



The Brazilian Kardecist School: An Educational Analysis of Spiritist Action in Brazil

Antonio Carlos Coelho

ABSTRACT

The work in question was developed during observations of services, lectures and discussions in the halls of 10 (ten) Spiritist Centers in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG, during the master's degree. Based on the spiritist purpose, that is, the revitalization of the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, in a reinvigoration of the ethics of love for others, and a reasoned faith in a mature relationship between human beings and God, so, let's check the religious discourse inserted in these environments. The method of approach for this study was hypothetical-deductive and bibliographical research, through consultation of academic books and psychographed texts. What the research showed is that within these environments, there is still thinking based on a conservative bias, cultivated by a Judeo-Christian moral interpretation. From this perspective, in contemporary times, it is concluded that the Brazilian spiritist discourse avoids the construction of a critical mentality, both in the religious and political scenario, relying on a fight for social justice and the defense of human dignity, building an insufficient assistance system to transform society. Society involved in this evolutionary process.

Keywords: Represent, Mediation, Spiritism, Challenges.

1 INTRODUCTION

Spiritism, codified by Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (1804 – 1869), under the pseudonym of Allan Kardec, arrived in the Empire of Brazil, acquiring peculiar characteristics, especially when compared to its French matrix, originating a "Brazilian Spiritism" (STOLL, 2003), in which the religious dimension of a welfare nature predominates.

The analytical cut is made from the Spiritist religion, more specifically, around a Brazilian Spiritism, in the scope of Belo Horizonte/MG. The first topic aims to present how the religious phenomenon, based on different interpretations and representations of the supernatural, galvanized a religious behavior capable of ordering the society that inserts it.

Secondly, as the right to act according to one's own will or free will, based on the *Spirits' Book*, make these writings suitable for mediating an individual transformation, driving an action against a latent heteronomy in the human being.

And finally, to verify, within the speeches made in different Spiritist temples, how religion has prepared its flock to live their daily experiences and how these challenges are dealt with in order to build a more fraternal life.



2 THE ART OF INTERPRETING AND REPRESENTING REALITY

The sharing of individual, social and cultural experiences and knowledge through interactionism makes it possible to emerge new skills and ideas with significant and lasting efficiency. In addition, it demarcates an uninterrupted act of a "symbolic system" (GEERTZ, 2008) in which "the being who knows (homo sapiens), socializes and constructs (homo faber), communicates, creates his representation and symbolizes (homo simbolicus)". (FERREIRA, 2015, p. 17).

The reality experienced in their daily lives is permeated by actions and conversation, forming a set of codes where there is a direct relationship between signifier and signified. In this way, from the point of view of the "interpretant" (PEIRCE, 2000), this symbolic system also conditions the interpreted, because it is

a social norm or a collective habit already installed, then – at least in this case – its mode of existence is not exactly that of something that the sign itself, when perceived by someone, creates in the mind of that someone, but of something that, being already registered in the mind of that someone, as a result of experiences from the past, At the moment when the sign is perceived by him, he actualizes himself (by virtue of the effect produced by him) and, actualizing himself, makes it possible for him (the interpreter) to interpret it. (SILVA, 2007. p. 2).

And these signs, as Santaella (2019) points out, produced and reinterpreted, become the foundation of reasoning by shaping human thought as a "biological phenomenon" (BORTOLINI; YAMAMOTO, 2013, p. 254), associated with transformations in "an interpretative and representative model of the constructed reality [...] with principles that are not only realistic, but also of the strange and the allegorical, as a springboard to the fantastic." (SILVA, 2007, p. 10).

The passage from the natural to the cultural plane made it possible to change *the modus operandi* in the human condition, proposing new goals and unveiling new patterns, ensuring survival through an "intelligence open to the creative event and that is experienced incessantly in the diversified life of the species spread throughout the planet". (GALEFFI, 2013, p. 450).

Through the daily *praxis* configured by the "cognitive revolution" (HARARI, 2018), a process of transformation in the social and cultural sphere was carried out. In response to these cultural variations, it was necessary to admit a mechanism capable of uniting individuals and their social groups, coining in this environment a notion of morality, adequate to develop a rational conscience and then regulate the human way of acting. Executed through semiotic increment, in order to "share a common future to the extent that they act in coordination to achieve certain purposes" (ROMANINI, 2014, p. 53), in social behavior.

The social transformation with the internalization of norms and rules, as a practical force in favor of life, operated in an orderly manner, allowed for a more harmonious and orderly sociocultural coexistence. As humanity adapts to new traditions and the "religious phenomenon" (DURKHEIM, 2003), reported as an experience with the divine by different peoples, in different times and locations, has also been interpreted,



represented, as well as deconstructed and reconstructed. It is worked as a form of knowledge in the cultural system, capable of acting through its dialogical relations and acting together with different cultural systems that legitimize a religion as a theological reflection.

Religion as a collective symbolic projection formed a

A system of symbols which acts to: (1) establish powerful, pervasive, and enduring dispositions and motives in men by (2) formulating concepts of a general order of existence, and (3) dressing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (4) the dispositions and motives appear singularly realistic. (GEERTZ, 2008, p. 67).

As part of a cultural process, religion has created, recreated and propagated, in the most varied cultures, an interpretation and understanding of reality, as well as an axiom of salvation, in which specific groups of religious or priests begin to mediate this experience of the individual with the divine. Creating "new values, [...] elaborating new value judgments, inverting the true and the false as needed: As long as the priest comes up with a superior type of man, [...], there will be no answer to the question, "What is truth?" (CAVALCANTE, 2001, p. 99-100).

These interlocutors bring to themselves the responsibility of representation and symbolic production, which throughout human historiography, in the West in particular, has built an argument for a single truth and the idealization of a single god, a creator of everything and everyone, which represented a great advance in religious thought.

Continuing, the religious phenomenon present in different societies is sustained by a "homo religiosus" nature (ELIADE, 1992), it is in this condition of the human being that Libanio (2002) bases his theology, by understanding the meaning of *religious plurality, as something inserted in God's salvific project and its relationship with the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth.*

In the same way, the present question "*homo religiosus*" was observed, when addressing in nº 6 of *the Spirits' Book*: "Couldn't the intimate feeling we have of the existence of God be the result of education, the result of acquired ideas? If that were so, why should there be such a feeling in your savages?" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 74).

Certainly, these feelings were able to unite communities, "as the moral sense develops" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 58), in the same way that the "religious phenomenon" (DURKHEIM, 2003) cannot be separated from the line of human evolution, as it marks the way of being, feeling and understanding the universe that surrounds it.

Religion, as a product of social knowledge, concretizes cultural belief, because through it enables forms of spiritual progress, providing keys to open doors in order to mature a relationship with the transcendent. This way of interpreting and representing, produced, assumed an explanatory character of natural phenomena and, by itself, admitted the emergence of



so many cultures and so many ways of recognizing the divinity, the Absolute, the transhuman, that which is beyond everyday life, that [...] like a great mother welcomes everyone, accepts the sentiments and visions of all religions. A god, a pantheon of gods, spirits of water and fire, of the jaguar and the hyena, all in short, in their experience and consistency, stimulates belief and faith. (GOMES, 2013, p. 133).

Consequently, these particular visions of religious values shape the set of myths, symbols and rites practiced by the cultural community around what is "sacred and profane" (ELIADE, 1992), however, these experienced particularities do not represent the absolute truth. The various religions are configured and accurate "by a set of social, economic, political and emotional conditionings, which in a concrete time and space affect the human being, which reveals how each religion is inseparable from a certain cultural tradition" (AMBROSIO, 2012, p. 1), cannot be understood as the principle of the absolute or the full truth, But it only presents a part.

In this way, in its provisionality, the knowledge of the absolute escapes humanity, because "even those who are capable of such an appreciation may show themselves to be divergent, as to the characteristics, according to the points of view in which they find themselves, especially if it is a division, which no absolute stamp presents" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 92), thus, the "truths of Philosophy are not definitive. It is an opening to the absolute, without concluding it." (SALGADO, 2015, p. 205).

According to Zilles (2010, p. 105), the absolute as the universal foundation of reality, *transcends the human capacity for reasoning and, therefore, "there must be a kind of world of eternal ideas that, as an absolute and metaphysical principle, guarantees the veracity of our knowledge"*, however, "only God is a proprietor in the absolute sense" (BRADFORD, 2011, p. 725) as he understands, According to the *Spirits' Book*, God is the "*supreme intelligence, the first cause of all things*". (KARDEC, 2013, p. 53).

The search to know the absolute, according to Ambrosio (2012), can only happen in historical concreteness, that is, as "transcendent incarnate" (AMBROSIO, 2012; KARDEC, 2013), thus, "beatitude is not something that is promised for tomorrow, but it is a reality that must be lived today, without previous conditioning". (CAVALCANTE, 2001, p. 105).

In their search for truth, this production of knowledge, particularly religious knowledge, enabled the emergence of

Philosophy and the sciences were born of religion, and religion itself began to take the place of sciences and philosophy. [...]. Men owe to him not only the material matter of their knowledge, but also the way in which that knowledge is elaborated. (DURKHEIM, 2003, p. XV).

In part, theology, philosophy and science as "manifestations of ways of knowing" (TRAMONTINA; FROSI, 2013) human, in the scope of the admissible, complements or overlaps with the other, by formulating



different readings that have been made of the same reality, using different methods, often following opposite paths, which makes it indispensable to have a common ordering of all the data obtained, so that no efforts of human thought are lost in this task. (BRASIL, 2002, p. 22).

With the advent of social and cultural transformations in nineteenth-century Europe, Western society gained new understandings and clarifications, based on its rational vision, capable of providing explanations to the most varied natural phenomena, said to be supernatural.

The clarity with which this period comes from this period provokes an increasing deinstitutionalization of clerical power, especially in the West, strengthening the need for an inclusive scientific and philosophical knowledge refuting a purely mythical exclusive thinking. It is permeated by this modern thought, in which the emergence of the individual becomes the support and center of social life, that the spirits present themselves, dialoguing between the Spiritual Being and the Incarnated Being.

It reinforces the importance of evolution and the search for a truth to be constructed and assumed through rationality, presenting the possibility of faith being "reasoned" (GODOY, 2007), by encouraging humanity to "see in ourselves and in others a supersensible dimension, a dimension that, however, is entirely linked to the demands of our reason". (BUENO, 2006, p. 76).

Does this mean that the spirits have brought the full knowledge of the absolute and its truth? No, they share with us part of their understandings and learnings, they invite us to adopt a reflection on reality, mediated by the science of their time, understanding that unshakable faith is only that which can face reason in all times of Humanity.

In modernity, what is observed is that codified Spiritism proposes a paradigm of freedom and responsibility, in which the human being or incarnated spirit, seeking in the

This is what constitutes the good news: The Kingdom of God is not something to be hoped for; it does not have a yesterday and the day after tomorrow, it does not come in a thousand years - it is an experience in a heart; it is everywhere and it is nowhere. [...], Not to oppose their enemies with the same weapons, not to accuse before their judges, but on the contrary, to love those who accuse and strike them. (CAVALCANTE, 2001, p. 106).

Armed with these apprehended data, it re-elaborates concepts, ideas, in an evolutionary education capable of understanding that in the unity of the absolute the belonging of its plurality. The *Spirits' Book*, in its pedagogical form, provides mechanisms for the individual to deepen their religious knowledge, improving their professed faith, enabling them to foster a dialogue in which faith and reason work as an inseparable, non-dogmatic "dialectical pair" (SIGNATES, 2021), capable of admitting doubts and living with them.

In the *Spirits' Book*, structured according to Allan Kardec, it reinforces human freedom, with its own bond of responsibility in its existential experience, executed in daily *praxis*, but, from this teaching, it



invites you to a new evolutionary level. The spirits understand that human rationality, however, is expressed through language, and as a rational being it has the capacity to dialogue, to argue, in a reflective way with oneself and with one's neighbor. And this proposed dialogue goes beyond intellectual merit, the proposal in question is an unarmed dialogue, recognizing the importance of an open and respectful exchange around an idea that the different religions of the world must avoid the search for world supremacy and that each one is part of the absolute truth.

In this way, the *Spirits' Book* provides a pedagogy of freedom, ideal for seeking spiritual care, in which the individual Spiritist ethics is improved, in the light of the universal laws, improving the social moral quality. And this pedagogical provocation to alter the current interpretative art allows the subject to reconfigure his relationship with the Divine, maturing his experience with God, providing the opportunity for an opening for a dialogue not only interreligious, but between the being and the other.

How will this principle of freedom, the right to act according to one's own will or free will, advocated by the Spirits, be important for human development?

3 THE MEDIATOR: THE SEARCH FOR THE AUTONOMY OF THE BEING

The importance of movements such as: Reformation, Enlightenment, Industrial Revolution, French Revolution, among others, corresponding to the European world, changed the culture of Western Europe *in their time*, determining the character of modern evolution, wrapped in a culture of freedom centered on the individual and scientific rationalization.

In the wake of "modern" emancipation (DOMENACH, 1995) a new paradigm is unfolding, marked by "rational and scientific" thinking (HOBSBAWM, 1970), the members of the nineteenth century fertilize knowledge to serve "without the guidance of others" (KANT, 2007, p. 5). The socio-cultural change based on these liberal reflections established a new relationship between the State and the Church in which the former is emancipated from the tutelage, norms and codes of the latter, and this ideal of freedom and autonomy, in the interpretation of Berger (2009), originated the "phenomenon of secularization".

Secularization, however, does not correspond to the disappearance of religion from the modern scenario, but marks the coexistence of discourses: secular and religious, within their specificities. Thus, Pimentel (2014) states that spirituality movements continued to play an important role in the society in question. That said, Spiritism was not a consequence of the advent of modernity, on the contrary, the Spiritist movement should be understood as an integral part of this broad set of structural changes in the West.

In an "organized invasion" (DOYLE, 2013), through free will, the spirits manifested themselves, as **critics of a humanity until then, in order to** sharpen the deformities of the human experience in the society in which it is inserted, from a new perspective, hoping that their texts can provide a "result, of guiding men



who wish to enlighten themselves, showing them, in these studies, a great and sublime aim: that of individual and social progress and that of showing them the path that leads to that end." (KARDEC, 2013, p. 46).

In his conception of *reasoned faith*, because it is based on facts and logic, he understands that no obscurity is fixed, in view of the practical reason for freedom, discussed in the *Spirits' Book*, is based on an understanding that "intelligence is a faculty proper to each being and constitutes its moral individuality". (KARDEC, 2013, p. 106).

Between the conception of the *Spirits' Book* and the present times there is no antagonism, because it is only a position that reflects the need for human evolution, either by showing it the cognation between the near goals and those higher and more distant in its future, bringing humanity closer to a civilization, in order to substantiate it with an understanding that enables it to begin to live not as the center of the world, but, integrated into a plural universe.

These changes reflect progress and its potential for transformation, an advance to enlightenment, through an education with a view to the principle of personal responsibility, for which the individual has to become aware that there rests in him "the question of the distinction between will and power as part of human free will". (COSTA, 2019, p. 121).

Thus, *the Spirits' Book* does not present an ideal model, but places in the hands of the human being the responsibility of his evolution, of his acts, alerting him to the need to supplant a primitive, materialistic disorder, to a state of order, of harmonization, individual and collective, in a progress that matures his experience with God.

The *Spirits' Book* understands human evolution as necessary, but gradual and progressive, without any problems. It beckons humanity to instruct itself to distinguish, to recognize the reason, the cause and the end of its evolution. It provides a mechanism of mediation between the incarnate and the voices of the beyond, however, in the same way, it warns that every message before being recognized has *to pass through the sieve of reason*.

The understanding of the universe, according to *the Spirits' Book*, develops with the progress of the human spirit, so its text combats a blind faith, built by skepticism, denial, incredulity and materialism. It does not disqualify religions, it only warns that the divorce from science has petrified religious thought through its dogmas, making them prisoners of themselves.

The love principle of the Gospel, lever of individual freedom, from this dogmatization becomes oppressive, feared and enslaving of the human being, not having as a "norm that all men are brothers and, whatever the way in which they worship the Creator, they extend their hands and pray for each other" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 210), reinforcing an ideal of social divisions, and legitimizing the principle that outside the Church there is no salvation.



The *Spirits' Book*, as a mediator between the spirituality of the soul and the materiality of the body, does not criticize religions. Spiritist epistemology recognizes the religious phenomenon as intrinsic to the human being, which has given rise to a multiplicity of religions and religious groups, and these expressions have within them parts of a single truth.

According to question no. 842 of *The Spirits' Book*, he stated that

all doctrines claiming to be the sole expression of truth. By what signs can one recognize the one who has the right to place herself as such? A. It will be that which is made by the most good men and the least hypocrites, that is, by the practice of the law of love in its greatest purity and in its widest application. This is the sign by which you will recognize that a doctrine is good, since any doctrine that has the effect of sowing disunity and establishing a line of separation among the children of God cannot but be false and pernicious. (KARDEC, 2013, p. 262).

Certainly, religions offered humanity a perspective of moral action valid for the individual, idealizing an order in social construction, but the later one became, exclusive and excluding, from the universal principle of love for one's neighbor. Thus, the criticism presented in the texts gravitates around a religious knowledge detached from dogmatic principles, which boosted feelings of superstition and social hierarchy, strengthening a thought of submission and "cultural conditioning". (CASÁS OTERO, 2003).

The proposed novelty admits salvation for all, regardless of any creed, race, color, "as long as the Law of God is observed" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 215), thus advocating a new vision of the Gospel of Jesus in which it is based on the question: "**without charity there is no salvation**". (KARDEC, 2013, p. 492). Therefore, knowing *oneself* with all the evolutionary consequences becomes imperative, in order to then want to help others, in this conception, *salvation* is close to the idea of *spiritual improvement because it implies an improvement in the condition of happiness*.

By not admitting religious privileges and conditioning for human salvation, the Spiritist pedagogy presents a response to this dogmatic appearance, inviting us to return to the restorative message of the Gospel, for a greater spiritual improvement. It strengthens the proposed rupture with **the "domain of the simulacrum" (BAUDRILLARD, 1981), thus dissolving the copy of an attractive reality, alien to the truth itself, opening a space for new values and new ways of experiencing the world.**

The *Spirits' Book* presents a third possible way, that is, a God for all, a God without religion who embraces everyone, as Tutu (2012, p. 31) demonstrates, a God who "is not a Christian, because his care is for all his children", thus, a God who does not divide, but pluralizes in his Unity. In the same way, the texts include the individual as responsible for his own evolutionary process, being responsible for the successes and mistakes. He invites religion and science to walk together, in which "faith and reason (*fides et ratio*) are as it were the two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (Paul II, 1998, p. 1). It also integrates the value of the other, the different, the neighbor.



Finally, it proposes a dialogue matured in the individual experience with God, a process of valuing the other, of acceptance, of community commitments, avoiding an organized atrophy of personal existence, making impossible an interior of reciprocity, in which "the life of the conscious being is a life of solidarity and freedom". (DENIS, 2011, p. 104).

This impartial thinking provides the emergence of an unshakable faith, understanding it as "faith that is based on truth [...], because it has nothing to fear from the progress of the lights, since what is true in the darkness is also true in the meridian light" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 280), which can face reason in all times of humanity. The writings of the *Spirits' Book* point to

A more heteronomic look at the way in which religious experience and ethical-moral actions are expressed and embedded in the intersubjective human condition will allow for a more edifying reflection and representation of the rationality and universality of goodness and free will. (BARROSO, 2013, p. 222).

As a pedagogical tool, the *Spirits' Book* provides a mechanism of interaction, mediation and agglutination within a perspective that encompasses religious diversity. As it is presented in the texts, the spirits are not opposed to any religion, they understand them as ways of reflecting and knowing the world. In this way, it combats the action of "heteronomy" (BARROSO, 2013), which is present in these religions, making it impossible for human beings to properly use their "free will". (KARDEC, 2013).

By the autonomous principle, based on instructing to know oneself, it becomes a revolutionary means of awakening, subverting this simulation that surrounds it, annihilating paradigms and constructing a truth appropriate to one's freedom, fertilizing a knowledge of oneself in relation to the other, that is, a free will free of any conditioning, motive or determining cause.

In its "pedagogical character" (PIRES, 1990), it teaches that the desired freedom follows morality as its principle and, in this equation, rationality will shape human consciousness, thus "[...] it is not Spiritism that creates social renewal, it is the maturity of Humanity that makes this renewal a necessity." (KARDEC, 1866, p. 366).

Spiritism as it appears in the *Spirits' Book*, codified by Allan Kardec, presents a possibility for the solution of the human moral crisis, by questioning the "universal truths" defended and experienced, where the symbols and abstract representations of a culture become more important than the real.

As Stoll (2003) indicates, the "experimental and scientific dimension" of the *Spirits' Book* is a set of explanatory principles of the "Moral Laws" (KARDEC, 2013) which, presented through a scientific system, reveals the supernatural world and its way of acting in the physical world, a "naturalization of the supernatural". (FERNANDES, 2008).

In short, Kardec's effort would be to improve the current nature of things, awakening it to its best part: the Spirit, the seat of reason and divine power in us, a power that came as an invitation and a



warning from God that we are with Him in His work of helping in the evolution (in the moral sense of the term) of the world and its living beings. This would be the mission of man as a spirit, and that of spiritism would awaken humanity to this sense of mission. (FERNANDES, 2008, p. 71).

As a mediator, *the Spirits' Book* is understood by respecting the condition of free thinking and autonomy to be rescued by each individual, not imposing on him, but inviting him, to a "spiritual evolution" (KARDEC, 2013). As an example, the very inequality presented as a way of valuing nationalist characteristics and sayings is deconstructed, because the form of the spirit is "[...] if you want, a flame, a flash, or an ethereal spark", (KARDEC, 2013, p. 88), that is, we are all equal. Thus, gender, color, ethnicity, etc., does not make sense, it becomes clear, because if spirits can reincarnate as much as men, women, blacks, whites, Muslims, Catholics, Hindus, etc., there is no logical reason for any discrimination.

It instigates the individual to an elevation, the human being

it cannot remain in ignorance indefinitely, because it must attain the end which Providence has assigned to it. He is instructed by the force of things. Moral revolutions, like social revolutions, creep into ideas little by little; they germinate for centuries; Then they burst forth suddenly and bring about the collapse of the wretched edifice of the past, which is no longer in harmony with new needs and new aspirations. (KARDEC, 2013, p. 2).

From *the Spirits' Book* (2013) what is sought is to mediate an awareness for a "moral autonomy and self-government" (FIGUEIREDO, 2016, p. 215), leading the being to **believe in himself and in his task of "evolution"**. (KARDEC, 2013).

Pedagogically, according to the work, a possible interlocution between the inhabitants of the earth and those of the spiritual world, parts that were incommunicable, between the incarnate and disincarnate. Spiritist education aims at the full growth of individuals, considering them an immortal being, thus strengthening a trusting dialogue between faith and reason, as a path to personal evolution, based on the experiences lived through the "exercise of learning from reality". (PANASIEWICZ, 2013, p. 590)tag.

The dialogue, understood by *the Spirits' Books*, has a conditional character to the being, as an educational journey that aims at a progressive self-improvement, added to the increase of scientific knowledge and a moral education, removes the impediments of evolution. Thus, a dialogue without preconceptions becomes possible, changing the relationship of "I and you" (BUBER, 1979), building a pluralistic and multicultural society, in which *the God who dwells in me greets the God who dwells in you*.

This proposed intercession of dialogue strengthens in humanity the will to transcend its individuality in a constant "inter-human" relationship (BUBER, 1979) propagating communicative and respectful actions based on a "dialogical dynamic" (SANTOS, 2014) with other authors.

Therefore, this dynamic cannot be summarized in individualism or collectivism, as Buber (1979) clarifies, because both are imperfect to satisfy the total will of the human being. Generally speaking, individualism and collectivism can only grasp a part of what is to be the truth. While individualism reaches



the human being in a relationship with himself and collectivism points to the social good, society as such does not reach the other.

Thus, the regeneration advocated by the *Spirits' Book* will occur progressively, when the human being,

By the rational effort to understand the laws that govern the moral world, it aims to completely alter every heteronomous conception that we must obey God's law in order to receive its reward, giving each one the responsibility of conducting his evolution spontaneously, understanding the circumstances of his life, without expecting anything in return. Thus, the rational belief that Spiritism gives is no more that of Catholicism than that of Protestantism, Judaism or Islam, but the fundamental belief, the indispensable basis of every religion [...]. This indispensable basis represents natural religion, the union of all men for the purpose of establishing social harmony. (FIGUEIREDO, 2016, p. 495).

With the proposal of mediator, *the Spirits' Book* provides a path to spiritual maturity, which drives the being to build an autonomous morality, obeying a law that is in his conscience, within an ethical freedom from the lights of the nineteenth century, a proposal "founded on ethics, on respect for the dignity and autonomy of the student" (FREIRE, 2000, p. 11), without infringing on ruptures in its evolution process.

The Spiritist pedagogy aims to provide a healthy reasoning of observation and analysis capable of altering the experience of the Being: with oneself, with one's neighbor and with the very God of one's religion; however, this education for autonomy must be conquered, architected from the decisions experienced by the being within its own freedom.

It is important to highlight at this point that

Spiritism does not understand human becoming as a history of salvation, according to the concept of traditional Christianity, but as a history of evolution. Man was created simple and ignorant and is destined to achieve perfection through the learning of multiple successive lives. There was no initial tragedy of the fall and no need for divine intervention for the redemption of creatures. Everything goes as planned by the Creator. Humanity is in an educational process, learning, through free action in the world, to grow spiritually, to make the virtues and wisdom that will be theirs blossom when they reach the evolutionary goal to which God has destined us. Every evil and every deviation from the course is on us, but they are evils and temporary deviations, because the immanence of God in us guarantees more or less the return to the path of perfection. The tragedy of the drama of sin, of the fall, is lost; We gain autonomy for the being, because it depends on us when and how we will adhere to this project of perfection and happiness, for which we were created. (INCONTRI, 2001, p. 1).

It is within this mediating model that the "Spiritist pedagogy" (PIRES, 1990) preaches a dialogue that seeks human autonomy, respecting the cognitive capacity of each human being in this evolutionary process.

How does the Spiritist religion behave in the face of the challenges presented to Brazilian society today? **In everyday experience: the challenges of a Spiritism experienced in current times**

The knowledge available to the human being highlights an integral perspective of formation carried out by his action in seeking his moral and intellectual progress, applying it in a daily self-formation between



himself, his neighbor, the environment and the Cosmos. Therefore, human/spiritual freedom is not negotiated and is not a contemplative concept of "an idea, nor an abstract horizon, but the mode of reality of every concrete human being, the absolute condition of ethics and the requirement of all liberation." (DUSSEL, 2002, p. 11).

Evolution, as stated in the Spiritist texts (KARDEC, 2013), becomes constant and inevitable to the individual, in a conception of building new faculties and conceptions, changing the concepts of desire and becoming in this procedure. There is no understanding of a static becoming in the Spiritist teachings (KARDEC, 2013), but rather a becoming actively constructed in daily life, favoring perceptions that, in the end, alter human behavior, thus being a socially inclusive process and carried out in their daily lives.

As a philosophical attitude, the teachings of the Spirits (KARDEC, 2013), aim to break the human inertia erected by a process of signification and production of meanings that prevents us from questioning "what man is, by the destiny that belongs to him intrinsically and singularly in this world, considering his status of freedom and confrontation in the face of events and the becoming that is revealed to him". (RÖHR, 2012, p.8).

Every clarification acquired modifies a previous knowledge, and this new does not appear out of nowhere, it has its basis and its structure, however, what is opened by the writings of the spirits, for a new interpreter, requires from him a desire to "be attentive to the difficult passage or walk from heteronomy to autonomy" (FREIRE, 1987, p. 78) because, You may encounter resistance and conflict in the face of these visions, because you feel uncomfortable in the face of the unknown.

However, according to Kant (2007)

man's departure from his minority, of which he himself is guilty. Minority is the inability to make use of one's understanding without the direction of another individual. Man is himself to blame for this minority, if the cause of it is not to be found in a lack of understanding, but in a lack of decision and courage to use himself without the guidance of others. Sapere aude! Have the courage to make use of your own understanding, such is the motto of enlightenment [Aufklärung]. (KANT, 2007, p.100).

And this human minority, of making use of his understanding without the direction of another individual, prevents him from interacting with the "Law of Freedom" (KARDEC, 2013), becoming an obstacle to being, because the "freedom to think, also has the freedom to work". (KARDEC, 2013, p. 473). The Spiritist pedagogy (PIRES, 1990), proposed by the Spirits, has no effect as long as education is not liberating, does not foster free thinking and refutes massifying organisms and norms.

Humanity, according to the *Spirits' Book*, is not enclosed in eternal determinism, "it is inconclusive, and while inconclusive, it needs to humanize itself, which opens the possibility of being free, of building itself, but, at the same time, makes it a being responsible for itself". (ZATTI, 2007, p. 77). As Paulo Freire (1987, p. 34) observed, "in many oppressed, what prevents liberation is the fear of freedom."



Individual freedom, as an essential point, cannot be understood as an instrument

disciplinarian of our freedom, not only so that we may have a dignified social life on Earth, but also so that we may maintain, in the field of the spirit, a harmonious individual life, duly adjusted to the impositions of the Perfect Universal Life, according to the norms of eternal Justice, elaborated by the supreme balance of the Laws of God. (EMMANUEL, 1957, p. 5).

The freedom of the Spirit is complete, **whether it is incarnated or not, and there is no room for a coercive conduct for a perfect balance, but the pedagogy of** the Spirits' Book understands *that it is the individual who has to seek, through his education, a moral and intellectual maturation.*

As presented in the texts, "[...] God created all spirits simple and ignorant, that is, without knowing it. To each one he has given a certain mission, in order to enlighten them and to bring them progressively to perfection, through the knowledge of the truth, in order to bring them closer to himself." (KARDEC, 2013, p. 128). As a free being, it is up to each individual to build and improve themselves, inserted in a learning process focused on social relations and political, economic and moral reflections. And in this process the "perfection" is that they find pure and eternal happiness. Going through the tests that God imposes on them" (KARDEC, 2013, p. 128), in this way the desired freedom "more than resistance or salvation, it constitutes the basis of a radical will to fight for a more just society". (SANTOS, 2014, p. 129).

One of the current challenges is the issue of teaching applied by the Spiritist religion in its cults. Is it going against the principles guided by the studies codified by Kardec (2013), present in the *Spirits' Book*?

In the course of the proposed analysis, what unfolds is a misunderstanding on the part of those who present the ideas contained in the *Spirits' Book*. They continue with a discourse that has as its conception a massification aimed at a "banking education" (FREIRE, 1987), in which an anticonvulsant drug is offered to subjects such as: religion, politics, gender, economy, etc.

In this way, the Spiritist religion becomes responsible for the sequelae not only individual, but is articulated in social life, mediated by a language wrapped in a complex system of signs linked in a system of guilt, rewards, and a "Law of cause and effect" (KARDEC, 2013), one of the fundamental principles for the permanence of a hermeticism that explains the contingencies linked to human life.

The Spiritist religion is not outside this structural and paradigmatic scope of the Catholic Christian base, according to Emmanuel

to exchange it for a place at the banquet of States is to invert the value of teachings, because all human organizations are transient in the face of the need to renew all the formulas of man in the law of universal progress, and it follows from this that the true construction of general happiness will only be effective with legitimate bases in the spirit of creatures. (EMMANUEL, 1941, p. 44).

Spiritism, brought by the modern lights to promote freedom, from the Brazilian religious phenomenon, founded the Spiritist religion with a "clearly dogmatic" perspective (SIGNATES, 2018), in



which the texts codified by Allan Kardec: *The Spirits' Book*; *The Book of Mediums*; *The Gospel According to Spiritism*; *Heaven and Hell and Genesis*, either became absolute truths or presented as the third revelation – 1st. Moses, in presenting a moral code; Second. Jesus experienced unconditional love and 3rd. Spiritism that develops the divine laws.

By becoming a religion, the Brazilian Spiritist Doctrine assumes a formulation among the Spiritist signs, dialoguing with the signs Catholicism. It establishes a religion with a Christian bias, antagonistic to Catholic dogmas, but understanding itself as "heir to the Christian tradition" (PEREIRA, 2007, p. 33). However, it presents itself as a mediator between faith and reason, something understood as necessary for the consolidation of a new representation of Christian reasoning.

In the process of religious construction, an idea of a "civilizing process" (RIBEIRO, 1995) was sought, based on a new "interpretant" (PEIRCE, 2000), through a discourse of distinction between the imperial past and the republican future. Having this starting point of the interpretative method, the members of Brazilian Spiritism legitimize a sign to be constructed, by establishing a "doctrinal, cosmological and ritualistic reference through literate cultural practices, which necessarily involve writing and reading in their realization". (LEWGOY, 2000, p. 6).

The Brazilian Spiritists, in accordance with the selected interpretations of the *Spirits' Book*, *did not move away from an understanding of perceptions from Christianity, but reinforced these teachings by maintaining a link with these customs and mental records, including at these points the direct contact with the spirits of the deceased and* a process of social assistance, starting a Spiritist religion of a welfare nature.

Based on the Weberian assumption, Arribas (2011) shows that religious interest has as its principle the need for a theodicy, that is, a theoretical rationalization aimed at the discursive validation of not only material but also symbolic properties and deficiencies, associated with a certain type of condition of existence and position in the social structure.

However, this is not what *the Spirits' Book*, a basic work, came to present a new religion, but through these, to help the faithful to understand, in a pedagogical way, to educate themselves in order to promote their autonomy, perfecting their dialogical form with themselves and with the other, so that the subject himself remakes the world and makes himself through action and reflection.

Certainly, these writings did not come only to Christians, which would make them small, but they present themselves as "valuable resources that can, and should, compose a mosaic of actions that promote the construction of transformative self-awareness" (FÉLIX, 2020, p. 1) of a people.

For Emmanuel to be a sincere Spiritist

he must understand that the illumination of a conscience is as if it were the illumination of a world, and it should be emphasized that the task of the Gospel, among the souls incarnated on earth, is the most important of all, since it constitutes a definitive and real achievement. The mission of doctrine



is to console and instruct, in Jesus, so that all may mobilize their divine possibilities on the path of life. (EMMANUEL, 1941, p. 46).

The expectation for a future contradicts what has been delivered by the Spirits, by establishing that the dedication, construction and application of a progressive and universal knowledge is on a daily basis. Happiness becomes effective in the here and now, even if it lasts for a minute, but it is in the actuality of the present minute that your tomorrow is built. Understanding that one cannot disregard all the knowledge produced by the being, throughout its incarnations to the present date, because it is from this acquired and updated learning that the *Spirits' Book* invites us to transform society, its relations of social and economic difference of classes.

By departing from the problematization of current issues that involve Brazilian society, seeking to maintain a self-image and peaceful characteristics in its meetings, the Spiritist religion is wrong in its revolutionary task, by avoiding providing the spirit "that it gains experience and, for that, that it knows good and evil. That is why there is union of the Spirit with the Body." (KARDEC, 2013, p. 119). Withdrawing from debates tells us that there was no learning for those who call themselves Spiritists. Like this

Brazilian Spiritism has become, above all, a religion of self-help, inert to social problems and themes, including debates on morality – which it has always tended to perceive from the perspective of individual choices, distant even from philosophical approaches, which interpret morality from the perspective of collective rules and customs inherited socially and historically. (SIGNATES, 2020, p. 3).

In the same way, the Spiritist religion identifies itself in its social welfare relationship, helping to propagate a political and social misery, contributing to the permanence of ghettos, strengthening an idea that these individuals, in this situation, are about to redeem previous debts, and

It is from this point of view that we can understand that in Spiritism, good works that are religiously qualified and socially oriented are, therefore, considered means of salvation. Weighted in an exact accounting between the guilt and the merit of each action, good works, according to the result of this current account calculation, attribute to the individual his religious destiny. (ARRIBAS, 2010, p. 189).

The Spiritist hermeneutics, by maintaining a welfare as the focus of its religious actions, only peacefuls the part of those who perform the action, by being satisfied with helping and feeling elevated, but this act harms those who receive it, because it does not emancipate them from a position of submission and defeated.

The Spiritist movement, despite its position of support for the deprived, has not yet been predisposed to a closer and more fraternal contact with "the poor, to dialogue with the disinherited, to listen and talk to those abandoned by society" (FÉLIX, 2020, p. 1)



Social thought appears clearly defined: it is the exacerbated individualism, of moralistic orientation, under a naturalistic and positivist approach to human existence, which not only prevents the Spiritist from thinking socially about his spirituality, but also leads him to a conservatism of political consequences extremely contradictory to his own moral aspirations. (SIGNATES, 2020, p. 13).

Assistance alone, as a synonym for help and support, is insufficient to transform the society involved in the process of evolution. When observing the Spiritist religion, it is understood that it is in a dilemma of how to "live with the growth of its movement and the maintenance of its identity without giving up the principles of freedom, love, tolerance and openness to ways of believing". (PEREIRA, 2007, p. 33). By vetoing a debate of a

Sociological bases, it refers the movement to the reproduction of the political ideologies of the class in which they find themselves, thus producing a generous and peaceful religious activity, but deeply conservative of inequalities and social injustices, adding to this its responsibility to face the challenges of current times without fear of losing its faithful. (SIGNATES, 2018, p. 14).

The Spiritist religion has its value within the work carried out, but it is still far from facing the challenges of current times. The premises of the order continue to be a process of change, but permeated by the idea of progress based on a social order guided by another Christian religion.

4 FINAL THOUGHTS

Modern Spiritism is in line with the values that were part of the imaginary of the twentieth century. XIX described as: scientism, rationalization, experimentation, secularization of society, and positivism.

Based on these schools the spirits (KARDEC, 2013), carrying out an educational analysis of the Spiritist action in Brazil, it is observed that these Centers carried out a rereading of old signs and outdated traditions, relegated to superstition, breaking a cultural paradigm structure promoting a renewal of values by composing a synthesis, within the *Spirits' Book*, which provides a beginning, if not a process of overcoming, of questioning some serious misunderstandings within religion.

In their teachings, the spirits explain, in all aspects, their nature, origin and destiny and their relationship with the physical world, explaining what the supernatural is. They build a non-antagonistic link between science and religion, on the contrary, in their teachings they harmonize them in order to be complementary. In the same way, they demand from the human being the abdication of a submissive and oppressive system for his own autonomy, exercised in his daily life through reasoning and free will.

Based on what was observed in the services, lectures and discussions in the Spiritist salons in the city of Belo Horizonte/MG, it is understood that the process of signification and the production of meanings clash with these teachings, the principle of autonomy in the most varied sectors is displaced to a symbology of meekness and permanence to a tradition of submission to a system.



Spiritism, as an educational system, cannot be seen as a training education, conformed to an oppressive and forged action, this system has something more to provide as a training education aimed at overcoming challenges, mobilized with a stamp of reform and for an emancipatory preparation of the being and society.

In this religious system, the Spiritist Movement needs to return to the sources, rediscover the spiritual riches contained in the basic text, renewing itself, rebuilding itself and promoting an opening for a self-understanding of the movement itself in order to better serve the Brothers who knock on their door in search of help.



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