

Spiritism and Spiritualism

We will cover Spiritism today – Next month Spiritualism

Spiritism is a religion, self-described as a spiritualistic philosophy, that started in the 19th century by the French educator Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, who, under the pen name Allan Kardec. Spiritist philosophy postulates that humans, along with all other living beings, are essentially immortal spirits that temporarily inhabit physical bodies for several necessary incarnations to attain moral and intellectual improvement. This is NOT **Spiritualism**. That is a religious movement based on the belief that the **spirits** of the dead exist and have both the ability and the inclination to communicate with the living. He saw spiritism not as a religion but as a philosophy rooted in observation and having moral implications. Kardec embraced Christian morality, but he did not accept key Christian dogmas such as the Trinity and the reality of heaven and hell. Spiritists believe that one cause of illness is affliction from earthbound spirits, which attach themselves to people and cause them mental distress and physical illness. Spiritism A general term for the belief that the **spirits or souls** of the dead communicate with the living through a medium or psychically sensitive individual.

Emanuel Swedenborg was a Lutheran Swedish scientist, philosopher, seer, and theologian. In 1722 He claimed to have experienced visions of the spiritual world and talked with angels, devils, and spirits by visiting heaven and hell. He claimed he was directed by the Lord Jesus Christ to reveal the doctrines of his second coming. Swedenborg, however, warned against seeking contact with spirits. Nevertheless, Swedenborg is often cited by Spiritists as a major precursor for their beliefs.

Sisters Leah, Margaretta and Catherine Fox played an important role in the development of Modern Spiritualism. In 1848, the family began to hear unexplained rapping sounds. Kate and Maggie conducted channeling sessions and claimed to have contacted a man that lived in the building in the past. A skeleton was purported found to proof their claims. This story was found to be false at once point by the one sister's admitting they made it up but then recanted. The girls were just part of a larger movement with communication with the dead. These ideas were what helped create Spiritism.

During this time Planchette and later Ouija boards were created to speak to the dead.

German doctor Franz Mesmer in the 18th century created animal magnetism or mesmerism. A practice that believed an invisible natural force possessed by all living things, including humans, animals, and vegetables. He believed that the force could have physical effects, including healing.

Today, some scholars believe mesmerism to share a concept of life force or energy with such Asian practices as *reiki* and *qigong* (*ee-gon*). However, the practical and theoretical positions of such practices are on whole substantially different from those of mesmerism. Though discredited as a credible medical practice by many, mesmerism created a venue for spiritual healing. Some animal magnetists advertised their practices by stressing the "spiritual rather than physical benefits to be gained from animal magnetism" and were able to gather a good clientele from among the spiritually inspired population. Allan Kardec suggested that Jesus was the greatest of all magnetizers, and that the source of his miracles was animal magnetism. The evolution of Mesmer's ideas and practices led Scottish surgeon James Braid to develop hypnotism in 1841

The Gospel According to Spiritism

Allan Kardec, author of the five books known as the Spiritist Codification, and is the founder of Spiritism.

He compiled over one thousand questions and compiled the mediums' responses that were consistent and adapted them into a philosophy that he called Spiritism. He wrote several books that become known as the Spiritist Codification. He concluded in several books but more in his first that Spiritism is based on the highest and truer Christian morality: that it descends directly from the key teaching of Jesus. Spiritist philosophical inquiry is concerned with the study of moral aspects in the context of an eternal life in spiritual evolution through reincarnation, a process that believers hold as revealed by Spirits.

Basic tenets

The five chief points of the Spiritism are:

1. There is a God, defined as "The Supreme Intelligence and Primary Cause of everything";
2. There are Spirits, all of whom are created simple and ignorant, but owning the power to gradually perfect themselves;
3. The natural method of this perfection process is reincarnation, through which the Spirit faces countless different situations, problems and obstacles, and needs to learn how to deal with them;
4. As part of Nature, Spirits can naturally communicate with living people, as well as interfere in their lives;
5. Many planets in the universe are inhabited.

The central tenet of Spiritism is the belief in *spiritual life*. From this perspective, the spirit is eternal, and evolves through a series of incarnations in the material world.

Doctrinal Principles

The key aspects of the *Gospel According to Spiritism* are:

- The revelation of God is continuous because mankind is slowly evolving to a higher level, making it necessary to perfect the doctrine. The first revelation was through Moses, the second through Christ (modern Spiritists argue that it was previously tried in Greece with Socrates but failed), and the third one was from God himself through his messengers, the several spirits that worked on the Codification. (Spiritism).
- **Spirits are immortal and live several lives (reincarnations) to perfect their moral and their intelligence until they are able to be in the presence of God.**
- Every revelation elaborates on the previous, instead of revoking it.
- **Morality is mostly based on love (spiritual love, that is, not carnal love) for everyone and anyone.**
- **Love must be put to practice.**
- Charity (the practice of love) must not seek retribution.
- Religion must be free.
- Marriage is not indissoluble, if there is no agreement, nor fidelity to the former love anymore, this proves that the couple is no longer bounded, so the divorce would be the final and natural act of separation for those who choose it.
- Outside charity there is no salvation. This is the main motto of Spiritism.
- **Everyone will eventually be saved, though it may take an unimaginably long time for some (see universal reconciliation).**
- **"God is the Supreme Intelligence-First Cause of all things.**
- "God is eternal, immutable, immaterial, unique, all powerful, sovereignly just and good.
- "A spirit is not an abstract, undefined being, only to be conceived of by our thought; it is a real, circumscribed being, which, in certain cases, is appreciable by the senses of sight, hearing, and touch.
- "All Spirits are destined to attain perfection by passing through the different degrees of the spirit-hierarchy. This amelioration is affected by incarnation, which is imposed on some of them as an expiation, and on others as a mission. Material life is a trial which they have to undergo many times until they have attained to absolute perfection.
- "A spirit's successive corporeal existences are always progressive, and never retrograde; but the rapidity of our progress depends on the efforts we make to arrive at the perfection.
- **"The soul possessed its own individuality before its incarnation; it preserves that individuality after its separation from the body.**
- "On its re-entrance into the spirit world, the soul again finds there all those whom it has known upon the earth, and all its former existences eventually come back to its memory, with the remembrance of all the good and of all the evil which it has done in them.
- "Spirits exert an incessant action upon the moral world, and even upon the physical world; they act both upon matter and upon thought, and constitute one of the powers of nature, the efficient cause of many classes of phenomena hitherto unexplained or misinterpreted.
- **"Spirits are incessantly in relation with men. The good spirits try to lead us into the right road, sustain us under the trials of life, and aid us to bear them with courage and resignation; the bad ones tempt us to evil: it is a pleasure for them to see us fall, and to make us like themselves.**

- "The moral teaching of the higher spirits may be summed up, like that of Christ, in the gospel maxim, 'Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you;' that is to say, do good to all, and wrong no one. This principle of action furnishes mankind with a rule of conduct of universal application, from the smallest matters to the greatest.

Current Status:

Spiritism is currently represented in 35 countries by the International Spiritist Council. Spiritism has adherents in many countries, including Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Jamaica, Japan, Portugal, Spain, United States, and particularly in Latin American countries which has the largest proportion and greatest number of followers. In Brazil there are about 20 million followers. The Philippines saw a creation of this type of organization in 1905. *Its motto: "Towards God through wisdom and love." Its doctrine: "Without charity (good deed), there is no possible salvation."* It uses the Holy Bible as the basis of its teachings, supplemented by messages from divine spirits.

Kardec's works do not establish any rituals or formal practices. Instead, the doctrine suggests that followers adhere to some principles common to all religions. The religious experience within spiritism is, therefore, largely informal. There are regularly held meetings by practitioners of Spiritism. Spiritist associations have various degrees of formality, with some groups having local, regional, national or international scope.

Spiritism is not considered a **religion** by some of its followers because it does not endorse formal adoration, require regular frequency or formal membership. However, the mainstream scientific community does not accept Spiritism as **scientific**, and its belief system fits within the definition of religion.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "*Spiritism* often implies *divination(prophecy) or magical practices*; the Church for her part warns the faithful against it".

Chico Xavier (April 2, 1910 – June 30, 2002) was a popular Spiritist **medium** and **philanthropist** in **Brazil's** Spiritist movement who wrote more than 490 books and over 10,000 letters to family members of deceased people, ostensibly using psychography.

Find more about this at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritism>