

Spiritual - Spirit as meaning; Visible and invisible; Qigong and gi invisible force

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I've always been uncomfortable with the term spiritual. It has been used inconsistently to describe an array of phenomena that may or not be the same thing. Spiritual food, spiritual life, spiritual experience, spiritual power, and on and on. Spiritual sight, smell, touch, and hearing all add to the confusion. Spiritual self, spirit man, and plain old spirit, soul, and ghost. High spirit, low spirits and school spirit.

To me, this goes to the heart of being.

Spirit as meaning Visible and invisible Qigong and gi as an invisible force.

Not just humans but all life, the earth, and waters are believed to be embedded with this invisible life force. Is it true? Folks who practice qigong act as if it's true. From my practice of Qigong I learned something important. The practice of Qigong is the

cultivation of qi and to move it throughout the body. What I learned was that to grasp and move gi, imagination was essential. The greater and more free my imagination became, the more my practice developed. I was able to grasp and move the qi with my imagination. This in turn leads me to believe that imagination is what moves and perceives the invisible world. Meaning is invisible and can be whatever you can imagine it to be. Therefore the spirit world is not a world of substance but a world of meaning.

Meaning's function as a motivator

Take up YOUR cross and follow me. My cross? What is my cross, my cross today and all my life. My cross is the heaviest burden I can pick up and walk uphill with. From bearing my responsibility comes meaning.

I'm still tossing around the meaning of spiritual and if it can be replaced by the word meaning. Are there two different worlds; that is a physical world that is visible and a spiritual world that is invisible and, well, other worldly? Or is this just a way to describe different aspects of one being? I'm already pretty much sold on the latter.

It does seem to me that, all the reported phenomenon aside, it is the only thing that makes sense. Instead of crediting the spiritual world with all the, as of yet unexplained things that folks experience, why not explain it as mankind's instinct for meaning? Can I replace the many uses of words like spirit and spiritual with the word meaning? Maybe yes and maybe no but in many cases the drive to create meaning may be a better explanation for being than a mysterious vague other world.

Often I've been told that some people are spiritually open. They can, to one degree or another, see or communicate with spirits. In a more primitive time these were the shamans, witch doctors, or fortune tellers that guided individuals, families, and tribes. Couldn't we say that such gifted individuals were particularly sensitive to perceiving, understanding, and creating meaning through imagination? Where do such powers come from and why can't everyone do these things? The nature of being and reality reveals itself in patterns. The perception of patterns is highly individualistic and subjective. It's no wonder then that there is such a wide, and often contradictory, array of ideas about the nature of being. Can they all be right? Although it is hard to wrap the mind around it, it very well may be true.

Spirituality may be the perception and pursuit of meaning. While superstition is the manipulation of the naive. The ultimate reality is found at the cusp where meaning meets substance. If you pursue material things devoid of connection to a purpose or meaning you will eventually find those things empty. On the other hand, we are grounded in observable facts that can be measured, replicated, and understood. Is one more real than the other? As two parts of a whole they may be equally real. One can conceivably manipulate both the visible and invisible. Through manual manipulation we have become very successful at controlling the visible world. It seems there is also a way to control the invisible world. The breath is invisible and we can control it using practice, the mind, and in particular, the imagination. One thing that I can always control is my breathing. I inhale for a time and then I exhale. Inhaling and exhaling are under my conscious control. They begin and end in the Dan, or belly. I imagine the breath fills the Dan as I inhale and as I exhale I move it to specific parts of my body using my imagination. Thus I can control the visible world using my breath and imagination. As superstition continues to fade away, we might deepen our understanding of being, both visible and invisible.