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Meaning of the words *poor in spirit*

1. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* (Matthew 5:3.)
2. The skeptics have taunted this maxim, as they have mocked many principles they lack comprehension. By *poor in spirit* Jesus does not mean the devoid of intelligence, but the humble, so that he says the Kingdom of Heaven is for the lowly ones, and not for the arrogant.

The so-called knowledgeable and erudite people of the Earth often hold such a high opinion of themselves that they consider the divine matters as unworthy of their attention. Concentrating completely upon themselves and their worldly interests, they are unable to lift their eyes up to God. Their tendency to believe that they are superior often leads them to deny anything that might be above them, because it could belittle them. Claiming that they alone can lead the Earth, they deny even Divinity. When admitting God's existence, they refuse one of the greatest divine attributes: the providential action over the world. Taking their intellect as the

standard for the universal intelligence, and judging themselves capable to understand everything, they are unable to believe in anything they ignore. They often consider their judgment as law.

They reject the existence of invisible worlds and divine power because their pride refuses any baseline higher than their own, as it could bring them down from their pedestal. Hence, they scorn everything that does not belong to the visible and tangible world. They self-assign such high imagination and learning that they cannot believe in things which, according to their viewpoint, are suitable only for *simple* people, taking for *poor in spirit* those who seriously consider the spiritual subjects.

But, no matter what such proud people say, they will inevitably be drawn into the invisible world they scoff at. There, they will open their eyes and understand their mistake. Nevertheless, being fair, God receives differently those who rejected the universal laws and those who humbly submitted to them, and gives them different shares.

By saying the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to the poor in spirit, Jesus teaches that one will only be admitted there with *simplicity of heart and spiritual humility*, and that the simple person, who presents these virtues, will be preferred instead of refined people who believe more in themselves than in God. Jesus

always places humility among the virtues that join humankind and God, and pride between the vices that keep them apart. In order to achieve future happiness, we should be *poor in spirit*, as the world understands it, and morally rich.

Those who exalt themselves will be debased

3. *The disciples came to Jesus and asked: Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven? Jesus called a little child to him, placed the kid in the midst of them and answered: Verily I say to you, except you are converted and become as little as children, you will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; therefore, those who humble themselves, as this little child does, are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven; and those who receive one such little child, in my name, receives me. (Matthew 18:1-5.)*

4. *The mother of Zebedee's children came to Jesus with her sons, worshiping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. Jesus asked her: What do you want? She answered: Grant that these two sons of mine may sit one on your right hand side and the other on your left, in Your kingdom. Jesus replied: You don't know what you ask; can you two drink of the cup that I will drink of? They answered: We can. He said to them, You will indeed drink my chalice, but sitting on my right hand side or on my left is not*

mine to give, but they to whom it is prepared of God. And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them to him and said: You know that the princes of the Gentiles exert dominion over them, and that those who are great exert authority upon them, but let's be different among you; whoever wants be great among you, let them be your servants, and whoever desires being the first among you, shall be your servant; as the Son of Human came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:20-28.)

5. *Jesus went into the house of a chief Pharisee to eat meal on the Saturday, and they watched him. When Jesus noticed the guests chose the first places, he taught the following parable to them. - If you are invited to a feast, do not sit down in the highest room, because people more honorable than you might also have been invited, and the host may come to you and say: "Give this place to this person." And so you, ashamed, will have to take the lowest room. When you have been invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that the host may say to you: "My friend, go up higher!" Then you will have glory, because those who exalt themselves will be debased, and those that humble themselves will be exalted. (Luke 14:1 and 7-11.)*

6. Jesus presents humility as a

requirement for happiness when he says “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.” He takes a child as a symbol of simplicity of heart when he says “The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven will be those who humble themselves *and make themselves as little as a child.*”

Christ also extols humility when he teaches: *Those among you who want to be the greatest, let them be servants and Those that humble themselves will be exalted, and those who exalt themselves will be debased.*

Spiritism confirms the Christ's words by showing simple and powerless people on the Earth occupying, after disincarnation, top positions in the spiritual world, as well as people that were the most rich and powerful on this planet often becoming tiny in the afterlife. On disincarnating, the former carried with them what is truly great and unlosable: their virtues and good deeds. But the latter were compelled to leave behind everything that made their former earthly greatness, impossible to take: riches, titles, power, birth nobleness etc. Having little spiritual wealth, they become completely needy in the other world, like ship-wrecked travelers who lost everything, even their clothes. The pride they retain makes their new position even more humiliating, as they see far above them, resplendent and glorious, those that they trod underfoot on Earth.

The same law applies to the successive reincarnations. Those who, in one life, occupied the highest earthly positions and were dominated by pride and ambition often go down, on being reborn, to the undermost social rank. Therefore, we should avoid yearning earthly top positions. We should abstain from trying to impose ourselves above others if we don't want being obliged to descend. We must be humble. If we deserve a higher place in the spiritual life, God will know how to grant us it.

Mysteries hidden from the learned and prudent

7. Jesus said: I thank you, my God, because you have hidden these things from the learned and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. (Matthew 11:25.)

8. It may sound singular that Jesus is grateful because God has disclosed the truth to the *simple and lowly*, who are the poor in spirit, and for having hidden it from the *learned and prudent*, who are apparently more able to understand it. The former are the *humble*. They are submissive before God and don't consider themselves superior to anyone. The latter are the *arrogant*. Proud of their worldly knowledge, they consider themselves prudent because they either deny God or treat the Supreme Majesty as an equal. This is why the Creator lets them

research the earthly mysteries, whereby revealing the heavenly secrets to the humble, who, being meeker, are more able to understand the divine message.

9. The same happens with the spiritual teachings. The unbelievers become astonished because the good spirits make so little effort to convince them. But there is a reason for this. The advanced spirits are very busy. They prioritize looking after the lowly ones, who heartily seek guidance, rather than the haughty ones, who, supposing to be enlightened, think that God must be thankful for being granted an opportunity to manifest before them and persuade them.

Such people prefer keeping their eyes shut. God respects their free-will and doesn't oblige them to see the truth. Their time will come. But firstly, due to their own choice, they will have to suffer pain and darkness, anguish that will remove their pride.

Therefore, let the unbelievers be aware that the Eternal, and the good spirits who execute the divine designs, disregard their proud demands. The Divine Power is everywhere, from the smallest things to the greatest. God spreads light in waves to every corner of the Universe. Only those who remain spiritually blind don't see it. The evolved spirits kindly listen to those who humbly ask for clarification, but they don't prioritize conceited people that

self-judge greater than God.

10. Someone might ask: why doesn't God astoundingly manifest in front of the unbelievers, in a way able to convert even the most obstinate atheist? Of course God can do it, but is this the best way to induce the unbelievers to use their free-will? What merit would they acquire from such manifestation? Moreover, there are many people who refuse the clearest evidence and still say: "I will reject it even if I see it, because I know it is impossible." So, what use would such a demonstration have? Their minds are still too immature to understand the truth, and their hearts are unable to feel it. *Pride is the cataract which covers their vision.* It is useless teaching the colors to a blind person. Rather, we first need cure the cause of the illness. The divine Providence takes care of everyone. Being a skilled surgeon, God first removes their pride, and sooner or later they will open their eyes. But the Creator wants them to do it through their own free-will. Then, defeated by the incredulity-inherent torments, they will come back to the divine arms, begging forgiveness, like the prodigal son did.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

Pride and humility

11. My dear friends, may the divine

peace be with you! We come in order to encourage you to follow the pathway of goodness.

God has entrusted the poor spirits, who inhabited the Earth in another time, to clarify things for you. We thank God for having allowed us to assist your improvement. May the Holy Spirit enlighten my thoughts, so that my words can be understandable!

Humility is a much forgotten virtue on Earth. Of the many examples given very few have been followed. Without being humble nobody can be charitable. Humility places all humans on the same level, tells us that we are brothers and sisters, who should assist one another, and induces us to goodness. Without humility we simply adorn ourselves with virtues that we lack, just as does someone who uses a certain clothe to hide a physical deformity. Remember Jesus. Remember his sublime humility that placed him above all the prophets!

Pride is the worst enemy of humbleness. Christ promises the Kingdom of Heaven to the poor because the worldly powerful people often think their titles and riches are rewards due only to their own merit. They frequently self-consider more deserving than the poor. As they determine that their wealth is due only to themselves, whenever life takes their riches away they accuse God of injustice. Oh, what blindness! God doesn't distinguish anyone by social status.

Everything made by the Most High is great and wise. Never attribute to God ideas that have been created by human prideful minds.

Oh, you rich! While you sleep beneath golden ceilings, safe from cold and hunger, millions of brothers and sisters, who before God's eyes are as worthy as you, sleep upon straw. The sufferers are your equals. Of course your pride rejects such words. You agree giving them alms but you would never shake their hands! Then you say: "So what! I, having the noblest blood and being an earthly great, am equal to those miserable wretched ones, covered by rags? This is a vain utopia of pseudo-philosophers! If we were equal, God would not have placed them so low and me so high!" It is true their clothes are different. But, if you undress yourself, what difference will exist between you and them? Some would answer: "Noble origin!" However, science hasn't found any difference between the organism of a lord and a plebeian, or of rich and poor. Who assures that, in a previous incarnation, you have not been as wretched as they are now too? Who guarantees that you have not begged alms too? Who can assure that, in the future, you will be free from begging alms from those that you despise today? Is richness eternal? Doesn't it disperse after the body end? Remember that body is just the perishable encasement of the spirit, which is eternal. Oh, be humbler! Remind

that death can strike you anytime, and that your richness is unable to protect you from it. Avoid burying yourself in pride! Otherwise you will become needy of huge compassion.

Oh prideful people! Who were you before becoming rich and powerful? You were perhaps beneath the lowest of your servants. Therefore, bow down your haughty brow, because God can make it fall just when you most exalt yourselves. All humans are equal on the divine justice scales. Only virtue makes the difference. All spirits have the same essence and all bodies are made from the same matter. Nothing will be changed by your titles and gold. They will remain on the Earth and will be incapable to take you up to the happiness of the chosen ones, reserved for those who possess the riches of charity and humility.

Oh, poor creature! You are a mother and your children suffer. They are cold and hungry while you, bent under your cross burden, go out, humiliating yourself, in order to bring them bread! I bow down before you! How saintly and noble you are! How great before my eyes! Pray and wait, because happiness is still not of this world. The poor and oppressed who trust in God will be taken to the Kingdom of Heaven.

And you, sweet maiden, poor child early thrown into the hardest work and privation, why do you have such sad thoughts? Why do you cry? Lift your eyes up to God, who, serene and

pious, feeds the little birds. Trust in the Providence, that always watches over you. The sound of parties and the joys of this world make your heart beat faster. You would like to adorn yourself with flowers and join the fortunate of this globe. You think to yourself that, like the women you see passing by, who are free of cares and full of laughter, you could also be rich. Oh, dear child, do not think like this! If you knew the unspeakable pain and the many tears that are hidden beneath those embroidered dresses, the many sobs that are muffled by the orchestra music, you would prefer your humble home and your poverty. Keep yourself pure before God's eyes if you want to keep your guardian angel nearby you, covering you with its wings, celebrating, with you, your wins on this planet, guiding your steps and supporting your journey, so that you might deserve, after overcoming the earthly challenges, the real happiness of the other world.

All of you, who suffer injustice from your fellow beings: forgive your brothers' and sisters' faults, because you are not guiltless. Forgiveness is both charity and humility. If you suffer slander, don't worry and carry on. God knows all of the truth! So, what importance does the slander of this world have? If your conduct is pure, cannot God reward you? Withstand courageously the humiliations put upon you by other humans. Be humble and recognize that

only the Supreme Wisdom is really great and powerful.

Oh, dear God, does Christ have to come back to Earth a second time, in order to teach again the divine law, because humankind has forgotten it?! Will Jesus, once again, have to cast the merchants out from the temple? Will you, humans, accept or reject him? Will not the modern Pharisees accuse Jesus of blasphemy, because he will hurt their interest and pride? Christ would likely be taken to the Golgotha again.

When Moses climbed Mount Sinai to receive the ten commandments, the ancient people made a golden idol, worshiped it and abandoned the true God. Present humans still behave like them when prioritizing the material subjects rather than the spiritual. Christ bequeathed his divine doctrine to humankind, giving examples of all the virtues. However, you have abandoned his examples and precepts. Each one, in accordance with each individual interest, makes a specific idol, for some, bloody and terrible, for others, indifferent to the world. Each fake god is still a kind of molten calf, adapted to a specific illusion.

My friends, my brothers and sisters, awaken! Let the spirits' voices echo inside your hearts. Be quietly unselfish and charitable, that is to say, do good with humility. Let each one, little by little, begin demolishing the pride altar.

Be true Christians and you will possess the Kingdom of Truth. Stop doubting the divine goodness, because God is always spreading many proofs of it. We have come to prepare the way, so that to fulfill the prophecies. We hope that, in the moment at which God will give you a more resounding demonstration of divine clemency, the Celestial Messenger finds you gathered together in a great family. We hope your hearts, being gentle and mild, will be worthy, at that moment, to hear the divine words he will offer. May the Chosen One encounter in his path only the laurels that you have laid there, returning to goodness, charity and fraternity. Then your world will become a paradise. However, if you remain indifferent to the voices of the spirits, who have been sent to purify and renew your society, which, although rich in science, is poor in noble feelings, then, unfortunately, there will be only tears and unhappy groans for you. But we hope it will not be so! Return to God, and all those who have contributed to the divine work will join together, singing a thanksgiving hymn. Let us praise God, who is immensely good, for all the centuries! So be it. - *Lacordaire*. (Constantine, 1863.)

12. Humans, why do you complain about the calamities that you yourselves heap upon your heads? You despise the saintly Christ's morality. So, don't be surprised when the cup of iniquity overflows.

Disturbance becomes widespread. Who is to blame if not you, humans, who are always trying to crush one another? It is impossible to be happy without mutual benevolence. Benevolence cannot get along with pride. Pride is the root cause of your troubles! So strive to destroy it, in order to end its fatal consequences. There is a unique and infallible way to achieve it: taking, as your invariable conduct rule, the Christ's law, which you have spurned or misinterpreted.

Why do you regard what shines and bewitches the eyes higher than that which touches the heart? Why do you flatter the vice within the richness, whereas despising the humble invisible merit? When rich debauchees appear, all doors open and everyone rushes to give them attention. But godly people, who honestly live by their humble work, are seldom given a greeting. When consideration is proportional to one's gold or titles, why would the flattered people strive to correct their moral flaws?

It would be quite different if general opinion strongly rejected vice and embraced virtue. But pride forgives all that flatters it. These are times of covetousness and money, one may say. Of course. But why did you allow your material requirements to surpass judgment and reason? Why do people covet placing themselves above others? Society today suffers

the consequences of selfishness.

An extreme pride indicates moral decay and imminent fall, because God always corrects the haughty ones. Sometimes the Supreme Wisdom allows the arrogant to rise, in order to give them time for meditation and mending. Now and then, life warns them by hurting their pride. But instead of becoming humble, they rebel. Thus, when the cup of wickedness is full, God makes the prideful descend, and the higher they have risen, the harder they will fall.

Poor humanity, whose selfishness has corrupted everything! Renew your courage despite the troubles. God sends you a powerful remedy for your ills, an unexpected help for your miseries. Open up your eyes to the Spiritist light! Here are the souls of those who no longer live upon the Earth, who have come to call you to fulfill your true obligations. The spirits will tell you, with the experience voice, that the vanities and ostentation of this fleeting existence are mere trifles compared to eternity. They will tell you that, in the other world, the greatest are those who were the humblest on your planet; that those who most loved their fellow beings are the best loved ones in the spiritual world; that the earthly powerful ones, who abuse their authority, will owe obedience to their servants; and that humility and charity compose the password to get grace from the Eternal. - *Adolf, bishop of Algiers*. (Marmande, 1862.)

Mission of the intelligent person on Earth

13. Never be proud of what you know, because knowledge has very narrow limits in the world you live. Even if you are a prominent intellectual celebrity on this planet, you still lack right to be prideful. Life allowed you to be born in a place where you could develop your intelligence because the Creator expected you to use your brain to benefit many. It is a mission that you have been entrusted with. God has put in your hands a tool. You should use your cleverness to develop the backward intelligence and lead them towards progress and goodness. The nature of a tool indicates the usage it is supposed to have. A gardener entrusts to his assistant a hoe. Does not this implement show the use to which it must be put? Let us suppose that, instead of digging the soil, the assistant raises the hoe against his master, aiming to injure him. What would we think about that? We would think that it is monstrous, and that such assistant deserves expulsion. Now, what about those who use their intelligence to spread hate, crime or to destroy the idea of God and Providence? Is this not the same offense? Don't they raise the hoe against the Master who entrusted them this tool? Do they deserve the promised salary? Don't they deserve, on the contrary, being expelled from the garden? You

can be sure they will be! Then, they will pass through many miserable reincarnations, full of pain and humiliation, until they finally bow down before the Almighty, to whom they owe everything.

Provided intelligence is well employed, it allows a great merit for the future. If all clever people used their intellect for good, it would be much easier for the spirits to help humanity to advance. However, many have turned smartness into an instrument of pride, selfishness and unhappiness against themselves. Humans abuse intelligence as they do with all other faculties. Nevertheless, lots of teachings warn everyone that a powerful Hand can, anytime, withdraw whatever has been granted. - *Ferdinand, a protecting spirit.* (Bordeaux, 1862.)