

IS THIS ALL THERE IS?

The following is a talk I gave as a guest speaker at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis, Oregon.

The background music I used to begin the Fellowship service was an old song by Peggy Lee, "Is That All There Is?"

I used this song because, to me, it optimizes the Humanist/Materialist belief that nothing exists other than what we can experience through our five senses and, basically, my talk is an answer to this based on my belief in Spiritism.

God, Angels, Spirits, lead us, guide us let us feel your presence.

I ask you Lord to send us the good Spirits to help with this meeting and remove all spirits who may cause us error; give us the necessary light so we may distinguish truth from falsity. Remove too, the maleficent Spirits, be they incarnate or discarnate, who may try to create discord among us, and turn us from charity and love for our neighbors. Good Spirits help us put aside arrogance, jealousies, anger, fear, bitterness, and disappointment. Help us approach this subject with an open mind.

(We sing the following frequently as the children march off to their religious exploration classes)

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?

Mystery, Mystery, Life is a riddle and a mystery.

I never thought a year ago when I first began attending this fellowship that I would be standing before you spreading the word of Spiritism. For some reason the Good Spirits want YOU people to know about this.

What is Spiritism?

It is the set of laws and principles, as revealed by the Superior Spirits, contained in the works of Allan Kardec, The Spirits' Book, The Mediums' Book, The Gospel According to Spiritism, Heaven and Hell, and Genesis.

It reveals what we are; where we came from, where we are going, what is the objective of our existence, and what is the reason for pain and suffering.

Spiritism can and should be studied, analyzed, and practiced in all the fundamental aspects of life, such as scientific, philosophical, religious, ethical, moral, educational, and social.

We believe that:

God is the Supreme intelligence. God is eternal, unchangeable, immaterial, unique, omnipotent, supremely just, and good.

A Human Being is a Spirit incarnated in a material body. Our Spirit is always progressing. The speed of our intellectual and moral progress depends on the efforts we make to attain perfection as defined by Jesus.

Life goes on, whether in this world or the Spirit world. Spirits are everywhere. There are evolved Spirits who try to help us succeed and un-evolved or imperfect Spirits, who are happy to help us fail.

Human Beings are given the free will to act, but they must answer for the consequences of their actions.

Spiritism does not impose its principles. It invites those interested in knowing it to submit its teachings to the test of reason before accepting them.

Spiritism respects all religions and doctrines; values all efforts toward the practice of goodness; works toward peace and fellowship between all nations and all peoples, regardless of race, color, nationality, creed, cultural or social standing. It also recognizes that the truly good person is one who complies with the laws of justice, love, and charity in their highest degree of purity.

Victor Hugo said "Turning a blind eye to the Spiritist phenomena is turning a blind eye to the truth."

In 1977 I got my first introduction to spirit communication in New Mexico when I played with the Ouija Board. My friend and I decided to test it with a question that I would ask and she would know nothing about. I asked it what my grandfather's favorite pastime was. In my mind I repeated, "Go to the races, go to the races". The board spelled out "To Bet". Now, mind you, my grandfather died when I was 12 and my only memory was that Nana wouldn't allow him to go to the races but once a year. This was verifiable information. We immediately called my parents, who told us, "Yes he liked to go to the races, but every day on his way to work he went to his bookie." (Laugh) "Of course, this was not something my parents told us kids." This communication scared me. Coming from a good Baptist/Lutheran background I just knew this was the devil. I didn't recognize the value in what I had experienced. I left it alone and got married.

He and I moved to Oklahoma in 1978. He took me for every cent I had and was gone by the end of that year.

Talk about the Devil taking possession!

When left alone with my thoughts I could feel that gnawing, ach came back. That hole in the dark pit of my stomach that asks "Is that what life is all about?", "Is that all there is?"

Church did not supply the answer. I had learned to recite "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and all things visible and INVISIBLEbut yet, no church I ever attended approached the subject of

what do you do when an inanimate object talks back! What happens when you do seem to get in touch with the invisible?

I filled my time with taking care of the basics. I started a business, met a man, and got married (again).

Your life gets really busy when you have three kids, a job, and a farm, and you can quiet that feeling of isolation with so much to do.

As my kids got older they didn't need me around as much and that little fear came back. What if this is all there is?

I began taking long walks alone contemplating that question. There was no burning bush. No voice. But one day a lady came into my office and told me about a woman who, while blindfolded, answered questions you wrote to a dead loved one. I decided to check this out; my first experience left me skeptical and wondering "how'd she do that?" I was intrigued, though, and began to attend other public sessions with her and rapidly realized she was tapping into something beyond our five senses; that there was no way she could know the answers she was giving.

Oliver Lodge, a professor and physician in England said, "I am a Spiritist because, after over 20 years of study, I have had to accept these phenomena as a reality".

It didn't take me twenty years.

The next few years I attended the readings mainly to hear the truly evolved messages given to all. My walks alone in the woods became more personal, more in the form of specific questions. I picked up doing my yoga that I had abandoned ten years earlier, except this time I used it as it was intended to be used, as a way to get centered, quiet, peaceful, so I could meditate deeper. I wanted to connect with my spirit guide.

Five years ago I was driving home from New Mexico alone with my old dog, Sasha. We were in a terrible snow storm in the Texas Panhandle and I was scared to death that some idiot driver was going to kill me. I was beginning to panic. All of a sudden a voice said "Don't worry; I'll take care of you". A flood of warmth and peace came over me and I drove the three hundred miles as if I was on a Sunday drive. Of course, I began to question my sanity. Within a few days I found a book about Angel Messages in which people described similar incidences and I knew this experience was being validated.

When I read "The Spirits' Book" I could not put it down. It explained to me why and how I had heard this voice. It explains the real existence. How our material world is but a passing experience that we use to progress our soul. That our soul evolves. Our loved ones do still exist. They have not stopped existing, nor have they melted into a gigantic pool of energy. They are real. They hear us. I took my mom to a Billet reading one day and she wrote a note to my dad, "Dear Bud, How are you?" He came through and said he was fine, (nothing too extraordinary in that), but he also said he visited the lake frequently. No one there knew that we had dumped his ashes in Lake Texoma, plus we had promised him before he died that we'd dump them in the ocean! So, how did he know? He was there.

In the Spirits' Book the Good Spirits tell us to be careful of the messages received, particularly if they appeal to your ego, or tell you they're some famous person. That you retain the energy of who you were in your most recent incarnation and a living liar will also be a dead liar.

During the mid 1850's a phenomena was occurring all around the world. The average person was suddenly being able to experience and communicate with what seemed to be dead people. This was an experience no longer reserved for mystics. There was a man in Paris by the name of Leon Denizard Hippolyte Rivail; he was a professor, a scientist, a writer of educational books, a linguist. He decided to investigate these strange goings on. He challenged everything he witnessed with skepticism, but he did not dismiss what he saw and heard. He set up experiments in different parts of the city and armed the participants with the same lists of questions for the channeled spirits. Then he compared the results. He kept copious notes on every question you could imagine. He was told by the spirits he had been talking with to codify the material and publish it in a series of books under the name Allan Kardec. "The Spirit's Book" being the first, answers all types of questions from why do some people have communication and some don't. Why is some information right on, and some is way off base. Do we have Guardian Angels? Why do some good people suffer and some bad people don't. It begins with a defining of terms the main definition being that a Materialist believes in only what it can experience through its five senses, and a Spiritist believes in the fundamental principle of the Spiritist theory which is the relation of the material world with spirits of the invisible world. It lays the foundation for the rest of the books; "The Medium's Book" which is the experimental application of the theoretic principles in "The Spirits' Book," "The Gospel According to Spiritism," "Heaven and Hell," and "Genesis."

The study of Spiritism is immense. It involves all subjects physical, metaphysical, and social. It deals with the immortality of the soul; the existence of spirits, their natures and their relations with us; the moral law of charity; the present life, the future life, and the destiny of the human race. Life no longer is a mystery.

The doctrine tells us there are in man three things:

The body or material being, analogous to the animals, and animated by the same principle;

The soul, or immaterial being, is a spirit incarnated in the body;

The perispirit is the link which unites the soul and the body, a principle intermediary between matter and spirit.

Humans, therefore, have two natures:

By our bodies we participate in the nature of the animals, i.e., survival of the fittest, procreation, pleasures of the senses;

By our souls, we participate in the nature of spirits.

The spirit is a real being. It is not an abstract, undefined being, only to be conceived of by our thought. It is a real, circumscribed being, which, in certain cases, is appreciable by the sense of sight, hearing, and touch. It is not a childhood fantasy, nor a figment of a hysterical mind.

This is not an abstract subject.

Someone asked me a month or so ago if the Spiritist group was still around. When I told them “yes”, their response was “Oh, there must be a need”. Without a shadow of a doubt there is a need. The time has come to get educated on this subject. I got 3,550,000 hits on my computer when I searched for the word “Spirituality”, 30,300 hits with the name Allan Kardec, 188,000 hits for ghosts and spirits, 361,000 on mysticism, 1,850,000 on psychics. A poll taken by Time Magazine showed 81% of Americans believe in Heaven, and 94% believe in God.

There are many people here today, who are more than interested in this subject. They are ‘closet spiritists’ afraid to come out and announce that they can see auras, or have heard voices, or have actually seen a discarnate spirit. There are those here interested in witchcraft.

Spiritism gives us a foundation of sound, logical explanations for phenomena that will become more and more evident in the future. It teaches us to be discerning. Education, as you know, is power. Are there abuses? Of course. We are human and so is the medium. Have there been people made fools of by believing in what a medium has told them, or what they considered divine revelation? Of course, we are only human. But do these abuses by humans negate the reality of the communication? No. The communication was probably real, but what evolutionary level was the spirit who was communicating?

Education is power. Spiritism says all you need is a belief in a high power; Approach with an opened mind; study the teachings for the essence of the thought; and don’t get hung up on semantics.

Know that spirits belong to different classes, and are not equal to one another either in power, intelligence, in knowledge, or in morality. The spirits who communicate most frequently and habitually with us are precisely those who are nearest to us in ideas and in feeling, and who, consequently, know little more than the human beings with whom they are in sympathy. Those of the highest order are distinguished from those below them by their superior purity and knowledge, their nearness to God, and their love of goodness; they are angels or pure spirits. The other classes are more and more distant from this perfection; those of the lower ranks are inclined to most of our hatred, envy, jealousy, pride, arrogance, etc.

What they tell us is that we are all equal in the sense that we all start out un-evolved and progress through many lifetimes to the ultimate goal of “pure spirit”. They tell us we can proceed as quickly or as slowly as we want. We all have free will and we can speed our evolutionary progress up by following the teachings of Christ when he said that charity was the most important.

What happens when you study the teachings? You are able to judge information, events, with an open minded skepticism.

When I first found “The Spirits’ Book” I could not stop reading it. It puts together all information about life, how to focus your life, how to behave in your life that appeared to me to be in bits and pieces in the books on religion, and metaphysics. It speaks of Christ and his teachings as teachings coming from a “pure” spirit who incarnated to this earth as a mission. It tells us that our

Guardian Angel is with us from birth to death and beyond. This good spirit takes on this assignment to help guide us in our path of evolution. It tells us we have many other guides and these are either prone to good or to bad depending on our own disposition. That like attracts like. If your goals and intentions are of a superior nature, you will attract superior entities. If your thoughts are full of anger, jealousies, envy, you will attract spirits who will encourage this attitude. If you have never released the past with love and forgiveness, you inhibit your own evolution.

When you are truly serious about your desire to learn, spirits come to your aid. Spirits put in place people, "coincidences", things that will help you on your path. All too often our egos get in the way of our true advancement. You may think: This stuff is just hysteria, or imagination. You may think, "If I investigate this, someone might think I'm stupid, or silly, or crazy".

When you begin to investigate, when you meditate, practice yoga, hike in the woods alone with your thoughts, walk along the beach alone with your thoughts, you begin to peel away the layers of fear, doubt, disappointment, pain, suffering, that you have been holding onto consciously or unconsciously. You begin to let go of these experiences. When you cry the tears of pain, loss, hurt, sorrow, and accept the fact that you are not alone, you are on a path that you chose before incarnating. That you have around you all sorts of helping spirits who will help you through your doubts, your fears, if you will only trust that we are more than this material envelope that will disintegrate and return to the dust. We are a creation of a God, who we on earth are not smart enough to understand, that loves unconditionally. Who gives you a Guardian Spirit who is with you unconditionally, just waiting to be asked for help.

There is a parallel universe, an existence of another life form whose vibration is faster than ours. This is the eternal existence, where as our earth life is temporary.

The energy necessary for all of us to communicate with spirits is available to certain degrees. Some are born with an abundance of this energy and are able to communicate with spirits from childhood. These people have been called crazy, schizophrenics, liars. These people have been driven to despair, isolation, and fear. There are many out there who are honest, but uneducated, mediums. Some very evolved channels. Some crooks. The knowledge of Spiritism is the place to start.

I remember back in the late sixties I finished a year as a VISTA volunteer in the San Joaquin Valley. I had spent a year fighting poverty. I'll never forget waving goodbye to the farm workers I lived with. I couldn't tell if I had made a difference. They were still poor and I was leaving.

I remember thinking.

Is this all there is to life, struggle, hardship, for some? Inequality? Is this all there is?

The answer is NO; this is not all there is.

Spiritism is a lesson of love and everlasting life in a continued pursuit of self-improvement and harmony with all the creation throughout multiple existences.

Arthur Conan Doyle said "Either the observers are liars or mad. Or their observations are true. When I state without the shadow of a doubt that I saw, in the presence of witnesses both my mother and my nephew who were dead, then I must belong to one of these 2 categories. I leave it to those who know me and to my work to decide on this."

Written by: Janice Imel
bogeeta2000@yahoo.com