

Basic Study Course

Class 2

The Spiritual World and the Physical World

Please write your name: _____

1. Significance of Knowledge of Spiritual Matters

It is often said that scholarship and human knowledge have progressed, but as this kind of progress is merely physical and material, the pace of metaphysical progress remains slow. For any valuable cultural advancement to take place, physical and metaphysical progress must occur together. However, although culture has already reached a wonderful level, people still lack genuine happiness. This is because cultural progress has been unbalanced. . . . Once you perceive spiritual phenomena and understand spiritual matters, you will see how clear the sources of true unalloyed happiness are and how easy they are to grasp. A faith that is not accompanied by a deep knowledge of spiritual matters cannot on its own bring perfect peace of mind. For this faith fails to answer one vital question: that of what happens after death, which we all know we must inevitably face. . . . If you acquire a deep knowledge of the spiritual world, then life is joyful and even death itself is pleasant. You will have found eternal bliss. — *Preface. Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Questions:

- How can knowledge of spiritual matters help enrich our lives?
- How can we gain or deepen our knowledge of spiritual matters?

2. The Spiritual World

As to the nature of **the spiritual world**, I would sum it up in the following way: it is **the world of the fusion of thought and will**. — *Are There Ghosts? Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

The spiritual world and the physical world are inseparably linked together like the front and back of a piece of paper. Although the spiritual world is invisible, it exists alongside the physical world.

— *Shinji Shumeikai Introductory Lecture Booklet*

As spirits become more and more purified over time, they become finer and less perceptible to the eye. Spirits can enter and leave a place by any aperture at all, even one as narrow as a pinhole. Because they are unencumbered by a fleshly body, it might seem that they exist in a world ideal for followers of the doctrines of absolute freedom. This is not so. **The spiritual world has stern laws; freedom is limited.**

— *Are There Ghosts? Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Physical bodies live and breathe in the material world, but their spirits dwell in the spiritual world. **Conditions in the spiritual world directly affect the spiritual body and are in turn reflected in the physical body.** Thus, the fate of people is fundamentally decided by their conditions in the spiritual world. — *Jyorei and Happiness. Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

The word “spirit” has been viewed as having an association with superstitious beliefs, and to profess a disbelief in this is to affirm one’s intelligence as superior. However, **the true nature of spirit is the fundamental source of all energy and the directing power behind the creation, movements, activities, and changes of every single thing in this infinite universe.** Because of this difference between the two worlds, I refer to the world that lies within a person’s immediate knowledge as “the material world” and the world unknown to most as “the spiritual world.”

— *Natural Power. Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Question: If asked to explain the spiritual (or spirit) world, how would you do so?

3. Reincarnation

Life after life, death after death, the spirit journeys toward endless happiness. — *Life and Death. Miakarishu*

After death the souls of human beings enter the spiritual world, or in other words, they are born into the spiritual world. The Buddhist word for death, “*ojo*,” literally means, “to go to birth,” and, if we look at it from the standpoint of the spiritual world, that is exactly what happens. In the spiritual world, human souls are purged to some degree of the many and various transgressions they have committed in the material world, and they are subsequently born again into this world.

— *Spiritual Cords, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Once the soul has returned to the spiritual world, the process of purifying it begins. The amount of spiritual clouds determines the position of the soul in the spiritual world and also the length of time it must stay there to be purified. At the shortest, the period would be a matter of years or decades, but it sometimes extends to centuries. After being purified to some extent, a spirit is again incarnated into the material world, according to Divine Will, and charged with a task from God.

— *Life and Death, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Question: How does the idea of reincarnation change our perspective on life? How does it relate to daily living?

4. The Law of Spiritual Precedence

The basic and underlying principle of the universe is that everything that exists in the material world has the origin of its existence and activity in the spiritual world. This is exactly the same as the relationship between a person's brain and his or her limbs. The thoughts or impulses of the brain give rise to the movements of the limbs. However, it has been the accepted doctrine of scholarship up to now to deal with problems only in terms of the perceived world, the material world. As a consequence of this, cultural progress has not been accompanied by an increase in human happiness.

— *Natural Power, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Every single thing occurs in the spiritual world first, and then comes about in the physical world later. Put metaphorically, our existence is just like the film of a movie. The film (the spiritual world) is run from projection room and the image is projected onto a screen (the physical world). From the minor daily events to the greatest historical events, all have their source in the spiritual world. All fortune and misfortune comes from the spiritual world. Our happiness, or unhappiness, is the result of our spiritual level and condition. — *Shinji Shumeikai Introductory Lecture Booklet*

One must first try to deal with problems in the spiritual world in order to bring about a real solution to the troubles in the material world. Thus, in the case of illness, a genuine cure is only possible by dealing with its cause in the spiritual world. That is, one must first heal the soul by Divine Light in order to bring a cure to the body. The soul of a human being belongs, of course, to the spiritual world and a human being's physical body belongs to the material world.

— *Natural Power, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

The Law of Spiritual Precedence that governs the relationship between spirit and body can never be broken. Therefore, to become happy and fortunate you must make all possible efforts to purify your soul and make it light so that it reaches the highest level possible. There is absolutely no other way. As stated earlier, Jyorei purifies your soul and raises your spiritual level. This is the great significance of Jyorei. — *Jyorei and Happiness, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

Question: How might you benefit from applying the Law of Spiritual Precedence to your daily life?

5. Spiritual Levels

The fate of people is fundamentally decided by their conditions in the spiritual world. The spiritual world, like the material world, is divided into a considerable number of levels. . . . If, for example, one's spirit belongs to one of the lowest twenty levels in the lowest major rank, then the conditions to experience are the worst and deepest hell, a world full of pain and suffering. This is inevitably reflected in one's physical body, which is oppressed by the worst kind of afflictions. On the other hand, if one's spirit is nearer the divine level, it has a much more pleasant time. Overall, the closer it is, the better the conditions become. . . . Thus we can see that one's fate on earth is decided by one's position in the hierarchy of the spiritual world, one should strive to rise as high as possible, for the higher one rises the less hardships and suffering one must endure and the greater the happiness within one's grasp. Or, to put it another way, the higher one goes, the less impurity one has and the less purification one needs to undergo. While one's spiritual body is in the lower levels of the spiritual world, however, no amount of ordinary wisdom or effort will help. This is the Heavenly Law of God. — *Jyorei and Happiness, Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

The spiritual body rises and falls according to the amount of its clouding. A pure spirit is light, and rises; a clouded spirit is heavy, and sinks. To become a person with a pure spirit, you must do good deeds and increase your accumulation of virtue even though it requires a fair amount of time and self-sacrifice. However, there is a way to raise your soul's rank in the spiritual world immediately by tens of strata. The first step is to take the introductory classes offered by our organization. — *The Strata of the Spiritual World. Essential Teachings of Meishusama*

It's important to understand that our actions in the physical world have an effect in the spiritual world: good actions generate “**Toku Energy**” (spiritual Light energy), whereas bad actions generate spiritual clouds. According to the Law of Spiritual Precedence, these create conditions in the spiritual world that eventually manifest as either good fortune or misfortune. Overall, this cause and effect process is known as the Law of Karma. If you really understand this, you will be able to change your destiny, as well as the destiny of others.

Question: How can we raise our soul's position (spiritual level) in the spiritual world?

6. Ancestors

Our ancestors are the like the roots of a tree. If you would like to make your family tree happy and healthy, you will have to pay extra attention to the condition of its roots and soil. If you offer flowers and food to

your ancestors' altar or grave they will be happy, but the best gift for them is “**Toku Energy**” (spiritual Light energy) generated by your good actions.

Some people believe there is no life after death, but this is not true. When people die, their spirits return to the spiritual realm. Some are chosen to be guardian spirits to protect their family members who are still in the physical world.

The spiritual care of our ancestors, such as holding memorial services, visiting their graves, and praying for them, is very important. When we do these things, it increases their good fortune and prosperity. We owe our existence to them; they are a part of our family tree. Although our ancestors are not physically present, they are always protecting us from a place within the spiritual world.

7. Spiritual Cords (from *Spiritual Cords. Essential Teachings of Meishusama*)

The term “spiritual cords” has seldom been used until recent times. Their importance has been neglected for so long primarily because these cords are much finer and subtler than air, and therefore invisible. However, their influence on all human affairs is impossible to ignore. They are the causes of human happiness and misery, and in the widest sense they shape history. Therefore, the human race must learn to recognize the nature and importance of spiritual cords.

There are tens, hundreds, thousands, indeed, uncountable numbers of spiritual cords attached to you. Some are thick, some thin; some are long, some short; and some of them are good, while others are bad. They all, to a varying degree, influence and change your life.

The links made by spiritual cords are not limited to people who are close to each other in this life. They extend to the spiritual world after death, and through them we can be connected both to truthful and deceitful spirits.

Spiritual cords do not only connect one with another. They also connect one with God and divine beings. The only difference is that spiritual cords from God and divine beings are pure radiance, whereas even the purest soul among humankind has spiritual cords of pale radiance.

Questions:

- Have you had any experiences that helped you realize the existence of spiritual cords?
- Why are spiritual cords important?

8. Spiritual Lifestyle

We face many challenges and sufferings in our daily life. These seem to happen suddenly, but according to the Law of Spiritual Precedence, **everything originates in the spiritual world**. Most people wish to have a happy and healthy life, but if they don't purify and cultivate their spirit, it is impossible to experience true happiness.

Meishusama's Words from *Essential Teachings of Meishusama*:

- If you do not make others happy, you can never be happy yourself. (*About Myself*)
- The truth of the matter is that luck comes not to one who waits, but to one who is purified. (*You Are Free to Make Your Own Destiny*)
- One must first try to deal with problems in the spiritual world in order to bring about a real solution to the troubles in the material world. Thus, in the case of illness, a genuine cure is only possible by dealing with its cause in the spiritual world. That is, one must first heal the soul by Divine Light in order to bring a cure to the body. Medical treatment until now has been directed only towards dealing with physical symptoms, and this misdirection has not resulted in true cures. (*Natural Power*)
- Therefore, to become happy and fortunate you must make all possible efforts to purify your soul and make it light so that it reaches the highest level possible. There is absolutely no other way. This is the great significance of Jyorei. (*Jyorei and Happiness*)
- The way to purify the soul without agony is, of course, found in spiritual discipline, and that is why the non-spiritual person never encounters true happiness. There are many kinds of spiritual paths, however, and if the one you enter is not an authentic and powerful one, you will never meet with good fortune and true happiness. I want you to realize that our faith is an authentic spiritual path that will take you to these goals. (*You Are Free to Make Your Own Destiny*)

Questions:

- Why is it important to elevate our spiritual level?
- How can we do so?

Here are some suggestions for elevating one's spiritual level:

- Daily chanting and praying for other's happiness and for world peace.
- Having a grateful and positive attitude every day.
- Giving and receiving Jyorei every day. Some people make a commitment to do this with 100 people every month. (This is very powerful.)

- Attending Daily Sampais and Monthly Sampais as often as possible.
(People sometimes make a commitment to do this continuously for 30 or even 100 days.)
- Reading spiritual books daily, especially Meishusama's teachings.
- Helping others, doing selfless service, or doing volunteer work.

9. Assignment (Essay writing)

Please write a short one page-length essay on the following questions:

- What does raising your spiritual level mean?
- Why is it important?

(The above are the questions that Eugene Sensei mentioned in the video.)