

The purpose of

LIFE

LÉON DENIS



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THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Léon Denis

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

— RATIONAL SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE

Translated from the original in French LE POURQUOI DE LA VIE

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Reincarnation and Disincarnation in Tours, France,

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LÉON DENIS

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE
Rational solution of the problem of existence

WHAT ARE WE?

AND WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

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To those who suffer

It is to you, O my brothers and sisters in humanity, to all of you who have been buried down by the burden of life, to you whose bitter struggles, worries and trials have become overwhelming, that I dedicate these pages. I have written to you, the afflicted and disinherited of this world. Humble pioneer of truth and progress, I have put into these pages the fruit of my vigil, my reflections, my hopes, everything that has consoled and sustained me in my walk here below.

May you find some useful lessons, a little light to brighten your way. May this modest work be for your saddened spirit, what the shade is to the sun-burnt worker, what is, in the arid desert, the limpid and cool spring, offering itself to the gaze of the thirsty traveller!

Léon Denis

DUTY AND FREEDOM

What man, in hours of silence and recollection, has never questioned nature and his own heart, asking them the secret of things, the purpose of life, the 'raison d'être', the reason for the existence of the universe? Where is the one who has never sought to know his destinies, to lift the veil of death, know if God is a fiction or a reality? There is not a human being, however carefree, who has not sometimes considered these tremendous problems. The difficulty of solving them, the incoherence and the multiplicity of theories which they originate, the deplorable consequences which flow from the majority of the widespread systems, all this confused whole, by tiring the human mind, has thrown it into indifference and skepticism.

Yet man needs to know; he needs the ray which enlightens, hope that consoles, certainty which guides and sustains. And he also has the means of acquiring knowledge, the possibility of seeing the truth emerge from the darkness and flood him with its generous light.

For this, he must detach himself from preconceived systems, descend to the depths of himself, listen to his interior voice which speaks to all, and which sophisms cannot deceive: the voice of reason, the voice of conscience.

So have I. I have reflected for a long time, meditated on the problems of life and death; with perseverance have I probed these deep abysses. I have made an ardent appeal to Eternal Wisdom and It has greeted me with answers, as It does to all.

Spirit animated by the love of good. Transparent evidence, facts of direct observation have come to confirm the deductions of my thought, to offer my convictions a solid, unwavering basis. After doubting, I believed; after denying, I saw. And peace, trust, moral force descended on me. Coming from the sincerity of my heart and wishing to be useful to my fellow men, these invaluable findings are my offer to those who suffer and despair.

Never has the need for light been felt more urgently. An immense transformation is taking place within societies. After being subjected for a long succession of centuries to the principles of authority, man aspires more and more to shake off all obstructions, to direct himself.

At the same time as political and social institutions are changed, religious beliefs and faith in dogmas are weakened. This is one of the consequences of freedom in its application to matters of thought and consciousness. Freedom, in all areas, tends to replace constraint and authority, to guide nations towards new horizons.

The right of a few has become the right of all; but, for this sovereign right to be in conformity with justice and to bear fruit, knowledge of moral laws must come to regulate their exercise. For freedom to be fruitful, for it to offer human accomplishments a sure and lasting basis, it must be complemented by light, wisdom and truth. Would freedom not be, for the ignorant and vicious men, like a powerful weapon in the hands of children? The weapon, in this case, would often turn against its bearer and injure him.

THE PROBLEMS OF EXISTENCE

What matters to man above all else, is who he is, where he comes from, where he is going and what his destinies are. The ideas that we have of the universe and its laws, of the role that each one must play on this vast theater, these ideas are of absolute importance. It is according to them that we direct our actions. It is by consulting them that we define the aim of our life and direct ourselves towards that goal. There lies the basis, the true motive of all civilization.

Such is the ideal, such is the man.

For both communities and individuals, it is the concept of world and of life that determines the duties; it sets the way forward, the resolutions to embrace. But, as we have said, the difficulty in solving these problems too often causes people to set these matters aside and dismiss them. The opinion of the majority is inconsistent, hesitant; actions and characters are affected. This is the evil of the time, the cause of the trouble which one needs to address. We have the instinct for progress; we want to walk, but in which direction?

This is what we do not contemplate deeply enough. A man, ignorant of his destinies, is like a traveler who mindlessly walks a road, undecided about his point of departure or the point of arrival, and is not quite sure of why he is travelling either; a traveler who, therefore, is always ready to stop at the slightest

obstacle, and wastes his time regardless of the goal to be reached.

The insufficiency of details, the obscurantism of religious doctrines together with the added abuses which they have engendered, have thrown many minds into materialism. There is a tendency to readily believe that everything ends with death, that man has no other destiny than to vanish into nothingness.

We shall demonstrate later on how this view is in flagrant opposition to experience and reasoning. Let us say, for the moment, that materialism is destructive of any notion of justice and progress.

If life is circumscribed to the period extending from cradle to tomb, if the perspectives of immortality do not come to enlighten our existence, man has no other law than that of his instincts, appetites and pleasures. It does not matter the fact that he likes the good or what is fair. If he only appears and disappears in this world, if he carries into oblivion all his hopes and affections, he will suffer even the more knowing his aspirations have been pure and higher; loving justice, supporter of the law, he believes himself condemned to hardly ever seeing its enforcement; passionate about progress, sensitive to the wrongdoing of his fellows, he imagines that he will die before ever witnessing his principles of righteousness triumph.

With the perspective of nothingness, the more you practice commitment and justice, the more will your life be marked by bitterness and despondency. Selfishness, in its full

spectrum, would be the supreme rule; existence would lose all splendour, all dignity. The noblest faculties, the most generous tendencies of the human spirit would end up withering, utterly extinguished.

The negation of a future life also suppresses all moral sanction. With it, whether good or bad, criminal or sublime, all acts would lead to the same results. There would be no compensation for miserable existences, obscurity, neither for oppression or pain; there would be no consolation in the misfortune, or hope for the afflicted. No difference would await, in the future, the egocentric who has lived for himself alone and often at the expense of his fellows, and the martyr or the apostle who will have suffered, succumbed while fighting for the emancipation and the progress of human race. The same shadow would serve all as a shroud.

If everything ends with death there is no reason, therefore, for constraints or curbing instincts, or one's tastes. Outside of the earthly laws, nothing can hold anyone back. Good and evil, the just and the unjust also merge and mingle in nothingness; and suicide will always be a means of escaping the rigors of human laws.

Belief in nothingness, at the same time that it ruins all moral deterrents, it leaves unresolved the problem of the inequality of existences with regards to the diversity of faculties, aptitudes, situations and merits. Indeed, why would some receive all the gifts of the mind and the heart, all the favours of fortune, while so many others would have nothing but

intellectual poverty, vices or destitution? Why is it that in the same family parents, their children and relatives, mostly those from the same bloodline, would fundamentally differ on so many points? So many unexplainable questions for materialists and many believers alike! We will briefly examine these questions in the light of reason.

SPIRIT AND MATTER

There is no effect without a cause; nothing comes from nothing. These are axioms, that is to say, incontestable truths. However, observing in each of us the existence of forces, such powers which cannot be considered as material, in order to explain the cause, it is necessary to return to a source which is this principle that we shall name soul or spirit.

When looking inwardly to the depths of ourselves, we seek greater self-awareness so as to learn and analyse our faculties; when, removing from our soul an effervescence accumulated by life, the thick envelope made of prejudices, errors and sophisms coating our intelligence, we penetrate into the most intimate folds of our being to find ourselves there, face-to-face with these hallowed principles without which there is no greatness for humanity: the love of good, the predisposition for justice and progress.

These principles, which are found in varying degrees, both in the ignorant and in the man of genius, cannot come from matter, which is devoid of such attributes. And if matter does not have these qualities, how could it form, on its own, beings who are endowed with them? The sense of beauty and truth, the admiration we feel for great and generous deeds, cannot have the same origin as the flesh of our limbs or the blood of our veins.

Rather, they are like reflections of a high, pure light shining within each of us, as the sun reflects off the waters, whether the waters are murky or crystal clear.

In vain would anyone claim that everything is dense matter. As we feel powerful impulses of love and kindness, we love virtue, devotion, heroism; the feeling of moral beauty is engraved in us; the harmony of things and laws invades us, delights us; and yet none of this should distinguish us from matter!

We feel, we love, we have a conscience, the will and the reason; and yet we are supposed to originate from a cause which does not contain these qualities at any degree, from a cause which does not feel, love or know anything, which is blind and mute! Higher than the force which produced us, we would be more perfect and better than it!

Such a view does not sustain an examination. Man participates of two kinds of nature: from the point-of-view of his body, organs, he derives from matter; seen from the aspect of his intellectual and moral faculties, he is spirit.

Let's say more exactly still, concerning the human body, that the organs which make up this admirable machine are like cogs, incapable of acting without a motor, without a will to set them into action. This engine is the soul. A third element links the other two, transmitting the orders of thoughts to the organs. This element is the perispirit, ethereal matter, which escapes our [*physical*] senses. It envelops the soul, accompanies it after death [*of the physical body*] in its infinite peregrinations,

purifying itself, progressing with the soul, constituting for it a diaphanous, vaporous corporeality.

We will return later to this perispirit, also called fluidic double. (1)

The spirit remains in the matter like a prisoner in a cell; the senses are the openings through which the spirit communicates with the outside world. But, as matter sooner or later declines, and eventually disintegrates, the spirit's power increases, strengthened by education and experience. Aspirations grow beyond the dimension of the grave; the need to acquire more knowledge, awareness, and to live is boundless. Everything shows that the human being only temporarily belongs to matter.

The body is only a borrowed garment, a transient form, an instrument with which to help the soul pursue in this world its work of purification and progress. Spiritual life is normal, real, endless life.

¹ After a few years, a certain school struggled to replace the dualism of matter and spirit with the theory of unity of substance. It advocated that matter and spirit are diverse states of one and the same substance which, in its eternal evolution, thins, depures itself, becoming intelligent and conscious. Without addressing the fundamental issue here, which needs long developments, it must be acknowledged that the idea that until now was made of the matter was wrong. Thanks to the discoveries of Crookes, Becquerel, Curie, Lebon, matter appears to us today under very subtle states and, in these states, it has infinitely varied properties. Its flexibility is extreme. To a certain degree of rarefaction, it turns into energy. Mr Lebon can say with apparent reason that matter is nothing more than condensed energy and energy, dissociated matter. As for deducing from these facts that intelligent energy, at a given moment of its evolution, becomes conscious, is still a hypothesis. For us, there is, between being and not being, a difference of essence. On the other hand, the

Haeckelian monism, refusing the human spirit a life independent of the body and rejecting every notion of survival, ends logically in the same consequences that positivist materialism and incurs the same criticisms.

HARMONY OF THE UNIVERSE

Given the existence in us of a principle which is intelligent and capable of reasoning, the weave of causes and effects takes us back, to explain its origin down to the source from which it derives. This source, in their poor and insufficient language, men call God.

God is the centre from which emanate and to which shall return all the powers of the universe. It is the centre from which radiates any principle of justice, solidarity and love; it is the common goal towards which all beings are moving, knowingly or unconsciously. It is from our relationship with the great Architect of the worlds that universal harmony, sense of community and fraternity flow. To be brothers, in fact, one must have a common father, and this father can only be God.

God, it must be said, has often been presented in such strange, sometimes outrageous aspects by sects, that the modern mind has turned away from Him. But what do these sectarian ramblings matter! Claiming that God can be lessened by the words of men is equivalent to saying that Mont Blanc and the Himalayas can be soiled by the breath of a fly. The truth hovers radiantly, dazzling, far above the theological obscurities.

To glimpse this truth, thought must free itself from narrow precepts, ostentatious practices, reject puerile concepts resorted to by certain religions, aiming to redress the already supreme ideal. One must study God in the majesty of His works.

At the time when everything rests in our cities, when the night is transparent and silence falls on the sleeping earth; then, O men! My brethren, lift up your eyes and contemplate the infinity of the heavens.

Observe the rhythmic march of the stars, revolving in the depths. These innumerable fires are worlds close to which the Earth is but an atom, prodigious suns surrounded by processions of spheres, whose rapid course is measured every minute by the astounding distances of millions of light years.

Frightening distances separate us from them. This is why they appear to us as modest luminous points.

But, direct this colossal eye of science - the radio telescope, towards them, and you will distinguish their surfaces like oceans of flame.

In vain will you to count them; they multiply even in the most remote regions and merge in the distance, like luminous dust. See also on the worlds neighboring the Earth the shapes of valleys and mountains, the hollow seas, clouds in motion. Recognize that the manifestations of life are happening everywhere, and that an admirable order unites, under unvarying laws and by common destinies, the Earth and her sisters, the planets wandering in the infinite. Know that all these worlds, inhabited by other human societies, move, move away, approach each other shaken by various speeds, traversing immense orbs; that everywhere movement, activity, life, show themselves in a grandiose spectacle. Observe our globe itself, this Earth, our mother, which seems to tell us: "Your flesh is mine, you are my children."

Observe there, this great nurse of humanity; see the harmony of its contours, its continents, within which nations have sprouted and grown, its vast oceans ever moving; follow the renewal of the seasons dressing her in turn in green adornments or blonde harvests; contemplate the plants and living beings which inhabit it: birds, insects, plants and flowers; each of these things is a wonderful carving, a jewel of the divine case. Observe yourselves; see the admirable play of your organs, the marvelous and complicated mechanism of your senses. What human genius could imitate these delicate masterpieces: the eye and the ear?

Consider all these things and ask yourself, your own judgement, about the reason for so much beauty, whether splendor and harmony could result from chance, or whether it is not the case of a rather intelligent cause presiding over the order of the world and the evolution of life. And if you question me about the plagues, catastrophes, everything that disturbs this admirable order, my answer will be: scrutinize the problems of nature, see that they do not stop at the surface; get to the bottom of things and you will discover with amazement that apparent contradictions only confirm the general harmony, that they are useful for the progress of beings, which is the sole goal of existence.

If God made the world, retort triumphantly some materialists, who then made God? This objection does not make sense. God is not a being added to the series of beings. He is the universal Being, without limits in time and space, therefore infinite, eternal. There can be no being above or beside Him. God is the source and principle of all life. It is through Him that all the individual forces are connected, united, harmonized, and without Him they are isolated and divergent.

Left to themselves, not governed by a law of a higher stature, these forces would only have produced confusion and

chaos. The existence of a general plan, of a common goal, in which all the powers of the universe participate, proves the existence of a cause, a supreme intelligence, which is God.

SUCCESSIVE LIVES

As we have said: in order to enlighten his future, above all man must learn to know himself. In order to walk with a steady step, you need to know where you are going. It is by conforming attitudes to the higher laws that man will work effectively towards improving himself and his social environment. The important thing is to discern these laws, to identify the duties which are reserved for us and foresee the consequences of our actions. The day when he is filled with the greatness of his role, the human being will know better how to become detached from whatever may weaken and lower him; he will be able to rule wisely, prepare by his efforts the fruitful union of men in a large family of brothers.

But we are still a long way from that state of affairs. Although humanity advances in the path of progress, it can be said, however, that the vast majority of its members walks the common road as if wandering in the midst of a dark night, ignorant of itself, knowing nothing of the real purpose of existence.

Thick darkness obscures human reason. The rays of truth only touch reason as some pale, weakened, powerless force to illuminate those winding roads which have been trodden by the innumerable legions on the march, powerless, however, to make the ideal and distant goal shine in their eyes.

Ignorant of his fates, endlessly floating from prejudice to error, man sometimes curses life. Breaking under his burden, he blames his fellows for the afflictions he endures, but which is too often engendered by his own poor foresight. Revolted against

God, whom he accuses of injustice, he even sometimes manages, in bouts of madness and despair, to abandon the salutary fight, the struggle which alone can strengthen his soul, enlighten his judgment, preparing him for work of a higher order.

Why is this so? Why does man, weak and helpless, choose to descend into a great arena in which the eternal and gigantic battle is fought without respite, relentlessly? It is because this globe - the Earth, is only a lower step on the scale of the worlds. Here reside mostly infant spirits, that is, souls recently awakened to reason. Matter rules sovereign over our world. It bends us under its yoke, limits our faculties, halts our impulses towards the good, our aspirations towards the ideal.

Also, to recognise the purpose of life, to come to understand the supreme law that governs souls and worlds, it is necessary to know how to become free from heavy influences, discharging the material concerns, all those fleeting and changing worries that clutter our minds and cloud our judgment. It is by lifting us up through an appreciation above the horizons of life, hovering somehow beyond the details of existence, that we will catch sight of the truth.

By an effort of will, let us leave Earth aside for a moment and climb these imposing heights. From their summit will unfold before our eyes the immense panorama of the ages without numbers, and spaces without limits. Just as the soldier lost in the melee sees only confusion around him, while the general, on the other hand, whose gaze encompasses all the twists and turns of the battle, calculates and foresees the outcomes; just like a traveler who, lost in the folds of the ground, climbs up the mountain and manages to see from there the valleys blend into a grandiose plan; so does the human soul manage to view from

those peaks where it soars, far from the sounds of the earth, away from the dark shadows, discovering universal harmony. What from below seemed contradictory, inexplicable and unjust, seen from above, connects, becomes clear: the windings of the path straighten out, everything unites, becomes linked. To the dazzled mind appears the majestic order which regulates the course of existences and the march of the universes.

From these illuminated heights, life is no longer in our eyes, as it is seen by most down there in the crowd — the vain pursuit of ephemeral satisfactions — but rather a means of intellectual improvement, of moral elevation, a school where one learns compassion, patience and duty. And that life, to be effective, cannot be isolated. Outside its limits, before birth and after death, we see, in a kind of semi-darkness, a multitude of previous existences unfold, through which, at the cost of toil and suffering, we have conquered piece by piece, the little knowledge and qualities that we possess; likewise, it is through the existences that we conquer all which we still lack: a perfected reasoning, a science without discrepancies, an infinite love for everything that lives.

Immortality, similarly to an endless chain, unfolds for each of us in the immensity of time. Every existence is a link that connects back and forth to another distinct link, to another new life, still one closely related to the preceding experience. The present is a consequence of the past and a preparation of the future. From degree to degree one rises and grows. Craftsmen of their own destinies, human souls, free and accountable, choose their paths; and, should this road be badly chosen, the ensuing falls from treading it, the pebbles and the brambles tearing one apart, would constitute in a further and inevitable development of experience, shedding new light on an incipient ability to reason.

VI

JUSTICE AND PROGRESS

The higher law of the universe is the incessant line of progress, the constant ascent of beings towards God, home of perfections. From the depths of the abyss of life, by an infinite route and uninterrupted evolution, we are getting closer to Him. At the bottom of every soul is laid the germ of all faculties, of all powers; it is up to the soul to make those seeds germinate by means of its deliberate efforts and actions. Seen under this light, our advancement, our future happiness will result from our commitment. Grace is no longer justified.

Justice shines on the world because we have fought and suffered for it and shall all be saved.

Similarly, the role of pain with its impact on a spirit's advancement, is exposed here in all its magnitude. Each globe, spinning in the cosmos, is a vast workshop where the spiritual substance is shaped. Just as the coarse mineral gradually turns into pure metal when under the action of fire and water, so does the human soul transform itself, under the heavy hammers of pain. The greatness of character is tempered amidst hardship. Pain is the supreme purification, a furnace where impure, tarnishing elements melt: pride, selfishness and indifference. It is the only school where sensations are refined, where one learns mercy and calm resignation. The sensual pleasures linking us to dense matter, hinder our elevation, whereas sacrifice and

selflessness release us in anticipation of this denser ground, preparing us for new stages, to a higher climb.

The soul, purified, sanctified by trials, sees painful incarnations come to an end. It leaves the material globes forever and soars over the magnificent range of the blissful worlds.

It traverses the boundless field of space and ages. With each step forward, it sees horizons widen into an extended sphere of action; it perceives even more distinctly the great harmony of laws and elements, participating in a more involved, more effective manner. Then time fades, centuries seep off like hours. United to its sisters, companions on an eternal journey, the soul continues the intellectual and moral ascent into a light that is continually intensified.

From observations and research we acknowledge a great law that emerges: the plurality of the existences of the soul. We have lived before birth and we shall live again after death. This law provides the ultimate key to hitherto inextricable problems. It alone explains the inequality of conditions, the infinite variety of aptitudes and characters. We have known or we are successively introduced to all phases of social life, and experience all sorts of environments. In the past, we were like those savages who inhabited undeveloped continents; in the future, we will be able to rise to the height of immortal geniuses, giant spirits who, like shining beacons, illuminate the course of humanity. Its story is our story. With mankind we have walked the arduous paths, undergone the transformative centuries later recounted in the archives of all nations. Time and commitment: these are the elements of our progress.

This law of reincarnation strikingly shows a sovereign justice reigning over all beings. We, in turn, forge and break our

own shackles. The frightening afflictions that some of us endure are, in general, a consequence of our own past conduct.

The despot is reborn a slave; the conceited woman, vain in her beauty, will resume a shapeless, suffering body; the idle will return as a soldier of fortune, contorted under obnoxious tasks. The one who caused suffering, will in turn suffer. There is no need to look for hell in unknown or distant regions, as hell is within us, as if lurking in the hidden recesses of the blameworthy soul, whose atonement alone can put an end to the pains. There are no such eternal punishments.

But, one may ask, if other lives of ours have preceded any particular birth, why have we lost the memory of them? How could we effectively atone for our forgotten sins?

Memory! Would it not be a heavy ball tied to our feet? Barely coming out of the ages of fury and bestiality, wonder what must have been this past of each of us!

Through the stages crossed, how many tears poured, how much blood was shed by us! We have known hatred and practiced injustice. What a moral burden is this long prospect of wrongdoing for a mind still weak and faltering!

And then, would not the memory of our own past be intimately linked to a recollection of other people's past activities? What a situation for the culprit, branded with a hot iron for all eternity! For the same reason, hatred and error would be perpetuated, widening profound divisions, almost indelible, within this already torn humanity.

God did well to erase from our weak brains the memory of a dreadful past...

After having drunk the elixir of oblivion, as souls, we are reborn into a new life.

A different education, a more refined upbringing make the chimeras that once haunted our spirit vanish into thin air. Relieved of a substantial baggage, we advance at a faster pace in the paths open to us.

However, this past is not so thoroughly erased that we cannot fathom out some of its fragments. If freeing ourselves from outside influences we descend to the bottom of our being; if we carefully analyze our tastes, our aspirations, we will discover aspects which do not really match with the present life, that nothing in our present existence combined with this new education could possibly explain. Starting from that premise, we will come to reconstitute this past, if not in all its details, at least in its broader outlines.

As for the faults, which entail a necessary expiation in this life, although they are momentarily erased from our eyes, their primary cause continues to exist, always tangible, such as those passions and impetuosity which the new incarnations have aimed to tame and appease.

So, if we leave the most dangerous memories on the threshold of life, we at least bring into the present existence the fruits and consequences of the work already accomplished, that is to say, a conscience, a judgment, a character such as we have shaped them up to this point.

Innateness is nothing other than the intellectual and moral heritage bequeathed to us by vanished lives.

And every time and again the gates of death open for us, when, freed from material yoke, our soul escapes from its prison of flesh to re-enter the empire of Spirits.

Then little by little the past reappears. One after another, on the path followed, the soul reviews former lives, the falls, the highs, the rapid advances. It judges itself by measuring the routes which it has travelled. In the spectacle of its shame or merits, all displayed before its eyes, the soul identifies its penance or its reward.

Since the goal of life is primarily an intellectual and moral refinement, what condition, then, what environment would be best suited for this target to be reached? Man can work on this improvement under all conditions of social backgrounds; however, successful outcomes would be more easily attained under some specific circumstances.

Wealth provides man with powerful means of study; it allows one to give the spirit a more developed and perfect education; it puts in one's hands greater resources with which to relieve the afflictions of others, by taking part in the process of ameliorating their foundations. But rare are those who consider it a duty to work and try to placate misery, contributing to the education and betterment of their fellows.

Wealth too often dries up the human heart extinguishing its inner flame, a love of progress and social improvements which warm every generous soul. Opulence raises a barrier between the powerful and the humble; it makes people live in an environment which one does not reach the underprivileged of this

world, whose needs, their misfortune, consequently, are nearly always ignored or unrecognised.

Poverty also has its appalling dangers: the degradation of characters, despair and suicide. But while wealth can make us indifferent and selfish, poverty, bringing us closer to the humble, makes us sympathise with their pain.

One must have suffered to be able to appreciate the sufferings of others. While the powerful, within honors, are jealous and seek to outshine compete each other, the impoverished ones, however, brought together by their difficulties, are more likely to live in touching solidarity.

Observe the birds of our climates during the winter months, when the sky is gloomy and the earth is covered with a white blanket of snow; tight against each other, at the edge of a roof, they warm one another in silence. Necessity unites them. But come the beautiful days, the resplendent sun, the abundant provisions, they chirp at their best, chase, fight, even tear each other apart. So is man. Gentle and affectionate towards his fellows in the days of sadness, too often does the possession of material goods make him forgetful and harsh.

A modest condition will be more suitable for the spirit who is eager to progress, to acquire the virtues necessary for its moral ascent. Far from the whirlwind of deceiving pleasures, it will judge life better. It will ask from matter what is sufficient for the conservation of its organs, but it will avoid falling into pernicious habits, becoming prey to the innumerable fictitious needs that are the plagues of humanity. He will be sober and hard-working, content with little, above all attached to the pleasures of intelligence and the joys of the heart.

Thus, fortified against the assaults of matter, the sage, in the pure light of reasoning, will see his destiny shine. Enlightened

on the purpose and reasons of life, he will remain steadfast, resigned in the face of pain; he will know how to use it for his purification and advancement. He will face the ordeal with courage, regarding this test as an opportunity, aware that it is the shock that tears our soul, and that by this laceration alone, the acrimony still in us can be poured out.

If men laugh at him, if he is the victim of injustice and intrigue, he will learn to withstand his tribulations patiently, directing his thoughts to our elder brothers: Socrates drinking hemlock, Jesus on the cross, Joan at the stake. He will find consolation in the thought that the greatest, the most virtuous, the most worthy, suffered and died for Humanity.

And when at last, after a busy existence, the solemn hour comes, it will be calmly, without regrets, that he will welcome death; death, which humans surround with sinister fanfare; death, the terror of the powerful and the sensual, but which, for the austere thinker, is only deliverance, the hour of transformation, the door opening to the luminous empire of Spirits.

This threshold of the supra-terrestrial regions will be crossed with serenity. His conscience, freed from the material shadows, will stand as a judge, representative of God, asking, "What have you done with life?" And the answer will be, "I have fought, suffered, loved, taught good, truth and fairness; I have given my brethren tokens of righteousness, of kindness; I have helped those who suffer, comforted those who weep. And now that The Lord judges me, here am I in His hands!"

VII

THE SUPREME PURPOSE

Man, my brother, have faith in your destiny, for it is great. You were born with uneducated faculties, infinite aspirations, and eternity is given to you to develop some and satisfy others. Grow from life to life, be enlightened by study, purify through pain, to acquire boundless science and increasingly more virtuous qualities; this is what awaits you. God has done even more for you. He has given the means to collaborate in His work; to participate in the law of limitless progress, opening new avenues, uplifting and attracting others towards you, introducing them to the splendors of truth and sublime harmonies of the universe. Isn't that creating, transforming souls and worlds? And by contemplating this immense task, fertile in pleasures, is it not preferable to a dreary and sterile rest? Collaborate with God! In everything do what is good and just, at all times! There is nothing greater, or more worthy to your immortal spirit! Then lift up your gaze and embrace the vast prospects of your future. Put in this stance the energy needed to face the winds and storms of the world.

March, valiant, fighter, climb the slope that leads to the summits we call virtue, duty, sacrifice. Do not stop on the way to pick flowers from the shrubs, to play with golden pebbles. Move forward, straight ahead!

Can you see in the splendid skies these flaming stars, these innumerable suns immersed in their prodigious evolutions, brilliant processions of planets?

How many accumulated centuries has it taken to form them! How many centuries would it take to dissolve them! Well! One day will come when all these fires will be extinguished, where these gigantic worlds will fade to make way for new globes, to other families of stars emerging from the depths. Nothing you see today would exist anymore.

The wind of the spaces will have forever swept away the dust of those tattered worlds; but you, you will always live, pursuing your eternal journey into the midst of a constantly renewed creation. What use will there be, then, for your purified, expanded soul, in the shadows and worries of the present? Ephemeral accidents of our rally, they will leave at the bottom of our memory, only sad or sweet memories. Before the infinite horizons of immortality, the evils of the present, the trials suffered will be like fleeting clouds in the middle of a serene sky.

So measure things on Earth at their fair value. Certainly do not disdain them, because they are necessary for progress, and it is also your mission to contribute to their improvement as perfect yourself; but do not exclusively bind your soul to it, and research in view of the teachings which they contain.

You will understand that the purpose of life is neither sheer enjoyment nor happiness. It is, instead, by means of work, study and fulfillment of duty, the development of this soul, of this personality that you find beyond the grave, as you have fashioned it yourself in the course of your earthly existence.

EXPERIMENTAL TESTS

The solution we have just given to life's problems is based on the most rigorous exercise of logic. It conforms to the beliefs of the great geniuses of antiquity, to the teachings of Socrates, Plato, Origen of Alexandria, the Druids, whose profound views, now reconstituted by history, have still baffled the human spirit twenty centuries later.

It forms the background of the philosophies of the East. It has inspired sublime works and deeds; our parents, the Gauls, drew from their indomitable courage their contempt for death.

In modern times, it has been taught by Jean Reynaud, Henri Martin, Esquiro, Pierre Leroux, Victor Hugo, etc.

However, despite their absolutely rational character, despite the authority of the traditions on which they are based, these conceptions would be qualified as pure hypotheses and relegated to the realm of imagination, if we could not place them on an unfaltering, direct, sensitive set of experiences, accessible to all.

Tired of theories and systems, the human mind, faced with any new assertions, now calls for proof. These proofs of the existence of the soul, of its immortality, have been brought to us by the experimental spiritualism: they are consistent, material, evident, result of detached and serious observation, studying with perseverance the psychic phenomena, so as to be convinced of their reality, of their importance.

We have aimed to assess what vast consequences our findings will have from the point of view of social transformations, by providing a positive basis, a solid point of support for moral laws and the ideal of justice, without which no civilization could develop.

The souls of the dead reveal themselves to humans. They manifest their presence, talk to us, initiating us into the mysteries of reincarnations, in the wonders of this future which will be ours.

This is a real fact even though very little known and too often contested. The experiences of Spiritualism were greeted with sarcasm and all who dealt with it in the beginning have been mocked, ridiculed, considered crazy.

Such has always been the fate of new ideas, the reception given to great discoveries. The use of rotating tables is considered trivial; but the greatest laws of the universe, the most powerful forces of nature, have not been revealed in a more imposing manner. Was it not thanks to experiments carried out on frogs that electricity was discovered? The fall of an apple demonstrated universal attraction, and the boiling of a pot showed the action of steam. As for being accused of madness, spiritists share at this point the fate of Solomon of Caus², Harvey³, Galvani⁽⁴⁾ and of so many other men of genius.

It is worth noting that most of those who passionately criticize these phenomena have neither observed nor studied them, or they might have done so rather superficially; gold, among those who know them and affirm their existence, we count the greatest scholars of the time.

Among these are in England: Sir William Crookes, member of the Royal Society of London, eminent physicist to whom we owe the discovery of radiant matter; Russell Wallace, Darwin's emulator; Warley, chief engineer of telegraphs; F. Myers, president of the Society for Psychic Research; O. Lodge, Rector of the University of Birmingham. In America the juriconsult Edmonds, president of the Senate; Professor Mappes of the National Academy. In Germany: astronomer Zoellner. In France: Camille Flammarion, Doctor Peul Gibier, pupil of Louis Pasteur, Vacquerie, Eugène Nus, C. Fauvety, the Colonel de Rochas, Professor Charles Richet, member of the Institute; Dr. Maxwell, attorney general of the Court of Appeal of Bordeaux.

In Italy, the famous professor Lombroso, following studies despite having long disputed the possibility of spiritist facts, has publicly recognised their reality. That in itself establishes on which side are the guarantees which stem from serious considerations, careful considerations!

Galileo, challenged by those who insistently denied the movements of the Earth, replied "*Eppur se muove!*" (And yet it does move!). Crookes has so pronounced on the subject of spiritist facts: **"I am not saying that this can be, I am saying that it is"**. The truth, qualified utopia at the beginning, always prevails.

Let us note, however, that the attitude of the press towards these phenomena has significantly modified. We no longer laugh, we no longer ridicule; we can see that something significant requires attention. The major newspapers of Paris, Le Figaro, Le Matin, L'Eclair, Le Journal, Le Petit Parisien, etc., frequently publish serious articles on these matters.

The doctrine of experimental spiritualism is spreading throughout the world with prodigious rapidity. In the United States, its followers account to millions; in Western Europe it has started and even in the most remote areas, investigative societies have been founded, numerous publications appeared. A metaphysic institute was founded in Paris, with the support of the State, for the experimental study of these facts.

The assistance of particularly gifted subjects is essential to obtain the psychic phenomena. Spirits cannot act on material bodies, impressing our senses without a supply of true fluid that they borrow from these subjects, individuals called mediums. Everyone has rudiments of mediumship, which can be developed through dedication and exercise.

The soul, in its existence beyond the grave, is not devoid of form. It has a fluidic body, of vaporous, quintessential matter, called perispirit, which preexists and survives the material body, of which it is at the same time the canvas, the model and the motor. This perispirit or fluidic body has a whole subtle organism, and it is by its action, combined with the vital fluid of mediums, that the Spirit manifests itself to observers, making us hear blows, displacing objects, corresponding by conventional signals. In some cases, it can even become visible, tangible, produce direct writing, messages, and even prints and moldings of your materialized envelope.

All these facts have been observed thousands of times by the scholars who we have appointed for this, and by people of all walks of life, of all ages and of all countries. They experimentally prove the existence, around us, of an invisible world, populated with souls who have left Earth, among whom those we have known and loved, and who we will on join again one day.

They are the ones who teach us the comforting and grandiose philosophy whose essential features we have outlined above.

² **Salomon de Caus:** *French engineer (1576-1626). We should consider him as the true inventor of the normal steam engine.*

³ **Harvey:** *English physician (1578-1657). He found out about the blood circulation.*

⁴ **Galvani:** *Italian physicist (1737-1798).*

And may it well be noticed that these are manifestations – despite being regarded by so many men under the empire of narrow prejudices as strange, abnormal or impossible, which have always existed. Ongoing relationships have united the spirit world to the world of the living. History proves it. The appearance of Samuel to Saul, the familiar genius of Socrates, those of Tasse⁵ and Jérôme Cardan⁶ the voices speaking to Joan of Arc, and so many other similar facts, proceed from the same causes. The difference is in that what was once considered supernatural and miraculous, is presented today with a rational character, as a set of facts governed by rigorous laws and possibilities, the study of which science has increasingly come to understand.

This has been the case since the discovery of radiant matter, the application of X-rays, Hertz's work on a wireless telegraph, Lockyer's study on nebulae, those works of Becquerel, Curie, Lebon on the radioactivity of bodies, all of which areas of nature which had so far been ignored.

Spiritist facts, as we can see, far from being deplorable, constitute one of the greatest intellectual and moral revolutions that have ever occurred in the world history.

They are the most serious argument that one can have in opposition to materialism. The certainty of reliving beyond the tomb, in the fullness of our faculties and of our consciousness, makes us lose the fear of death and of the fantasies about it. The knowledge of happy or painful situations experienced by spirits for their good or bad deeds, is a powerful moral action. The perspective of infinite progress, of intellectual conquests, which await all beings and lead them to common destinies, can alone bring men closer together, united by fraternal bonds. The doctrine of Experimental Spiritism is the only positive philosophy which responds to all the moral needs of mankind.

⁵ **Tache**: *Italian poet (1544-1595)*.

⁶ **Germ Cardan**: *Italian mathematician, physician and philosopher (1501-1576)*.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary, the principles which stem from Spiritism, principles taught by discarnate Spirits - much better placed than we are to discern the truth - are the following:

Existence of God, guiding intelligence, living law, soul of the universe, supreme unity where all relations return to and harmonize, immense focus of perfections from which radiate and spread in the infinity all the moral powers: Justice, Wisdom and Love!

Immortality of the soul, spiritual essence which contains in the germinal state all faculties, all powers; which is intended to develop them through its work, in incarnating on the material worlds, rising by successive and innumerable existences, from degree to degree, until perfection.

Communion of the living and with the dead; reciprocal action of one another: permanence of relations between the two worlds; solidarity of all beings, identical in their origin and in their purposes, different only by their transitory situation: some in the state of Spirit, free in space, the others, covered with a perishable envelope, but passing alternately from one state to another, death being only a transitional period between two earthly existences.

Infinite Progress, Eternal Justice, Moral Sanction; the soul, free of its actions and responsible, creates for its own future; the coarse fluids or subtle patterns that make up the perispirit, and which have been attracted to it by habits and tendencies/trends; subject to the universal law of attraction and gravity, these fluids lead it to the lower globes, to the worlds of pain, where it suffers, expiates, redeems the past, to live where matter has less influence, where harmony and happiness reign.

The soul, in its superior and perfect life, collaborates with God, forms the worlds, directs their evolutions, watches over the progress of the humanities, the fulfillment of eternal laws.

These are the teachings that experimental Spiritism brings us. They are not other than those of early Christianity, freed from the forms of material worship, stripped of dogmas, false interpretations, errors, under which men has concealed and kept unrecognizable the philosophy of Christ.

The new doctrine, revealing the existence of an invisible spiritual world, as real and as alive as ours, opens horizons to human thought which, before this knowledge, was still uncertain, confused, unsettled about these matters. But the relationship between the dead and us that this revelation facilitates, the consolation and encouragement that comes from it; the certainty of finding all those we believed lost forever, of receiving from them the supreme teachings, all this constitutes a set of forces, of moral resources that man could not disregard or disdain unharmed.

However, despite the high value of this doctrine, the man of this century, deeply set in skepticism, numb in his prejudices, would hardly have noticed it, had facts not come to support this view. To strike the human spirit off its superficiality and indifference, resorting to those apparently whimsical material and noisy manifestations was necessary. That is why, around 1850 and in various circles, furniture of all shapes would be set in motion, walls resounded with loud blows, heavy bodies moved contrary to known physical laws; but after this first conspicuous phase, spiritist phenomena became increasingly more intelligent.

Facts of psychic order (from the **Greek *psickè***, soul) succeeded to the physical manifestations giving opportunity for mediums, writers, speakers, sleepwalkers, healers to be seen receiving inspirations, mechanically or intuitively, from sources outside themselves; visible and tangible apparitions were produced, and the existence of spirits became incontestable for all the unbiased observers.

Thus appeared to mankind the new belief; on the one hand based on the traditions of the past, on the universality of principles found at the source of all religions and most philosophies, and on the other hand innumerable psychological testimonies observed in all countries by men of all walks of life.

Remarkably, this science, this new philosophy, simple and accessible to all, free from any device or form of worship, this science arrives at a time when customs are corrupted, where social ties are loosened; where the old world wanders in adventure, without limits, without ideal, without a moral law, like a ship without a rudder would drift about with the wind.

Any man who observes and reflects cannot hide from himself that modern society is going through a formidable crisis. A deep decomposition wears it away. The hatred that divides the

classes, the lure of profit, the desire for pleasures, become increasingly abrasive, more ardent. You want to own at all costs. All means are good to acquire well-being, fortune, the only goal that one considers worthy of life. Such aspirations can produce only two consequences: the merciless selfishness in the happy, the despair and revolt among the unfortunate. The situation of the small, of the humble is painful, and too often these, plunged into a moral night where no consolation shines, seek in suicide the end of their evils.

The spectacle of social inequalities, the sufferings of some opposed to the apparent joys, to the indifference of others, stir intensified cravings in the underprivileged. The demand for material goods is growing. Let the frustrated masses rise up, and the world can be shaken by excruciating convulsions.

Science is powerless to ward off evil, to raise characters, heal injuries sustained in the various battles in life. In fact, in our time there are hardly any other than sciences in certain aspects of nature, gathering facts, providing the human spirit with amounts of specific and relatable knowledge. This is how the physical sciences came to be prodigiously enriched for half a century, but these scattered constructions lack bond, unity and harmony. The science par excellence, that which from the series of facts, will go back to the cause which produces them, the one which must link, unite these diverse sciences in one great and magnificent synthesis, to give rise to a general conception of life, to fix our destinies, highlighting a moral law, a basis of social improvement, this universal science, essential, does not yet exist.

If religions are dying, if the old faith is dying, if science is powerless to provide man with the necessary ideal, to improve societies, will everything be desperate?

No, for a doctrine of peace, of brotherhood, of progress is rising over the troubled world, coming to appease savage hatreds, calm passions, to teach everyone solidarity, forgiveness and goodwill.

This long-awaited synthesis offers a science without which everything would remain forever sterile. It triumphs over death and, beyond this life of trials and evils, opens to the minds of radiant prospects of boundless progress in immortality.

It says to everyone, **"Come to me, I will warm you and comfort you, make your lives wholesome, make it easier to have courage and patience, turn trials more bearable. I will shed a powerful light on your gloomy and winding path. To those who suffer I will give hope; to those who seek, to those who doubt and despair, I will give certainty and faith."**

It also says, "Be brothers, help each other, support each other in your collective march. Your goal is beyond this material and transitory life; it is in this future spirituality that you will bring you together as members of one family, free from a myriad of worries and sorrows. So deserve it for your efforts and your work!"

Humanity will rise up great and strong on the day when this doctrine, the infinite source of consolation, is understood and accepted. On that day, envy and anger will be extinguished in the hearts of the mean; the powerful, understanding that he also was once weak, and that he can return to that condition, that his wealth is only a loan from above, will become more charitable and sweeter towards his suffering brethren.

Science, completed, fecundated by the new philosophy, will chase away superstitions and darkness.

No more atheists or skeptics. A simple, broad, fraternal faith will spread over the nations, putting an end to resentments and deep rivalries. The Earth, freed from the plagues that devour it, will continue its moral ascent, to rise by a degree in the scale of the worlds.



We must remember that in each of us sleep useless and unproductive, infinite riches. Hence, our apparent indigence, our sadness, and sometimes even our distaste for life. But open your heart, let the light descend, the regenerating breath, and then a more intense and more beautiful life will awaken you. You will become interested in thousands of things that were indifferent to you, but that will make the charm of your days.

You will feel it grow; you will walk in existence with firmer, more secure step, and your soul will become a temple full of light, splendor and harmony.

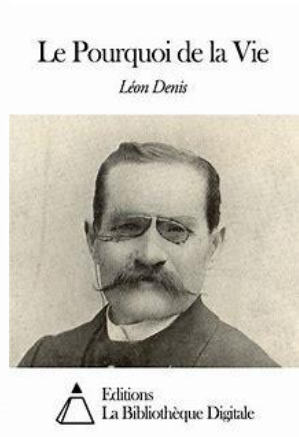
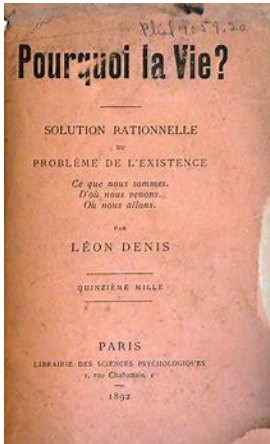
Léon Denis

Extracted from the book: "JOANA D'ARC MEDIUM".

Spiritism has spread, invaded the world. At first despised, hated, it eventually attracted attention and raised interest. All those who did not remain in the streaks of prejudice and routine and who approached him sincerely were conquered by him. Now, it penetrates everywhere, sits at every table, takes place in every home. To their appeals, the old secular fortresses, science, and the Church, until now, by themselves, hermetically closed, lower their walls, between opening their results. Soon you will stand as a master.

Léon Denis

Extracted from the book "Dans l'invisible".



LÉON DENIS

It was, alongside Camille Flammarion and Gabriel Delanne, one of the main expressions of the Spiritist Doctrine, after the disemour of the encoder Allan Kardec, defending and disseminating Spiritism.

He was born in Foug, Tours, France, on 1st January 1846 and from a young age embraced THE SPIRITS' BOOK.

He was nicknamed "Spiritist Apostle" for his great contribution, either in the clash with the detractors of the Doctrine, or in the lectures or for the literary works he left – whose style is of rationalism, depth and cognition. The philosopher, already in his time, was reputed to exuberant wisdom and docility.

He suffered a process of progressive blindness, aggravated from 1910, without leaving working for the spiritist cause, including writing – under the use of Braille language.

He disincarnated in his homeland on 12th March 1927, nailing his name in the gallery of the greatest thinkers of Spiritism and leaving great works, such as: CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITISM, AFTER DEATH, IN THE INVISIBLE, THE GREAT ENIGMA, THE PROBLEM OF BEING, OF FATE AND PAIN AND SOCIALISM AND SPIRITISM.

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