

Filial devotion. - Who is my mother and who are my brothers? - Bodily kinship and spiritual kinship. - **Instructions from the spirits:** Children's rebellion and family ties.

1. (...) *Jesus said:* - *You shall do no murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall honor your father and mother, and you shall love your neighbour as yourself.* (Matthew 19:18-19, Mark 10:19 and Luke 18:20.)

2. *Honor your father and mother, so that your days may be long upon the land God will give you.* (Exodus 20:12.)

Filial devotion

3. The law of love and charity demands us to love everyone, including our parents. However, the word *honor* contains an additional obligation which is filial devotion. To the love we owe to our mother and father we must add respect, care, submission and goodwill. Our duty of charity toward neighbors is yet more strictly applicable to our parents, as well as, if they are absent, to their replacements, whose merit is as greater as lesser is their bond. Honoring mother and father is more than respecting them. It is also helping them in their needs, offering them rest in old age and taking care of them just as they did for us during our

infancy. All violations of this commandment are punished.

Filial devotion especially applies to the poor parents. Many people, depriving themselves of nothing, enjoying the best food and the most comfortable room, suppose they do a great deal of charity because they provide their old parents the worst lodging and their strictest needs, so as just to avoid their unsheltered starvation death. Others still do it with ill-will and even enslave their elders. Do they keep the commandment? Must old and feeble beings serve young and strong children? Did your mother collect you for the milk you suckled, or for the sleepless nights she spent beside you when you were sick? Did your parents reckon the long hours they worked hard in order to assure you lacked nothing? You owe to your old ones more than their exact needs. Besides thoughtfulness and loving care, you also owe them those little extras which are just the interest over a sacred debt. This is the filial devotion God expects from us.

Alas, child who forgets the elders that provided them life, that sustained them during weakness and that self-imposed deprivations in order to guarantee their well-being! Poor ungrateful, for they will suffer ingratitude and abandonment, for they will undergo, *perhaps in present life*, but certainly in future incarnations, what they have made them to suffer!

Yes, there are parents that neglect duty. But only God is allowed to judge them. Even in this case we must give up accusing mother or father because we have perhaps deserved their improper behavior. The love law says we must repay evil with good, abstain from cursing others, forget grievances and forgive our fellow beings, even our enemies. Thus, how much greater are these obligations before the parents? All Christian duties are yet more strongly applicable to them, and every censurable behavior is even more reprehensible when it relates to mother or father. A small offense against a stranger may be considered as a serious crime when it is committed against parents, because in this case lacking charity is worsened by ingratitude.

4. As the ancient people knew little about the future life, the Decalogue still promised to those who had honored mother and father a material award, that is, a long life in the Promised Land. By the time of Jesus, however, people had more advanced spirituality. So Christ could replace the earthly paradise by the spiritual homeland, his actual kingdom.

Who is my mother and who are my brothers?

5. *While Jesus was talking to the people, his mother and brothers came and stood outside, asking to speak to him. Then someone*

told him: - Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, looking for you. Jesus replied: - Who is my mother and who are my brothers? And looking at those who sat around him, he said: - Behold my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother, sister and mother. (Mark 3:31-35; Matthew 12:46-50.)

6. Some words of Jesus may sound strange when compared with his goodness. Some unbelievers take support on such singularities to criticize him, alleging he contradicts himself. However, the cornerstone of Christ's teachings is love. Jesus does not destroy on one side what he builds on other. If some propositions attributed to him deny charity, then the words assigned to him have been wrongly understood, mistakenly reproduced or never pronounced by him.

7. Jesus' brothers did not love him. Spirits of little evolution, they were unable to understand his mission. They thought he was eccentric. His teachings seemed weird to them, so that none among them became his disciple. At home, they received him more as stranger than as brother. According to the apostle John, *they did not believe in him.*¹ But, despites the untuned relationship, it is still surprising that Jesus, the love personification, could have shown indifference to his brothers and especially to his mother, an advanced spirit

1 - John 7:5.

endowed with outstanding tenderness, affection and maternal care. Those who suppose Jesus could have belittled his mother ignore his character. Such hypothesis is incompatible with the one who teaches we must *honor mother and father*. Thus we need looking for the real meaning of his words. Never wasting an opportunity to teach, he took advantage of his family's arrival to explain the difference between corporeal kinfolk and spiritual kinfolk.

Bodily kinship and spiritual kinship

8. Blood ties do not mean spiritual harmony. Mother and father do not create the child's spirit. Body comes from body, but the spirit is independent and exists before body formation. The parental mission is providing to the child's spirit the fleshly wrapping and the best moral and intellectual education achievable, in order to further their spiritual evolution.

Spirits that incarnate in a same family are often sympathetic and joined by a past friendship. During current life they evince their previous affinity through spontaneous affection. However, spirits within a family may also be stranger or even enemies of the past. In the last case they feel, during present life, a mutual dislike which is a trial for them. Thus, blood relationship does not assure affection. The true and lasting ties are sympathy and idea sharing,

which can hold the spirits together *before, during and after* incarnation. This explains why unbonded people may be much more united than blood siblings, who may fight and reject each other as we often see. Reincarnation explains this complex moral problem.²

So there are *spiritual families* and *bodily families*. The former are everlasting. They get stronger along time through several soul journeys. The latter, fragile as the flesh, fade away and may extinguish through time. Jesus explains the difference between spiritual kinship and corporeal kinship when, on being informed of his brothers' arrival, he says that his heart family was made up of his followers instead of his kins. Although his mother Mary, who meant very much for him, as he showed on many occasions, was also standing outside, he had to simplify that lesson in order to make it more understandable.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

Children's rebellion and family ties

9. Ingratitude is always blameworthy, but the ingratitude of children toward parents is yet more damnable. Let us analyze this problem under the reincarnation light.

When a spirit leaves the physical plane it carries its vices and virtues. In the spiritual

2 - See chapter 4, item 13.

world it may remain stationary until it decides receiving enlightenment. Many spirits return to the spiritual homeland full of hate, violence and vengeance desire. Nevertheless, the more evolved ones among them are able to receive a truth glimmer. Beginning to understand the disastrous hatred consequences, these spirits are then motivated to make good resolutions. They start perceiving that there is only one password to conquest peace: *charity*. But this requires evil forgetfulness, enemy forgiveness and hate-free mind.

Then through a huge effort the spirit begins to observe those ones it hated while upon the Earth. On seeing them, animosity is aroused again. The spirit refuses the forgiveness idea and the personal renouncement option. Above all, it strongly rejects the supposition of loving the ones who destroyed its earthly wealth, honor and family. Time passes and this spirit continues disturbed and upset. Contrary feelings make it to waver. When good decisions predominate it begs divine help. Then it receives careful assistance. It is led to reflection, prayer and work.

One day that spirit, now under treatment, is informed that a physical body is being designed in the family of the one it hated. Deciding to take advantage of this opportunity, it finally asks permission to animate the body which is about to be formed. Within that family,

what will this spirit's behavior be like? This will depend on its free will. The permanent contact with those it hates will be a terrible trial for everyone. Reconciliation may become impossible if willpower falters. If love wins, the incarnated spirit and that family will finally reconcile. Else, the old enmity will prevail. These previous antagonisms explain why some children show an apparently unjustifiable rebellion, as nothing in present life could have motivated antipathy. In order to find the rage cause it is necessary to look back into the past.

Christians! The soul which enlivens your child comes from space in order to evolve. Now you can understand it! So, endeavor your best to bring your child's soul nearer to virtue and farther from vice. Put all your love into this sacred mission! Fulfill your duty and your peace will come. The education, care and love you provide to your children help their advancement very much. God will ask every mother and father: What have you done with the spirits I entrusted you? If due to a fault of yours they remain backward, you will have to watch their sorrow among the suffering spirits. This will work as punishment for you. Later on, assailed by remorse, you will apply for a new opportunity to remedy your mistakes: you will ask for your child and you another incarnation together. During this new chance, you will make your best efforts to surround them with care, so

that your offspring, finally grateful, may reciprocate your love.

Mother and father! Keep welcoming the child that repels you! Random has nothing to do with their rebelliousness! Their attitude perhaps discloses an unsolved problem of past. Someone might have been offended. One, the other or all might have come to Earth to atone and forgive. Lovingly embrace the child that displeases you! Say to yourselves: We might be guilty! The Supreme Majesty assigns to parenthood a divine joy. Be worthy of it! Strive to teach your children that they breathe on the planet in order to serve, perfect themselves and love neighbors. Your strength is greater than your mission. You can achieve it! Pray and remember that love covers the multitude of sins.³ The Spiritist philosophy supports you.⁴

Unfortunately many parents, through their bad example or negligence, maintain or even develop child's innate wrong trends. Later, the selfish child's behavior will become the parents' atonement.

Since tender age children show the features they bring from their past existences. Most of evil comes from selfishness and pride. Parents should then watch their offspring for these vices and fight them without delay, before

their roots get deeper. As good gardeners, they should cut defective shoots off as soon as they appear in the young tree. Otherwise they will probably be paid back with ingratitude, because the pest of selfishness and pride may freeze the child's heart.

Parents that have striven for their offspring's spiritual advancement can keep serene even if their children fail, because God is fair and knows everything. Of course the failing brings anguish to the parents, but it is a solace for them to be *sure* that it means just a delay, that reincarnation will allow new opportunities for the work to be completed, and that the ungrateful child will eventually love them.⁵

Any trial that you request is only authorized by God if you are able to fulfill it. Every life challenge is in accordance with each one's capability. Failures are commonly due to lacking willpower. In fact, how many people are there who feel pleasure in bad tendency instead of resisting it? These ones will cry and moan in future existences. Fortunately, the Supreme Wisdom always welcomes repentance. When the culprit, tired of suffering, decide kneeling at God's feet, they will see the Supreme Mercy standing there with open arms, ready to enfold the prodigal children who return home. Listen: *The hardest trials, provided they are accepted with thought in God, often mean end of suffering.* During extreme moments you should

5 - See chapter 13, item 19.

3 - 1 Peter 4:8.

4 - Give to your child *all the love you can offer them*. Later on, if your child falls into the sea of error, the love you have given them will turn into their rescuing lifebuoy.
- Versionist's note.

persist without grumble if you want reaping ordeal fruits instead of restarting atonement from beginning. Rather than complaining, thank God for each opportunity of learning and evolution. Keep struggling in order to triumph, so that God may bestow you the victory prize when you return to the spiritual motherland.

The harshest trials are those that strike heart. Many people bravely withstand misery and material challenge but fall under the weight of household bitterness. Indeed, a dear family member's ingratitude causes a terrible ache. But a balm for this sorrow is the knowledge of evil root cause and the certainty that, although pain might be prolonged, all disagreements will finish because God desires so. It is comforting to know that suffering abbreviation depends on our own effort to remove the evil cause from inside ourselves. The understanding that we reincarnate many times, and that the current life is just a short moment between the infinity of past and future, helps us to keep serving and going ahead. It clarifies divine justice and makes us more patient and serene. Even the worst earthly monstrosity becomes understandable. A painful heart wound turns into a mere scratch. Family ties start looking as beautiful as they really are: besides the fragile bodily links, which the merciless death cuts, there are also the beloved spirits' undying ties, which multiple existences reinforce and purify.

Spirits that have similar moral advancement and share common interests and affection use to form families. As they do in space, during their terrestrial migration they seek one another aiming at gathering together. Sometimes they stay away from each other, but after a while they meet again and share background. On Earth the sympathetic spirits make up united and homogeneous families. However, they have also to benefit outsiders. Thus, God allows a backward spirit to reincarnate in that group, so that the newcomer may receive good advice and moral example. The retrograde outsider will probably disturb the family's harmony, and the resulting unrest will be a trial for the group.⁶

Therefore, receive with love these unbalanced spirits. Help them as the siblings in God they are. Afterwards, when once again in the spiritual motherland, you will be able to celebrate for having saved some outcasts who, in their turn, may save others. - *Saint Augustine*. (Paris, 1862.)

6 - The same principle applies to society in general, that receives backward disturbing spirits who need good example and treatment. - Versionist's note.