

Return goodness for evil. - Discarnate enemies. - If someone smites you on your right cheek, offer to them also the other. -

Instructions from the spirits: Revenge. - Hate. - Duel. Reparations.

Return goodness for evil

1. *You have heard that it was said: You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you and pray for those who persecute and slander you, so that you may be children of God, who makes the sun to rise on both the evil and the good, and who sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love only those who love you, what reward will you deserve? Don't the publicans do this? If you salute only your friends, what will you do more than others? Don't the heathens do the same?* (Matthew 5:43-47.)

- *If your justice is less than the justice of scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* (Matthew 5:20.)

2. *If you love only those who love you, what thank have you? For sinners also love those who love them. If you do good only to they that do good to you, what thank have you? Even sinners do this. If you lend to them of whom you hope to receive, what credit have you? For*

sinners also lend to sinners, in order to receive as much again. But love your enemies. Do good and lend, hoping for nothing in return. So, your reward will be great and you will be children of the Most High, who is kind even to the thankless and to the evil. Therefore, be you as merciful as God is. (Luke 6:32-36.)

3. Loving the neighbors is the charity principle, and loving the enemies is the best application of this tenet. The conquest of this virtue is an outstanding victory over selfishness and pride.

However, the meaning of the word *love* in this teaching is usually misunderstood. Jesus doesn't demand us feeling for an enemy the same tenderness we dedicate to a friend. Affection presupposes trust. We cannot trust in someone that wants to abuse us, neither devote a restful friendship to one who is likely to harm us. Two people that mistrust each other are impossible to share the same sympathy that two old mates enjoy. When staying beside an enemy we cannot feel the same pleasure we feel next to a friend.

Such contrasting feelings are related to the natural law of attraction or repulsion of vibratory fields. A spiteful thought produces a nasty fluidic current, whereas a benevolent emanation involves us with a pleasant emotion. This is why we feel opposed sensations while approaching a friend or a foe. We must love our

pursuers, but there is a difference between them and our friends. Loving our enemies seems to be hard, or perhaps impossible, because this guidance has been falsely interpreted. Christ doesn't expect we assign to an adversary the same place in heart we reserve to our beloved ones. When language poverty obliges us to use one only word to describe several shades of feeling, we need to use reason to find the proper meaning.

Loving the enemies is different from dedicating them an unnatural affection, because our hearts, easy beside a friend, beat in a very different fashion near to a foe. Loving the enemies is not hating them; is not feeding their hostility; is liberating them from our grudge and revenge wish; *is unconditionally forgiving them without hidden thought*; is making reconciliation with them easy; is wishing them good rather than evil; is accepting the good they experience instead of regretting it; is helping them whenever possible; is giving up harming them *both through words and acts*; is repaying evil with goodness *without intention to humiliate them*. Whoever proceeds this way loves their enemies.

4. The unbelievers think present life is everything. Thus, for many of them an enemy is just an obnoxious being, who disturbs their peace and deserves death. Loving a foe is a nonsense for them. They see vengeance as a

need and pardon as a weakness. Sometimes, when forgiveness can enhance their reputation, they spread everybody they have forgiven their adversaries, but they secretly retain hate and evil desire against them.

The point of view of Christians, specially of Spiritists, must be different. We know that present existence is just a fleeting moment within the eternal life; that everyone is likely to meet wicked people because Earth is still a world of trials and atonement; and that the evil we endure is part of life challenge. This understanding softens the existence roughness. *So, once we have accepted our trials, we should also accept the hands that work as trial tools.* Once we have silenced complaint and thanked God for every moral development opportunity, we should also accept the human hands that create the opportunities. Those who think so are naturally inclined to forgiveness. The more we tune in good, the more we keep away from our pursuers' harmful emanation.

As an adult forgives a small child that insults them, an evolved soul pardons their assailants. The advanced spirits are good and generous. They pray in favor of all their persecutors, because revengers are still morally-immature people. So, in order to evolve we must pardon our pursuers.¹

¹ An analogy helps stressing the pardon importance. What would happen if one decided to store trash inside home drawers? Would such attitude be healthy?

Discarnate enemies

5. Spiritists have a lot of reasons to forgive. We know that temporary human imperfection is the root cause of evil, which is transitory; that, just as a child grows up and gets mature, evil people will also repent and become good; and that death can at best relieve a person from the material presence of their enemies, who, even after burial, can remain persecuting and harming the hated one. Furthermore, Spiritists know revenge is useless, increases hatred and makes hostility to last from one existence to another.

Blood never extinguishes hate. Actually, violence increases the quarrel, including afterlife. So, there is a positive reason for everyone to forgive, a practical purpose for us to *love enemies*. Even the most wicked hearts are, although resistantly, sensitive to the good conduct, which weakens the retaliation motive and perhaps turns a foe into a friend. In the other hand, one's bad behavior further irritates the pursuer, *who thus become a God's justice tool to punish the merciless.*

6. We may have both incarnate and

discarnate pursuers. The bodiless persecutors often obsess and subdue their enemies. Their chase becomes a kind of trial which, in the end, will help the victim's moral advancement. We should accept the unavoidable suffering as a consequence of the inferior nature of this globe. If there were only good people on Earth, evil would feel awkward and there would be only good spirits on the planet. Just as we must be benevolent with our incarnate foes, we must also treat our discarnate enemies with pardon and prayer.

In the past, people sacrificed bloody victims in order to appease hellish gods, who were actually inferior spirits. Later, the infernal gods were replaced by demons, who are the same. Now Spiritism shows that devils are just suffering spirits still bound to material instinct; *that in order to appease pursuers like these we must sacrifice our selfishness and pride*; and that the charity we practice weakens the hate of our foes and helps bringing them back to lucidity. The commandment “Love your enemies” is part of the universal law of solidarity and siblinghood, which far exceeds the boundaries of planet Earth.

**If someone smites you on your right cheek,
offer to them also the other**

How many bugs and insects would come? Rancor is invisible garbage. Just as keeping trash inside drawers is foolishness, holding grudge inside our hearts is also a senseless decision. - Versionist's note.

7. *You have heard that it was said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you: Do not resist evil. Whoever smites you on your right cheek, turn to them also the other. If one sues you at the law and takes your coat away, let them have your cloak as well. If one forces you to go one mile, go with them other two. What one asks you, give them. If one desires to borrow of you, don't turn away from them.* (Matthew 5: 38-42.)

When moral sense is still tied to inferior passions, people use to confound strength and cruelty, dignity and pride. So, they adopt mistaken concepts of “honor” and “justice” that lead them to return a violent act with another. In accordance with his epoch, Moses advocated the “an eye an eye” rule. However, Christ came and taught “Return goodness for evil; Do not resist the evil others want to do to you; *If someone smites your cheek, offer them also the other.*” This advanced guidance looks cowardice to the proud because they, still prioritizing material life, ignore that withstanding an offense requires much more courage than avenging it.²

However, should we always take this Christ's maxim literally? Not exactly because it is somehow as figurative as the teaching which tells us to pluck eye out if it has become an offense cause. If society took this lesson word

for word, it would be very difficult to restrain crime and protect the peaceful. The very self-preservation instinct, one of the nature's laws, prevents us from offering ourselves to an aggressor. Those words of Jesus don't forbid self-defense, but *they doom vengeance*. When Christ tells us to offer the other cheek, he stresses that we must never repay evil with evil; that we must humbly accept every blow dealt against our pride; that it is better receiving an offense than offending others; suffering an injustice than committing one; being deceived than deceiving somebody; being ruined than ruining a sibling. This guidance teaches us to avoid duel, strife, discord and any other pride manifestation. It remarks that God's justice never fails. Thus, faith in divine justice and in the future life provides us strength to patiently endure, in spite of the impacts we might suffer, which are frequently struck against our selfishness and pride. This is the reason why we need always considering divine justice and the future life. The more we do it, the more resilient we become.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

Revenge

9. Vengeance is a barbaric custom which tends to disappear. It shows the backward state

² Gandhi's non-violence and non-retaliation principles are greatly aligned to these Jesus' teachings. - Versionist's note.

of people and spirits inclined to it. Those who self-call Spiritists should never welcome an alike intention inside their hearts. Jesus teaches us to forgive our enemies. So, the true Christian forgives. Avenge is yet worse when falsehood and baseness are its partners. Indeed, one who commits himself to a vengeance often moves hiddenly. When being the stronger one, the revenger falls savagely upon the pursued person. But in many cases the avenger assumes hypocritical attitude and hides their vile feelings. Following their unsuspecting foe in the shadows, the pursuer awaits an opportunity to safely strike them. Covertly spying on them, prepares the hateful trap. When the opportunity comes, the revenger pours the poison into their victim's cup. If death is not desired, the persecutor attacks their foe's honor and affections by slandering. Treasonous hints, ably spread on all sides, increase along the way. Consequently, when returning to the places contaminated by chasers' whispers, the victim finds, astonished, cold reception instead of the former friendly faces; refusing hands rather than open arms. Finally, the unfortunate person feels defeated when even their greatest friends and closest relatives withdraw and avoid them. Oh! The coward who avenges like this is a hundred times guiltier than the one who openly insults the enemy face to face!

Let us throw such a primitive usage

away! Spiritists! Remember that *without charity there is no salvation*. Those who follow this godly motto must get rid of all revenge thoughts. The only impulse a Spiritist should yield is forgiveness. - *Jules Olivier*. (Paris, 1862.)

Hate

10. Love one another. Be good and you will be happy. Love specially those ones you despise or hate. Jesus, the love missionary, the model you should follow, gave you the example of love and devotion. He gave his very life for humanity. You may allege it is hard to love people who insult and torment you. We understand your claim. However, your best effort to love them is exactly what will make you superior. If you hate them as they hate you, then your merit will be null. Respecting and pardoning your enemies is the greatest offering you can give to God. The love law demands you to forgive all your siblings. This is sometimes a very challenging task, we know it, but the Greatest Universe Power cheers in support of your effort. Remember love law violations always bring serious consequences. Love draws you nearer to God, while hate leads you toward regretful pain. - *Fénelon*. (Bordeux, 1861.)

Duel. Reparations

11. We can think of life as a short journey, during which we have to arrive at a certain destination. The worthy travelers, disregarding the briars and thorns that scratch them along the way, firmly stare at the target. In spite of troubles, they never divert from the correct path. The purpose of earthly life is achieving spiritual progress. Revenge is thus a waste of time. Devoting one's time to avenging means moving back, means a recoil from the ordeals of life. It is a madness and a crime before God's eyes.

It is crime to kill through duel. This is a murder before the divine law. Nobody is entitled to attempt against another human. Remember you will be pardoned as much as you pardon others. Forgiveness leads you nearer to God, because clemency is akin to power. While people still keep shedding the human blood, the Kingdom of God will be far away from the Earth. However, peace and love will soon reign on this planet. Animosity, discord and wars will be banished forever. The word duel will exist only in history books. Apart a noble righteousness rivalry, there will be no more antagonism among people on this globe. - *Adolf, bishop of Argel*. (Marmande, 1861.)

12. Duel, as well as suicide, evidences moral cowardice. The suicidal lacks courage to face the life problems. The duelist lacks courage

to withstand an offense. Christ teaches there is more honor in offering the other cheek than avenging an affront. He ordered Peter to encase sword, and explained him that those who kill by sword shall perish by sword. With those words he dooms duel and revenge. There are still wrathful people who, at the least insult, think only blood can repair the damage. What greatness do they show? What kind of courage is this? Let them tremble! Later, inside their conscience, a voice will shout: “Cain! Cain! What have you done to your sibling?” They will answer: “I had to shed their blood to save my honor.” Then the voice will reply: “You reminded to protect your reputation before proud humans, but you forgot saving your soul before the Supreme Judge!” Oh Poor wretch! How much violence, how many offenses did Jesus receive from you humans? You injured him with thorns and spears. You nailed him on an infamous log. Still, during his agony, you forced him to listen to your mockery. How much blood has he demanded from you in return? How many reparations has he asked of you? None! On the contrary, his very last act was a prayer in favor of his executioners. Follow his example! Forgive those who offend you. Pray for them!

Dear friends, love one another. Be strong. If you receive a hateful blow, reply with a smile. Everyone who affronts you, offer them

your silent prayer. Rid your mind of retaliation ideas. Of course proud people will rise up and treat you as a coward. Pray for them too. Show them that your hands refuse taking a vengeance supported by a false honor concept which is, indeed, just pride. Has God granted you any authority to decide someone's life or death? No! You are not allowed to dispose even of your own bodies. As well as the suicidal, the murderer self-stains with blood. Both of them will experience long and harsh penalties. God is fair. Even one who says “Raca” to a neighbor will have to attend the divine tribunal. So, what about those who go that court blood-handed? How much more severe will their penalties be? - *St. Augustine*. (Paris, 1862.)

13. Duel means savagery. Let us suppose two opponents in dispute. Imagine that, in order to solve the strife, they decide to plunge into boiling water, agreeing that reason will be with the one that withstands longer the high temperature. Does such agreement make sense? No! Dueling is still worse than this. For the skillful duelist it is a cold murder. For the unskilled adversary, it is a planned suicide. In the past, duelists were less enlightened. Thus, they were less guilty than today. Making matters still worse, the offended person is often the one who dies.

Oh senseless conceit, foolish vanity and insane pride! You need replacing these vices by

charity, love and humility, virtues Jesus lives and teaches! When you start doing it, these monstrous prejudices will disappear. Human law is impotent to repress them because the worldly rules cannot forbid the secret evil. The goodness source and the horror of wickedness need to live together inside the human heart. - *A protective spirit*. (Bordeaux, 1861.)

14. You may ask: “If I refuse the duel that is being demanded of me, what will people think about me? If I don't require a reparation from the one who is offending me, what will they say?” Foolish people will ridicule you. But the enlightened ones will say you proceed wisely. Bethink. A careless word comes from another person and hurts you. You reply scathingly and a provocation arises. Before situation becomes critical, breathe and ponder. Are you behaving like a Christian? Are you sure you want to take away a child from a parent? A parent from a child? The upholder from a family? Have you ever thought of the remorse pain? Nothing more than vengeance thirst quenching will be left. Unhappy satisfaction! It will give way, perhaps still in present incarnation, to a scorching grief. When it is the offended one that dies, where is the reparation?

When charity becomes the general conduct rule, everyone will do to others what they want others doing to them. Therefore, all

dissension causes will disappear. No more duels and wars, which are duels between nations. - *François-Xavier*. (Bordeaux, 1861.)

15. Someone who, due to an offensive word, gambles their life or gambles other one's life is a hundred times guiltier than the scoundrel who, wanting to rob, kills those who oppose them. The latter is often a brute person, who lacks a perfect notion of good and bad, whereas the duelist is often cultured and educated. One murders brutally. The other kills with refinement. The duelists act coldly, with premeditation, studying the best way to surely slaughter their opponent. They lack the frenzy passion excuse. Thus, they are guiltier than the wroth one who kills in a moment of anger. Someone may allege the duelists are brave because they risk their lives. However, is there any courage in those who are sure of their skill? The duel, as well as any kind of law of the strongest one, will disappear as people better understand the real concept of honor. Peace will be on the Earth when humans vitally consider the future life. - *Augustine*. (Bordeaux, 1861.)

16. NOTE. Dueling becomes rarer as time goes by. The growing disuse of duel indicates softening of habits. Formerly, these strange combats were publicly held. Nowadays, when they occur, they happen in secrecy. This change indicates moral progress. Death provokes more emotion in society presently than

in olden times. Spiritism will help humanity to replace such barbarism by charity and fraternity.³

³ Armed duels seldom happen today. However, most of people often fight through words and acts. Arguments, quarrels and lawsuits occur everywhere. We can interpret such conflicts as *modern duels*. So, according to this viewpoint people still duel a lot nowadays, although guns, spears and swords have been replaced by other means of fight. In this sense, the instructions above remain up-to-date. So, we must give up the modern duels too. - Versionist's note.