide and model for humankind. (*The Spirits' Book*, question 625).

For its part, the universal character of the divine laws, spirits say, was acknowledged and taught in the course of time by "*all who have meditated on wisdom and have been able to understand and teach these laws... from the remotest times. Though their teachings were incomplete, they prepared the ground*

to receive the seed. Since the divine laws are written in the book of nature, men and women are able to understand them as soon as they want to look into them. That is why the precepts of the divine laws have been proclaimed by moral persons in all ages and also why we have encountered their elements –though incomplete or altered by ignorance and superstition– in the moral doctrines of all cultures that have left barbarism." (The Spirits' Book, question 626).

Such clear concepts adopted by Spiritism take it to up to a level above any religious system. Nonetheless, in view of the historical and cultural context, some regard Spiritism merely as a new belief, rather advanced in comparison with the previous ones.

From this linear perspective, Spiritism can find roots in the Jewish and Christian faiths. Only in this way one can understand the reason why even its founder introduced it as the third revelation.

From a wider perspective, its seasoned concept will be necessarily tied to every endeavor to get to know humans and the world. Spanish writer of the 19th century, Manuel González Soriano, was keenly aware of it when recognizing in the Spiritist philosophy "*the essential synthesis of human knowledge applied to research into truth.*"¹⁰

Manuel González Soriano (1837-1885): "Spiritism is the essential synthesis of human knowledge."



Accordingly, depicting Spiritism as a revelation, let alone the third revelation, is not that appropriate. We take sides with Brazilian Spiritist thinker Reinaldo Di Lucia. To his mind, *"there is no need to insist on the thesis of revelation. The diverse meanings afforded to this word are just confusing and explain nothing."*¹¹

Rather than a revelation, Spiritism should be admitted in its own right because of its immense ability to capture from multiple other scientific, philosophical, historical and ethical revelations the substance of each of them to offer humankind a new paradigm of knowledge, based on the immortality and evolution of spirits and their loftiest attribute, *i.e.*, reason. And this reason, as postulated by Kant, is an ally with and enriched by experience.

Hence, progressive Spirits face the challenge of releasing Kardec and his philosophical proposal from

the spatial, time-related, Biblical, Evangelistic cage and place it in a vast, boundless field, to answer the questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where do I go?

2.6 Knowledge committed to freedom

The spirits that engaged with Kardec in a long, universalist and non-sectarian talk resulting in the Spiritist philosophy did not introduce themselves as the interpreters of a new moral order. Nor did they deprive their addressees from their right to believe or not as they please. Such spirits were not moralist advisors. Instead, they invite us to seek together, in the book of Nature, the laws stemming from it, fully consistent with the rationality able to be conquered by the modern humankind.

Nevertheless, this does not preclude good and well-meaning spirits –through the natural tool of mediumship, the factual basis of the philosophy systematized by Allan Kardec– from showing up as advisors and rescuers of the troubled incarnated, unable or unaccustomed to find, deep inside their conscience, the beacon leading them to the stages of balance and happiness throughout their incarnation experiences.

However, individual responsibility and moral autonomy must prevail always in building our own destiny.

Paulo Henrique de Figueiredo rightly said that Spiritism offers us *"the amplest status of freedom and individual responsibility. Spirits are their own arbitrators. Aware of their destiny, they plan their challenges and choose their trials on their own. While moral suffering is a natural consequence, happiness is in proportion to the conquest of perfunctory charity, wisdom, involving them in the divine creation, taking an active and progressive part in universal harmony."*¹²

Therefore, Spiritism is above all the doctrine of freedom, of moral autonomy, of responsibility predominant in life and natural laws, and written in the conscience of moral spirits.

Allan Kardec proposed his spiritual interlocutors in the third part of *The Spirits' Book* to divide the study of divine and natural laws into ten sections, including the laws of worship, labor, reproduction, preservation, destruction, society, progress, equality, freedom and, finally, the law of justice, love and charity.

The spirits observed such division. It seemed to them that it covered *"all the circumstances of*

life, which is the essential point." Meanwhile, they pondered that such division *"although like other classification systems, it does not contain anything absolute."* And they concluded, *"The last law is the most important since through it humans can advance the farthest in the spiritual life – it sums up all the others."*⁵ (*The Spirits' Book*, question 648).

Thus, a brilliant treaty of ethics was produced from that dialogue between the incarnate and the disincarnate. Overall, it covers the major questions posed by humans about deity, material and spiritual life, and social and family relations, guided by noble feelings of justice, love and charity. The topics tackled there continue up-to-date. In light of their extemporal foundations, they are fully applicable to the characteristics of each era, to new challenges in a world in constant social, political, scientific and technology changes.

DID YOU KNOW?

Spiritist philosophy synthesized all the great divine or natural laws into three fundamental values: Justice, Love and Charity.



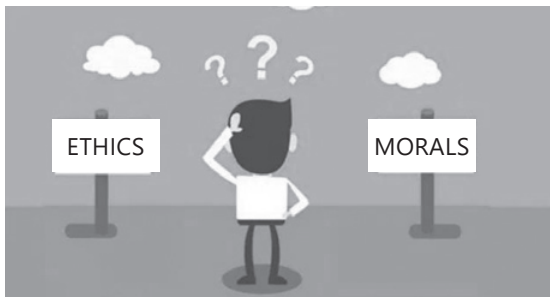
3 ETHICS AND MORALS, MORALISM AND MORALITY

Jacira Jacinto da Silva

Knowledge is the foundation of human actions; hence, the structure of every human being can be inferred from individual knowledge. Nonetheless, in some situations, actions in the world look like far away from culture and intellect.

This chapter is intended to analyze some important lessons learned from the Spiritist study and highlight the need to make them part of the ordinary life. The practice of ethical-moral basics is discussed.

3.1 Retaking the concepts of ethics and morals



I avail myself of Jon Aizpúrua's definition of Spiritism to back my presentation in this book:

*"(...) is an authentic philosophical knowledge, of a rationalistic and open-minded style, relying on a sound scientific foundation and translated into immense consequences for moral and social change in the world."*⁴ (p. 37)

Similarly, I deem it appropriate to reflect on the following introduction by author Fabio Renato Villela in the book *Modern and Contemporary Philosophers*:

"We are living in a particular and paradoxical era. On the one hand, there is the cult of matter, the instantaneous, the superficial. On the other hand, there are people in quest of some essence, some transcendence, beyond immediacy and securing

them the status of thinking, feeling and believing beings.

Generally, people seek such transcendence in religions, sects or mystic techniques singing to the tone of fashion. Nevertheless, in realizing their emptiness, they proceed to find an answer to their questions in a rather dense and deep thought. They proceed to classic philosophy."¹³

Perhaps we could contribute somewhat with those who pursue such knowledge anchored in philosophy.

In order to align these ideas, some terms are defined below.

Moralism:

A set of strict and stiff rules, characteristic of those in search of some essence in mysticism, religions and sects.

From Latin "moralis" of "mor-" "mos" = customs, the term "moral" in a wide sense is the theory of "values and principles" that rule the human conduct.¹³

In the words of Jaci Régis,

"Moralism, has been used as a tool of manipulation and control, gradually defeated by spirits insofar as

*they mature and grant themselves the right to set the rules of behavior."*¹⁴ (p. 114)

It is sort of distorted morals whereby some people impose their personal beliefs and own views of morality. It is a paradoxical practice that attacks dissenters, showing attitudes contrary to the invoked morals.

Morality:

This term is the expression, a least for specific societies, of a consolidated sense of values.

*From Latin "moralitas," it means a set of values and principles in a society. It also means the good or bad quality of an action, a fact, when the judgment is based on current moral standards.*³

Ethics:

Since this work assumes humanism and the challenge of human relations in the evolutionary journey of spirits, Emmanuel Lévinas' beautiful lesson on ethics is a must.

*"First thing is that there is no ethics when considering one individual only; there is no ethics if built on the self, deemed as the prototype of the entire humankind. **First and foremost, ethics***

*is a primary relationship. This relationship is the principal fact; it is the frontal ontic where the ontology builds upon and that rationality itself supposes and demands.*¹⁵ (p. 219) (Our emphasis added).

*Ethics or philosophy of morals deals with the reflection on the fundamentals of the moral life.*¹⁶

To the extent that the co-author of this work, Milton Rubens Medran Moreira, cleverly and properly elaborated on morals and ethics in the previous chapter, the subject permeates the whole book.

In spite of the existing, well-identified differences nowadays among these concepts, depending on the context, words may carry a similar meaning.

Moral/morality may be synthetized to guide human actions, marking out what is regarded licit or illicit, such as *"customs, rules, taboos, and conventions, in an expression of certain common form, social standards"*.¹⁷

Therefore, it does not identify itself with authoritarianism or totalitarianism; nor does it contemplates a conduct regulated by the well-known and old *moralism*. As far as we are concerned, Spiritist morality is enshrined in ethics as a value

expressed in human knowledge, in line with universal values. For this reason, it cannot be static, which is the case for absolute and immutable regulations contained in moralism, which do not make room to new or *different* things.

Herculano Pires cast light on the matter:

*"(...) [conscience] reflects itself the natural eagerness for transcendence of the soul, which is the individualized spirit, the specific substance of mankind. The governing law of such substance is ethics, which, in Latin languages usually overrides and controls over morals. All of the practical guidelines on morals are governed by the theoretical principles of ethics. The synchronous ethical-moral set forms the conscience."*¹⁸ (p. 70)

That conscience and human freedom allow people to make progress, rethink, recreate, go ahead and, therefore, promote significant changes as the main character of substantial projects on social transformation.

In line with Herculano Pires, David Grossvater wrote down:

*"Ethics is a matter of personal conscience in human conduct, through which it is developed. Ethics is not the premise, but the corollary, the consequence of our convictions. For this reason, it was laid down as "ethical-social projections."*¹⁹ (p. 25)

The word ethics is usually associated with the substantiated study of moral values, philosophically built to, likewise, drive human actions in a society. There is not a set of rules, understood as an unavoidable guideline in a social context. To the contrary, it prompts research for better comprehension of human nature and the effects of social performance.

In a colloquial context, ethics is synonym with honesty, correction, respect, "(...) *the ends and values of moral performance; ideas of freedom, liability, duty, obligation, etc.*"²⁰ (p. 67) Ethical, for instance, was René Descartes' conduct. He protracted the release of a treaty for three years in order to revise it, making sure that nothing written there may harm anyone.²¹ (p. 63)

In times of slavery, masters were comfortable with such a reality. Naturally, they shielded themselves in the morals effective by then, when slavery was lawful.

Since ethics involves the study of a set of moral values prevailing in a group or individual, it makes sense to infer that the ideal opposite to slavery gained strength in the course of time, ending up in shifting such a value. Unarguably, slavery is inadmissible nowadays. Hence, ethical maturity pressurizes current morals.

The difference between ethics and morals is something natural today, but this was not always

the case. Many philosophers in the past made no distinction. Allan Kardec, for instance, adopted the expression *morals* in reference to specific circumstances where the use of the word ethics was rather appropriate, as noted by co-author Milton Medran in Chapter 2.

Philosopher Fabio Villela said:

*"Taking moral and ethics as synonyms is a mistake. Broadly speaking, ethics is a concept superior to the concept of morals, inasmuch as the latter one is just the coding of the standards set out by ethics."*¹³

And I conclude this discussion as follows: human actions are driven by ethical values, which, as a whole, influence human morals. Otherwise, individual actions are regulated by these values.

If a distinction between these concepts is to be made, we could say that ethics is linked to the substance, the rational study of moral choices in order to lead human actions towards the common good. Morals are tantamount to a code of conduct that imposes sanctions, though covert, in the daily practice.

*"Ethics is a feeble plant that we need to water everyday, for it not to lose vital force, the ability to move ahead, fertility."*²² (p. 15)

3.2 Morals and moralism

Multiple studies have revealed the damage caused by religious obsession to humankind. On the pretext of *obeying God's will*, humans have committed atrocities, far from the morality necessary for the advancement of individuals and social groups.

Alberto Cuauhtémoc Mayorga Madrigal, from Guadalajara University, an expert in bioethics in the social and regulatory contexts, opines:

*"History has produced clear evidence of terrible attacks against humankind, committed in the name of unquestionable moral stances. This reminds us of apartheid, Nazism, the Inquisition, or the burning of the Alexandria Library, to name just a few of the most relevant events."*²³

Sad events throughout history occurred against the backdrop of Western religions, in the name of Jesus, one of the major benchmarks of love for humankind. Incidentally, Spiritism admires, applauds and feels inspired by Jesus of Nazareth, whose life was useful as the framework of humankind, so great was his impact. Like many others (Buda, Rosa Parks, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa of Calcutta etc.), he is not identified with Jesus Christ, taken as a Christian myth and the only example of behavior.

Take note of the Manichean stance where people and events are placed in two polarities, i.e., good/evil, fair/unfair, pretty/ugly. It is imprinted in religious moralism, or in false religious morals that many a time deface morals.

The advocated keynote does not ignore our role of spirits learners on planet Earth; nor does it require unattainable sanctity. Otherwise, it would result in hypocrisy. It is worth remembering that in his timely cogitations, Deolindo Amorim²⁴ (p. 132) advised that being a Spiritist requires something else than verbalizing concepts, expected instead to be committed to moral precepts and to the Spiritist philosophy.

Spiritism offers safe guidance to our evolution in *The Spirits' Book*, particularly the third part, on *Moral Laws. Reading, study and meditation of these moral laws represent a life program.*²⁵ (p. 127) In the meantime, this is just one path and the timing and conditions of every inhabitant on planet Earth may not be dismissed. Some are ahead of our time; some others are lagging behind. Compassion is burdensome, yet necessary; putting ourselves in the place of others; trying to understand their choices.

In this context, freedom plays a decisive and relevant role. Only one kind of progress is interesting,

that is, the one built upon the reality of thinking persons, observing their limits and conditions for comprehension.

Even the law of humans, no matter its troubles, has adopted the principle of guilt in proportion to the ability to understand the offense. Within the scope of human knowledge, thinking otherwise would be inconsistent. Question 830 of *The Spirits' Book* certifies: "(...) *the responsibility for evil is relative to the means at your disposal to comprehend it.*" In the words of Gustave Geley,

*"(...) Everything necessary for our improvement, for our advancement or evolution, should result from our individual efforts. Therefore, within the limits of what is possible, human morals should set individuals free."*²⁶ (p. 145)

Is it desirable to prepare a code of moral conduct from the Spiritist philosophy? Clearly, the point is not to set out its own ethics. Human beings acquire morality by realizing their acts. However, life experience is very different according to the individual comprehension ability, including an endless range in the scale of spiritual progress.

The purpose of the Spiritist philosophy is to help improve performance, build a fairer society, and establish more respectful, supportive human

relations, among others. Nevertheless, such values may not be imposed. Therefore, depending on their interests, individuals will clarify and widen up their ability to excel themselves and further new behavioral patterns. Under the aegis of freedom with responsibility, we suffer the natural effects of our acts, and we learn as well.

A timely note by Jaci Régis proposes consistency with knowledge, the adequacy of language and concepts, without compromising the substance of the philosophy. *"The Spiritist doctrine is capable of modifying certain concepts without losing its grounds."*²⁷ (p. 68)

Search for knowledge and learning takes humans to different evolutionary stages and this provides a rationale for the different views of the world. As long as we prefer to remain in ignorance and prejudice, under the natural law that exposes us to the repercussions of our actions, we will have a meager harvest.

Alienation leads to stagnation, and no success can be expected from that. We must acknowledge that only through an act of unreasonable selfishness we could expect *good luck* by a miracle of nature.

Certainly, the Spiritist philosophy helps us to outline our trajectory from our actions, including individual and collective accomplishments.

A liberating philosophy, it does not result from a system of penalties and punishment, or of rewards. Definitely, such bases are absent in Spiritism, at least in this updated, human and progressive vision of the Spiritist philosophy.

The Spiritist proposal involves overtaking the stages of abuse and investing in human beings. This means that the challenge relies on laying favorable conditions for spiritual maturity, awakening the general interest in human, dignifying, clarifying, altruistic, constructive and proactive actions.

In this manner, the effort always falls to us. The life conditions we experience today in the world are the result of our previous constructions. Therefore, it does not seem very sensible to wait for a messiah or any kind of *savior of the homeland*, set to change humankind or remove modern scourges. Each one grows on their own and every one influence the collective.

The Spiritist philosophy is at odds with gloomy proposals, adapted to a pseudo moralism that imposes insincere conducts. Bigotry inhibits reflection, even though many religious sects rely on the existence of alleged *representatives of God*, saints, gurus, ministers, mediums, etc. It is an unreasonable, blind belief, considering that planet Earth accommo-

dates spirits from different evolutionary levels and fully developed spirits are not expected to reside here. Sandra Stoll noted:

*"Sanctity results from a social production, defined and regulated by conventions, expressed as a socially differentiated way of being."*²⁸ (p. 193)

A result from the author's statement is that labels not always match with the contents. In other words, such status does not stem naturally from actions, but from conventions. The purpose of the Spiritist philosophy is to foster understanding, comprehension, voluntary change, taking distance from encouraging standardized, declared sacred behaviors, let alone under threat of condemnation after the physical death.

The true Spiritist ideal joins, in the practice, words and actions together, on the understanding that we are far away from attaining such an ideal. Since we are evolutionary spirits, we try good experiences and insist many a time on bad experiences. However, we ignore that the separation between what we say and what we do is not advisable.

Mario Sergio Cortella suggests active hope, leading to the *feasible original* to do the right thing. Mean Spiritist in daily routine, out of earning or vanity, no matter their material donations to *appease*

their conscience or earn hour bonuses, are still selfish. The apparent practice is worthless, to the extent that evolution and progress are built and expressed from inside to outside.

The Spiritist proposal suggests a work in progress, possibly slow, yet sincere and real. Each of us needs to be concerned about our own steps and collective progress, conscious, respecting the process and timing of others.

Incidentally, disrespectful and despicable actions should be countered. Note, however, the big difference between challenging actions or ideas (what could be done in favor of ethical values) and abjuring persons. The main way of assisting in collective improvement resides in our day-by-day effort to enhance our actions, by living and experiencing the quest of serenity and happiness resulting from a rather ethical behavior. Also, by taking good care of not accommodating ourselves on the lodge of omission, passivity, permissiveness or cowardice.

In any case, life is not linear. Quite the opposite. Since we are evolutionary Spirits and, therefore, very far from perfection, sometimes we not even realize our mistakes. For instance, we could think that tax evasion is a way of protest against the outrageous administration of public funds. We would rather strive

to rate the standard of political agents. Anyway, in case of doubt, just remember that we ought to do unto others as we do have them to do unto us in a similar situation. Such a recipe describes the best way of understanding the fair thing.

Without temples, or bishops, or any sort of missionaries, particularly without mediums playing gurus, without rituals or dogmas, the drive for constructive actions makes the difference in modern world.

Not introducing anyone meant to lead the life of others, the Spiritist philosophy bolsters realization by means of rationality.

PSEUDO MORALISM

A characteristic feature of a pseudo moralist is to demand from others what they never could be.

Vantuilo

3.3 Moralism and faith

On the issue of moralism, and its contrast with pseudo moralism, the input of faith, invariably linked to religion, should be understood.

We have learned all these years about the importance of faith, the one that moves mountains, empowers, resolves. A new vision is advisable in this regard to unbind the concept of faith from moralism, let alone from pseudo moralism.

Kardec proposed reasoned faith, a proposal likely to be implausible as a matter of fact, but the founder of Spiritism really meant to live reasonably.

Shall people trust, repose hope, reasonably, in others, in God, in themselves. Shall people believe in the ability of spirits equipped with intelligence and, therefore, potentially armed with resources to achieve their desires.

While seemingly incoherent and contradictory, the aim is to instill a dose of skepticism, which was the case for Immanuel Kant in his intense research into critique.

Thus, the faith that helps us is not that of *wait and see* for wealth, good health, prosperity, or love. To the contrary, Kardec invoked reason, cognizant of the fact that the good will never materialize in the absence of hard work and standing awareness. Blind faith catches, dazzles, impedes. For its part, doubt is a driving force. In this way, the reasonable belief in human ability, in the existence of fertile, abundant

resources in Nature, in the immeasurable human talent, will provide the necessary advancement.

Induced by the unreasonable belief according to which their dreams will come true with no effort or work, people pour out of temples, give money, forget about science, discontinue medical treatments, and arrest their development. In this context, the meaning of the statement *knowledge liberates* is understandable, as the condition for transformation.

Again, the strength of reason does light up the paths of humankind.

In the discussion of freedom at a great length in the next topic, it will be further proved that taking on responsibility as a creative force is more powerful than blind faith. In other words, longed-for morality is rather associated with freedom, as compared to restraining faith.

"Unshakable faith is only the kind that can stand face to face with reason in all human epochs."

Allan Kardec



3.4 Morality stemming from freedom

In *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, in the text *Affability and Meekness*, there is an interesting message attributed to Lazarus, in 1861. Reference is made to: *"men and women who look benign in the outside but who are really domestic tyrants. (...) Their vanity rejoices at saying: 'Here, I command and am obeyed,' without thinking that they could very well add, 'and I am detested.'"*⁶ (p. 163)



It is a beautiful signal of the path proposed by Spiritism, in addition to depicting properly the path to authoritarianism, many a time disguised in pseudo moralism. Respect, deference for leaders, parents, authorities, is desirable. However, the Spiritist philosophy does not embrace any kind of forced discipline, imposed by means of aggression or violence. A dutiful education, recognizing learners as intelligent human spirits, with an extraordinary potential for learning, will result in acts of gentleness, courteousness, love, recognition and esteem. Lovely, respectful feelings and expressions stem from a free

conscience. Naturally, reasonable persons will not respond to truculence and imposition. Such attitudes fail to make changes in individuals and groups.

Everybody deserves respect. However, as in all conquests, respect does not arise just like that, but only after hard work, study, observation, equal treatment and incentives. In the same manner as violence generates violence, kindness generates kindness. Based upon this ground, as understood by Spiritism, there must be hypocrisy outside freedom, but not true evolution.

Mario Sergio Cortella quoted Thomas Paine (1737-1809), a decisive thinker in laying the foundations of modern democracy.

*"He that would make his own liberty secure, must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty, he establishes a precedent that will reach to himself."*²⁹ (p. 82)

Two decades after the beginning of the 21st century, it seems reasonable to recognize that most of humankind does not admit to live in censorship, cruelty, authoritarianism, as nothing good can result from that.

Thus far, in the 21st century there has been carefully orchestrated movement in a handful of

countries against structural racism. Racist demonstrations, particularly in the United States, but also in all the Americas, including Brazil naturally, and Europe, have unleashed strong social reactions from multiple segments.

The fundamentals of Spiritism were written down in the mid-19th century, based on freedom, in line with the proposed progressive morals, open to reconsideration and revision, framed by rationality that paves the way to a seamless social development.

Evolution and progress do not result from a decree or a state order, but from cohabitation, common emotions, adaptation to social life. According to Deolindo Amorim, moral and intellectual progress depends on life in society.³⁰ (p. 160) Along the same lines, Dora Incontri says:

"(...) social evolution interacts dialectically with individual evolution. Therefore, no dimension can be realized without interacting with another."³¹ (p. 236)

History is marked by blood, struggle and extreme human persistence to conquer freedom. The facts attest to it: from the historical black movement and black feminism³² in the United States and the fight against apartheid in South Africa, to modern leaders, as Pakistani Malala Yousafzai, who was awarded the

Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, and Iranian Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize in 2003. Remember also Gandhi, for his extraordinary ability to launch peaceful campaigns. Drawing most of his inspiration from him, Martin Luther King became the major reference of the fight against racial discrimination in the United States, and equality and freedom in all the Americas.

In this regard, Paulo Henrique de Figueiredo affirms: *"heteronomy may be construed as the stage of spiritual childhood of humankind, whereas autonomy is the stage of conquest of social harmony, or early moral maturity."* To the writer's mind, a duty is assumed as free act and deed, knowing what is good and universal. In Figueiredo's words:

*"Governed by **heteronomous morals**, the masses act like zombies, robots remote-operated by someone. (...) Under the autonomous morals, moral laws are inside conscience, set out by the principles of freedom and equality."¹² (p. 347) (Our emphasis added).*

Freedom fuels human action, but social cohabitation, present in almost every relationship, constraints it. Same right claimed by someone is entitled to somebody else; hence, there is the peremptory need for tolerance. The exercise of otherness is of the essence in human relations as

an indispensable and reciprocal tool, in view of the impossibility of thinking likewise and the natural difficulty in having the same perspective.

**“Freedom is a word cherished by humans.
Nobody can explain it and nobody can
understand it.”**

Cecilia Meireles (1901-1964)

DID YOU KNOW?

THE INSURRECTION OF THE BURNED EARMARKED THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

March 19, 1849 is among the most significant dates in black culture. That day, the insurrection of the burned occurred, an emblematic episode in the Afro-Brazilian history. Although scarcely recorded, the event is commemorated mainly in the state of Espírito Santo, the home of the cry for freedom of black slaves.



Visit: <http://www.palmares.gov.br/?p=9431>

4 SPIRITISM AND MORAL LAWS

Jacira Jacinto da Silva

The study of Spiritism, ethics and morals entails the relevance of the third part of *The Spirits' Book*, on moral laws, already described by the co-author of this book in Chapter 2. Kardec's work could be regarded as the greatest collection of ethical lessons found in Spiritism, able to direct the human performance. Surely, they are not enforceable, but they are excellent standards to demonstrate the ethical conduct, a true and safe compass for those eager to improve themselves deontologically speaking.

Having observed the basic concepts of love, justice and charity, every topic in that part of *The*

Spirits' Book gets the scholars in contact with the substance of Spiritism.

Nevertheless, this study cannot be meaningless in the daily routine. It must result in thoughtful reflection, action, motion towards the change of practices, a shift in the way of looking at the world and behaving in it.

“The true Spiritist can be recognised by their moral transformation and by the efforts they employ in order to dominate their bad instincts.”

Allan Kardec (1804-1869)

4.1 Working on a new paradigm

Knowledge of the Spiritist philosophy, its study and approximation to the thought produced from Allan Kardec may lead to significant changes in human demonstrations. Besides their growing convictions as individuals go deep inside Spiritist literature, they also look forward to new proposals for the world they live in.

Awareness of the spirits' immortality and the possibility of reincarnation as many times as necessary for evolution provides a better understanding of the importance and value of daily attitudes, and helps

rethink all the expressions of life. From the concerns about environmental sustainability to major scientific projects aimed at healing serious diseases, human demonstrations acquire a new shape and meaning. Amado Nervo's remarks, as quoted by Join Aizpúrua, are noticeable:

*"Within a few centuries, perhaps you shall lie in the shadow of a centennial oak that you planted today."*⁴ (p. 24)

As immortal spirits, we will be emboldened to combat the human scourges, famine, social inequality, mistreatment against animals and the Nature, prejudice and discrimination. Aware of our ability to experience different social ranks, gender identities, ethnics, and some other living conditions, what we look now as *different* will likely change.

In this Spiritist context, turned to cashing in on incarnation as a stage in spiritual evolution, it is intended by no means to join the current of believers, the self-proclaimed respectful or fearful of God and His laws, the ones who label themselves as learned scholars. The world awaits attitudes. We need to work on new paradigms concerning humankind performance, to repose hope, but, first of all, to make us promote the desired changes.

According to Manuel Porteiro's appropriate lessons, economic and social inequality, natural cohabitation of the society with the crimes of exploitation, the division of exploited and exploiting classes, and passive acceptance of the existence of despots and the powerful ones controlling and leading the lives of the miserable and hungry, may not be permitted as requisite necessary for the spiritual advancement. Taking issue with this trend, advocated, believe or not, by a handful of Spiritist, Porteiro also slams the suggestion of not removing these social issues, on the pretext of not breaking the Spiritist causality. For Porteiro, said attitude smells of Church instead of Spiritism; religion instead of scientific philosophy.³³ (p. 151)

Note that religion was never synonym with ethics, morals or good conduct. Alysso Mascaró's lesson points to that direction:

*"Religions less and less gravitate around a coherent axis of dogmas to build more and more a power machinery pragmatically sufficient for multiple purposes of social dominance. Presently, religions speak up less in the interest of intrinsic morals and more in the interest of politics and capital."*³⁴ (pp. 19-20)

True Spiritism fits in a different context; it does not preconize suffering as a condition to attain

happiness, inasmuch as the notion of free will tied to responsibility stems from it. On this understanding, the Spiritist philosophy suggests concern about people's happiness; recognizes the possibility of the least tortuous road, edifying processes, supportive and collective overcoming; ultimately unravelling a positive, promising, hopeful horizon.

Incarnation may be and should be taken as an opportunity to produce happiness, not only individually, but also jointly and severally³⁵. Anyhow, such comprehension depends on recognizing Spiritism as a path, an option different from any proposals based on guilty, sin and suffering. Spiritism proposes hope and life, the continuing quest of happiness.

"Every year I live I am more convinced that the waste of life lies in the love we have not given, the powers we have not used, the selfish prudence which will risk nothing, and which, shirking pain, misses happiness as well."

Mary Cholmondeley

“ PENSADOR



4.2 Ethics in us

From the previous discussions, ethics is understood as a set of principles that define the individual character; a set of beliefs and values that outline the individual way of looking at things, thinking, appreciating and acting in society.

Furthermore, ethics is construed as the set of moral concepts and principles mirrored in individual and collective behaviors inside a society, which reveal their values, more or less plural, more or less supportive, more or less selfish, more or less fair.

These values, rather underlying principles and paradigms instead of regulatory, gradually become an integral part of selfhood, in different times for each individual, considering that no persons or social groups have absolutely homogeneous thinking. Every member of society absorbs, at their time and mode, this set of principles and values. The motion that takes people to another level of comprehension of life is not at all abrupt, but part of a process. Ignorance, roughness, violence, and many other human troubles cannot be reversed all of a sudden.

The invigorating proposal for life and conduct of those who study Spiritism, based on its liberating approach and lobby for autonomy, includes confronting reason, as postulated by Kardec. Spiritism

advises us to take off the sacred cloak, worn in the religious environment, with little authenticity, claiming the moral high ground we do not possess.

Taking on our truth and facing the consequences are of the essence to base our actions on rather fruitful benchmarks.

The need to evolve, change our feelings and actions could eventually match with same yearning contemplated in religious contexts. The difference proposed by us will rest always on the possibility of coping honestly with our imperfections.

A paper of ready access on internet, entitled “*20 Exercises by Chico Xavier for Inner Reform*,”³⁶ makes a clear distinction in this regard. An objective review of this work will find that the proposed **inner reform** is tantamount to the magic transformation of humans into heavenly beings. In our view, this **is not what the Spiritist philosophy upholds**.

An analysis of Spiritism following Kardec is useful to understand that we are humans at the beginning of the evolutionary process. Although valuable and fit, we evolve stepwise, instead of experiencing sharp, sudden, miracle transformations.

In reference to the major goal of the Spiritist philosophy, Jaci Régis wrote:

*"[Kardec] declared that Spiritism is a philosophical and moral doctrine. In this sense we will analyse the input of Spiritism to social renewal. Why? Because if Spiritism would set to be just an inner, "personal reform," it would be an elite doctrine, a closed group, a privileged club."*¹⁴ (p. 116)

The burden of the Jewish-Christian culture many a time precludes us from acknowledging our mistakes. Meanwhile, at least in the West, we are knowledgeable enough to overcome the sacred-profane dichotomy. In a number of daily situations, we could learn a lot one from another, or even if we were capable of recognizing and realizing our mistakes, but this requires a little bit of humility. It seems that we have an *obligation* to be above the error, or to be perfect. How would it be possible?

The Spiritist philosophy proposes the pursue of evolution, yet concedes that Spiritist have all the time in the world to build upon it. The Spiritist proposal urges us to grasp the chance, with no punishment. General law flows naturally, and life generously presents every opportunity as necessary in successive human incarnations on the way to improvement. It is a supportive, community requirement which makes no room for individual predominance.

Notwithstanding, as spirits awake concerning ethical and moral values, they realize the relevance and the reasonability to volunteer to actions on behalf of the community. Such liberating movement of collective construction fuels the necessary social change.

Cleusa Colombo's text is useful to understand the matter:

"The evolution of humankind, construed as moral beings expressing themselves in society, determines the evolution of social relations"³⁷ (p. 86) (Our emphasis added).

We can note lack of ethics in abuse, affront and attacks on citizens' fundamental rights. By mid-19th century, Spiritism already paid full attention to these rights, expecting to have them ingrained in the Spiritist culture.

Notwithstanding, according to the Spiritist philosophy, people's heterogeneity is coherent as well. This fact determines respect for others' understanding, with no reason to claim, charge, or impose the reform of others' thinking. Everyone at their own pace, according to their comprehension and ability to assimilate new values.

A peer community would be unsuitable or less than desirable, to the extent that coping with

differences is absolutely necessary. To be honest, living together with those who are not like us helps us grow, learn, appreciate the significance of the practice of otherness.

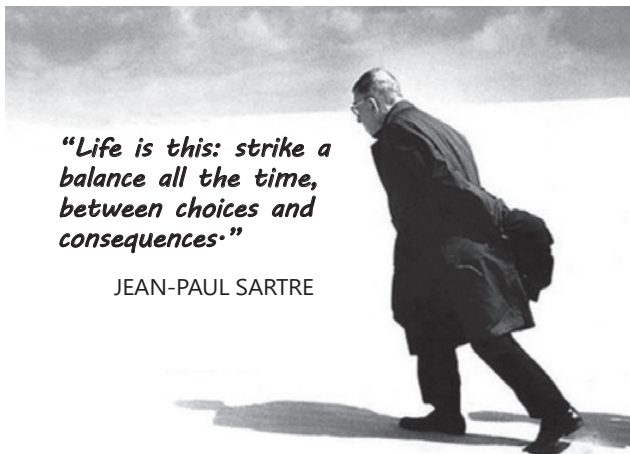
The text ascribed by Mario S. Cortella to Anatole France (1844-1924), awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1921, for his work *The Garden of Epicurus*, deals with the issue of cohabitation, coexistence with persons who think otherwise.

*"We call dangerous those with a spirit different from us, and immoral those who do not share our own illusions, without minding about knowing if they have any other."*³⁸ (p. 46)

While all of us are, as a general rule, the owners of our truths, warnings like this are good to realize our own difficulties and limitations. In this context, the exercise of otherness emerges as an indispensable tool to develop the ability to listen to others and, certainly, to behold the feedback of others, even if we disagree with it.

Luiz Signates³⁹ teaches that the practice of otherness shares the same place with conflict, and the evolution of both positions is reasonable to contrast ideas, provided, however, that it does not imply violence. In this scenario, everybody would lose.

Thinking that old, confuted concepts deserve to wear new clothes could be an interesting invitation in all areas. The Spiritist philosophy effectively proposes the notion of **responsible free will**. The natural law of life gives us leeway to act, and this is good, because the true notion of responsibility emerges from freedom.



"Life is this: strike a balance all the time, between choices and consequences."

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

Understandably, from the Spiritist viewpoint, duress impedes progress, considering that life flows and naturally transforms into freedom. In contrast, impositions arrest the natural push and do not contribute to people's progress.

In reference to human evolution, Herculano Pires quoted Simone de Beauvoir, who regarded humankind as a process of ongoing mutation in the direction of future.⁴⁰ (p. 116)

DID YOU KNOW?

A defiant statement made by Simone de Beauvoir, one of the biggest influencers ever, remains effective nowadays:

**“LET NOTHING DEFINE US.
LET NOTHING HOLD US.
LET FREEDOM BE OUR OWN
SUBSTANCE.”**



5 ETHICS, MORALS AND THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS

Jacira Jacinto da Silva

This chapter deals with modern issues involving ethics and morals, with an emphasis on social injustice. The Spiritist philosophy is useful to understand modern problems. The society still confronts social inequality. Intolerance of diversity and gender identity, xenophobia, misogyny, racism, class division and some other attacks on human rights and democracy are troubling questions, involving prejudices of different proportions and various nuances.

In the middle of the 21st century, amidst

demonstrations against structural racism,* for instance, some authorities still deny it. The point at issue, from the Spiritist viewpoint, is especially interesting, as immortality and the potential of reincarnation are helpful to extend the vision. We are not black, yellow or white; LGBTQIA+ or heterosexual; rich or poor; perfect or imperfect. We are just in one of these or any other expressions of human life. And we will be able to experience a different condition in our next incarnation.

These events occur anywhere in the world, and can be witnessed in the West, in Europe, in the United States, in other countries and regions, and in Latin America. The accurate timeframe when they came to surface cannot be determined for sure, yet we can affirm that they blew the lid off in the last three decades of the 20th century.

The recent conservative wave has led multiple nations to hardcore governments, uncommitted to the democratic Rule of Law. These current issues, appreciated for the Spiritist philosophy, are not

* Structural racism means the formalization of a number of institutional, historical, cultural and interpersonal practices in a society that frequently puts a social or ethnic group in a lower position to succeed and concomitantly harms other groups, in a consistent and constant manner, eventually causing disparities among groups. A set of practices, habits, situations and guidelines deep-rooted in our culture, promoting directly or indirectly, segregation and social prejudices.

https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Racismo_estrutural#:~:

interesting for governments with extreme ideologies, either rightwing or leftwing, whose view of the world focuses on neo-fascist totalitarianism, exclusion of rights, and hatred. Also, for them, economic interests take precedence over human rights.

After a totalitarian military dictatorship from 1964 through 1985, Brazil managed to write a citizen constitution in the late 1980's. In spite of the attempts at overcoming its moral stains, in subsequent capitalist governments, some rather liberal, some betting on social investment, Brazil has failed to reach desirable levels in the advocacy of human rights. Nor has it overcome historical social differences.

It is likely that the dispute between the rightwing and the leftwing, or between more or less liberal approaches, strained this antagonism until ending up in hardcore neo-liberalism in Brazil with a high risk of destroying the path travelled.

The trouble is the intolerance resulting from meanness, and we usually believe that our viewpoint should prevail.

Nevertheless, according to Kardec, "conviction cannot be forcefully imposed." Therefore, a good doctrine *"will be the one that produces the fewest hypocrites and the greatest number of moral individuals."*⁵ (q. 842)

Besides meanness, the worst of vices and a scourge indeed in society, we so far live under the aegis of vanity and pride, the agents of neglect and indifference for someone else's suffering.

Spiritism preconizes an equal footing for all human beings, regardless of gender. Spiritism repudiates violence or slavery; refutes punishment as means of education or socialization, and sustains that the failure to contain crime is just the result from disinvestment in education and anti-corruption efforts. In this scenario, Spiritism proposes to reform the institutions through education on spiritual issues, so that humans can afford less value to material things.⁵ (q. 914)

DID YOU KNOW?

The United Nations released on July 11, 2019 the Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2019. The paper notes "stark inequalities across countries." Near 1.3 billion people from 101 nations within the analysis are considered "multidimensionally poor." Major differences are glaring in the same developing region and the poorest segments in all societies.

In Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Niger and South Sudan, 90% or more of children under 10 years old are considered multidimensionally poor.

5.1 Overcoming the right/wrong dichotomy

As descendants of the Jewish tradition inherited by Christians, we grew accustomed to look at the world from a Manichean perspective.** Nevertheless, in the wise words of William Shakespeare, *“There are more things in heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”*

In human relations, calling people good or bad has shown to be inappropriate. The myriad of instances found in daily situations is useful to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, consistently with human imperfection.

Moreover, humans have a remarkable ability to transform themselves and seize the opportunity even in the most implausible situations. This is an excellent sign that extreme judgment and condemnation are useless. Instead of demeaning the spirits’ intellectual abilities, we ought to recall the objective of incarnation, as an opportunity to grow for all inhabitants on planet Earth. Even though created in the culture broth of reattributing punishment, our mission also is to advance general progress.

** Doctrine based on the opposite principles of good and evil.

As an alternative to the dichotomy view, the Spiritist theory proposes **to live under the umbrella of endless possibilities**. That is, admit cohabitation of different people, without any predominance. Live together in the middle of numerous views of the world, beliefs, philosophies, likes, guides, etc.

5.2 Social standards – A free, plural Spiritist outlook

From the outset, in the main, the Spiritist philosophy has properly dealt with life and human concerns. Instead of replicating religious practices, the proposal made by the founder of Spiritism was always of a pedagogic, progressive and plural nature, in keeping with scientific findings.

Current social issues linked to the ethical and moral aspects of living in society are a matter of concern for the Spiritist philosophy, capable of making an expressive and significant contribution for the purposes of their comprehension. This was also the case when Spiritism came on the scene.

The limited scope of this work does not allow to elaborate on each of the social and ethical-moral requirements at present. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning the way of looking at, and dealing with them in the context of the Spiritist philosophy.

Some of these requirements will be addressed below in form of manifest. Of note, some other works in this collection tackle related topics.

By the end of 20th century, economic conditions worsened in most capitalist countries, concomitantly with technology breakthroughs and reinforced neo-liberal policies. As a result, the social divide widened up, the dimension of which has been ignored. Note the statement below of important Brazilian jurists:

*"The makeup of more and more restricted, meager, growingly informal labor markets, contributes to dismantle in developing countries a sociability mediated by labor rights."*⁴¹ (p. 208)

In the middle of the 21st century, we could display a long list of human rights issues barely settled in the world stage. Multiple challenges are faced in building a more decent, ethical and supportive world.

Question 886 of *The Spirits' Book* elucidates and validates the notion that Spiritism deals with evolution from the perspective of human interaction, teaching that loving others *"is to do them all the good possible, all that we would wish to be done to ourselves."*

A reflection on this question brings to the table one of the two most serious problems on planet Earth, related to the void in social justice. While some

eat in excess, waste food and spoil natural resources, an infinity of humans are sidelined, living in extreme poverty. There is famine throughout the world, but this outcry, barred by meanness, cannot find an echo, does not reach the holders of the power.

Miguel Reale voiced great sorrow at seeing the nominalist views that just negate the ideas of social justice and common good. Ascribing such a view to liberalism, he wondered:

"With which yardstick can the 'right of third parties' be identified without first meditating on a 'common social right'?"⁴² (p. 129)

Milton Medran, in *Law and Justice*, warns about the responsibilities entailing wealth:

"In a world where social injustice abounds and where, contradictorily, those who have more amass their fortune at fast pace, there is, as a consequence, redoubled social responsibility for the holders of wealth."⁸ (p. 103)

No matter the diverse and visible obstacles, the Spiritist philosophy has made a relevant input concerning social promotion and inclusion, as well as redistribution of wealth in the most unequal societies in the world. Thus, it should be understood in its philosophical dimension, not misleading its lay, humanist, open-minded and progressive nature.

While this work is closely tied to social standards, some of them will be broken down in other books of the upcoming series of this collection. Some highlights follow:

Selected social standards

Health

Security and justice

Democracy

Education

Diversity

Science and progress

Love and solidarity

Labor

Health:

How could we regard as something natural the state neglect of health care or health care related issues? Even for ordinary people the strides for the enforcement of public policies on surveillance, prevention, inter-disciplinary, joint efforts together with the society, the pharmaceuticals market, technology and educational approaches are crucial.

From the above-mentioned factors, special attention should be paid to the environment and environmental hazards, including the greenhouse effect, elementary sanitation and deforestation.



Unreasonable waste disposal endangers rivers

What about people's health on planet Earth in the absence of drinking water? Although extraordinary and generously offered by Nature, it is a non-renewable resource. All alike are entitled to it, but the fact of the matter is that most people have not access to it.

The history of psychiatric treatments per se is a salient sample of what could happen when government policies disregard human beings and their needs.

Institutionalization of the mentally ill and drug abusers ignores the prop of these and other policies, i.e. **respect for human rights**. The Spiritist proposal allows the society to positively face this challenge and encourage the historic evolution. Spiritist have a responsibility to lobby for better universal health care, as Spiritism does not take sides with any exclusion.

Health also means leisure. Incidentally, Spiritist do know that they have not come to Earth for a walk, aware of the evolutionary stage of this planet and of the extent of the challenge. Hence, they are cognizant of their duty to work, study, and carry out significant tasks. But renewing one's energy forms part of this process. Taking a break from daily routine is healthy, positive and advisable.

Leisure and entertainment should be afforded to everybody, inasmuch as overstrain compromises production.

Security and justice:

The pretended protection of society turned the correction system in Brazil among many countries into a mere deposit of people, even though a lot could have been done through effective rehabilitation policies.

Notably, *The Spirits' Book* was released in 1857, one century before the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, enacted in 1948, containing the same fundamental principles, particularly articles V, VIII, IX and X. Note also the answer to question 796 in *The Spirits' Book*:

*"A depraved society has a need for harsher laws. Unfortunately, such laws are meant to punish a wrong after it has already been committed, rather than to cut out the roots of what has caused the wrong. Only education can reform humankind, who will then have no more need of such harsh laws."*⁵

Concerning social justice, ideal levels of attention and concern about fundamental citizen's rights have been identified in a small group of western nations that actually invest in education, health care, housing and equal job opportunities, as the main pillars of human dignity.

Zeus's decision, in the myth of human creation, related by Protagoras in *The Dialogues of Plato* is emblematic, i.e. *"allocate human beings the skills of justice and respect, in the absence of which no society can survive."*⁴³ (pp. 538-9)

In furtherance of justice and security, state leaders are expected to:

- Make policies consistent with intelligence services and combat of urban violence.
- Review the issue of criminal convictions, as an opportunity for rehabilitation instead of revenge.
- Invest in education from the early childhood, including arts, culture and sports, to unravel implicit talents as the best antidote for crime.

In a book authored by me,⁴⁴ I proposed to offer rehabilitation opportunities for offenders, recalling that punishment is by no means pacifying.

I was inspired by *The Spirits' Book*, question 761: "*it is necessary to open the door of repentance to the criminal rather than to close it*".⁵

Actions amenable to the exercise of citizenship and available for everybody are necessary. Sometimes, however, state leaders animate people to arm themselves and confront their adversaries, going back to a state of barbarism, in an action inconsistent with civilization. Such a proposal should not be regarded as an alternative to a peaceful social life. To the contrary, it shows the lack of ethical and moral tools, spiking the use of brute force.

How can be justice administered through the criminal conviction of women that had no option but abortion? Out of fear, lack of support or structure

to face the *current morals*, economic insecurity, emotional unbalance, or for unknown reasons, humans are prone to make decisions that they would not think of under different circumstances. Besides all the suffering resulting from such a decision, sending those women to jail look looks like the right thing?

Spiritism induces solidarity, brotherhood, understanding, and, above all, doing others all that we would wish to be done to ourselves in a similar situation. It is not that I am lobbying for indiscriminate abortion, but the Spiritist philosophy does not endorse any conviction. The decision of having or not children exclusively falls to women. Therefore, Spiritist have no right to pursue criminal conviction of women who have chosen abortion. Against criminalization does not mean on behalf of abortion. First and foremost, Spiritism advocates responsible freedom.

It must be remembered that the Spiritist philosophy and the Criminal Code do not punish abortion in the event of pregnancy resulting from sexual abuse or life-threatening pregnancy. Additionally, the Federal Supreme Court of Brazil admitted as licit the abortion of anencephalous fetuses.

The society has a duty to act assertively, protecting those women who would like to have their children, educating them on the use of contraceptive

methods and life opportunities. Each of them already carries the burden of their actions. Hence, our rebuke is all but useless.

Democracy

Democracy has been at stake. There is no happiness, peace and harmony under dictatorial and totalitarian regimes. Curiously, Kardec did not address this specific subject. However, the baseline concepts of the Spiritist philosophy prove to be at odds with such regimes. Democracy does not mean only the right to election, but the expansion of the political scope to all domains of social interaction.⁴⁵ (p. 276) The revision of the *status quo* involves the promotion of social justice, in the absence of which there is no democracy.

Furthermore, democracy is linked to the concept of freedom, understood as the human power to resolve any kind of conflicts.

Again, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, namely articles XIV, XX and XXI, sets out, "*The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government.*"

The huge challenge of human civilization for many centuries has not been the fight for survival.

The main pursuit of human beings has been the ability to freely interact in social groups, get free from tyranny, from the authoritarian yoke and from unfair, continued and disrespectful restrictions concerning natural rights. Mario Sergio Cortella quoted French Enlightenment writer Voltaire (1694-1778), as follows:

*"If man is created free, he needs to govern himself; if ruled by tyrants, he needs to overthrow them."*³⁸
(p. 89)

The dream of freedom has been the basis for human battles. To date, such an ideal remains in full force and effect.

Education:

This work represents an effort to promote the true philosophy implanted by Kardec, the founder of Spiritism. As a teacher educated in Pestalozzi's school system, Kardec made a significant input to learning, particularly with regard to civility, humanism and solidarity.

Dora Incontri said:

*"The right to develop ourselves and express our own individuality is among the most legitimate human rights. Such an opportunity can be provided only by education, understood in its real purposes."*⁴⁶ (p. 33)

Jaci Régis made an appeal to reinforce this notion:

"(...) morality is neither existential void nor the negation of natural forces. To the contrary, it is the result of comprehension of authentic existential objectives."¹⁴ (p. 114).

Education, a fundamental right enshrined in Article XXVI of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and highlighted by the founder of Spiritism, is an extraordinary tool to yield positive actions, far more effective than mere rhetoric. Kardec brought forward free moral transformation, based on findings, insight and spontaneous will. In possession of a fantastic track record as an educator, the founder of Spiritism reasserted his teaching trend in question 685 of *The Spirits' Book*, on the value of moral education:

"There is an element that has not been sufficiently pondered, but without which economic science is nothing more than theory: education; not intellectual education, but moral education; not moral education through books, but moral education that consists in the art of forming character; moral education that creates habits because education is the sum of acquired habits."¹⁵

He referred to education based on the opportunities at hand, capitalizing on practical and daily experiences.

Reasonably, experiencing ethics and inserting it in our daily habits would be more beneficial than any attempt at teaching it. In this way, examples could flow smoothly at home, in politics, and elsewhere, including Spiritist centers, the school and the workplace.

Thus, it would be possible to dream of a rather political society, given that political issues would form part of the daily routine of parents and teachers, of the set of relevant habits to be instilled and eventually shared.

By the same token, Ney Lobo, a renowned educator, devoted most of his works to lobby for lifelong education, defined as follows:

"Lifelong education means ongoing process for life, seeking to unravel all the potentials of human beings and through which all are educated from birth through death. Hence, it is not a mere extension of the school term."⁴⁷ (p. 155)

Culture: Cultural activities listed in the section entitled Science and Progress and the section entitled Security and Justice are inserted in this series of actions. Education does not only promote culture, but also ensures access to this ever-changing universe.

Diversity:

No room should be made for discrimination anymore, anywhere else in the world. Article VII of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* refutes this practice. Unfortunately, no matter the enormous diversity, the society continues putting minorities apart with no mercy.^{***} On the basis of being in a same-sex relationship, belonging to a group of refugees, being black, low-income or poorly educated, depending on chemical substances, having certain medical conditions, or being a woman, people of same earthy brotherhood are demeaned, ignored, ill-treated, the target of prejudices and subject to discrimination.

Note that the term *diversity* is construed in this work as different, diverse, non-similar, with various characteristic features, multiplicity.⁴⁸ Some deem misogyny, refuge and, above all, racism, as identity signals, reserving the concept of diversity only to the issues of gender identity and sexual orientation.

^{***} In the context of social sciences, social minority refers to a segment of the population on the sidelines, that is, precluded from social interaction. Social minorities are generally composed of a large number of people, most of the time an absolute majority in terms of numbers, excluded on the basis of social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, and special needs, among others. (<https://brasilecola.uol.com.br/sociologia/minorias-sociais.htm>).

Besides putting on its agenda all those concerns prevailing so far in the western modern society, Spiritism as such brings the innovative view of the Lyonese thinker, well ahead of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, by clarifying that spirits have none of such attributes, but experience them dissimilarly in successive lives.

Totally apart from the mystic faith, which dictates blind belief in a savior purporting to transform humankind, Spiritism, particularly from the progressive point of view, recommends study, work, dedication, confrontation, action.

Basically humanist, such different way of taking difficulties as opportunities and challenges relies on a liberating, democratic, supportive, fraternal philosophy, able to advance individual growth, giving assurances of the individual potential, and also collective growth, out of conviction that social groups make headway by joining efforts.

In this regard, Jaci Régis said:

*"The Spiritist proposal could not ignore the social reality and, having as banner the systematic combat of meanness, should break with individual isolation from society."*¹⁴ (p. 116)

On this understanding and practice of Spiritism we repose hope in making a better world of planet

Earth. Such a liberating philosophy is not situated in the field of sects; nor does it dispute other religions, loaded with prejudices and arrogance, repeating the secular deceit of beliefs, their ministers and temples.

In the context of a rational, lay and respectful philosophy, it is most important to choose an agenda contemplating democratic politic systems, appreciating truly inclusive public policies, working tirelessly to eradicate social inequality, and apportioning natural and essential resources among all. At the end of the day, *despite ephemeral, human life accrues value with perennial, sound and existential constructions.*

While Kardec did not specifically deal with some of those topics, for not being effective by then, the Spiritist philosophy gives excellent input to a humanist, up-to-date agenda.

Present and frequently addressed on the media, particularly in social networks, as well as by scholars, these topics have not been addressed accordingly by religious movements, which prefer to ignore them, or ban, or boycott the discussion in their temples.

Science and progress:

Spiritism supports the case studies intended to treat human ailments and, consequently, human

lives. Being at odds, in the name of blind faith, with any studies purported to relieve any kind of suffering would be antagonistic with the contents of Spiritism.

Kardec recommends us to take sides with science. Take for instance, the text below contained in *Genesis*:

*"Pressing forward with progress, Spiritism will never be surpassed, because if new discoveries were to show it to be in error on one point, it would modify itself on that point. If a new truth is revealed, it accepts it."*⁴⁹ (p. 44)

Along the same lines, Wilson Garcia affirmed:

*"The doctrine can survive only if joining the evolution of human thinking and scientific testing."*⁵⁰ (p. 77)

Kardec appreciated the significance of science: *"If religion refuses to move forward with science, then science will advance by itself."*⁴⁹ (p. 89)

Moral issues related to human life are the centerpiece of the progressive outlook. Humanist, authentic, open-minded, progressive Kardec's followers applaud the psychiatric reform, targeted to a decent, human management of mental disorders. Spiritism regards those dependent on chemical substances as someone who suffers a serious health problem, unlikely to be healed; takes care of the mother who had an abortion with no judgment, let

alone criminal conviction. Spiritism proposes attention, support, care and human treatment **for everybody**. Spiritism makes no deal with elitist proposals, always based on the economic issue, showing utter disrespect for the rights inherent in the human condition.

Also in this regard, Spiritism headed off at the pass of *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Article XXVII of which ensures everybody, unconditionally, *the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits*.

Love and solidarity:

Whenever a Spiritist proposes disobsession of alcohol or drug abusers; suggests their inpatient treatment in asylums, closed and alienating facilities; or sentences to dozen useless incarnations a woman who had an abortion, in addition to her criminal conviction, is not taking Jesus of Nazareth as a reference. Such a model who left his mark in history reminds us of fraternal love and the necessary energy to safeguard justice.

Moreover, for Spiritism, misery, hunger, and deprivation of elementary human rights are inconceivable. Therefore, any cohabitation with it is

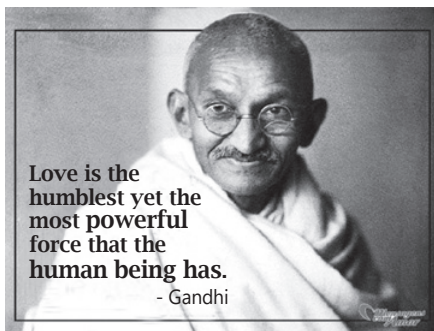
misleading. The ethics guiding Spiritist represents the conducting thread to compassionate care, for a better quality of life and less suffering, taking the greatest benefit from existence. This implies unwavering commitment to human rights, simply for being persons, in all dimensions.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, particularly Article I (“*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*”), and the precepts contained in *The Spirits' Book*, provide for sufficient ethical and moral guidelines to build a supportive society, with love overtaking meanness.

Either out of the need to follow modern methods, or just for refusing harmful, outrageous, and invasive practices, health care under outdated, conservative and inhuman proposals is inconceivable from the Spiritist perspective. The term “human rights” encompasses the most elementary assurances for citizens. Sadly, at this dubitable stage of the spiritual evolution on planet Earth, such rights are effective just for a few. In addition, for Spiritism, prejudices on the basis of social class, gender identity, physical disability, ethnic origin or any other characteristic feature are indefensible.

Besides the philosophical corpus bestowed by Kardec, Spiritism covers an immense literature subsequent to his works. Such literature even comprises the fruitful work of Spiritist who, by dynamically applying the principles of Spiritism, have contributed to new stances, commitments and deeds.

Any containment or pullout of the progressive march in face of current human conundrums is like refusing the Spiritist essence.



Labor:

The value of respect might be the key for labor to play the role of promoting autonomy and dignity. We learn with Kardec5 that labor is pivotal, both to meet bodily needs and leverage the ability of thinking.

This human activity was also highlighted in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Articles IV and XXIII, among others, ensure the right to work, free election of employment, fair and favorable labor conditions, protection against unemployment, equal pay, etc.

The Spirits' Book warns against missing opportunities to work, or the inability to work, because of aging, or disease, or any physical disability.

The guidelines set out in question 685.a, third part, Chapter III, are interesting indeed:

"a) – But what resources do aging people have available if they must earn a living but cannot?"

"The strong should work for the weak. In the absence of a family, society should replace it. That is the law of charity."⁵

A sensible and indispensable ethical ruling.

Failure to show respect, compassion and solidarity may result in abuse of the economic power, by way of modern slavery, submitting people to strenuous work. Spiritist lessons abound in antidotes, filled with inspiration for respect and appreciation of beings. The answer to question 829 in *The Spirits' Book* is in same direction as Article IV, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, to wit: "Slavery is

abuse of power and will gradually disappear with progress, as will all other abuses."

5.3 Human rights

Ethics and morals permeate the necessary discussion on human rights, highly appreciated by open-minded Spiritism. The term "human rights" is construed as action, creation, transforming ability, coexistence and production, sharing with diversities, movement or process.

While only upon the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, a global system of assurances for fundamental rights was established, the history of human rights, always permeated by the fight and advocacy of natural rights, intrinsic and inherent in the human condition, began, according to some scholars, between the Middle Ages and modernity. The most meticulous ones locate this remote framework in the so-called *axial axis*, between the eighth and second centuries before Christ, concurrently with the birth of philosophy⁴³ (p. 20).

As early as in the Renaissance, when the juridical science started to take on its lay nature, recognizing the historical role of human beings in their relations, the abandonment of the anthropomorphic God

as the dictator and responsible for the social and economic order became apparent in the West.

The revolutions generated in the Enlightenment, particularly, the confrontation of operational and political movements with the industrial capital and their relevant interests, led to the great wars at the beginning of the 20th century, which stained the history with blood and untold tragedies, representative of Nazism and fascism, still effective.

Together with the tragic depletion of the ongoing model, profound changes would be necessary and decisive for the emergence of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* after World War II.

This brief summary of the endeavors for the recognition of human rights provides sufficient elements to understand the reason why, even inside the Spiritist movement, there are still people who run counter to humanist causes.

Believe it or not, so far there is strong resistance to a harmonic interaction with different ethnic groups; prejudices to gender identity and sexual orientation remain in full force and effect; certain social classes are excluded, and persons with disabilities and some other minorities are mercilessly harmed. These and some other unforgivable bases for discrimination, which resist and persist, are the great challenges nowadays.

Even though globalization imposes cohabitation of different groups, humankind makes way to a paradoxical discrimination.

Instead, the humanist nature of the Spiritist philosophy makes an appeal to gather energy for respectful human relations, their progress, the solution of difficulties, recognition and the effective assurances for human rights. A simple syllogism leads to such conclusion, for humans are growing immortal spirits.

Everybody deserves same respect, has same rights and liberties. The word race**** is by no means justified and should not be used anymore. Defined as a *"socially constructed concept of the existence of biological differences among ethnic groups,"*⁵¹ this term has turned out to be improper and superfluous, particularly because of the scientific evidence attesting to the absence of substantial differences among the diverse peoples on planet Earth.

If distinct groups, identified as such on the basis of their flags and own characteristic features (for instance, origin, language, ethnics, sexual orientation, and ideology, among others), are to live together under the same political system and governed

**** *Classification of humans by their physical and hereditary traits. dicio.com.br*

by same laws, there is the need to nail down the elementary principles of democracy, inasmuch as favorable laws are not enough.

At a time of such diversity in pluralist societies, amidst global and instant information, human rights advocacy relies on the effective consolidation of the democratic rule of law. This entails the layout of a moral legal system, opposed to outdated values trying to resist to progress in the course of time. Nonetheless, in order to be established, it also depends on initiatives aimed at education and politicization of citizens. No persons, institutions and processes ought to accommodate to the alleged neutrality.

Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate in 1984 admonished: *"If you are neutral in a situation of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."* Individually and collectively, in the family, professional or institutional domains, the Spiritist trademark should be that of indignation in face of oppression and resistance to the attacks on human dignity.

Eduardo Valério makes a relevant contribution in this discussion:

"The enactment of the social rule of law ensures the minimum status of decent existence for humankind. It can be concluded, inspired by the precious lessons of Spiritism, that, upon full enforcement in the country social and political institutions of the rights entitled to

everybody, immortal spirits will manage to implement their reincarnation plans, carrying out their relevant task in the construction of the Kingdom and, consequently, in the transition of the planet towards a higher moral level."⁵² (p. 94).

The democratic regulatory order is consolidated little by little, updating its precepts by the ethical dimension, from certain arrangements taking into consideration the needs of the target audience. The Spiritist philosophy shares the modern expectations of respect for human rights, casting light on improved rulemaking, with humanist, democratic proposals, suitable to contribute to justice and social peace.

Finally, remember Deolindo Amorim, who regarded Spiritism as sensitive to social injustices.

*"How could we work on a better world if we move farther away or become estranged in a 'purely contemplative life,' very comfortable indeed, yet totally fruitless and unworkable? The Spiritist doctrine never was, and it is not, on the sideline of human concerns."*⁵³ (p. 38)

DID YOU KNOW?

You can understand and learn easily about human rights and their classification online.

Visit: <https://www.educamundo.com.br/blog/direitos-humanos-pratica-curso-online>

5.4 Ongoing ethics

We have learned from Kardec that spiritual progress is a continuous and endless process. Hence, there is no prompt and irrefutable truth. Nevertheless, at a time of huge economic exploitation, conceptual confusion and vague speeches and stories form an illusion around personal beliefs with no ethical commitment.

The idea of absolute or final truth would be unwarranted in light of multiple technology revelations and some other scientific discoveries. Notwithstanding, on the assumption of the *sole truth*, many people continue *buying* the idea that faith is all that they need for their dreams to come true. Between bargaining with God, as suggested by unscrupulous ministers, and the alleged sanctity of some mediums gurus, there is *the human ability to rebuke flagrant contradictions by means of reasoning, as appropriate*.⁵⁴ (p. 15)

The conduct of a few religious leaders taking benefit from the good faith of naïve followers is just another piece of evidence of the low ethical-moral level attained by humankind.

But there are also fabulous experiences of the efforts for a fairer, more peaceful, equalitarian

coexistence. Because of its heterogeneity, planet Earth lodges spirits at dissimilar evolutionary stages.

This is an excellent insight for the necessary upgrade of social organization. The Spiritist philosophy elucidates on the evolutionary dynamic in the experiences of immortal spirits, either inside or outside their physical dimension, but always in quest of progress.

The construction in the field of fundamental rights follows same process. In the course of time and according to the choices, individual values settle down, influencing the collective, and promoting in turn social changes.

Argentinean Spiritist writer Manuel Porteiro offered an astonishing clarification:

*"Historic determinism depends on the direction of new individual influences that will be as much or the more beneficial for humankind, the higher the moral and spiritual level of individuals and the activity carried out by them."*³³ (p. 150)

Even though humankind is still at the initial stage of evolution, the set of ethical principles and values, like a connecting thread, leads the way, acting as the backdrop of successive conquests. Inspired by this compass, human beings can break new ground.

Juridical science, dedicated to economic law throughout the history, achieved laicism three centuries ago. Paradoxically, from its detachment from the Catholic Church, juridical science focused on the recognition of natural rights, as evidenced by their lobbyists in the 17th and 18th centuries, notably Hugo Grotius. For its part, the Code Napoleon, which influenced the legal systems of some other nations, enacted in the early 19th century, prioritized the right to own property.

After the two world wars, on October 24, 1945, dozens of nations gathered in order to bring the issue of fundamental human rights to the attention of the juridical science. More than twenty centuries had passed from the birth of philosophy to the establishment of the United Nations.

Besides human dignity, the right to privacy and free personal development was contemplated for the first time ever, stipulated in the German Constitution⁵⁵ (p. 54), and subsequently endorsed in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in mid-20th century. This brief historical-juridical mention shows the maturation time of social awareness.

Within the Kardecist vision, spirits are immortal and have all the time in the world to learn and grow. Juridical contributions, recognized around the world

apropos the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, in addition to the Spiritist conviction of the spirits' immortality and the possibility of infinite progress across successive incarnations, did not suffice to build a democratic society. Certainly, the way has been somewhat paved, with a powerful motivation to resist a setback, authoritarian moves, constraints on freedom, and forceful imposition.

Furthermore, humans have a great potential to excel themselves and facilitate progress on planet Earth or, through the progress on Earth, advance as individuals.

Eugênio Lara affirms that Spiritism *is essentially human, too human*.⁵⁶ (p. 92) Spiritist have a responsibility to behave as such and join the ranks of resistance to restraining, outdated and authoritarian movements.

The Spiritist philosophy properly deals with these current issues, even though Kardec did not specifically address some of them, for being inexistent or barely discussed at that time. It draws out from a democratic, dialectic and compassionate model, enabling incarnated spirits to transform themselves and change the civilization model accordingly, or, vice versa, grow out of such changes.

Remember Herculano Pires:

*"Spiritism makes use of three fundamental components to turn our world into a better, more beautiful world, namely love, labor and solidarity."*⁴⁰
(p. 76)

The true advocates of a fairer, equalitarian world bet on a society built upon the grounds of equality and freedom for every individual to achieve love, labor and solidarity.

5.5 Ethics and otherness

Luis Signates³⁹ recommends otherness in Spiritist centers. He suggests detachment from the ethical forms used by us to build a relationship with the world. He laments that major human concerns are missing in the discussions in Spiritist centers. He regrets that Spiritist gather to talk about issues unconnected with social problems, ignoring worldwide suffering.

Remember Mauro Spínola, when bringing forward a model of Spiritist center focused on society and individuals, led by individuals and worried about human problems.

"Spiritist centers have been made for humankind, not otherwise. The members of Spiritist centers

should regard their daily routine as the continuum of a hectic evolutionary process. They should grasp the revolutionary meaning of immortality and the true significance of their lives."⁵⁷ (p. 73)

Herculano Pires sets a similar guideline⁵⁸ (p. 14). Notwithstanding the large number of people in miserable conditions, we are busy with theories such as plurality of inhabited worlds. Ethical demands in the modern world should be helpful to place us back to context.

Without any question, Spiritist ought to work on improving social structures. So, it does not seem very sensible for Spiritist centers to be satisfied with social aid only. No matter the apparent significance of our engagement with the problems of social injustice, we should focus on uprooting the cause, instead of minimizing the consequences.

Otherness, from Latin *alteritas*, that is, *other*, derives from the basic assumption that any and all social beings interact and depend each other. Otherness means the ability to take the place of someone else in personal relations, that is, true respect, with no value judgments. In default of it, there is no way of understanding each other.

Perhaps, never before social cohabitation demanded such a degree of comprehension of

others. On the understanding that all incarnated spirits are limited and incomplete, Boaventura Souza Santos advises:

*"Being increasingly aware of cultural incompleteness is among the prior tasks for the construction of an emancipating and multicultural concept of human rights."*⁵⁹ (p. 446)

For centuries, humans came to the point of confronting the positions of others, regardless of the consequences. Filters got a different nuance; the concepts of freedom and respect underwent serious changes, challenging renowned jurists and philosophers to put a partition wall between free thought and expression versus fundamental rights indispensable for social cohabitation.

The word *cohabitation* raises per se awareness of someone else. From Latin *convivere*, it entails comprehension, different from being subject to anyone else.

In reference to the life of hermits in a desert, as the only possibility of enjoying absolute freedom, Kardec rather signified brotherhood, sharing, healthy living together.

Understanding the concept of otherness is most appropriate indeed. In this regard, Martin Buber said:

*"The You appears for the I as condition for existence, for there is not I on its own, independent; in other words, the oneself is not a substance, but a relation."*⁶⁰ (p. 49)

Moreover, Emmanuel Lévinas introduces the ethics of otherness, suggesting *the experience of feeling inside the infinitude of someone else*. The sense of being would lie in a relationship ready to run the risk of differences.

*"(...) I am the one who passes to the background: I can look at myself through someone else, expose myself to someone else, I am accountable."*⁶¹ (p. 123)

In the event of dealing with the concept of true, irrefutable truth, the Spiritist philosophy would be done, naturally; it would revolve around its enouncements and purport to convey its convictions to the world. However, this is not the case. Spiritism is based on the expectation of findings, new horizons, certainty about multiple possibilities for evolution.

That is, they are prepared to engage in dialogue and listen to others, as suggested by the above-mentioned philosophers. Paying attention, learning from different views, assimilating different notions are among the resources that give shape to Spiritism in

the context of plural, open-minded, progressive, and humanist dynamics, based, as Geley recommended, on a positive demonstration. Spiritism, he said, *"should be studied and discussed only as a scientific philosophy."*⁶² (p. 16)

In addition to respect for different ways of looking at life, with no offense, with no discrimination, with no pretension to be better, Spiritism, free from religious bias, proposes interaction with other areas of knowledge, sciences and philosophies. Spiritism seeks to enter into a dialogue with sociology, anthropology, philosophy, medicine, psychology, and pedagogics, among others, acknowledging the inability to embrace all the wisdom.

Such exercise, not easy at all, requires an effort to pay attention to different ways of thinking. It is highly likely that, should we identify this message, we will get an insight into our own view of topics and facts. Incidentally, philosopher Alysson Mascaro said:

*"Justice, according to Aristotle, means the good for someone else. Fair actions are made in reference to someone else, to third parties, to someone else, but ourselves. Therefore, just persons are characterized by their otherness, their reference to someone else."*⁶³ (p. 230)

DID YOU KNOW?

Plato introduced the term otherness in his work *Sophist*. The self should not be regarded as identity, but in multiple ideas in the context of the reciprocal relationship with the collective.⁶⁴



5.6 No penalty, no punishment

Jon Aizpúrua made a timely remark about the contribution of ethics from the Spiritist viewpoint to science and philosophy. To the mind of this celebrated scholar, Spiritist, in addition to knowing and experiencing Spiritism, should insert its tenets in their lives, prompting them to moral, permanent transformation in the personal, family and social domains.⁴ (p. 44)

From this beautiful lesson taught by Jon Aizpúrua, open-minded Spiritist have a duty to enter into effect the theses in everyday life. By the way, knowledge sets you free, ennobles, empowers. Nonetheless, the lessons learned will barely dignify human beings, if they are not used for a better performance.

Remember Manuel Porteiro:

"Spiritism rejects rewards and punishment, admitting only the natural effects of actions. The moral sanction arising from its philosophy is temperate and remedial."⁶⁵ (p. 91)

In this regard, besides rebutting the hardcore, dualistic Christian approach of sin and punishment versus reward and salvation, Spiritism suggests that Spiritists have a fiduciary duty to build a fair, fraternal and supportive society, with everybody cherishing love, happiness and peace.⁶⁶ (p. 183)

The challenge posed by Spiritism free from mysticism entails the conversion of the salutary lessons by Kardec and his followers into positive, proactive actions, into significant changes to articulate a fairer society.

Remarks such as *"no comments,"* apparently harmless, may be dangerous or at least indicate embarrassment, or lenience and connivance.

In ethical terms, if we are not to be excessively permissive or unwary, we need to get out from neutrality.

The desirable morality for conscious Spiritists should come along with a mature behavior, with the genuine desire of not harming, just by realizing the importance of wishing others whatever they would

like for themselves. Ethical conduct means direct commitment to practice common good, without judgment, in every context, even alone with oneself.

"When humans develop their virtues, led by their conscience, comparing and discerning reasonably, they manage to be content with themselves, and that is true happiness."⁶⁷ (p. 169)

Hence, punishment is not included in the journey to morality. Cognizant of their ability to act as a transformer in life, of their potential to make the difference, Spiritist will not dare punish those of a seemingly despicable behavior, let alone if the alleged offenders are black, poor and underprivileged.

Following suit with Kardec, Spiritist will grasp the significance of providing learning opportunities and creating appropriate conditions for better comprehension of facts and circumstances.

The Spiritist work furnishes a myriad of priceless lessons, calling for structural and behavioral changes. Rather than judging, we would better put ourselves in the place and stead of others. Rather than condemning, we would better lay down the conditions for potential adjustments.

Spiritism is outspokenly against racism. Note that such conclusion has been drawn from the

philosophical corpus, even though in *Posthumous Works* there is a hint of racism persisting in Kardec.⁶⁸ (p. 149) While this fact cannot be ignored, it should be put into context, as it was in line with science at that time and the prevailing mindset in Europe.

Actually, the teaching journey is not at all enticing; it is burdensome, requiring dedication, and imposing study, research and sweat. Condemning, punishing and isolating persons as a result of their reprehensible actions are easy choices, yet with a sense of immediacy and totally unproductive.

In contrast with the expectations of a large portion of the society, retaining persons in an institutionalized system is not value added.

To the contrary, it could exacerbate the signs and symptoms of mental illness and violence, redoubling the concerns and requirements of care.

Significant lessons are retrieved from the authentic Spiritist philosophy, namely questions 822 and 887 of *The Spirits' Book*, or Chapter XI of *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, in line with the conclusions of Daniela Arbex⁶⁹, proposing human treatment, solidarity and deinstitutionalization. Such care conforms to the Spiritist rule of thumb of doing to others whatever you would like them to do to you.

Manuel Porteiro corroborates:

"If individuals may not punish the society whenever it fails to carry out its duties, or restricts their rights and dignity, the society may not punish individuals, or subordinate them to its interests. The society, in this case, has no right other than force, and force, as a principle of law, means injustice, immorality."
70 (p. 115)

The logic in Kardec's thinking translates into the value of education, or regular teaching, as noted in his brilliant lesson:

"Smiling when you are required to be serious, being honest when you are required to be steadfast, being strict when you are required to be sweet, a word without thinking, nothing; sometimes, all of them are enough to form an overriding impression and for a vice to sprout. What will happen then, when such impressions turn out to be resentful from the cradle, and frequently throughout childhood? In this regard, the system of penalties is among the major issues to be considered in education, for being usually the source of most defects and vices." (Our emphasis added)⁷¹ (p. 19)

Padres y maestros agreden a hijos y alumnos por faltParents and teachers spoil their children and students for lack of inner resources. The fabulous grant-in-aid from the Spiritist philosophy is useful

to learn that humans are potentially competent and the owners of intelligence as an extraordinary tool to work on their progress.

It is natural for us to enjoy our successes, and our claims against ethical indigence in the daily routine look like illegitimate. As the pioneers, we will make the difference and spearhead the attempted changes in the current scenario.

And from the perspective of immortality and evolution (not determinism), we must not forget our intellectual and moral capacity to transform the society through fraternal and fairer cohabitation methods, by adopting new behaviors, rather appropriate for ourselves, but also for the collective.

Meditating on potential actions for global sustainable development, Gustavo Molfino reported on the Rio+20 conference and its predecessor Earth Summit, joining efforts to reduce poverty, further social equality and ensure protection of the environment. (...).⁷² (p. 150) While such hypothetical tenets need to materialize into specific actions, they somehow represent the beginning of the structure to be framed and make an impact on people.

The time is good to focus on Article 1 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Perfectly in tune with the answer to question 803 of *The Spirits'*

Book, it highlights that all humans are born equal, with same rights and dignity.

Notably, the great Argentinean Spiritist thinker, Manuel Porteiro, said:

*"The place occupied by everyone in society (...) changes incessantly and it may and should change, stimulated by our will, our ideas and our efforts, even amidst existing contradictions; and the set of wills, of ideas and individual feelings alike and combined efforts can put a new twist in the society, enable it to conceive a superior ideology and remove many evils and social injustices."*³³ (p. 102)

DID YOU KNOW?

Letter "S," used as the initial of the middle name of Manuel S. Porteiro actually is a misprint, eventually included by the witty author by introducing himself as "Manuel *Servidor* (Servant) Porteiro."⁷³ (p. 18)



The last chapter of this book contains a manifest wrought in free-thinking.



6 BEING ETHICAL = BEING HAPPY

Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

6.1 Reason and happiness

"Happiness is not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself, and we do not enjoy it by restraining passions; quite the opposite, we enjoy it because we can restrain passions."⁷⁴

Philosopher Baruch Spinoza made the statement above almost two centuries before the appearance of Spiritism. It brings forward a concept of ethics and morals in perfect harmony with the Spiritist proposal.

In previous chapters, we made a comparison between the *religious ethics*, constructed and guided by our beliefs, and the *natural or lay ethics*, resulting from a rational stance.

Then, we maintained that Spiritism, a philosophy inserted in the noble ideals of the Enlightenment and modern times, has markedly rationalist and lay characteristics. At the same time, Spiritism is based on concepts labelled as religious, namely: the existence of God, the precedence of spirit over matter, immortality of spirits and their communication ability, and the spirit's endless progress in successive reincarnations.

Such concepts, eventually turned into religious beliefs and dogmas of faith, go beyond religions and report, basically with regard to the human attitude, on the origin, nature, destination and meaning of life.

It is a way of looking at humans, the world and the divinity, bringing along moral consequences, from a supernatural perspective, for everything is contained in Kardec's concept of *natural law*.

Religions, particularly Christianity, which shaped the western culture, introduce these subjects as the result of divine revelations. Usually, they come together with moral regulations including rewards and punishment after death, when the soul, free from the body, would be able to understand the *eternal truth*.

Tied to the body in the *Valley of Tears*, residing there because of the original sin, the soul could not

understand such eternal truth. As a result, it was taken as *divine mystery*, contained in the religious dogma. This leads to *God's will*, which, according to religions, humans are not permitted to dispute. From a rational spiritualistic perspective, the divine will expresses itself in Nature and, particularly, in the conscience of intelligent beings, as a constituent element of Nature. "*Spirit is the intelligent principle of the universe*," question 23 of *The Spirits' Book* lays down.⁵

In this connection, as Jacira Jacinto da Lima said in Chapter 3, morality, or ethics, "*stems from freedom*," conquered by spirits as rational beings. Certainly, as she said, only "*the acts of gentleness, courteousness, love, recognition and esteem*" from a free conscience, will effectively change the environment.

Now, in these final remarks, we intend to make a connection between reason, which affords us to freely understand the natural law, and happiness, not by way of reward for obedience to the dictates of good, but as forming an integral part of life, of Nature itself.

For this purpose, we urge the reader to revise the reasoning quoted at the beginning of this chapter, the summary of the ethical philosophy of the outstanding thinker of the 17th century. Just for saying this sort of things, he was anathematized by Judaism,

his religion at home, and fought by Christianity, in the death throes of a theocracy created by the mighty Roman Church, the successor of the Roman Empire.

Along this line of thinking, happiness started to be taken as a *natural law*, a fundamental law that should accompany humans gradually, as they develop their rationality and, consequently, their attitude towards life.

Therefore, we urge the reader to meditate, again, on the question in *The Spirits' Book*, indispensable to understand the Spiritist philosophy, where Allan Kardec's spiritual interlocutors use the terms *natural law* and *God's law* as synonyms.⁵ (question 614). Previously, in Chapter 2, we referred to the linkage between *natural law* and natural legislation.

In this chapter, by way of conclusion, we elaborate on the optimistic character of Spiritism in relation to humans, from their origin, born "*simple and ignorant*," yet leading toward perfection, with no exception. It is a long journey, demanding personal, non-transferable effort, but the only way to a glorious destination.

Natural law, according to question 614 of *The Spirits' Book*, "*is the only law that is truly necessary for human beings to be happy. It shows them what*

they should or should not do, and they only suffer misfortune when they depart from it."

Therefore, based on the Spiritist philosophy, ethics and happiness are conjoined twins. There is no other way to happiness but the practice of virtue, that is, living our lives under the guidelines of natural law engraved in our conscience.⁵

Indeed, we reached this point after a long evolutionary journey where the heteronomous morals, that is, the morals from the authoritarian regulations set out either by religions or otherwise, played their role in bringing human relations near justice, to the extent possible, according to the collective understanding.

Moral autonomy is a recent conquest, albeit a rudimentary process, amenable to perfection as human beings set free. Another discernment by Spinoza is appropriate for this matter:

"Slaves, not free men, need to be rewarded for behaving well."⁷⁴

As a matter of fact, religion started from the point that we are not free, that we are imprisoned, subject to guilt, and will be released only by divine grace, afforded to a few beatified persons, who, because of their obedience, will be awarded eternal

life. For its part, the Spiritist rationality postulates that men and women are in quest of freedom, which will be conquered and enhanced as we get to know ourselves and the universe.

DID YOU KNOW?

Philosopher Spinoza surmised that slaves, not free persons, were the ones expected to be rewarded for their good conduct.

6.2 Spiritism and transformation

Again, according to Kardec, *"A true Spiritist is recognized for his moral transformation and by his efforts in taming his bad inclination."* This is virtually the same remark made by Spinoza, first above cited. Nonetheless, for Spinoza, happiness not only is the result of the practice of virtue, but also a condition to fight bad inclination. In other words, we are happy, not only by becoming virtuous, but also because we can, based on our good sense, *"restrain vicious spurts,"* inherent in humans.

Some regard Spiritism as a really ethical proposal due to its much admired doctrinarian excellence. They usually affirm: *"I cannot call myself a Spiritist because I am incapable of practicing the Spiritist*

morals." That argument is misleading. Spiritism is neither a factory of saints nor a community of men and women promoted to a rank of moral perfection, making them different from their peers.

Truly, we, Spiritist, are distinct from religious or materialist persons, for instance, because we admit a philosophy based on the immortality of spirits and their ongoing transformation across successive experiences in multiple dimensions and stages of life.

But Spiritist are not necessarily more virtuous than those who abide by a religion or those who think that matter is the only existential occurrence. In our opinion, the former and the latter also hold, in their innermost conscience, natural law, more or less developed, yet driving them toward a virtuous, and eventually, happy life. Incidentally, Kardec properly addressed this subject in his article "*The Five Alternatives of Humanity*," inserted in his *Posthumous Works*.⁶⁸

DID YOU KNOW?

In an article contained in his *Posthumous Works*, entitled "*The Five Alternatives of Humanity*," Allan Kardec contrasted the Spiritist ethical proposal with some other existential views.

6.3 Raison d'être

We must acknowledge that the philosophical foundations of Spiritism are a sound and permanent inducement to ethical transformation. Provided that we are convinced of our status of immortal spirits with the authority and leeway to reach higher, and ultimately, happier stages, our lives will be meaningful. But such meaning will be different from the unlikely reward of eternal beatitude or from the nihilistic view of existence exclusively made of matter.

The law of spiritual immortality confers unto every intelligence in the universe the particular condition of co-author of the creation. As suggested in question 132 of *The Spirits' Book*⁵, "*Incarnation has a further objective, which is to place spirits in situations where they can do their share in the work of creation.*"

This means undertaking the task of being better, more helpful, happier. It also means to provide an input for life in its entirety and its constituent elements, to continue in the direction of perfection.

Sure enough, there is no way of completing such task within the limited timeline of a single bodily existence. Notwithstanding, Jesus of Nazareth, depicted in *The Spirits' Book*,⁵ as "*the guide and model of humanity,*" calls upon us to be perfect,⁶

intimating that perfection is possible; even more so, it is the destination of every intelligent being.

Usually, the dogmatic beliefs of religions fail to offer these assurances. Furthermore, they do not hold human beings as the owners of such a huge potential. To remove these notions, however, spirits needed to replace blind faith with the infinite universe of knowledge, the key of transformation.

The moral autonomy proclaimed by Spiritism neither isolates human beings nor subjects them to any contribution coming from the outside in during their growth. Nobody is an island. All of us are interdependent. Solidarity is a universal law. As for love, it is the driving force that moves us to assimilate and experience the greater meaning of existence.

Anyhow, and this is the major challenge in life, nothing and nobody may stand in for us in the steep, unremitting and restless fight of our individual transformation toward wholeness, termed as *perfection* in the Kardecist philosophy.

Of note, *Spiritist morals* does not refer to the morals of a belief, a religion or a sect. It is ethics resulting from the supreme laws of the universe, governed by a *supreme intelligence and the first cause of all things*.⁸

We, the Spiritist, exhort the humanity to pay attention to the rationality of the laws written in the individual conscience. Pursuant to these laws, our troubled world, still in crisis, will give way to a new historical reality, governed by peoples' solidarity, cooperation for peace, material and spiritual progress. This is briefly the great law of universal love. All of us come from same origin and head for same destination, no matter race, belief, political stance or ideology. Thus, as long as we continue to ignore the issues of fraternity and equality, we will delay the yenned quantum leap on planet Earth.

The spirit, the intelligent principle of the universe, holds an immense potential to make humanity understand that life makes sense indeed!



7 THE AUTHORS' FINAL PROPOSAL

The authors of Spiritism, ethics and morals, part of the *Free-Thinking Collection – Spiritism for the 21st Century*, convinced of Allan Kardec's assertion in his book *Genesis*, chapter The Time Has Come, according to which, "*Through its moralizing power, its progressive tendencies, the breadth of its outlook and the generality of the issues it encompasses, Spiritism is more capable than any other doctrine to aid the regenerative movement,*" and whereas Spiritism runs in parallel with a historical period marked by the necessity of profound social changes in the domains of justice, freedom, equality, fraternity and love,

PUT FORWARD,

in form of corollary of the reflections herein expounded, the manifest stated below:

SPIRITIST MANIFEST FOR A BETTER WORLD

It is essential and urgent for us to:

- 1. Enter into a partnership with human rights advocates**, creating an ethical environment on the basis of respect, in default of which any verbalization makes no sense. Therefore, the daily practice of morality based on freedom is a must.
- 2. Get together for humanist causes**, fighting for the implementation of universal systems of health, improvement and permanence of a public health network taking good care for everyone alike (Article XXV, Universal Declaration of Human Rights).
- 3. Desire a justice system able to provide security**, contributing to the provision of the necessary conditions for people's intellectual and moral development, setting apart from social interaction only those persons who are really harmful.

4. **Choose democracy always**, seeking mature political representatives for the rule of responsible freedom.
5. **Have education as a goal**, making it abundant and pleasant, enticing and capable of educating insightful, knowledge-loving citizens. In this manner, all of us will have an opportunity to learn always, through our education for life.
6. **Garner respect for every human being on an ongoing basis**, regardless of their physical condition or economic situation, belief, gender identity, ethnic group, race, language, political opinion or otherwise.
7. **Welcome always scientific findings**, fully supporting the progress of humanity, in the most diverse areas of knowledge.
8. **Offer decent employment, in human conditions**, compensated accordingly and permeated by well-deserved leisure. Shall we allow no more the exploitation of child labor, adult slavery, or any contemptible labor in exchange of daily bread. (Article XXIV, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and question 682, *The Spirits' Book*).

9. **Help always to create the conditions to overcome social inequality**, in an attempt at removing misery and extreme poverty, the product of a standard of meanness incompatible with a decent civilization process.
 10. **Finally, hold love as our compass**, invigorating us to cultivate peace for a more supportive, fraternal and fair world.
-

Jacira Jacinto da Silva

Milton Rubens Medran Moreira

SUGGESTED READING

Three elementary books:

Manuel Porteiro. *Espiritismo dialéctico*.

Paulo Henrique de Figueiredo. *Revolução Espírita*.

Fabio Konder Comparato. *A afirmação histórica dos direitos humanos*.

Delving into the issue:

Dora Incontri. *Educação, espiritualidade e transformação social*.

Emmanuel Lévinas. *Humanismo de outro homem*.

Jon Aizpúrua. *Los fundamentos del Espiritismo*.

SUGGESTED WEB SITES AND LINKS

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Born in a Spiritist home in December 1957, in Palmeira D'Oeste-SP, Brazil. Married, five children and four grandchildren.

Bachelor's Degree in Biology, Mathematics and Law. Master's Degree in Procedural Law.

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Professional practice: Receptionist, Office Assistant, Bank Clerk, Court Attaché, University Professor, Law Judge at São Paulo Court of Justice, Attorney-at-law, Businesswoman and Counselor.

In Birigui-SP, Jacira embarked on the establishment of the Jail Protection and Assistance Association (APAC), the Social Protection and Inclusiveness Institute (IPIS), and Hernani Guimarães Andrade Spiritist Culture Institute. In Bragança Paulista, she co-founded the Learning Community Center (ECO) – Comprehensive Education Program. She is a member of the Open Doors Foundation in São Paulo.

Jacira has been actively involved in the education of Spiritist children and teenagers. She is a member of the Spiritist Research and Documentation Center (CPDoc), the CEPA Fellow Association in Brazil (CEPABrasil), and José Herculano Pires Spiritist Study Center. Additionally, Jacira is the current chair of the International Spiritist Association (CEPA) and the author of the book *Criminalidade: Educar ou punir?* (*Crime, to educate or to punish?*)

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A solicitor based in Rio Grande do Sul and a journalist.

Milton was a member of the board of directors of *Rio Grande do Sul Spiritist Federation*, also the manager of the Social Communication Department and editor of *A Reencarnação* review, at the Federation.

In 1983, he joined and presided over the Porto Alegre Spiritist Cultural Center. Milton founded and has led for 26 years *CCEPA OPINIÃO*, the official institutional review.

He is the author of multiple Spiritist books, including *Direito e Justiça, um Olhar Espírita* (*Law and Justice, a Spiritist Outlook*); *Se Todos Fossem Iguais* (*If Everybody were Equal*); *O Espírito de um Novo Tempo ou Um Novo Tempo para o Espírito* (*The Spirit of a New Time or a New Time for the Spirit*).

Milton translated from Spanish into Portuguese the book *History of Parapsychology*, by Jon Aizpúrua.

In 2000-2008, Milton chaired the *International Spiritist Association (CEPA)*.



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