

*Matheus Laureano
Wilson Garcia*

**THE FREETHINKING
COLLECTION:
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY
1ST SERIES**

Allan Kardec: the founder of Spiritism

Matheus Laureano
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the founder of Spiritism

THE FREETHINKING COLLECTION:
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

1st Series - Book 8

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PRESENTATION

"(...) freethinking elevates the dignity of man; through it he becomes an active, intelligent being, rather than a machine of beliefs."

Allan Kardec (Spiritist Magazine, February 1867)

The CEPA - International Spiritist Association* and the Centre for Spiritist Research and Documentation (CPDoc) have the honor of presenting to both spiritist and non spiritist readers *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century*.

The first series of *The Freethinking Collection* aims to present, in a summarized way, but without prejudice to conceptual precision, the theoretical positions of the

* CEPA is the acronym, both in Spanish and Portuguese, for the previous name of the International Spiritist Association. CEPA used to stand for Confederación Espírita Panamericana. Its initials also created a word that reminded us of the symbolism suggested by the Spirits and used in the Prolegomena within *The Spirit's Book*.

so-called secular and freethinking spiritism, which has been developing in several countries in the Americas and in Europe, during recent years.

Edited in four languages - Portuguese, Spanish, English, and French - it aims to disseminate lay and free thinking spiritism as comprehensively as possible.

This perspective has been characterized by being an alternative look at spiritism, which was founded by Allan Kardec in 1857, as published in his masterful work *The Spirit's Book*, and its institutionalization and popularization in various regions of the planet.

As it spread, spiritism was subjected to processes of absorption and syncretism with the set of religious beliefs and practices specific to the historical and cultural context of each country and of each era.

In some countries, such as Brazil for example, the historical and cultural process of a catholic nature faced by spiritism resulted in the formation of another Christian religion, to the detriment of the principles of rationality and freethinking proposed by Allan Kardec for spiritism.

This phenomenon of syncretism has occurred with spiritism in several countries making it a minor religion, shifting it from its natural epistemological positioning, and causing it to lose its potential

to open perspectives in the fields of knowledge, especially in the areas of science and philosophy.

Hence the need for spiritists gathered around the CEPA and CPDoc, for a rereading of spiritist thought in an attempt to rescue the generous proposal of Allan Kardec, who sought to build a spiritualist, lay, freethinking, humanistic and progressive philosophy. These are fundamental characteristics so that spiritism could walk along the progress of knowledge, ethics, and spirituality in the contemporary world.

The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century intends to present to the reader some fundamental topics of spiritism from the perspective of this rereading, with the aim, therefore, of clarifying spiritist readers in general and those who are interested in these subjects.

The collection presents and elaborates, in this 1st series, a set of fundamental themes, which will allow a comprehensive and full-fledged understanding vis-à-vis the hegemonic thought prevailing in the spiritist movements of Brazil and the world. This gaze is proposed within the greatest spirit of otherness possible.

All topics were elaborated with a method that seeks clarity, conciseness, and precision with the aim

of providing fundamental introductory information on spiritism and the spiritist movement, from a lay and freethinking perspective.

The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st Century also aims to offer scholars and communicators of spiritism, as well as those engaged in the organization of courses, conferences and coordination of study groups, references, and support material to be used in didactic activities carried out by spiritist associations in general.

We believe that this initiative will contribute to a healthy debate on important issues of spiritism, as reflected in the transcendental spiritualist philosophy founded by Allan Kardec.

The authors of this 1st Series - Fundamental Themes - from *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st Century* are intellectuals originally from the spiritualist movements of Argentina, Brazil, Spain and Venezuela who developed the following topics:

- **Spiritism in the lay and free thinker perspective**
Milton Rubens Medran Moreira (Brazil) and Salomão Jacob Benchaya (Brazil)
- **The immortality of the soul**
David Santamaría (Spain)

- **Mediumship: exchange between two worlds**
Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis (Brazil) and Yolanda Clavijo (Venezuela)
- **Reflections on the idea of God**
Ricardo de Moraes Nunes (Brazil) and Dante López (Argentina)
- **Reincarnation: a revolutionary existential paradigm**
Mauro de Mesquita Spínola (Brazil)
- **The evolution of spirits, matter, and worlds**
Gustavo Molfino (Argentina) and Reinaldo Di Lucia (Brazil)
- **Spiritism, ethics, and morals**
Jacira Jacinto da Silva (Brazil) and Milton Rubens Medran Moreira (Brazil)
- **Allan Kardec: the founder of spiritism**
Matheus Laureano (Brazil) and Wilson Garcia (Brazil)

Spiritism, in the words of the important Brazilian writer and spiritist philosopher José Herculano Pires, remains as the “great unknown”. The shadows of misunderstanding fall upon it, preventing its original

brilliance from being appreciated as a philosophical proposal which reveals the horizons of the Spirit over modern thought, emphasizing the importance of reason and facts.

The Freethinking Collection: Spiritism for the 21st century aims, therefore, to shed some light on the spiritist philosophical proposal, with the purpose of illuminating its understanding by spiritists and non-spiritists as well as rescuing its revolutionary potential contribution to a new vision of the human being and the world.

This is a bold but necessary task.

Ademar Arthur Chioro de Reis

Mauro de Mesquita Spínola

Ricardo de Moraes Nunes

Organizers

CEPA - INTERNATIONAL SPIRITIST ASSOCIATION

In *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century*, CEPA unfolds, in the various volumes that make up the 1st Series, the fundamental themes of spiritism. In the series that will follow, current issues of equal importance for societal living will be addressed.

CEPA - International Spiritist Association, was founded in Argentina in 1946. It was strongly influenced by the freethinking tradition that arose in the Spanish spiritist movement, shortly after the mid-19th century advent of the Spiritist Philosophy in France, under the direction of Allan Kardec.

Argentine spiritists, whose main characteristic was the defense of the progressive, secular, and freethinking character of spiritism, played a leading

role in the basis of thought that always guided CEPA members.

Since its founding, CEPA, initially called the Pan American Spiritist Confederation, has been working for the construction and consolidation of the philosophical and scientific nature of spiritism, as proclaimed by its founder Allan Kardec.

As an interpreter of spiritism in its original form, CEPA defines it as **“a science dealing with the nature, origin and destiny of spirits, as well as their relationships with the bodily world”** and as **“a spiritualist philosophy of moral consequences”**.

Its nature today is that of an International Spiritist Association, comprised by individuals and spiritist institutions from different continents. It is characterized by being an alliance of people and institutions sharing the same freethinking ideal, not compatible with vertical and authoritarian organizations within the spiritist movement.

Its main objectives are:

- (a) promote and disseminate the knowledge provided by spiritism, based on the thinking of Allan Kardec, under a lay, freethinking, humanist, progressive and pluralistic vision.
- (b) promote and support efforts for the permanent updating of spiritism.

- (c) promote integration between spiritists and spiritist institutions of all continents, sharing these same objectives.

Valuable scholars and thinkers gathered around CEPA have been expanding the scope of the Spiritist Philosophy, adding their efforts to restore its original progressive sense, unfortunately minimized when it is mistakenly read as a religious doctrine.

Spiritism free of adjectives is a universalist philosophy with liberating potential, and thus the reason for CEPA's commitment to its earliest postulates, upholding the historical context in force at the time of its birth.

The association of people around the study of spiritism, in its purest expression, has served for the aggrandizement of the spiritist philosophy, which can serve everyone, regardless of their beliefs and visions of the world.

In honor of the work and dedication of the authors, I leave an affectionate invitation for the reader to study and critically analyze their contributions, as a true freethinker.

Jacira Jacinto da Silva,
President of CEPA

CPDOC - SPIRITIST RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION CENTER

CPDoc is one of the oldest working spiritist research centers in Brazil. Its main objective is the development and dissemination of studies and research of spiritist themes, using the appropriate methodology for each topic as well as the contributions of the various areas of knowledge. It seeks to contribute to the improvement of knowledge, as a whole and of spiritism specifically.

CPDoc was born in Santos (Sao Paulo, Brazil) in 1988, the result of the dream of young people interested in reinforcing their spiritist studies. It has participants from several Brazilian states and other countries. The works are published through its website, in books, in the press, and they are discussed in various events, especially at the Brazilian

Symposium of Spiritist Thought as well as at the Congresses and Conferences of CEPA, which it joined in 1995.

To date, CPDoc has in its collection the following books published or to be published:

- **Magnetismo e vitalismo e o pensamento de Kardec**, by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis
- **Um Blues no meio do caminho**, by Paulo Cesar fernandes
- **Centro espírita: uma revisão estrutural**, by Mauro de Mesquita Spinola
- **Teleco**, by Geraldo Pires de Oliveira
- **Igualdade de direitos e diferença de funções entre o homem e a mulher**, by Marissol Castello Branco
- **Mecanismos da mediunidade: Processo de comunicação mediúnica**, by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis
- **Criminalidade: educar ou punir?**, by Jacira Jacinto da Silva
- **Ensaio sobre o Humanismo Espírita**, by Eugênio Lara
- **Os espíritos falam: Você ouve?**, by Wilson Garcia

- **Doca e o menino – O laço e o silêncio**, by Wilson Garcia
- **Perspectivas contemporâneas da reencarnação (several authors), organized** by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis and Ricardo de Moraes Nunes
- **Os livros dos espíritos**, by Luís Jorge Lira Neto
- **Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21st century** (several authors), organized by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis, Ricardo de Moraes Nunes and Mauro de Mesquita Spinola

The CPDoc also offers online courses presenting spiritism within a secular and freethinking vision, using modern distance learning techniques.

All those interested in research can participate in the CPDoc if they know the fundamentals of spiritism and are hosted by a member of the group.

Information, published articles, CPDoc-promoted events, and online courses are available on the group's website:

<http://www.cpdocspirita.com.br>.

Wilson Garcia
President of CPDoc

PREFACE

When the hosts of the *Freethinking Collection* invited me to write the preface for this book — *Kardec: the Founder of Spiritism*, authored by Wilson García and Matheus Laureano— I must admit I asked myself, Why me? Yet I did not decline. I sensed that this experience, though personally challenging, would offer valuable lessons.

Me considero una estudiosa del Espiritismo desl have considered myself a student of Spiritism since early childhood. Growing up in a household where my beloved mother demonstrated mediumistic abilities, I was drawn to the writings of Allan Kardec and other Spiritist authors. This initial curiosity evolved into a path of study, service, and personal growth, aimed at developing and responsibly applying mediumship.

The authors of this book have set out to present Allan Kardec's profound legacy in accessible and contemporary language. To illuminate the man behind the ideas, they not only provide essential biographical details but also explore his intellectual foundations, relationships, and evolution. Through this approach, readers gain deeper insight into Kardec's work and its enduring significance.

Kardec's contributions remain timeless —marked by clarity, logic, and a commitment to impartial observation. He demonstrated that the interaction between incarnate and discarnate beings forms the cornerstone of a future scientific philosophy. His writings offer immediate, tangible insights accessible to all. The study of spiritual life is approached with rigor, and the ethical implications of mediumship are affirmed through its communications.

Like many others, I recognize the importance and urgency of sharing Kardec's work —a legacy crafted by a humble and just man who fulfilled his mission in this life: to disseminate a beautiful and enriching body of knowledge.

The authors have succeeded in their aim: to make Kardec's journey and ideas accessible through diligent study and research. For those of us already

familiar with his teachings and biography, this book offers an opportunity to deepen our understanding and appreciation of his enduring legacy.

I am grateful to the spiritual world for having found Spiritism on my path, and 50 years later, I have the privilege of writing this preface dedicated to Kardec, whom I thank with much love and appreciate the work he left us.

Rosa Díaz Outeiriño

*President, International Association for the
Progress of Spiritism (AIPE), Spain*

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INTRODUCCIÓN

“If every effect has a cause, every intelligent effect should have an intelligent cause”ⁱ

An observant professor and scientist drew upon the aforementioned axiom when examining what appeared to be a frivolous social event. He recognized it as an opportunity to clarify a fact that, until then, had been widely circulated, speculative in nature, and poorly understood. The revolving tables' affair was quite a success in the social circles of Paris and many other cities around the world. Nonetheless, unveiling the relationship between the living and the

-
- i. This logical axiom is present in many Kardec's statements and at various times. Kardec used this axiom as the starting point of rationalist arguments to elaborate on some ideas that permeate his work.

dead required a discerning mind—someone capable of perceiving beyond appearances and lifting the veil of ignorance.

In this regard, the monumental and profound work accomplished by Allan Kardec places him among the intellectual giants of humanity. Though not without flaws, his contributions possess a depth, vitality, and transformative power that continue to shape our understanding of human interaction and spiritual reality.

To grasp the essence of Kardec, we have chosen a slightly unconventional approach. Beyond presenting the essential biographical data, we offer a critical analysis of his ideas—exploring how Kardec emerged, evolved, and engaged with his contemporaries, and assessing the legacy he left to humankind. Understanding Kardec necessitates understanding both his thought and the historical context in which it developed.

This also involves a close reading of his texts, seeking not only inspiration but also contradictions—for no substantial body of work on such a profound subject is devoid of tension. This is the humanization of Kardec and his oeuvre: a recognition of his greatness and humility, his insights and concerns, all of which reflect the shared human condition.

Ultimately, to understand Kardec today, we must engage with his work in its entirety. Fragmented quotations and isolated excerpts are insufficient. A comprehensive reading is essential to fully appreciate the scope and significance of his contributions.

Rather than adhering solely to the literal word, we must engage with the complexity of Kardec's thought and intentions —reaching beyond the written text. While this may appear to be a fruitless hermeneutic exercise, it is anything but. Interpreting a body of work as extensive as Kardec's requires navigating a path marked by curves, ascents and descents, detours, viaducts, and countless intersections and crossroads. This book, therefore, proposes a journey toward understanding Kardec and his immense contribution.

We have endeavored to be as didactic as possible, employing clear language while maintaining a degree of depth —following suit with Kardec— to help readers grasp his ideas and inspire a deeper exploration of his work.

From Kardec's birth and life as Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, through the historical, political, and social context of his time, we examine his pivotal role in communicating with spirits and shaping the

foundations of Spiritism. The society he led and the journal that disseminated his research are essential elements in illustrating the context we present. His major original works, the trajectory of his successors, and even the claims of his reincarnations position Kardec as a model of critical inquiry —one whose subject matter demands thoughtful engagement and respect.

For some, this journey through Kardec's legacy may be familiar. For many others, much remains to be discovered and studied. We invite you to join us in getting to know him —more deeply, more critically, and more meaningfully.

1

FROM THE LIFE OF PROFESSOR RIVAIL THROUGH THE BIRTH OF KARDEC

The founder of Spiritism was born of a literary birth at the exact moment when the last sheet of paper ran through the printing press and brought to light the first edition of *The Spirits' Book*, in Didier's printing press. Centuries later, the poetic pen of Herculano Pires recorded this extraordinary event:

Allan Kardec was born on April 18, 1857 at Paris. His birth certificate was not notarized, but printed in the workshops of the publisher Didier and exposed to the public in his bookstore. Everyone who acquired a volume of the new work became aware of the existence of a new writer who emerged

from the distant Gallic past: the Druid priest Allan Kardec, later reintegrated into the modern life of the ancient and mysterious homeland¹.

Indeed, Kardec emerged through the publication of his work within the expansive domain of spiritualism. Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail unearthed a pseudonym from history —*Allan Kardec*— amidst high expectations for a new body of knowledge. By coining neologisms still untouched by semantic ambiguity to define Spiritism, Rivail wished for his ideas to be received without the constraints of his established reputation as a professor in France.

Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail was born on October 3, 1804, in Lyon, approximately 470 kilometers south of Paris. The French term for its residents is *lyonnais*. At the time, Lyon was a thriving industrial center and would later be recognized for decades as the global capital of silk.

Rivail's early years were spent in Bourg-en-Bresse², a rural town over 60 kilometers from Lyon, where he lived with his mother and maternal uncle at his grandmother's home. In 1807, his father departed on a military mission and never returned.



Allan Kardec
(1804-1869)

At the age of 11, his mother enrolled him at the Yverdon Institute in Switzerland, led by the esteemed educator Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi.

At the age of 19, Rivail relocated to Paris, where he began publishing works aimed at introducing Pestalozzi's educational method to France. Over the next three decades, he dedicated himself to teaching, school administration, and the development of didactic materials and advanced textbooks³.

His formative experiences under Master Pestalozzi left a lasting imprint on his character, shaping his lifelong commitment to education. The first of many contributions to the field was *Practical Arithmetic Course*, published in 1824 when Rivail was just 20 years old. This work, *grounded in Pestalozzian principles*, marked the beginning of a prolific career. By the age of 50, Rivail had established himself as a respected educator, with dozens of pedagogical publications to his name. It was at this juncture that his attention turned to emerging phenomena within spiritualism —a shift that would ultimately lead him to formulate the Spiritist doctrine.

Nonetheless, Rivail did not confine himself to theory. From an early age, he immersed himself in the practical aspects of teaching. In 1825, he founded

and managed a primary school. Three years later, the institution was placed under new leadership and eventually evolved into a boarding school for boys. Rivail continued to oversee other educational establishments, notably the Polymathic Lycée, which he directed for nearly a decade.

An 1835 advertisement detailed the comprehensive curriculum offered at the Polymathic Lycée. The subjects included: religious education; ordinary reading and speech; writing; language; French rhetoric and literature; Latin; Greek; German; geography; history; arithmetic; geometry; higher mathematics; geometrical drawing of plans, machines and artworks; academic and landscape design; astronomical geography; physics; chemistry; physiological and hygienic anatomy; anatomy applied to drawing and painting; mechanics applied to arts; technology; a complete course of business studies, and a preparatory course for the bachelor of arts and sciences degree⁴.

CURIOSITY

In addition to education, Rivail used his creativity with inventions. In May 1835, two of such inventions were reported on *Le Censeur of Lyon* —wind gauge and a desalinization system, apparently without major repercussions⁵.

Rivail was proficient in English and Italian, among other languages. One of his earliest professional endeavors following his graduation from the Yverdon Institute was a German translation of works by Fénelon, which were subsequently adopted in various educational institutions.

According to contemporary accounts and his own reflections, Rivail was notably rational, methodical, and objective—traits that distanced him from romanticism and poetic expression. In 1832, at the age of 27, he married Amélie Gabrielle Boudet, then 36, a year after their first meeting.

Amélie was deeply devoted to the study and teaching of the arts, a field for which she possessed remarkable sensitivity. She authored several writings and books on artistic subjects and became Rivail's closest collaborator. Her unwavering support extended throughout his professional career and, crucially, during the approximately 15 years that marked the foundation of Spiritism. The couple did not have biological children.

The first biographic notes claim that Rivail was also a doctor of medicine and a mason. To date, none of this has been proven.



An unusual picture of Amélie, as a student

2 BACKGROUND AND INFLUENCES ON KARDEC'S THOUGHT



Prise de la Bastille (The Storming of the Bastille)
This painting by Jean-Pierre Louis Laurent Houel (1735-1813) depicts a crucial event for the French Revolution
Source: [Prise de la Bastille]: [dessin] / Hoüel pinxit | Gallica (bnf.fr)

2.1 The French Revolution

In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, France was immersed in a profound intellectual, social, and moral upheaval. This effervescence was driven by the Enlightenment's rationalist ideals, the seismic shifts of the French Revolution, the transformative force of the Industrial Revolution, and the growing authority of science as a guiding principle of life. For Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail —later known as Allan Kardec— this dynamic environment was not unfamiliar. Yet, when combined with his personal experiences, marked by loss and an enduring quest for existential meaning, these forces deeply shaped his philosophical and spiritual inquiries.

The French Revolution stands as one of the most pivotal political and ideological turning points in Western history. Far from arising spontaneously, it was the culmination of a volatile social landscape. France, second only to Russia in population, faced dire living conditions: widespread poverty, hunger, and a government drowning in debt. Despite this, the monarchy continued its extravagant displays of wealth, seemingly indifferent to the suffering of its people. The brutal winter of 1788 exacerbated the crisis, driving food prices —especially for bread—

beyond reach and forcing the population to reduce consumption drastically.

For their part, Enlightenment thinkers challenged the notion that poverty was an eternal sentence for the masses, while wealth and power were the birthright of the aristocracy. In July 1789, amid mounting public debt, mass impoverishment, and resistance from liberal aristocrats unwilling to relinquish their privileges, the newly formed National Constituent Assembly curtailed royal authority and moved to dismantle the power of the clergy and nobility. The Storming of the Bastille and the subsequent Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in August 1789 became the milestones of revolutionary change.

The French Revolution did more than restructure political institutions —it redefined the symbolic and linguistic landscape of France. It introduced a new political lexicon and collective consciousness, emphasizing democratic republicanism and the transformative power of revolutionary ideals. These developments formed the backdrop against which Kardec's intellectual formation unfolded.

While the revolutionaries aimed at higher equality between French citizens by means of sweeping changes in domestic laws and policies, no political or economic stability followed the French Revolution.

Sure enough, the French Revolution made headway with a universal, lay, public and free education for both men and women. The revolutionaries entertained a new nation and regarded education as the most effective means to have knowledgeable citizens.

In 1792, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis of Condorcet, was appointed chair of the Public Education Committee at the Legislative Assembly. In such capacity, he submitted the National Education Plan, moving forward with deeper changes.

Rivail was born in 1804, fifteen years after the first stage of the French Revolution, whose repercussions lingered for decades in France, Europe and the entire world. At that time, Napoléon Bonaparte had completed his coup d'état of November 9th, 1799 [18th of Brumaire in the year VIII (1799), in the French Republican Calendar]. Romanticized during the French Revolution, the motto of *liberty, equality, fraternity* was far away from reality. No matter the humanist wording, there was terror, persecution and death disguised as justice. While the French Revolution brought along important reflections and influences on the Western world in the field of ideas, in the practice, it was a period of intense clashes. Between 1792 and 1812, Europe was immersed in wars between nations or inner strife. Instead of bringing the longed-

for modernity, power just changed hands under the French Revolution, concomitantly maintaining a bureaucratic and absolutist monarchical State.

In the first half of the 19th century, France was divided and polarized. On the one hand, the Girondins ruled under Napoléon Bonaparte. On the other hand, the Jacobins had lost their power, but continued exerting strong influence, particularly on workers and peasants. Although longstanding, the Napoleonic periods were not at all quiet.

Between 1789 and 1848—an era Eric Hobsbawm famously termed the *Age of Revolutions*—the pursuit of freedom became a defining ideal, though it was persistently shadowed by violence and war. Across France and much of Europe, three major revolutionary waves reshaped the political and social landscape of Western nations:

- 1820–1824: Centered in the Mediterranean region, these uprisings marked the beginning of liberal challenges to absolutist regimes.
- 1829–1834: A broader wave swept across Europe, reaching as far as eastern Russia, triggering profound social and economic transformations.
- 1848: Known as the *Winter of Peoples*, this was the most widespread revolutionary surge, engulfing

nearly all of Europe and posing a formidable challenge to entrenched autocratic rule.

Despite the core values of *liberty, equality, fraternity*, materialized in a lay State and lay education, the 19th century featured a myriad of conflicts, advances and setbacks. During the Second French Republic, in March 1850, the Falloux Law, named after its proponent, the French Minister of Education and Religious Affairs, André Falloux, was enacted. This law "*submitted education in public Elementary schools to ecclesiastic authorities, and also favored Catholic secondary schools, with a view to advancing free education.*"ⁱⁱ At the time, public policy, education, and even scientific institutions were heavily influenced by the Church, whose members often held public office or served as school inspectors and administrators.

2.2 Science

Rivail was born, raised, and intellectually shaped during a turbulent era marked by contradictions, betrayals, and economic expansion. Having lived

ii. Laity Observatory. For further information, visit <http://ole.uff.br/franca/>. In addition, the reader is advised to read the article Republican laity in France or the paradoxes of a historical process of laicization (18th-19th centuries), by Valentine Zuber, at <https://journals.openedition.org/lerhistoria/1370>.

through this reality in France, received his education in Switzerland, and devoted himself to teaching, he cultivated a character grounded in common sense — one that favored holistic observation as the basis for drawing conclusions.

I approached this new science with the same experimental method I have consistently applied thus far. I made no allowance for preconceived theories; instead, I observed attentively, compared systematically, and inferred conclusions. From the observed effects, I sought to trace the underlying causes through deduction and logical correlation of facts —never accepting an explanation as valid until all difficulties inherent to the question had been resolved. This has been my consistent approach in previous works, beginning at the age of fifteen and continuing through sixteen⁸.

Far from being alien to the world, acumen, care and responsibility for life events made him a pundit of reality. While many were enchanted by the revolving tables, Rivail was not carried away by easy entertainment, as a man who practiced education could not lend himself to mere futilities.

Drawing from his observations, Rivail, now Allan Kardec, established a connection between Spiritism and magnetism. He was well-versed in and supportive of magnetism, recognizing in the emerging pheno-

menon of Spiritism a natural continuation and necessary evolution of magnetic principles. Moreover, he credited magnetism with facilitating the rapid success of Spiritism, going so far as to assert that both fields constituted a single, unified science. Like magnetism, Spiritism brought controversial aspects in reality. However, Kardec encountered the gear shaft of magnetism —the spirit.

This seemed to be simple for Kardec on the basis of his observations, but the fact of the matter of fact is that science was being cemented at that time. In the 19th century, science arose as a way of life and the driving force of society, the true source of knowledge and the apex of humankind. In 1830-1842, Auguste Comte released a series of papers entitled *Course of Positive Philosophy*. Later, in 1844, the French philosopher elaborated on The Three Stages of Law, a basic postulate of positivism with a strong influence on Spiritism.

*To properly explain the true nature and character of positive philosophy, it is indispensable to provide an overview of **the progressive march of the human spirit**, for no concept can be fully understood except through its history*⁹.

According to Comte, in the progressive evolution of human knowledge, thought passes through three

distinct stages: the theological, the metaphysical, and the scientific.

The theological stage is characterized by the pursuit of the intimate nature, the original and ultimate causes, that is, absolute knowledge. Supernatural beings, acting arbitrarily in the universe, emerge as a recourse to explain the anomalies occurring in nature. In the metaphysical stage, supernatural beings give way to abstract personifications, and reason replaces imagination. In the scientific stage phenomena are no longer attributed to supernatural or abstract causes. Instead, they are explained through observation and the discovery of effective laws.

Kardec affirmed many a time that Spiritism is a positive science. Rather than a pun, it was an attempt at inserting the Spiritist phenomena into the most advanced body of knowledge at that time. Kardec aimed to engage philosophers, scientists, and other scholars —inviting them to examine the subject with rigor and seriousness. Kardec actively sought their collaboration, recognizing that the magnitude of his discovery required a broader investigative effort. He believed that only through systematic inquiry and adherence to scientific methodology could Spiritism be validated as a legitimate field of study.

Gentlemen, this is a pivotal truth that must be proclaimed with conviction: Spiritism is not a personal invention, nor the product of imagination. It is not a theoretical construct devised to serve a particular cause. Rather, it arises from natural phenomena —tangible, observable events that have occurred before our very eyes, though their significance long went unrecognized. Spiritism is, fundamentally, the outcome of empirical observation.

In essence, it is a science—a science of the relationships between the visible and invisible worlds. Though still in its formative stages, this discipline evolves daily through continued study and investigation. And rest assured, it will ultimately take its rightful place alongside the positive sciences. I emphasize positive, for any science grounded in verifiable facts belongs to that category, as opposed to those founded solely on speculation¹⁰.

In essence, the positive system of knowledge —also known as positive philosophy— articulated the aspirations of the scientific community during



Snapshot of La Revue Spirite, of November 1864. Source: National Library of France (Gallica). La Revue Spirite: journal d'études psychologiques | 1864-11-01 | Gallica (bnf.fr)

a period of profound scientific and technological progress. It consolidated the view that science should prevail over other forms of knowledge, positioning it at the core of intellectual inquiry and societal development. This marked the beginning of a transformative era, one that continues to date. Our inclination to use science as the benchmark for determining truth or falsehood originated as a structured epistemological and social framework, rooted in Auguste Comte's positivism. As Kardec himself observed:

For its part, Spiritism shows a new law, a new force of nature, residing in the action of spirits over matter. It is a universal law, same as the gravity and electricity laws, although still unknown and denied by some people, as it used to be when the other laws were discovered. (Spiritism is a positive science, Revue Spirite, November 1964).

Kardec presented Spiritist phenomena as natural occurrences —manifesting independently of human will or intervention, much like rain, lightning, or gravity. The influence of spirits upon the material world, he argued, constitutes a natural event. Today, such interactions can be observed and analyzed through Spiritist methodology, which enables the formulation of consistent laws.

No corpus of knowledge, and no doctrine, can emerge in isolation. The integration of the Spiritist doctrine into the domain of positive sciences serves a strategic purpose: to engage scientists capable of advancing this nascent field through rigorous inquiry. By doing so, it aims to expand the community of scholars exploring an invisible dimension —populated by intelligent entities and actively interacting with the material world.

Despite Kardec's persistent efforts to position Spiritism within the framework of positive science, significant conceptual tensions remain. The very first question posed in *The Spirits' Book* —“What is God?”— stands in stark contrast to positivist thought. Few inquiries are more deeply rooted in metaphysical tradition than this. Indeed, the initial volume of *The Spirits' Book* engages with themes such as divinity, the universe, eternity, infinity, creation, and the vital principle —topics that clearly signal Kardec's intent either to transcend positivism or to expand its boundaries by subjecting metaphysical questions to scientific reasoning.

The metaphysical foundations Kardec invoked were not novel; he acknowledged this himself. His true innovation lay in forging a durable and coherent link between metaphysics and experimental science,

thereby establishing a new school of thought. In this framework, the divine is presupposed, while the spirit —its influence on matter and its interaction with the material world— becomes the operational core of Spiritist science. Kardec’s role in articulating and legitimizing this synthesis was pivotal and far from trivial.

Yet a profound epistemological challenge emerges when science is defined as the sole rational pathway to truth. Under such a paradigm, common sense, metaphysics, and other forms of knowledge are relegated to the realm of provisional or subjective experience, lacking inherent truth-value. Consequently, any discipline that explores the divine or the subjective interplay between material and immaterial realms — especially one that traces observable effects to non-material causes— struggles to gain recognition as science within the prevailing framework.

Scientific totalitarianismⁱⁱⁱ emerged as a dogmatic framework that asserted truth could only be attained through strict adherence to epistemological principles and methodological rules. Within this paradigm, alternative forms of knowledge —whether religious,

iii. A term properly used by Boaventura de Sousa Santos in his renowned *Essay on Sciences* —an insightful critique of sciences and society.

intuitive, or metaphysical— were deemed either unreliable or irrelevant to scientific inquiry. This totalizing approach was the culmination of centuries of philosophical and scientific critique, particularly targeting religion and any epistemology not grounded in observation and empirical method. In its rise to dominance, science positioned itself as both the solution and the ideal vehicle for societal progress.

In response to this intellectual climate, Allan Kardec sought to frame Spiritism as a positive science—a discipline aligned with the prevailing scientific ethos. Positivism, as a societal doctrine rooted in scientific rationality, rejected engagement with general

DID YOU KNOW?

According to Werner Heisenberg, the founding of scientific academies was driven by a deliberate effort to eliminate magic and superstition. Experiments were designed to disprove these beliefs, often by scrutinizing the very texts that promoted magical practices. In some academies, members were even required to swear an oath prohibiting discussion of general theories, restricting discourse to specific, observable phenomena. As a result, natural theories became narrowly focused on isolated events rather than broader systemic interactions¹¹.

or universal questions. Instead, it emphasized the study of specific facts, the formulation of precise laws, and the pursuit of increasingly specialized knowledge. This led to the proliferation of narrowly focused scientific disciplines, each concerned with discrete natural phenomena. Mathematics, abstract and exact, became the language of science —far from societal concerns and confined to academic circles.

Another core tenet of positivism was its insistence that science be limited to the observable. This principle was embedded in Comte's *Law of Three Stages*, which proposed that humanity's intellectual evolution culminates in the scientific stage, where theological and metaphysical explanations are replaced by empirical observation and rational analysis.

Given this context, why should Spiritism be situated within the positivist framework?

Kardec lived during a period of scientific ascendancy, and positivism represented the dominant intellectual current. While he sought scientific legitimacy for Spiritism, he also recognized its dynamic nature —it was not a fixed doctrine encapsulated in a single foundational text, but a system in continuous pursuit of knowledge. Despite his efforts, many rejected Spiritism's premises, viewing them as incompatible with the scientific orthodoxy of the time.

Ultimately, Kardec came to understand that Spiritism would need to transcend the rigid boundaries of the prevailing scientific paradigm to fulfill its broader epistemological and societal aspirations.

The physical sciences are based on the properties of matter, which can be subjected to experimentation and manipulated at will. Spirit phenomena, on the other hand, rest on the action of intelligences who have wills of their own, and who show us at every turn that they are not subject to our whims. (...) Science per se is incompetent to make any declaration of its own on the issue of Spiritism. It is not science's place to concern itself with the subject, and its favorable or unfavorable verdict regarding it carries no weight¹².

However, further, Kardec underscored:

Spiritist Science consists of two aspects: the experimental deals with manifestations in general, whereas the philosophical deals with intelligent manifestations¹³.

Despite official rejection by scientific societies, Kardec persistently asserted that Spiritism was both a philosophical and a positive science. What appeared to be a conceptual dichotomy was, in fact, an effort to integrate Spiritism into the prevailing scientific framework —while simultaneously expanding its boundaries. At its core, Spiritism represented a novel

field of inquiry, previously relegated to the realm of speculative ideas and dismissed as supernatural. Kardec's contribution lay in rendering these phenomena observable and subject to systematic study.

Supernatural is everything outside the laws of Nature. Positivism does not admit anything beyond the action of these laws, yet, does it know all of them¹⁴?

One of Kardec's pivotal insights was the assertion that the supernatural does not exist. He proposed that *"the spirit is simply a soul that has survived the body"*. From this standpoint, Kardec sought to offer his contemporaries a broader scientific perspective—one that acknowledged the existence of intelligent, non-material beings. As he stated, *"it differs from everything we know as matter¹⁵."* These beings, he argued, exist naturally both during and after incarnation, governed by the laws of the spiritual principle, just as the physical body is governed by the material principle¹⁶.

2.3 The method

We must resist the facile, futile, and arrogant temptation to believe that Spiritism offers answers to everything. It does not. Rather, Spiritism casts a

transformative light on the very notion of learning. It may illuminate and even enrich other disciplines — medicine, psychology, physics, chemistry— by offering perspectives that transcend material boundaries.

Spiritism affirms the continuity of life beyond death: that spirits persist beyond matter, and that the material and spiritual realms interact. Yet this affirmation is not a conclusion —it is an opening. Spiritism invites inquiry, expands horizons, and poses questions still awaiting exploration. This is what propels us forward.

Spiritism does not claim omniscience. Its brilliance lies in its capacity to contribute meaningfully to broader fields of knowledge, offering partial answers and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue. This progressive spirit, championed by Allan Kardec, urges us to think expansively. Spiritism is progressive because it must evolve —learning, refining, and accomplishing more with each step. Progress is unceasing; life is a continuum. Though we remain far from grasping its full trajectory, we are prepared to take small, deliberate steps in its daily unfolding.

Having said that, it is essential to revisit Kardec's methodological approach —to question, understand, articulate, and construct a coherent school of thought grounded in the dynamic relationship between the

living and the dead. Every science begins with a subject of study. Kardec laid the foundational steps toward this endeavor.

Spiritism is indeed both a science and a philosophy. As a science, it involves the study of spirit phenomena and communication with spirits through mediums. As a philosophy, it explores the moral implications and consequences that arise from these interactions with the spirit realm¹⁷.

Spiritism is a science that explores the nature, origin, and destiny of spirits, as well as their interactions with the material world¹⁸.

Recognizing that the nature, origin, and destiny of spirits—as well as their interactions with the material world—constitute a legitimate subject of study, Allan Kardec repeatedly emphasized his use of the experimental method in his research. Critics have often dismissed this claim, arguing that Kardec merely compiled and organized data provided by spirits, without applying a rigorous scientific methodology. But such critiques often overlook a crucial question: what did *experimental method* mean in Kardec's time?

To understand Kardec's approach, one must consider the methodological context of the mid-19th century. The contemporary experimental method, with its strict control of variables and reliance on

statistical and probabilistic analysis, was not yet fully developed. Even the most esteemed scientists of the era would fall short of today's methodological standards. Within this historical framework, Kardec's approach was both innovative and methodologically sound.

In the case of the famed *revolving tables*, Kardec began by observing and collecting data allegedly communicated by spirits. After ruling out deception and dismissing known physical explanations—such as electricity or magnetism—he proceeded to formulate targeted questions, which functioned as control variables. These questions grew increasingly complex, and the responses evolved accordingly. This dialectical exchange between researcher and subject refined the instruments of inquiry, ultimately leading to the recognition of mediumship as a human faculty and the medium as a research instrument.

Once the medium was established as a conduit, Kardec introduced control mechanisms to reduce error and prevent fraud. He posed intricate questions to spirits through mediums who, by their own capacities, could not have produced such answers. Yet the responses came—coherent, meaningful, and beyond the medium's intellectual reach. Kardec

concluded that the source of the information was not the medium, but a disincarnate intelligence. Thus, the instrument proved effective.

All collected messages were then subjected to Kardec's primary validation criterion—reason. Though subjective, reason served as a philosophical filter for coherence and consistency. As Spiritist societies and mediums proliferated globally, Kardec introduced a second validation method—the Universal Control of the Spirits' Teaching (*Contrôle Universel de l'Enseignement des Esprits*, CUEE). This comparative analysis across independent sources ensured that teachings were not isolated or idiosyncratic, but reflected a broader spiritual consensus.

Through these dual criteria—reason and CUEE—Kardec's role extended beyond mere compilation. He discerned which messages were consistent with Spiritist principles and filtered them through what he called the sieve of reason. He further systematized the conditions for serious séances, establishing rudimentary but essential controls over the variables involved. Despite lacking institutional support, funding, or academic affiliation, Kardec succeeded in laying the groundwork for a vast field of study.

DID YOU KNOW?

During Kardec's time, psychology had not yet emerged as a fully recognized scientific discipline. Its formal establishment came only after the pioneering work of Gustav Fechner, Ernst Heinrich Weber, and most notably, Wilhelm Wundt —widely regarded as the father of modern psychology. In 1879, Wundt founded the first laboratory dedicated to experimental psychology at the University of Leipzig, marking a foundational moment in the discipline's history.

Wundt employed the method of introspection, a structured form of self-observation in which trained individuals examined and reported their own thoughts and feelings in response to controlled stimuli. This approach proved effective for studying basic mental processes such as sensation, perception, and elementary attention. These experiments were conducted using sophisticated apparatuses designed to produce stimuli with precise variations in size, intensity, and duration, allowing for systematic observation and measurement.

However, Wundt recognized the limitations of the experimental method when applied to higher mental functions. He argued that complex psychological phenomena —such as language, memory, and volition— could not be fully understood through laboratory introspection alone. For these, he emphasized the importance of historical and cultural context, proposing that such processes were shaped by collective human experience and thus required a broader methodological framework.



Wilhelm Wundt (seated) and other researchers in the first laboratory of psychology. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wundt-research-group.jpg>

His legacy includes:

- *Revue Spirite*: a journal for dissemination and critical reflection.
- *The Mediums' Book*: a manual of methodological procedures.
- *The Spirits' Book*: the scientific and philosophical foundation of Spiritism.
- *Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism*: theoretical and cosmological insights.
- *The Gospel According to Spiritism and Heaven and Hell*: ethical and moral frameworks grounded in spiritual and social practice.
- The third part of *The Spirits' Book*: a preliminary treatise on Spiritist ethics and moral philosophy.

Kardec fulfilled his role with remarkable success. Yet, does Spiritism require further development? Undoubtedly. Spiritism is a living, evolving discipline. Kardec accomplished an extraordinary feat within a limited timeframe, working with meager resources and without access to the instruments and technologies available today.

Any perceived shortcomings in Kardec's methodology are not flaws, but reflections of the constraints of his era. The real concern lies not in Kardec's pioneering work, but in the posture adopted by many of his successors. Even today, many Spiritists refrain from practicing science, content to reiterate Kardec's teachings without subjecting them to critical inquiry or empirical expansion.

Imagine if physics had remained confined to Isaac Newton's contributions, with generations merely venerating his insights. We might have not reached even the steam engine. Or consider biology, had it stopped at the discoveries of Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace. Without further inquiry, the field of genetics might never have emerged, and the structure of DNA might have remained unknown. Science thrives on continuity —on the dynamic interplay of theories, experimentation, and the exchange of knowledge.

Spiritism has transitioned from being the authoritative voice on spiritual phenomena to becoming an object of academic inquiry. It no longer occupies the central role in investigations into mediumship, reincarnation, and related experiences. Today, disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry examine Spiritism as a social, cultural, and religious phenomenon. Those seeking to understand spiritual realities increasingly turn to universities and research institutions rather than to Spiritist doctrine itself.

Allan Kardec must be reclaimed as a rigorous investigator—a seeker of truth who embarked on a journey to explore spiritual reality as an integral dimension of nature and the cosmos. He recognized the magnitude of Spiritism and employed the tools available in his time to construct a monumental body of work. Yet, his contributions, however foundational, were not conclusive.

Science is a continuum, and its practitioners are aware of their role within an ongoing process of discovery. Spiritism should be approached in the same vein. To comprehend nature from a spiritual perspective demands sustained research, critical dialogue, and interdisciplinary collaboration. Kardec did not deliver the final word; rather, he opened a

path toward understanding spiritual phenomena through the lenses of science, philosophy, religion, cultural representation, and the arts. All in all, Spiritism is a way of understanding a portion of such phenomena and could become a scientific field, yet it is not.

2.4 Philosophy

The Spiritist philosophy, rooted in Allan Kardec's dialogues with spirits, advocates for behavioral transformation through education. Kardec's Spiritist doctrine can be seen as a continuation and expansion of Rivail's educational ideals, now extended into the spiritual domain.

Rivail envisioned the progressive development of society through secular, universal, and accessible education, with a particular focus on the moral formation of children. He believed that cultivating ethical sensibilities in youth was essential for shaping future citizens capable of contributing to a more just and harmonious society. He also criticized punitive systems, viewing them as impediments to moral growth and as sources of vice. For Rivail, education should nurture not only intellectual faculties but also moral and physical virtues.

Kardec built upon this foundation, constructing a doctrine centered on the holistic education of both the spiritual and material aspects of human beings. He proposed Spiritism as a transformative educational tool—an epistemological framework through which spiritual phenomena could be understood and integrated into human development. Thus, Spiritist philosophy emerges as a direct outcome of this pedagogical vision.

Humanism occupies a central place within Spiritism. Kardec explicitly sought to dispel mysticism and obscurantism surrounding the spirit world. He conceived life as a continuum oriented toward potential perfection, rejecting notions of divine predestination. In his view, human beings possess sufficient autonomy to shape their own destinies, and spirits are not supernatural entities but constituent elements of nature. This naturalistic understanding calls for a rational and empirical approach to the spiritual realm, stripping it of superstition and aligning it with the laws of nature.

Kardec's humanism resonates with the philosophical currents of René Descartes, David Hume, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. He aligned himself with a tradition that emphasized liberty, autonomy, and the centrality of human agency in creation. By asserting

that intentions arise from reason rather than hidden determinism, Kardec empowered individuals to become authors and stewards of their own lives.

Kardec's intellectual milieu was shaped by three dominant epistemological paradigms —rationalism, empiricism, and critical philosophy.

- Rationalism posits that knowledge originates in reason. For rationalists, knowledge is valid when it is universal and necessary. Reason discerns among alternatives, arriving at conclusions that are not contingent but logically inevitable. Thinking, in this view, is the true source of knowledge.
- Empiricism asserts that experience is the sole foundation of knowledge. The soul, at birth, is a *tabula rasa* —a blank slate— requiring sensory engagement with the world to acquire understanding. Empiricism privileges individual experience over universal truths.
- Critical Philosophy, particularly Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism, synthesizes these approaches. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, *Critique of Practical Reason*, and *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, Kant argues that while knowledge arises from experience, it must be structured by a priori frameworks to be

intelligible. Transcendental knowledge refers to the conditions that make experience possible—knowledge of objects insofar as they can be known before experience.

Kant wrote:

"Reason must approach nature with the intention of learning from it—not as a passive student who merely records what the teacher dictates, but as a judge who compels witnesses to answer the questions he formulates"¹⁹.

For Kant, there exists a realm of pure reason—knowledge independent of experience—encompassing concepts such as mathematics, God, freedom, and immortality¹⁹.

Kardec sought to synthesize the aforementioned epistemological approaches. He may have begun from a rationalist standpoint, privileging reason as the guiding principle in confronting life's dilemmas. Alternatively, his method could be interpreted as empirical, grounded in the idea that knowledge arises from lived experience. Or perhaps, akin to Kant, Kardec aimed to reconcile the dichotomy between reason and experience, proposing a framework in which both contribute to the acquisition of truth.

At first glance, Spiritism suggests that the spirit undergoes multiple reincarnations. This implies that

knowledge is not solely derived from experiences in the present life, but is carried forward —preexistent within the spirit itself.

If we accept the premise that we are spirits — intelligent entities within Creation²⁰— then the spirit becomes the locus of knowledge, memory, and learning. This view likely represents a point of convergence within the Spiritist community.

Nevertheless, while reincarnation might suggest the existence of prior knowledge, question 115 of *The Spirits' Book* offers a decisive clarification of the Spiritist epistemology: “*God has created all spirits simple and ignorant—that is, without knowledge*”²¹.

This implies that spirits, at the moment of their creation, possess no innate knowledge and must acquire it through experience. Can we then describe spirits as *tabula rasa*? Yes. And can we align this view with the empiricist tradition —particularly with thinkers like John Locke— which asserts that experience is the foundation of knowledge? Yes and no.

Although spirits are created devoid of knowledge, their incarnation introduces a complex interplay of influences. The spirit may be the repository of memory and learning, but it operates within a material body that plays a central role in cognition.

Such a framework may appear contradictory or opaque, yet it reflects the limits of our understanding—not only of the body, but of the spirit itself. Still, this uncertainty does not preclude reflection or hypothesis. On the contrary, it invites inquiry. In this respect, Spiritism serves as a powerful lens through which to illuminate the mysteries of the spiritual realm.

Returning to the theory of knowledge, we recognize that our spiritual nature—originating as simple and ignorant beings—is foundational to the process of experiential learning. Yet, as incarnated spirits, we inhabit a condition in which the body serves not only as our primary interface with the world but also as a conduit for apprehending knowledge. Advances in neuroscience, particularly since Kardec's time, have revealed the intricate complexity of our biological apparatus. This compels us to reconsider any notion that the spirit alone suffices in the pursuit of understanding.

Beyond the brain, we must also consider the role of culture and the socially constructed dimensions of knowledge, shaped through subjective interrelations. We are not isolated entities; rather, we exist within a dynamic world that both informs and influences our being. Such a view aligns us more closely with the dialectical approach of Friedrich Hegel, wherein

knowledge emerges from the interplay of opposites and the synthesis of diverse forces.

The dialectics of knowledge thus encompass a multifaceted convergence of spiritual, corporeal, cognitive, social, and cultural elements. Accordingly, the aim is not to conclude Kardec's epistemological inquiry, but to expand it—foregrounding the significance of matter and opening a path toward a Spiritist interpretation that embraces complexity. Kardec, ever devoted to education, approached his work with pedagogical clarity. As a teacher, he endeavored to present profound ideas in accessible terms—not to oversimplify, but to render the intricate intelligible.

Therefore, the educational dimension stands as one of the most salient philosophical concerns. As a progressive doctrine, its advancement is inseparable from education, which must be conceived as a vehicle for the integral development of the human being. This necessitates a philosophy grounded in knowledge as a means to cultivate society and foster bonds of fraternity, thereby improving living conditions. Within this framework, *"spirits are recognized not by abstract attributes, but by their moral transformation and their conscious efforts to master their primal inclinations²²"*.

The philosophy of the education proposed by Kardec delves into freedom. The individual has been afforded free will, and the use of such freedom translates into the path travelled across successive lives. It is a learning process, where life experiences are transformed by acquiring knowledge and improving assets. Therefore, the more educated, wise, fraternal and loving, the widest is freedom.

Everything presented serves to illustrate that Kardec developed a comprehensive philosophical system, marked by a clear structure that emphasizes knowledge, freedom, autonomy, and fraternity. Although Kardec often affirmed that Spiritism is free from the constraints of rigid doctrinal systems, he acknowledged its openness to insights from all intellectual traditions. This inclusive approach broadens the understanding of the nature of reality.

Therefore, to regard Kardec as a philosopher within the framework of Spiritist philosophy is to consider how Spiritism engages with the fundamental questions of nature. A crucial observation must be made here: to attempt is the appropriate verb. Kardec did not resolve all of life's questions —and it is precisely in this humility that his greatness resides.

The mythical aura surrounding Kardec and Spiritism must be dispelled. Truth is not a possession;

it is a pursuit. No philosophical, scientific, religious, or mystical system has definitively answered all the questions of nature. Kardec's enduring contribution lies in the progressive character he imparted to Spiritism: it is a philosophy of ongoing inquiry, grounded in the universal and natural dimension of Spiritist phenomena, and oriented toward the moral and intellectual transformation of the individual through continuous progress.

Again, Kardec's legacy —Spiritism— is a process instead of a finished product. As a process, it requires responsibility and commitment to ourselves and the world. Kardec's pursuit has not ended, and we can continue his work. Having said that, we are the authors of our own destiny and our freedom is the most precious jewel in creation. It places the germen that dwells within us, which is the constituent element of our spiritual structure.

2.5 Morality

Continuing comprehending Kardec's work, we cannot ignore his understanding of morality and his talks with spirits in this regard. What does morality mean? Which meanings and restatements did Kardec leave? Presently, is the Spiritist morality appropriate?

Or do we need a new interpretation? How do Spiritist currents interpret such morality?

This is the key point that separates diverse approaches within the Spiritist movement, with the largest number of disagreements, because everyone has their own interpretation of morality. As a matter of fact, different points highlight the struggled and disputes over the authority of the Spiritist interpretation. Hence, there is the need to understand what this work has emphasized —Spiritist morality is also work in progress. Kardec was the pioneer and continues being the major character in this context.

As suggested by the title of this *Free-Thinking Collection*, the starting point is a lay, free-thinking, humanist and progressist view of Spiritism. Therefore,

DID YOU KNOW?

For further information about the Spiritist morality, download the book *Spiritism, ethics and morality*, which forms part of the *Free-Thinking Collection*. It is an outline of the influence of morality on Kardec when working on the Spiritist morality.

Jacira Jacinto Silva, Milton Rubens Medran Moreira. *Spiritism, ethics and morality*. CPDoc, 2021; cepa, 2021. *Free-Thinking Collection: Spiritism for the 21st Century*, series 1: n. 7 / Organized by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis, Mauro de Mesquita Spínola and Ricardo de Moraes Nunes.

everything regarding Kardec's legacy should be demythologized and deconsecrated. Based on this legacy, the Spiritist phenomenon is supposed to be within the laws of nature. Spirits are just the souls of the individuals who lived here. Spirits are governed by the law of progress. All spirits will reach perfection as appropriate. There are not privileges in divine creation. Free will is an inevitable condition of spirits. We seek to engage in dialogue with all the ideas that have been developed over time. Therefore, everything intended to mythicize incarnated or disincarnated spirits or "*that has gone up the stairs of evolution straight and smoothly*" is inconsistent with the Spiritist proposal described here.

As far as Spiritism is concerned, it repudiates every extraordinary effect, i.e., those outside the laws of nature. It performs neither miracles nor prodigies; rather, by virtue of a law, it explains certain effects that have until now been reputed as miracles and prodigies, and as such demonstrates their possibility. Thus, it has broadened the realm of science, and in doing so, it has become a science itself. However, because the discovery of this new law has entailed moral consequences, the codification of such consequences makes it, at the same time, a philosophical doctrine²³.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, morality is defined as “an informal public system applicable to all rational individuals, which governs the behavior affecting others, *“an informal public system applicable to all rational individuals, which governs behavior affecting others; it is intended to reduce harm or evil, and encompasses what is commonly known as moral rules, moral ideals, and moral virtues²⁴”*. From that standpoint, morality is informal because goes beyond the authority of any individual or system aimed at solving controversial issues. Morality is a social construction, given that a certain dilemma easily resolved somewhere could be hard to resolve somewhere else. Likewise, morality changes in the course of time.

629. *What definition may be given to morality?*

“Morality is the rule of good conduct; in other words, it is the ability to distinguish between good and evil. It is founded on the observance of God’s law. Humans behave correctly when they do everything for the good of all, for then they obey God’s law²⁵”.

In *The Spirits’ Book*, Allan Kardec addressed the issue of moral conduct and its alignment with divine law, introducing a theological dimension by asserting that doing good equates to compliance with God’s

laws. Throughout his works, Kardec's conception of morality diverges from conventional dictionary definitions; he emphasized morality as the foundation for future happiness.

The Spiritist understanding of spiritual existence—both before and after earthly life—broadens the scope of moral consequences, situating them within a continuum that transcends temporal boundaries. Rather than advocating eternal condemnation or bliss, Spiritism's progressive nature—and its emphasis on individual moral evolution—suggests that we are perpetually engaged in refining our social and emotional relationships.

The pursuit of moral perfection is ongoing, and the recognition of our shortcomings should serve as a catalyst for empathy. This perspective fosters an environment in which relationships are informed by the understanding that our actions are shaped by a complex narrative of multiple incarnations, across diverse contexts and subjective experiences.

In Kardec's dialectics, the basis of morality is described in Part Three of *The Spirits' Book*, not by chance entitled *Moral Laws*. It is a volume composed of 12 chapters, dealing with multiple aspects that form the grounds of Spiritist morality. As for part four—*Hopes and Consolation*—it has to do with the

consequences of morality. It is the work of pragmatic ethics, routine morality and behavioral advice. For much of the Spiritist movement, *The Gospel According to Spiritism* is regarded as its foundational text. Yet Kardec himself explicitly cautioned against such absolutism, emphasizing that it was neither intended nor sufficient as a singular doctrinal anchor. His pedagogical approach is evident in the systematic division of knowledge into distinct categories — foundational tenets, principles, and consequences.

Kardec unequivocally affirmed that Spiritist morality aligns with Christian morality, which he considered the highest ethical standard. At the same time, he envisioned a form of Christianity devoid of religious institutionalism —a Christian no-religion, as it were. While this may appear paradoxical from a 21st-century perspective, in the 19th century, it was not uncommon for philosophical systems or schools of thought to adopt Christian ethical frameworks.

As a great philosopher, scientist or thinker, Kardec also sought references for his works. He specified that Spiritism is a positive science; cited Socrates and Plato as the forerunners of Spiritism, and broke down Jesus's morality from the Spiritist standpoint. All such references are an initial guide to develop Spiritist ideas. At no point did he cite anyone as special,

specifically created with divine privileges. No mystic, supernatural or sacralized aspect lies in any historical character within the Spiritist framework.

The basics of Spiritist morality arranged by Kardec in close coordination with the spirits are listed as *Moral Laws* in *The Spirits' Book*, to wit: progress, freedom, equality, society, justice, love and charity. Spiritist morality should be regarded first and foremost as a whole, that is, based on the conclusions drawn from the foundational tenets of Spiritism, namely: the existence of God, the existence of spirits, the plurality of existences (reincarnation), cause and effect, the communication and influence of spirits, and evolution (progress). In a nutshell, morality ought to be consistent with the theoretical bases of Spiritism. Rather than sticking to the text, it is a requirement to ponder on the complexity of Kardec's thought, on what lies beyond the written text, on the intention of Kardec's cogitation.

The foundational tenets are the rationale of morality. In the absence of them, Spiritist morality makes no sense. Therefore, morality should rely on the foundational tenets of Spiritism, on the primary cause, as it were.

The Law of Progress represents a foundational approximation of Spiritist morality. In its absence,

the notion of inherently privileged spirits would contradict the principle of divine justice. However, as Kardec elucidates, all spirits are created simple and ignorant —endowed with the capacity to evolve through successive life experiences. Spirits, being the souls of individuals who once lived, are subject to a continuous process of learning and moral refinement.

This insight affirms the essential equality of all beings before the divine. Each spirit charts its own path toward perfection, shaped by the choices it makes and the environments it inhabits. The trajectories we follow —past and future— are intimately linked to our freedom of thought and action, unfolding under the auspices of the Law of Progress.

In this same vein, freedom is an indispensable condition for our progress. Given that progress is a subjective process, it is intrinsically connected to social relationships. Freedom is both a question of choice and a shared process. Kardec realized it when querying *"What would be a condition in which humans could enjoy absolute freedom?"* And spirits answered *"That of a hermit in the desert."* Anyhow, it will not be that way forever. Understanding it implies understanding multiple Spiritist postulates, including progress, freedom, survival of the soul and reincarnation.

Kardec grounded Spiritist morality in the principle of individual autonomy. At every stage of existence, the spirit engages in a process of emancipation — interacting with the world, upgrading it. Autonomy is not granted; it is cultivated through this ongoing effort to act freely and responsibly within one’s sphere of influence, without passively awaiting revelation from an anointed figure bearing the formula for salvation.

Emancipation, then, is the very mechanism through which autonomy is forged. As the spirit advances, freedom becomes less abstract and more experiential —each moral conquest, each step forward, allows the spirit to breathe more deeply the air of liberty.

Justice, as the cornerstone of Spiritist morality, moves like a vital gust through the Spiritist universe. The right to live, to access equal opportunities, to work, and to dwell in comfort is inseparable from the duty to support those in need. This imperative arises from the stark reality that many suffer from hunger and indignity —not due to fate, but as a consequence of human indifference and moral failure.

Yet justice cannot exist without love. To be just is to transcend mere judgments of good and evil; it is to recognize that true justice demands an active commitment to elevating human conditions through understanding and empathy. This is not

sentimentalism, nor does it imply leniency in the face of wrongdoing. Rather, it affirms that even offenders deserve a baseline of dignity—even when liberty is rightfully restricted.

Kardec and the communicating spirits were deeply influenced by the ideals of the French Revolution and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*. Core principles such as the right to life and property are explicitly embedded within the Moral Laws outlined in *The Spirits' Book*. Remarkably, Kardec and the spirits anticipated several provisions later formalized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—adopted 91 years after the publication of *The Spirits' Book*.

Beyond affirming life and property, the Spiritist doctrine rejected the death penalty and torture as ethically indefensible responses to crime. Kardec also addressed rights that resonate with modern social protections: access to education, social security, fair wages, rest, and leisure. These themes, explored in Part Three of *The Spirits' Book*, align closely with the principles enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Morality, as articulated by Kardec and the communicating spirits, must be understood as a dynamic and evolving process. While its foundational

tenets —previously outlined— constitute immutable clauses of Spiritist ethics, the principles and normative rules derived from them are subject to ongoing development.

In this light, certain historically situated aspects of Spiritist moral thought warrant thorough reexamination. To faithfully advance Kardec's progressive legacy into the 21st century, it is essential to preserve its foundational tenets while critically reassessing and reformulating moral prescriptions that reflect outdated paradigms.

From the standpoint of autonomy, it is essential to critically examine the influence of spirits on human actions. Common discourse often attributes personal and collective failures to the interference of malevolent spirits, framing earthly life as a battleground between forces of good and evil. Within this narrative, failure is frequently portrayed as the outcome of coordinated efforts by disincarnate entities opposed to planetary progress —spirits who allegedly incite discord, revolution, war, and conflict by influencing individuals.

This matter comes from question 459 in *The Spirits' Book*:

Do spirits have any influence on our thoughts and actions?

*Their influence on you in this regard is greater than you suppose, for very frequently it is they who guide you*²⁶.

Kardec's inquiry strikes at the core of Spiritist moral philosophy. The crux lies in the concluding remark: "*for very frequently it is they who guide you.*" This raises a fundamental tension—how can morality be grounded in freedom if unseen forces are steering our actions? Even if spiritual freedom is conceived as an evolving capacity, the notion of being guided evokes imagery akin to the old metaphor of puppets controlled by an external hand. In the original French, the term *dirigent* encompasses a range of meanings—guiding, directing, orienting—yet it has been rendered simply as *guide* in translation. This choice, while linguistically valid, introduces a conceptual dissonance: *guide* implies a more active influence, potentially undermining the Spiritist emphasis on moral autonomy. Ultimately, this seems to be a case where translation becomes captive to context.

The Gospel According to Spiritism is another point at issue. Kardec cleverly divided into five parts the subject matter contained in the Gospels: the ordinary events in the life of Christ, the miracles, the prophecies, the words that served for establishing the dogmas of the Church, and the moral teachings.

Moreover, Kardec underscored that the moral part is what matters and has remained unassailable. However, there is a problem when using this book as the cornerstone of Spiritist morality. Kardec failed to overcome the barrier of guilt and punishment, much emphasized in the interpretations of the Bible.

At certain junctures, Kardec offered insightful interpretations grounded in his Spiritist investigations. Nonetheless, he veered toward a more dogmatic and religiously inflected Spiritism —particularly in proclaiming it as the Third Revelation, invoking notions of guilt and punishment, and treating Gospel morality as beyond critique. These positions stand at odds with Spiritism’s foundational commitment to continual progress and evolving understanding.

Certainly, when writing the word Spiritism, Kardec referred himself to the Spiritist science, the finding of individual entities without a physical body who preexist and survive corporeal death. In many passages, he described this phenomenology, this subject of study, instead of the Spiritist institution. Nonetheless, terming the Spiritist science as revelation, regardless of meeting the requirements listed in *Genesis: Miracles and Predictions according to Spiritism*, we may not ignore the following statement:

Just as Christ said: "I am not come to destroy the

Law but to fulfill it," so Spiritism says: We have not come to destroy the Christian Law but to carry it out. It leaches nothing contrary to what was taught by Christ. Rather it develops it, explains it in a manner that can be understood by all and completes that which had previously been known only in its allegoric form. Spiritism has come at the predicted time to fulfill what Christ announced and to prepare for the achievement of future things. It is then, the work of Christ Who, as He also announced, presides over the regeneration which is now taking place and which will prepare the reign of the Kingdom of God here on Earth²⁷.

Kardec's inclination to align Spiritism with Christianity reaches its peak in this context. Yet, the foundational tenets of Spiritist morality —freedom, progress, equality, justice, love, and charity— are not exclusive to Christianity or any religious tradition. These are universal values, intrinsic to nature itself and, as Kardec affirmed, indispensable conditions for genuine morality. Despite occasional religious overtones, Kardec consistently emphasized throughout his work that Spiritism is not a religion. This stance is particularly evident in his opening remarks during the *Annual Session in Commemoration of the Dead*, where, reflecting on the use of the term *religion*, he arrived at the following conclusion:

Why then have we declared that Spiritism is not a religion? Because there is only one word to express two different ideas, and that, in the general opinion, the word religion is inseparable from that of worship; that it brings up exclusively an idea of form, and that Spiritism does not have one. If Spiritism were to call itself religion, the public would only see a new edition, a variant, if you will, of the absolute principles in matters of faith; a priestly caste with its entourage of hierarchies, ceremonies, and privileges; they would not separate it from the ideas of mysticism, and from the abuses against which public opinion has often been raised²⁸.

Christian morality was Kardec's choice in his talks with spirits and in his decision to place the Spiritist doctrine within the Christian context. *The Gospel According to Spiritism* is a code of conduct based on the Gospel. It is not the cornerstone of Spiritists morality; it is, at most, a principle, which is different from foundational tenet. *Love your neighbor as yourself* is a principle. Love is the fundamental tenet. Love is irrevocable, the rationale. *Love your neighbor as yourself* is the guiding principle of Christians, based on love.

The moral framework articulated by Kardec and the communicating spirits within Spiritism stands on

principles that are philosophically independent from traditional Christian morality. Any passage in *The Gospel According to Spiritism* that appears to conflict with the foundational values of freedom, equality, progress, love, justice, and charity ought to be critically reassessed or set aside. This is not a dismissal of Christian morality, nor a claim of its irrelevance. On the contrary, Christian morality continues to inform many of our judgments and contradictions, and remains a dominant moral reference within contemporary society.

Kardec was the first one in giving the Gospel a novel meaning.

"We have now reached a phase upon this planet when the teachings of Christ must be completed and the intentional veil cast over some parts of these teachings lifted. A time when science must desist in its exclusive materialism, so taking into consideration the spiritual element; when religion must cease to ignore the organic and immutable law of matter, so that both may become two forces, each leaning on the other and advancing together in mutual concourse. Then religion, no longer discredited by science and no longer being able to oppose the overwhelming logic of the facts, will acquire an unshakable power because it will be in agreement with reason."^{29,30}

If we are to integrate Spiritism in the 21st century, then we need to reformulate *The Gospel According to Spiritism*. Again, Kardec did not succeed in overcoming the moral barrier of guilt and punishment, and this book is filled with related passages^{iv}.

iv. Take, for instance, the following statements:

It is thus that God, in his divine goodness, enables punishment itself to revert to the advantage of the spirit's progress. Pg. 75

Therefore, tribulations are at the same time expiations that punish the past and trials for the future, which they prepare. Let us render thanks to God, who, out of divine goodness, grants humans the possibility of reparation and does not irrevocably condemn them for their first wrong. Pg. 101

When pride reaches extremes, it is an indication that a downfall is close at hand, for God always punishes the arrogant. Pg. 144

All men and women proud enough to deem themselves superior in virtue and merit to their incarnate brothers and sisters are foolish and at fault, and God will punish them on the day of his justice. Pg. 181

Like the suicide, the dueler will be marked with blood when he appears before God, and the Sovereign Judge reserves a harsh and long punishment for both. Pg. 210

If they do not take advantage of it, they will be punished with the loss or perversion of their faculty, with evil spirits taking hold of them in order to obsess and deceive them. This will not lessen the real afflictions with which God smites unworthy servants and hearts hardened by pride and selfishness. Pp. 367-368

It is imperative to move forward with this initiative. Reinterpreting *The Gospel According to Spiritism* is essential to ensure that its moral principles align with the foundational tenets of Spiritist morality. This effort does not seek to alter the text, erase Kardec's contributions—an impossibility—or preserve them uncritically. Rather, reinterpretation entails fostering and conducting rigorous studies on the themes Kardec addressed, examining them through the lens of Spiritism's core values: freedom, equality, progress, love, justice, and charity.

Such an approach allows us to contextualize and revitalize Spiritism for contemporary understanding. It is insufficient to merely affirm that freedom is a foundational tenet or that Kardec envisioned an autonomous moral system if we do not actively engage in reinterpreting *The Gospel According to Spiritism* in light of those very foundational tenets.

3 ALLAN KARDEC – A CLERK OF SPIRITS, A CODER, OR THE FOUNDER OF SPIRITISM?

As emphasized throughout the previous chapter and the broader *Free-Thinking Collection*, both Spiritism and Allan Kardec must be demythologized and deconsecrated. To grasp the human nature of Spiritism is to understand Kardec not as a prophet, but as the architect of a philosophical and scientific endeavor. His trajectory reflects a human being in pursuit of truth, employing the tools available to him to construct a coherent framework of knowledge.

From a religious, dogmatic, or messianic lens, human phenomena are often interpreted as divine interventions —where a deity selects a human

intermediary to deliver sacred messages to a chosen group or to humanity at large. Spiritism, however, diverges sharply from this sacred narrative. Despite efforts within the Spiritist movement to mythologize the so-called Third Revelation, Kardec sought to imbue the term with scientific nuance and humanistic purpose, rather than divine mysticism.

While Kardec did assert that the philosophical substance of Spiritism was derived from the spirits, and positioned himself as an organizer, his role extended far beyond that of a mere spiritual bureaucrat. He was a philosopher and educator who engaged with this reality, extracted knowledge from it, and built a school of thought that few dared to challenge. Indeed, Kardec confronted the skepticism of his intellectual peers, the hostility of religious authorities, and numerous personal and societal obstacles—all in service of what he saw as a revolution in thought, morality, and science.

Spiritism shares certain affinities with other philosophical traditions, yet its revolutionary core lies in its treatment of the spirit. While many philosophies and religions acknowledge the existence of spirits, none have placed the spirit at the center of a scientific and philosophical inquiry as Kardec did. In Spiritism, the spirit is not a mystical abstraction but a

natural phenomenon —an extension of the human being. This is the essence of the Spiritist revolution —the unveiling of a natural reality that had not been systematically, didactically, or scientifically explored.

The Spirits' Book, the milestone of Spiritism, presents a structured dialogue —questions, answers, and commentary— concerning the past, present, and future of humanity, its essence, its role in creation, and its social and moral dimensions. Kardec developed a methodology for investigating spiritual reality. Thus, he positioned himself not as a passive recipient of divine wisdom, but as an active researcher. His work involved discerning the mechanics of mediumship, evaluating the credibility of mediums, identifying potential fraud, and formulating incisive questions to engage with the spirit intelligences. In this light, Kardec emerges not as a prophet delivering a finished revelation, but as a thinker constructing a dynamic epistemology —one that redefines the boundaries of science, philosophy, and spirituality.

It was during those meetings that I began my serious study of Spiritism —not through revelations, but through observation.

One of the first results of my observation was that, the Spirits being but the souls of men who disincarnated, they had neither the sovereign wisdom, nor the

*sovereign science; that their knowledge was limited to the degree of their improvement, and that their opinions were just personal opinions. This truth, recognized from the beginning, preserved me from the great obstacle of believing in the infallibility of the spirits and prevented me from formulating premature theories about the thoughts expressed by one or by some spirits*³⁷.

Importantly, Allan Kardec deliberately distanced Spiritism from any prophetic or mystical character. In numerous statements, he emphasized that its development stemmed not from divine revelation, but from rigorous observation, systematic study, and thoughtful engagement with communicating spirits. Spiritism emerged as a rational synthesis of phenomena reported across the globe.

Kardec did not claim to possess a salvific formula for humanity, nor did he author self-help manuals promising worldly happiness. His role was that of a meticulous observer —examining the dynamics of communication between the living and the discarnate, and assessing their practical implications. By framing spirits as natural beings —simply the souls of individuals continuing their evolutionary journey— he demystified their nature and laid the intellectual foundation of Spiritism.

Throughout his work, Kardec faced critics, skeptics, and detractors. Yet he consistently responded with composure, relying on reasoned argumentation and documented evidence. He never asserted Spiritism as an absolute or dogmatic truth, nor did he threaten eternal damnation for those who rejected it. Such notions were entirely foreign to his discourse, including his exchanges within the *Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies*.

While Kardec centralized the editorial and doctrinal direction of the *Revue Spirite*, maintaining final authority over its content and the trajectory of the Spiritist movement, he never claimed infallibility or special status. On the contrary, his leadership was marked by diligence, humility, and a deep respect for the collaborative nature of the work.

Letters currently being transcribed and translated by the **Allan Kardec Project** at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora reveal the esteem in which he was held. Many individuals, even strangers, sought his guidance on personal matters such as employment or health. Despite this recognition, there is no evidence of favoritism or authoritarian behavior. Instead, the correspondence portrays a man devoted to a task of profound human significance —working tirelessly, yet

remaining personally discreet. In essence, Kardec was a dedicated scholar who consistently prioritized the message over the messenger.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Allan Kardec Project by the Federal University of Juiz de Fora makes available to the public hundreds of manuscripts and original documents authored by Kardec. The official website displays original documents, French transcriptions and Portuguese translations, including letters, drafts, communications and a wide array of historical papers that can be accessed for free.

4 THE ROLE AND CHARACTER OF THE PARISIAN SOCIETY FOR SPIRITIST STUDIES (SPEE)

The Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies (Société Parisienne des Études Spirites, SPEE) was officially established on 1 April 1858, following a decision by Allan Kardec and a group of close collaborators. Prior to its formal founding, they had been convening regularly on Tuesday evenings at Kardec's residence. As interest in Spiritist phenomena grew, these infor-



A Monsieur le Recteur de l'Université de Paris

Monsieur le Recteur

Les membres fondateurs de votre Société de l'Université de Paris ont l'honneur de vous adresser ci-joint le prospectus de votre Société de l'Université de Paris. Les membres de votre Société de l'Université de Paris ont l'honneur de vous adresser ci-joint le prospectus de votre Société de l'Université de Paris.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur le Recteur, l'assurance de mon profond respect.

Allan Kardec

Letter by Allan Kardec asking for authorization to establish the SPEE

mal gatherings soon exceeded the capacity of the space, prompting the need for a more structured and accommodating venue.

In the May 1858 issue of the *Revue Spirite*, Kardec reported on the creation of the SPEE,

The Society—whose founding we are pleased to announce—is composed exclusively of earnest individuals, unencumbered by impediments and animated by a sincere desire for enlightenment. From its inception, it has counted among its members men distinguished by both intellectual merit and social standing. We are confident that it is destined to render indisputable service in the demonstration of truth.

A year before, the codifier had published *The Spirits' Book*, followed in 1861 by *The Mediums' Book*. *The Spirits' Book* emerged from Kardec's systematic efforts to gather and analyze communications transmitted by spirits through mediums, across various sources and locations. The SPEE would serve

DID YOU KNOW?

The second edition of *The Spirits' Book* comprises 1,019 questions, twice the number of questions found in the first edition (over 500 questions). To date, this figure has remained unchanged.

as a kind of laboratory for subsequent developments—focusing on analysis, reflection, and dialogue between mediums and spirits.

More recently, given the SPEE's significance as a prototype for the establishment of similar societies in and out of France, a symbolic and affective parallel has been drawn between the SPEE and Spiritist centers in Brazil. From this perspective, it has been asserted that the SPEE was the first Spiritist center in history. However, such a claim does not align with historical and structural realities. As will be discussed further, there are substantial differences between the organizational framework and objectives of the SPEE and those of Brazilian Spiritist centers—particularly after these centers adopted the religious profile that characterizes them today.

SPEE Regulations

Slightly commenting on the SPPE Regulations in the May 1858 issue of the *Revue Spirite*, Kardec outlined some of its objectives:

The Regulations ensure its homogeneity — without which no lasting vitality is possible. They are grounded in the experience of individuals and phenomena, and in a clear understanding of the conditions required for the observations that form

the basis of its research. Foreign visitors arriving in Paris who are interested in the Spiritist doctrine will thus find a center they can visit to gather information and share their own insights.

The first article of the SPEE Regulations, transcribed in *The Mediums' Book*, reads as follows:

Article 1 - The Society's purpose is to study all the phenomena related to spirit manifestations and their application to the moral, physical, historical and psychological sciences. Issues involving politics, religious controversy or social economics are forbidden. It shall take the name: Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies.

In other words, the predominance of scientific bases, especially given the observation method and insight into mediumship phenomena was set out as an objective of the SPEE under the leadership of Allan Kardec.

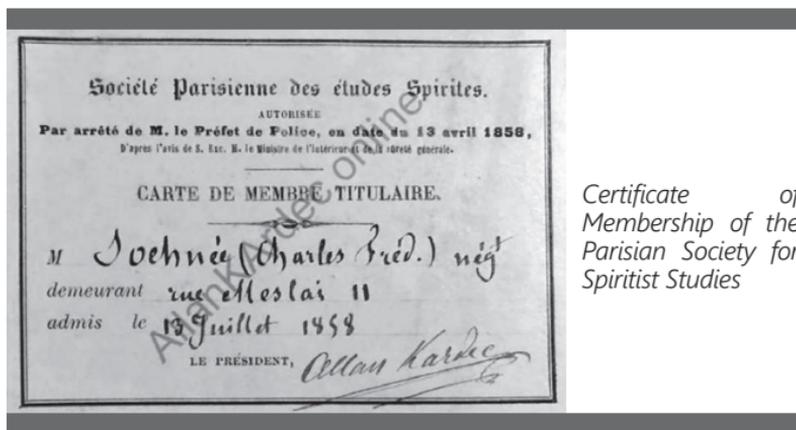


Palais Royal, Paris, where the SPEE initially operated.

Several structural features of the Society suggested a closed organizational model, as membership was restricted exclusively to adherents of Spiritism. Curious outsiders and opponents were explicitly excluded. Admission required sponsorship by two existing members and approval by the board of directors, which rigorously evaluated each applicant's convictions and familiarity with the Spiritist doctrine.

New members initially joined as *free partners*, with no voting rights in the Society affairs. After one year, their eligibility for *senior partner* status was reconsidered through formal discussions.

The SPEE sessions were either private or general, with access limited to members. No public sessions were held. Non-members could attend general



Certificate of Membership of the Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies

sessions only with prior approval from the Chair, and solely as silent observers without speaking privileges.

Mediumistic communications originating from other societies required authorization from the Chair before being considered within the SPEE. Communications received within the SPEE were deemed the exclusive intellectual property of the Society, which retained full rights to their disclosure. Mediums could obtain copies of their messages but were not recognized as their proprietors.

These features typified the SPEE's institutional framework. The Society served as a model for similar organizations in France and abroad, particularly those that evolved from familial study groups into formal research institutions. Many of these adopted and preserved the SPEE's foundational guidelines.

The SPEE and Spiritist centers

Spiritist centers, as they are known today, followed a different path to that of the SPEE and developed on the basis of their fundamental characteristic as open entities, i.e. free participation by their visitors, even without the obligation to become members. Instead of engaging in scientific studies and research based on mediumistic phenomena, Spiritist centers

act, as it were, as service providers to society, under the banner of gratuity, that is, not for valuable consideration.

Spiritist centers have shown from their inception a progressive trend, with activities being incorporated as they proved to be effective: practices such as passes, disobsession sessions, regular studies, welfare, public lectures and many other actions ended up forming the fabric of Spiritist centers and through which they offer visibility to the society.

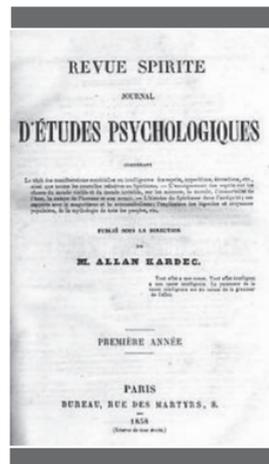
The vast majority of Spiritist centers do not intend to replicate the SPEE, nor to follow its proposed objectives. They are, from the outset, distinct societies, having in common only the fact that they follow the proposal of communication and practice in accordance with the Spiritist philosophy contained in *The Spirits' Book* and subsequent books.

Thus, the SPEE was the first Spiritist institution in the world, established with the specific aim of investigating, studying and developing the Spiritist knowledge, in accordance with *The Mediums' Book*. Another kind of society ran in parallel, known as *Spiritist center* with its own objectives. While the SPEE was a closed, private society, the Spiritist center is an open, public site.

5 THE ROLE OF THE REVUE SPIRITE

In his opening remarks to introduce the *Revue Spirite*, Kardec tackled the need to delve into Spiritist phenomena. Like magnetism, he said, Spiritist phenomena are present in nature; they are subject to study and experimentation, drawing conclusions from it.

Scientists are aware of the importance of having a journal useful to publish, discuss, determine and demonstrate the significance of science. Kardec made it clear.



It would be unnecessary to dispute the utility of a special organization to make the public aware of this new science and prevent it against the excesses of credulity, as well as skepticism. This is the blank which we propose to fill out with the publication of this Review, aiming at providing a communication media to those interested in these questions and to connect, through a common bond, those who understand the Spiritist Doctrine, from its true moral point of view: practice of good and evangelical charity towards everyone³².

For this reason, Kardec released in January 1858 the first volume of the *Revue Spirite*, which became the primary means of communication with the society, not only with Spiritist groups, but also with science, scholars and any kind of individuals interested in the Spiritist phenomena.

Still more significant, the *Revue Spirite* became sort of preview of Kardec's future releases. For instance, excerpts of *The Mediums' Book* were posted in advance on the Review.

As we have seen in the chapter on Kardec's contextualization, to establish a science and gain trustworthiness before scientists, La Review Spirite was perhaps the major communicating vessel. It is not a matter of belittling books, but no science

can be done without a journal for dissemination, communication and peer interaction.

The *Revue Spirite* is a “free tribune, in which discussion will never deviate from the strictest convenience³²”. Such tribune called upon construction, discussion about Spiritist phenomena. It was about the way of developing and cementing the Spiritist views, for the proposal to naturalize Spiritist phenomena went faster and based upon stronger theoretical and moral grounds. That was the impact sought by Kardec.

As a publication of ready access, the *Revue Spirite* submitted several hypotheses for reflection and insight into diverse issues further broken down on in the books.

Everyone will realize that a whole science is being created, a whole philosophy, a new mindset³³.

In the *Revue Spirite*, Allan Kardec first introduced the concept of Spiritism’s developmental stages. In the conclusion of the 1858 edition, he identified two initial phases —curiosity and philosophy. By 1863, through various subsequent editions, Kardec somewhat revisited and expanded upon this

framework, which means that as he did not provide a comprehensive elaboration of each stage.

Moreover, Kardec brought forward the chapter about the Spiritist revelation in September 1867, few months prior to the release of *Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism*. In 1868, he continued writing on the book released in January, ahead of the second edition.

Allan Kardec published the *Revue Spirite* on a monthly basis, from January 1858 until his death in March 1869. The journal proved pivotal in shaping Spiritism as an emerging field of inquiry, both in terms of content and epistemological development. Its rapid dissemination reached even the most remote corners of the globe, positioning it alongside other spiritualist publications —many of them in English— that explored related themes.

Following Kardec's death, the *Revue Spirite* and the broader Spiritist movement underwent significant transformations, marked by internal disagreements. The unifying and centralizing influence exerted by Kardec gradually dissipated amid the divergent interests of his successors. Pierre-Gaëtan Leymarie eventually assumed leadership, navigating a complex power dynamic to claim stewardship of Kardec's

legacy. Under his direction, the journal began to feature articles of a mystical nature, some of which diverged from —or even contradicted— the foundational principles of Spiritism.

Amélie Boudet, Kardec's widow and intellectual partner, sought to preserve his legacy through strategic decentralization. However, she also became a target of Leymarie's maneuvering.

After some changes in the course of Spiritism (see Chapter VII), the *Revue Spirite* went through the same stages of change and decline that were equally important for both the society and the Spiritist movement. The *Revue Spirite* was once a respected and widely discussed journal, particularly among those eager to grasp the Spiritist phenomenon during Kardec's lifetime. After Kardec's death, however, the publication eventually became indistinguishable from other mystical periodicals driven by commercial interests.

From 1858 to 1869, the *Revue Spirite* played a pivotal role in illuminating the evolving construction of Spiritism. No school of thought —whether philosophical or scientific— can be decreed into existence; rather, it emerges gradually through sustained engagement with its subject matter and its

implications for humanity. In this regard, the *Revue Spirite* was an essential instrument in shaping and disseminating Spiritist thought.



6 ELEMENTARY WORKS

Seminal Spiritist literature from an educational perspective

As discussed elsewhere in this book, education stood at the heart of Allan Kardec's concerns. His intellectual formation, professional background as an educator, and pioneering exploration of the spiritual realm led him to regard education as the most powerful instrument for human development. For Kardec, individual progress unfolds through the lessons acquired across successive reincarnations—a process that must be understood through an educational lens on the meaning and purpose of life.

According to the teachings of the spirits, all beings are created simple and ignorant, with the vast

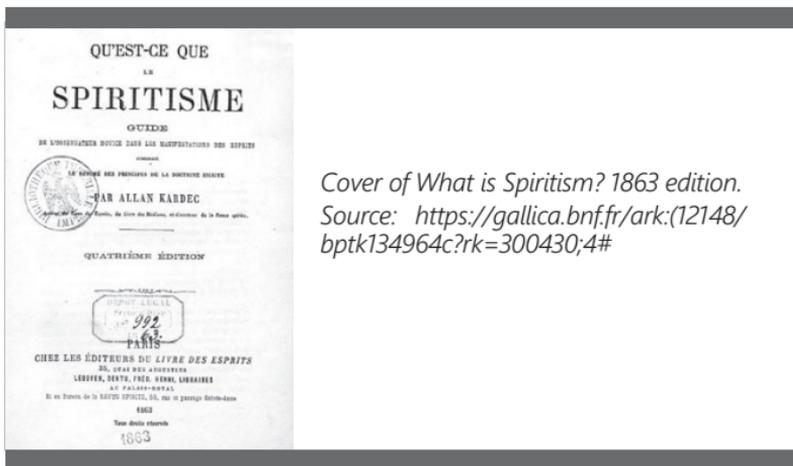
universe before them as a field of experience and growth. Kardec's writings reflect a deep commitment to educating humanity for the transformative revolution introduced by Spiritism. At no point did he engage in proselytism; on the contrary, he actively opposed it. His call was for learning and ethical application—for using acquired knowledge in service of the common good.

Education for the spiritual realm, in Kardec's view, does not entail a zealous push for conversion or sectarian allegiance. Rather, it involves illuminating truths that were once confined to the domain of faith, revealing them through the lens of Spiritist science and rational inquiry.

There is ongoing debate within the Spiritist movement about which of Kardec's books should be read first. Some advocate starting with *The Spirits' Book*, while others recommend *What is Spiritism*. A third perspective suggests *The Mediums' Book*, particularly for those drawn to the study of mediumship.

What is Spiritism?

What Is Spiritism? serves as an introductory exposition of Allan Kardec's life and the foundational tenets of Spiritism. Kardec himself recommended it



Cover of *What is Spiritism?* 1863 edition.
Source: [https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:\(12148/bptk134964c?rk=300430;4#](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bptk134964c?rk=300430;4#)

as a first reading for those seeking to clarify doubts or misconceptions, as it presents the essential ideas in a concise and accessible format. Besides its pedagogical value, the work offers synthesis of the key concepts found in *The Spirits' Book* and *The Mediums' Book*.

In this book, the reader will find a rather pragmatic, upfront Kardec, prepared to continue his way, disregarding frivolous or curious individuals who look for easy, simple and fast recipes to understand Spiritism.

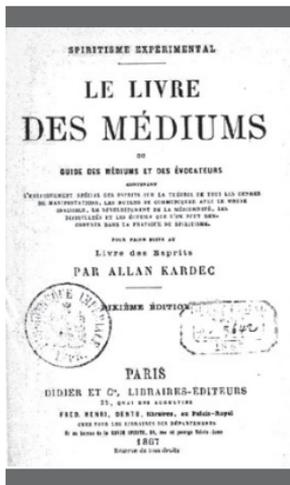
The Spirits' Book

The Spirits' Book is the next essential reading. It presents, in a comprehensive and accessible format,

Unsurprisingly, this book marks the beginning of Kardec's Spiritist codification, born from a spirit of inquiry and the universal human desire to understand life and existence. From this premise, Kardec crafted a work that is not only philosophically profound but pedagogically astute. Through it, Spiritism emerges as a school of thought with enduring relevance—a meaningful contribution to humanity's quest for understanding.

The Mediums' Book

The Mediums' Book stands as the third and most pivotal work in Allan Kardec's Spiritist codification. Conceived as a complement to *The Spirits' Book*, it is essential reading for students and practitioners of mediumship from the Spiritist perspective. This book offers a systematic theoretical framework for the phenomena Kardec observed, enriched by the teachings of communicating spirits. It presents key concepts, a detailed classification of mediums based on the nature of their manifestations, and a thoughtful exploration of the moral responsibilities inherent in mediumistic practice. It also warns against the dangers of frivolous or misguided mediumship. In essence, *The Mediums' Book* serves as a comprehensive manual—both for practicing



Cover of *The Mediums' Book*, 1867 edition

Source: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k324491w?rk=536483;2>

mediums and for those studying Spiritist phenomena. Together with *The Spirits' Book*, it forms the foundation for a deep and coherent understanding of Spiritism.

Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism

Finally, *Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism* is of the essence to understand Spiritism. It seems that, in this book, Kardec purported to complete the central concepts of Spiritism, concurrently with posing new hypotheses on the creation of planet Earth, Jesus' miracles and predictions. To that end, Kardec revisited the issue of the Spiritist revelation, the

divine, and good and evil. In the second part of the book, Kardec presented the Spiritist view of miracles. *"If there are some facts which we do not understand, it is because we have not the necessary knowledge to comprehend them³⁸"*, he reasoned. Kardec demonstrated that the events of nature, likely to be considered as wonderful and supernatural, actually find a rational explanation. Next, Kardec elaborated on the miracles related in the *Gospel*. In the third part, Kardec elucidated on the predictions from the Spiritist view. According to him, progress is the key to seeing further and being aware of events.

Kardec finished the book with a mixture of fierce pride and reality. On the one hand, he claimed that the progress of his time sufficed for humankind to move faster toward a world of happiness. On the other hand, he said that moral progress was the key to secure such happiness. In any case, Kardec made a dexterous synthesis of irreversible progress and the role of Spiritism.

Spiritism does not create social renewal. Mankind's maturity will make this renovation turn into a necessity. Due to its moralizing power, to its progressive tendencies, to the extent of its views, to the issues it covers, Spiritism is, no doubt, more fit than any other doctrine to support the movement of regeneration³⁵.

№ 8506526

LA GENÈSE

LES MIRACLES ET LES PRÉDICTIONS

SELON LE SPIRITISME

PAR

ALLAN KARDEC

Auteur de Livre des Esprits

Le double agit avec la clarté de l'inspiration, celui-ci et celui-là des Esprits.

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le bien-être de la vie de la nature.

Elle pourra en profiter et en

faire un usage profitable de son

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Cover of Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism, 1868 edition

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Genesis: Miracles and Predictions According to Spiritism is an attempt at summarizing and signaling the future of humankind and the role of Spiritism in that future.

The edition published by the André Luiz Foundation (FEAL), first released in 2018, is highly recommended for its fidelity to Kardec's original text —presented without alterations. This recommendation is grounded in Simone Privato's research, which demonstrated that Kardec himself was the custodian of the work at the National Library of France up to the fourth edition. In contrast, the fifth and subsequent editions are subject to considerable controversy, with concerns raised about

possible editorial tampering. At the time this book was written, only the Portuguese-language version of the FEAL edition was available.

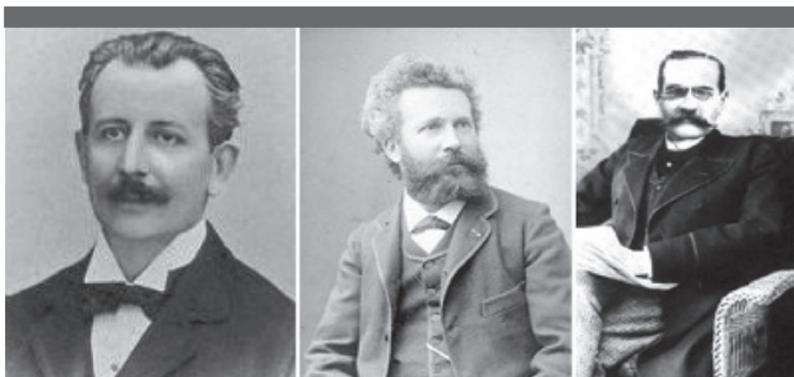
While Kardec's body of work is extensive, the titles mentioned above offer a solid foundation for the study of Spiritism. That said, identifying the most essential texts is inherently challenging, as relevance often depends on the reader's specific area of interest. For those drawn to moral philosophy, in addition to *The Spirits' Book*, *The Gospel According to Spiritism*, and *Heaven and Hell* are particularly valuable. Meanwhile, readers focused on historical inquiry will find the *Revue Spirite* indispensable.

7 KARDEC'S SUCCESSORS

Allan Kardec's heart had shown signs of frailty for several years. On the morning of 31 March 1869, it ceased beating definitively. His body collapsed, and his immortal spirit departed after nearly 65 years of material existence.

Kardec left behind an extraordinary legacy, especially in the moral and intellectual domains. His wife —“*my dear Amélie*,” as he affectionately called her in his letters— assumed responsibility for preserving this heritage, alongside several collaborators from his working circle. They safeguarded his contributions until the legal and administrative foundations of the movement were formally established.

Meanwhile, a new generation gradually stepped forward to carry the torch, particularly in the philosophical and scientific dimensions of Spiritism. Among them, three figures stood out —Gabriel Delanne, Camille Flammarion, and the young Léon Denis.



Gabriel Delanne, Camille Flammarion and Léon Denis

As the founder of Spiritism, Allan Kardec recorded his vision and concerns about the future of the work, setting guidelines for such purpose. When he passed away, his wife and heiress, Amélie Gabrielle Boudet, aged 74, was in good health.

The Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies continued playing its role. Afterwards, the General and Central Spiritist Fund was established with the aim of

disseminating the doctrine, publishing the books by Kardec and other authors, releasing the *Revue Spirite*, and keeping the Spiritist Library.

The first three managers of the Fund were Armand Desliens, also the secretary general of the *Revue Spirite*; Jean Marie Tailleur and Edouard Mathieu Bittard. Amélie Gabrielle Boudet, along with Gustave Achille Guilbert, took responsibility for the Higher Council.

From its inception, the Fund faced serious challenges, particularly the claims of failure to fulfill the precepts set out by Allan Kardec in the document that established Spiritism in 1868, contained in his *Posthumous Works*.

CURIOSITY

Allan Kardec recognized the necessity of establishing a governing body to assume leadership following his death. To this end, he proposed that management should not be concentrated in a single individual, but rather entrusted to a standing committee with clearly defined structure and responsibilities. This standing committee would consist of twelve senior partners, each required to meet essential qualifications, alongside an equal number of advisors³⁵.

In 1871, Desliens resigned, and Pierre-Gaétan Leymarie—a medium and longstanding member of the SPEE—assumed leadership. Under Leymarie’s direction, the Fund underwent significant transformations, marked by the introduction of heterodox elements. Among these were the doctrines of Jean-Baptiste Roustaing, as presented in *The Four Gospels*, and the esoteric tenets of *Theosophy*, propagated by Helena Blavatsky.

These doctrinal deviations were accompanied by financial irregularities, ultimately leading to the Fund’s collapse under the weight of debt and doctrinal distortion. With its dissolution, Roustaing’s influence waned once more. Notably, his work—previously marginalized for fourteen years—had been revived through Leymarie’s permissive editorial stance and his instrumental use of the *Revue Spirite* to promote it.

Roustaing’s influence resurfaced in Brazil during the 1870s, concomitantly with the rapid expansion of Spiritist adherents across the country. A small contingent of his supporters sought to elevate Roustaing to a position of doctrinal parity with Kardec, effectively mirroring earlier efforts in France. Their headquarters included the Fraternity Spiritist Society and the Sayão Group, both seated in Rio de Janeiro.

This movement gained momentum when Roustaing's advocates integrated into the Brazilian Spiritist Federation (FEB) under the presidency of Bezerra de Menezes. Both the proponents and Roustaing's theological framework were received with openness, finding fertile ground within the institution for the dissemination of his ideology.

8 A CRITIQUE OF KARDEC'S PRESUMED REINCARNATIONS



Alas, truth shall not be readily known or believed by all, but only with time. In this life, you shall witness but the dawn of your work's success. To complete what you have begun, you must return,

reincarnated in another body. Only then shall you behold, in its fullness, the seed you have sown upon the earth.

The previous statement was written in a séance at Mr. Baudin's residence, on 17 January 1857, in Paris, almost three months before the release of *The Spirits' Book*. The author was Zephyr. In Kardec's words, "*It was not a superior spirit, but a good and very beneficial one.*" Kardec interpreted such statement as an indication of his future reincarnation.

Three years and a few months after the publication of *The Spirits' Book* on 10 June 1860, a spirit with whom Kardec discussed the future scope of his work offered a striking admonition: "*You shall be absent for some years, and when you return, you shall be in such conditions as will allow you to work from an early age.*" Kardec harbored no doubt regarding his eventual return in a new physical body. He even anticipated reincarnating near the end of the 19th century or at the beginning of the 20th century.

Kardec's passing gave rise to enduring speculation about the circumstances of his return—when it would occur, and in what form. The prospect of his reincarnation in a new physical body has been debated for decades. Moreover, more than a dozen individuals have claimed to be his reincarnation —

some self-proclaimed, others designated by third parties.

The oldest recorded news of an alleged reincarnation of Allan Kardec was given by Léon Denis, in his book *The Celtic Genius and the Invisible World*. Reference was made to a 30-year-old Frenchman born in Le Havre in 1897, mostly in line with Kardec's estimation. Denis distrusted the news and the case was closed.

Most of news and speculations around the reincarnation of Allan Kardec occur in Brazil. Oswaldo Polidoro —born in São Paulo, the same year as Chico Xavier and dead in 2000, two years before him— claimed to be, not only Kardec, but also Moses and others. He was the founder of the Divinism sect.

In Niterói, state of Rio de Janeiro, Professor Erasto de Carvalho Prestes was positive of being familiar with the reincarnation of Allan Kardec. He was his father! De Carvalho Prestes wrote and published himself a small book on this matter, entitled *I met with the reincarnated Allan Kardec*.

CURIOSITY

Over a dozen of individuals have been designated as the reincarnation of Allan Kardec. None of these cases has been confirmed.

In Birigui, state of São Paulo, a farmer named João Lopes Hidalgo was regarded by some as the reincarnation of Kardec. Though he never attended formal schooling, he claimed to have learned to read and write under the guidance of Christ himself. In 1933, Lopes Hidalgo authored a voluminous work titled *Natural Prophecy Through the Humane*. Six years later, in 1939, he founded the Pure Christianity Brotherhood (*Irmandade do Puro Cristianismo*).

Born in 1910 in Pedro Leopoldo, Minas Gerais, Francisco Cândido Xavier —renowned medium and prolific author—emerged as the foremost representative of Spiritism in Brazil and a significant figure on the global literary stage. A substantial group of adherents advocate for the idea that he was the reincarnation of Allan Kardec, often relying on similar lines of argument. Somewhat ironically, they refer to themselves as *Chiquistas*. Prominent members of this group include Dr. Marlene Rossi Severino Nobre, Weimar Muniz de Oliveira, Adelino da Silveira, Arthur Massena, and Dr. Jarbas Leone Varanda, among others³⁶.

Arthur Massena, a journalist, chaired the *Society of Medicine and Spiritism* of Rio de Janeiro for 30 years. Under the pseudonym of Milton de Andrade, he wrote an article released in the newspaper

Desobsessão, of Porto Alegre, in October 1972. In his article, he took for granted that Chico Xavier was the reincarnation of Allan Kardec. In May 1978, he stressed his view of the Chico-Kardec link. For that purpose, he wrote two books —*Allan Kardec is reincarnated in Brazil as Chico Xavier and Chico Xavier, or the Great Evangelist*.

In 1990, Adelino da Silveira voiced his favorable opinion in the book, *Kardec continues*, published in São Paulo. The cover portrays a photographic merger of both *Kardec and Chico Xavier*. It is a simple work, without scientific rigor.

In its April/May 1998 edition, the *Spiritist Newspaper of Minas Gerais* published a message entitled *The Comeback of Allan Kardec*, received through automatic writing by Dr. Antônio Baduy Filho. The communication, attributed to the spirit Hilário Silva, was recorded on October 31, 1997, at the Co-fraternity of Spiritist Youth and Adults of Triângulo Mineiro, in Ituiutaba, Minas Gerais. This message sparked a wave of interpretations and declarations supporting the thesis that Allan Kardec had reincarnated as Chico Xavier.

Dr. Marlene Nobre's perspective was featured in a comprehensive interview published in the *Folha Espírita*, 291st edition of June 1998. Her remarks were

prompted by the message received by Dr. Baduy Filho. A physician by training, Dr. Nobre served for many years as editor-in-chief of *Folha Espírita* and as president of the Spiritist Medical Association of Brazil. She affirmed that, since her student days in medicine and her regular participation in Chico Xavier's circle of friends in Uberaba, she had been convinced that the medium was indeed the reincarnation of Allan Kardec. Although she held a medical degree, Dr. Nobre did not concern herself with producing scientific evidence to substantiate this belief.

The question of Kardec's reincarnation has evidently taken on considerable proportions and remains unresolved to this day. Critics of the claim—whether in Brazil or abroad, including lay Spiritists and independent thinkers—generally maintain that only irrefutable evidence could settle the matter definitively. To date, no such evidence has been presented.

9 CONCLUSION

In his first letter, dated 13 August 1831, addressed to his soon-to-be wife, the young Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail wrote: *"The lady will surely not be taken by surprise at finding in this letter the style frequently used in this occasion. I must confess that I am not accustomed to it, the reality of which lies solely in a generally fleeting feeling."*

Rivail distanced himself from the ephemeral nature of things throughout his material life, deliberately avoiding their transience in favor of a work rooted in enduring value. Yet, to his own astonishment, he discovered this lasting vocation only after the age of 50 —through his encounter with intelligent minds offering equally insightful responses

amid the phenomenon of the revolving tables.

Eureka! The figure of Rivail gave way to Allan Kardec —a previously unknown individual who ignited a profound revolution in the realm of spirituality. His pioneering work began with the groundbreaking *The Spirits' Book*, which explored the nature of spirits and souls, the invisible world and its dynamic relationship with Earth and its inhabitants. It illuminated the role of mediumship in human evolution, revived the doctrine of reincarnation on broad and rational foundations, examined the laws governing nature, emphasized the progressive development of intelligent beings, and redefined the concept of God as the Supreme Intelligence, the origin and essence of all existence.

During the twelve years between the publication of the foundational book and the passing of the Spiritism's founder, Kardec demonstrated a resolute commitment to laying the essential pillars of the building known as Spiritism. He lucidly affirmed its progressive nature, encapsulated in the guiding maxim: *"Wherever science advances, the doctrine will be modified, for Spiritism walks hand in hand with progress."*

Following Kardec's passing, Spiritist scholars and successors took up the task of advancing the body of Spiritist knowledge. Thus, the Spiritist building remains in continuous improvement.

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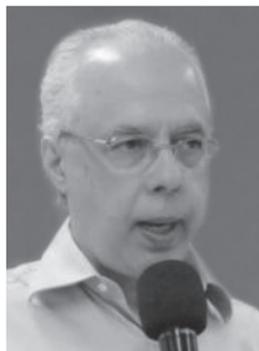
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Garcia is the author, co-author, and editor of approximately 40 books, including:

- *You and the Spirits*
- *Kardec and Reason*
- *Spirits Speak. Can You Hear?*
- *Doca and the Boy*
- *Final Point – The Reunion of Spiritism and Allan Kardec*

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