

Spiritism

Definition

- “Spiritism is a science which deals with the nature, origin and destiny of Spirits, as well as their relationship with the corporeal world.”
- It is the set of principles, as revealed by the Superior Spirits, contained in Allan Kardec’s works, which constitute the Spiritist Fundamentals: The Spirits’ Book, The Mediums’ Book, The Gospel Explained by Spiritism, Heaven and Hell, and The Genesis.

What it reveals

- It reveals more profound concepts with respect to God, the Universe, the Human Being, the Spirits and the Laws which govern life itself.
- Furthermore, it reveals who we are; where we have come from; where we are going to; what is the objective of our existence; and what are the present and past causes of pain and suffering.

What it encompasses

- Spiritism contributes to all areas of knowledge, human activities and behavior, offering new perspectives for humankind.
- Spiritism is studied, analyzed, and practiced in all the fundamental aspects of life, such as scientific, philosophical, religious, ethical, moral, educational, and social.

Its main principles are:

- God is the Supreme Intelligence, first cause of all things. God is eternal, immutable, immaterial, unique, omnipotent, supremely just and good.
- The Universe is God’s creation. It encompasses all rational and non-rational beings, both animate and inanimate, material and immaterial.

- In addition to the corporeal world inhabited by incarnate Spirits, which are human beings, there exists the spiritual world, inhabited by discarnate Spirits.
- There are other inhabited worlds in the Universe, with beings at different degrees of evolution: some less, some equal and others more evolved than men on Earth (us).
- All the Laws of Nature are Divine Laws because God is their author. They cover both the physical and moral laws.
- A Human Being is a Spirit incarnated in a material body.
- What connects the physical body to the Spirit is a semi-material body named perispirit.
- Spirits are the intelligent beings of creation. They constitute the world of the Spirits, which pre-exists and outlives everything.
- Spirits are created simple and ignorant. They evolve intellectually and morally, passing from a lower order to a higher one, until they attain perfection, when they will enjoy unalterable bliss.
- Spirits preserve their individuality before, during, and after each incarnation.
- Spirits reincarnate as many times as is necessary for their spiritual advancement.
- Spirits are always progressing. In their multiple physical existences, they may sometimes become stationary but they never regress. The speed of their intellectual and moral progress depends on the efforts they make to attain perfection.
- Spirits belong to different orders according to the degree of perfection they have attained: Pure Spirits, who have attained maximum perfection; Good Spirits, whose predominant desire is towards goodness; and Imperfect Spirits, characterized by their ignorance, their tendency towards evil, and by their inferior passions.
- The Spirits' relations with Human Beings are constant and have always existed. The Good Spirits attract us towards goodness, sustain us in life's trials, and help us bear them with courage and resignation. The Imperfect Spirits induce us towards error.
- Jesus is the Guide and Model for all Humankind. The Doctrine He taught and exemplified is the purest expression of God's Law.
- The morality of Christ, as contained in the Gospels, is the guide for the secure progress of all Human Beings. Its practice is the solution for all human problems and the objective to be attained by Humankind.
- Human Beings are given free-will to act, but they must answer for the consequences of their actions. Future life reserves for Human Beings penalties and pleasures according to the respect they do or do not show for God's laws.
- Prayer is an act of adoration for God. It is found in the natural law and is the result of an innate sentiment in every Human Being, just as the idea of the existence of the Creator is innate.
- Prayer makes Human Beings better. Whoever prays with confidence grows stronger against evil temptations, and God sends the Good Spirits to assist them. This assistance will never be denied when requested with sincerity.

THE SPIRITIST PRACTICE

- All Spiritist practice is gratuitous, following the orientation of the moral principle found in the Gospel: "Give for free what you receive for free."
- Spiritism is practiced with simplicity, without any external forms of worship, within the principle that God should be worshipped in spirit and in truth.
- Spiritism has no clergy, nor does it adopt or use at any of its meetings or during its practices the following: altars, images, candles, processions, sacraments, concession of indulgences, religious vestments, alcoholic or hallucinogenic beverages, incense, tobacco, talismans, amulets, horoscopes, cartomancy, pyramids, crystals, or any other objects, rituals or external forms of worship.

- Spiritism does not impose its principles. It invites those interested in knowing it to submit its teachings to the test of reason before accepting them.
- Mediumship, which allows the Spirits to communicate with Human Beings, is a faculty which many individuals bring with them at birth, independently of the religion or belief that they may come to adopt.
- Spiritist mediumship practice is solely that which is practiced based on the principles of the Spiritist Thought and within Jesus' examples.
- Spiritism respects all religions and doctrines; values all efforts towards the practice of goodness; works towards peace and fellowship between all nations and all peoples, regardless of race, color, nationality, creed, cultural or social standing. It also recognizes that "the truly good person is one who complies with the laws of justice, love, and charity in their highest degree of purity." (The Gospel According to Spiritism – chapter 17 – item 3).

Adapted from the International Spiritist Council's flyer

ALLAN KARDEC



Allan Kardec, the nom de plume of H. Leon Denizard Rivail, was a French educator and philosopher born in Lyon on October 3, 1804. Rivail spoke several languages, and his impressive intellectual background allowed him to teach courses in comparative physiology, astronomy, chemistry and physics in a prestigious scientific school in Paris. For one of his research papers, he was inducted into the Royal Academy of Arras. He organized and taught free courses for the underprivileged. In 1854, at the age of 50, Rivail heard of the mysterious paranormal phenomena that had taken America and Europe by storm.

Despite his skepticism, he was convinced by close friends to attend an experimental meeting where he was able to witness such occurrences firsthand. His intellectual curiosity and scientific instincts told him that there had to be a rational explanation for these phenomena. Consequently, he began soon afterward to conduct investigations of his own.

Using the same logical rigor that he had applied to his work in education and science, Rivail set out to understand the phenomena. He submitted questions to different channels (mediums), in different countries. The answers were compared, analyzed, and organized for inclusion in *The Spirits' Book*, which was first published in 1857.

To keep his new area of research apart from his writings on education, Rivail — on the advice of spirit instructors — adopted the name Allan Kardec, which he was told had been his name in a previous incarnation. In addition to the publication of the books listed below, he founded the Spiritist Society of Paris and *La Revue Spirite*, a journal he edited until his death on March 31, 1869.

He was married to Amelie Gabrielle Boudet on 6th February 1832. She was nine years his senior, a writer, teacher of fine arts, poetess and artist. She was a perfect companion and helper, being dedicated and uncomplaining. She played an important part in all her husband's activities and sustained him through many financial difficulties encountered during his life, and greatly assisted him in his teaching.

Books by Allan Kardec:

The Spirits' Book
The Medium's Book
The Gospel – According to Spiritism
Heaven and Hell
Genesis
Posthumous Work

