

*Mauro de Mesquita Spínola*

**THE FREETHINKING  
COLLECTION:  
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**  
1<sup>st</sup> SERIES

# *Reincarnation: a revolutionary existential paradigm*





*Mauro de Mesquita Spínola*

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existential paradigm***

**THE FREETHINKING COLLECTION:**  
SPIRITISM FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY



**1<sup>st</sup> Series - Book 5**

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

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\* 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> Series - Fundamental Themes - from *The Freethinking Collection: spiritism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* are intellectuals originally from the spiritualist movements of Argentina, Brazil, Spain and 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century*, CEPA unfolds, in the various volumes that make up the 1<sup>st</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.cpdocespirita.com.br>.

Wilson Garcia  
*President of CPDoc*



## PREFACE

In these times of profound uncertainty, of substantial changes affecting life, interpersonal relationships, and the very structure of society, it is when human beings seek to find sensible and coherent answers about their nature, their reason for being and existing and the purpose of incarnation. Oppressed by dogmas, rhetoric and empty speeches, he foresees that the notion of spirituality, transcendence and evolution through successive lives are philosophical concepts that provide rational and hopeful meaning.

The basic questions of all time: Why do we live? What is the meaning of life? Where are we going? Is there causal determinism or does free will prevail? What consequences do human actions have? Can I be the architect of my own destiny? They have their answers in Spiritist science and philosophy.

The idea of reincarnation, as the return of the spirit to the corporeal world for a new life, has been maintained in all beliefs and religions, under different names and meanings, but it acquires its true basis and transcendence in the proposal of Allan Kardec and other Spiritist thinkers. The whole worldview of the spirit is permeated by the idea of reincarnation.

In recent CEPA Congresses, the imperative need to begin a process of updating the fundamental statements of Spiritism, presented by Kardec and other thinkers in all branches of knowledge, has been insisted upon. This arises because of the new scientific and philosophical paradigms, the distortion of Kardecian thought, which attempts to convert Spiritism into a religion or with an evangelical bias foreign to it, the use of terms already surpassed by science, the clarification and reinterpretation of some key concepts that ultimately produce a refined body of doctrine from a secular, free-thinking, and progressive perspective, in line with 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge.

This new epistemological position includes the central theme of reincarnation, no longer as an article of religious, sectarian, or ancient beliefs, but the contribution of research carried out with scientific rigour in study centres, universities, and research groups, as well as philosophical reflections and

the resulting ethical and moral consequences for individual and social progress.

In this book, Mauro de Mesquita Spínola presents the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation from an essentially Kardecist and humanist approach, and as he clearly states, “with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of the Spiritist view on the subject” and “in the continuous search to update and truly insert Spiritism into modern culture”.

From the book’s summary onwards, the author displays the scientific rigour that distinguishes him in other works he has written, essays and conferences, the fruit of his academic training, his studies on Spiritism, his critical spirit, his experience in Spiritist Centres and his pragmatic and modern view of the profound implications that reincarnationist theory has on all aspects of a person’s life.

He expresses the foundations of what he calls the free-thinking Spiritist model of reincarnation, specified by Kardec when referring to the purpose of the spirits’ incarnation, but establishing differences with other Christian religious positions, conceptually redefining religious keywords such as atonement, guilt, sin, punishment, judgements, injustice. Like others that, although they were used by Kardec, responded to the context in which *The Spirits’ Book*

was written, his religious background and the need to respond to the attacks of the church at that time. These terms were the starting point for many authors and leaders to define spiritism as a religion, and reincarnation as an evolutionary mechanism of rewards and punishments based on mistakes or successes in previous lives.

The book takes us back to a dynamic and progressive concept of reincarnation, with a dialectical and rational view of material and spiritual evolution: with each new existence, the spirit takes a step towards progress. “Everything is chained and everything in nature is united,” says Kardec.

The author uses clear and didactic language, with graphs and comparative tables that help to better understand the themes, as well as reminders and reviews of Spiritist authors and thinkers who have contributed to pushing the boundaries of Spiritist knowledge. Likewise, the intertextuality that appears in his work, such as the author references and the links suggested to the reader for possible expansion of some themes, is an invaluable pedagogical resource.

The chapter “Scientific research on reincarnation” is of fundamental importance, since the main questions of this Theory of reincarnation come from

science. The author rigorously presents the lines of work, the evidence collected, the methodological aspects, the experiments carried out around the world, the progress made and the challenges ahead.

With this book, Mauro de Mesquita Spínola has made a formidable contribution to the study of reincarnation, with an analytical, modern, precise and conceptual update. This dynamic, humanist and secular approach is a valuable contribution that enriches free-thinking spiritism and is an unavoidable starting point for any reading on this transcendental aspect in the evolution of the spirit.

Mario Molfino

*Lawyer and agricultural producer,  
writer and spiritist lecturer, member of the True  
Spiritism Society of Rafaela, Argentina*



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

To the Executive Council of the International Spiritist Association (CEPA), for its unconditional support to the Free-Thinking Collection – Spiritism for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;

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# 1 REINCARNATION

*"After all, it's no more surprising to be born twice than to be born once."*

Voltaire (1694-1778), French philosopher

Reincarnation is the return of the spirit to the corporeal world for a new life. The theory of reincarnation establishes the possibility that the human spirit can survive death and experience another human life again.

Present in several philosophies and religions, in the most diverse cultures of the planet, some millenary, reincarnation has become an essential foundation of spiritism since its beginning, by Allan Kardec, in France, 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1, 2</sup>

The African philosopher Hasskei Mohammed Majeed, in his Doctoral Thesis *in Philosophy with the title An examination of the concept of reincarnation in African philosophy*, investigates studies on reincarnation in the literature and identifies the relationship between immortality and reincarnation:

*"The doctrine of reincarnation suggests that there is a stable part of a person that constantly and consistently is not subject to death. The part is also believed to be spiritual, and distinct from the body. This immortal part, often understood as a soul, a rational soul, is that which takes on flesh repeatedly in a person's cycle of rebirths. In this case, the 'person' who is believed to consist in the soul survives in different bodies as a completely rational being."*<sup>3</sup> (p. 22)

An initial clarification of terminology is needed. There are several synonyms for the word reincarnation. The Venezuelan writer Jon Aizpúrua, former President of CEPA, presents them in his work *Fundamentals of Spiritism*:

*"Palingenesis, Rebirth, plurality of existences, successive lives or multiple lives are expressions equivalent to reincarnation, and which can be used with equal meaning, as they express the same idea of the eternal progress of the spirit, animating in each life a distinct bodily organism."*<sup>4</sup> (p. 200)

## Reincarnation: a few synonyms<sup>4</sup>

Palingenesis

Rebirth

Plurality of Existences

Successive lives

Multiple lives

Psychologist, economist, university professor, Venezuelan writer and lecturer. He was the first Director of the School of Parapsychology at the University of the Third Age, in Caracas. He was the International President of the CIMA Spiritist Culture Movement. Between 1993 and 2001 he was President of the Pan-American Spiritist Confederation (CEPA), having contributed for its expansion, especially in the Brazilian territory.



**Jon Aizpúrua**  
(1949-)

He was founder and director of the magazine *Evolución*, which spreads the free spiritism. He is the author of several books on spiritism and parapsychology, including *The Fundamentals of Spiritism*. He gave hundreds of lectures in dozens of countries in America and Europe, always divulging spiritism and presenting it with a laic and free-thinking vision.

On the other hand, the same author alerts that the terms **resurrection** and **metempsychosis** cannot be confused with reincarnation, as shown in the table below.

## Spiritist reincarnation IS NOT:<sup>4</sup>

### Resurrection

*"Dogma from some religions such as Christianity and Judaism, according to which the soul only lives bodily once and, after death, after a certain period of time, it will occupy the same body again to receive God's definitive punishment in the final judgment."*

### Metempsychosis

*"An ancient Eastern belief that accepts the possibility that the human soul can be reborn in the bodies of animal species as a punishment for their guilt."*

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In this introductory chapter, several views of reincarnation and an overview of recent research on the belief in reincarnation are initially presented. The next chapter exposes the bases for the free-thinking spiritist view of reincarnation. Chapter 3 discusses the Spiritist philosophy of reincarnation. Chapter 4 discusses the ethical and moral aspects from the perspective of the spiritist reincarnationist view. Chapter 5 presents the methods and advances in

scientific research on reincarnation. Finally, Chapter 6 reflects on the impacts, perspectives on the topic and the challenges it brings to human beings and society.

## **1.1 History and different views of reincarnation**

The belief in reincarnation dates back several millennia before our era. Hinduism has professed it since 5,000 years BC. With different features, it is naturally associated with the belief in life after death, but it carries quite different philosophical and religious conceptions.

In ancient Greece and in various doctrines, metempsychosis is its main face.

In many of these doctrines, arising at various times, there is no transition period in which the spirit wanders through space: the soul, in some of these beliefs, reincarnates immediately after death; in others, it only resurfaces to reincarnate. Added to these differences are the various philosophical conceptions that each of these doctrines possess.

Karma, for example, is also an ancient concept, present, with some variations, in various doctrines, such as Buddhism, Shintoism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Theosophy, among others. Each of them has its own

concept of karma, but in all of them there is the view that we keep marks of our thoughts and actions, with future consequences. In Hinduism, for example, it refers to the effects that our actions have in our future. In Buddhism, it is related to our good or bad intentions, which bear good or bad fruit. Karma is not a concept present in spiritism, although many Spiritist scholars try, without success, to give this word an interpretation consistent with the Spiritist vision. It does not express the spiritist concept of autonomy and freedom.

The table below presents the reincarnationist views of some religions, philosophies and thinkers, present in different periods of history and in the most diverse parts of the planet. Further study can be done in the literature of each of these lines of thought. André Pezzani, French Imperial lawyer contemporary with Kardec, made a special contribution to the knowledge of the history of reincarnation through his book *The plurality of existences of the soul (La pluralité des existences de l'âme)*.<sup>5</sup>



## SOME REINCARNATIONAL VISIONS

### **Hinduism, religious tradition originating in the Indian subcontinent**

*"As a person sheds worn-out garments and wears new ones, likewise, at the time of death, the soul casts off its worn-out body and enters a new one." (Bhagavad Gita, 2:22)<sup>6</sup>*

### **Jainism, Indian religion**

*According to its karma, a soul can reincarnate in any form, human, animal, or plant. A soul only achieves liberation by getting rid of its karma.<sup>7</sup>*

### **Orphism, Greek tradition**

*The man's soul (Dionysian factor) is divine, while the body (titanic factor) imprisons the soul. The soul repeatedly returns to life, tied to the wheel of rebirth, seeking to spy the original guilt and the guilt acquired throughout the earthly existence.<sup>8,9</sup>*

### **Pythagoras (570 BC to 497 BC)**

*Reveal his memories. Transmigration: the soul is immortal and goes through a series of reincarnations to purify itself. Admits metempsychosis.<sup>2,10,5</sup> (Book I, chap. III)*

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## SOME REINCARNATIONAL VISIONS

### Plato (427 BC to 347 BC)

*Dying does not mean reaching the end of life. The soul continues its journey, being born again in another human organism and beginning a new stage, which will be added to previous existences.<sup>11, 5</sup> (Book II, chap. II)*

### Druidry, religion of Celtic origin

*Souls do not perish and after death they pass from one body to another.<sup>5</sup> Book I, Chapter IV*

*In the Celtic rebirth there is no emphasis on the need to make amends. The desire to return to do more things, to prove one's strength, to go through other experiences, to learn even more, is crucial. Desire pushes the soul forward.<sup>12</sup>*

### Jesus of Nazareth

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (Answers to questions from Nicodemus, Jewish senator, St. John, chap. III, vv. 1 to 12)<sup>13</sup> (chap IV, item 5)<sup>5</sup> (Book 3, chap. I)*

### Indigenous tradition

*In many ways, reincarnation is present in many of America's indigenous traditions.<sup>15, 16</sup>*

## SOME REINCARNATIONAL VISIONS

### New Testament

*The Bible announces Elijah as the reincarnation of John the Baptist: "But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands. Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist." (Matthew 17:10 to 13)<sup>5</sup> (Book II, Chap. I)*

*For Kardec, "as he cannot return, unless he takes on a new body, then we have the formal consecration of the principle of plurality of existences".<sup>13</sup> (ch. IV, item 10)<sup>14</sup> (ch. XVII)*

### Early Christianity

*In its early centuries, Christianity came in various forms. Many Christian groups from that period advocated reincarnation.*

*In the year 543 AD, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Constantinople, by order of Emperor Justinian, condemned and cursed Origen (who showed himself against eternal punishment and postulated the pre-existence of the soul), definitively barring this vision and the reincarnation of Catholic Orthodoxy.<sup>11</sup>*

### Sikhism, Indian religion

*Accepts the Hindu belief in karma and reincarnation. The cycle ends with a disciplined life.<sup>18</sup>*

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## SOME REINCARNATIONAL VISIONS

### **Yoruba, African religion**

*Ancestors can return to the world of the living, one of the most common forms being reincarnation in the family itself, being reborn as a son or grandson of the dead. Families do not want an ancestor who died badly to be reincarnated. Thus, the bad ancestors reincarnate in animals and wander through abandoned places.<sup>17</sup>*

### **Kabbalah, spiritual basis of Judaism**

*Moses is the reincarnation of Abel, and his father-in-law Jethro is a reincarnation of Cain. Human souls can return in animals, vegetables or even inanimate objects.<sup>19</sup>*

### **Theosophy**

*"Through the reincarnation process, the individual and imperishable entity, the superior triad, transmigrates from one body to another, dresses in new and successive forms or transitory personalities, covering, in the course of its evolution, one after another, all phases of conditioned existence in the various realms of nature, (...) until, at the end of the cycle of rebirths, all experiences are exhausted and the complete perfection of the Being acquired, the individual Spirit, completely free from all obstacles of matter, reaches Reincarnation." (H. P. Blavatsky)<sup>20</sup>*

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Reincarnation is present in cinema, as well as in literature, music, and theatre. Below is an exemplary list of films that allow you to know different views on the subject (some trailers can be seen at [youtube.com/watch?v=j4m113d6P44](https://youtube.com/watch?v=j4m113d6P44)):

- *I Origenes (O Universo no Olhar / Orígenes)*,
- *Cloud atlas (A viagem / El atlas de las nube / Cloud Atlas: la red invisible / Cartographie des nuages)*,
- *Birth (Reencarnação / O Mistério / Reencarnación / La Naissance)*,
- *Yesterday's children (Minha vida na outra vida / Los niños de ayer / Les Ombres du passé)*
- *The fountain (Fonte da vida / La fuente de la vida / La Fontaine)*
- *Manika (A reencarnação de Manika / La reencarnación de Manika / Manika, une vie plus tard)*.

## 1.2 Belief in Reincarnation

Strongly proclaimed by Asian and African doctrines, the belief in reincarnation is less accepted among Westerners, especially due to the strong Christian dogmatic influence, in its most diverse expressions, but it is present in all continents. The few surveys that exist show that the numbers are growing.

Research conducted in 2017 in the United States (published in October 2018) by the Pew Research Center showed that 33% of adult Americans believe in reincarnation. In 2009, a similar survey carried out by the same institute had indicated 24%. Among Catholics, the percentage reached 36% in the new survey (26% in 2009). It is clear the higher acceptance among women (39%), the youngest (39%), afro-descendants (43%), Latins (37%) and Democrats (38%).<sup>21</sup>

The research also demonstrates that the acceptance of at least one of the beliefs called “new age” (spiritual energy, paranormality, reincarnation and astrology) is greater than 50% in almost all extracts, except for evangelicals, atheists and those who identify as non-religious or spiritual.

In Europe, researches are carried out systematically, through different institutes and with varied methodologies. *The European Values Study (EVS)* revisits every nine years the main areas of life (family, sociability, work, politics, religion). (22) In the topic of religion, there are 30 questions that include the belief in reincarnation. The survey carried out in 2008 showed that 21% of Europeans said they believed in reincarnation (67% said they did not, while 11% did not know or did not respond).<sup>23</sup>

Now, the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) has carried out, since 1985, annual surveys with approximately 60 questions focused on religious beliefs, including reincarnation.<sup>24</sup> The survey carried out in 2008 presented the following results: 17% definitely yes, 13% probably yes, 22% probably no, 36% definitely no, 12% don't know (or didn't answer).<sup>23</sup>

A relevant fact, pointed out by Bréchon Pierre, Professor at the Institute of Political Studies at the University of Grenoble, is that, in Europe, young people with a higher level of education are less religious and tend to believe less in the various aspects researched, including reincarnation. In any case, it is clear that this belief is much smaller in Europe than in other parts of the world.

A more complete and detailed study on the belief in reincarnation in Europe, with data stratified by countries, can be found in the article "Scientific evidence of reincarnation", by Raul Horacio Drubich, inserted in the book *Contemporary perspectives on reincarnation*.<sup>25</sup>

In Latin America, the belief in reincarnation has been shown to be greater than in North America and Europe. A survey conducted in Brazil in 2007 found that 44% of Brazilians do not believe in reincarnation; 37% fully believe and 18% have doubts. Believe

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are spiritualists who believe in immortality and communication with the dead, but do not believe in reincarnation. Yvonne Crespo Limoges, from The Spiritist Society of Florida ([spiritistsocietyfl.com](http://spiritistsocietyfl.com)), a scholar of American spiritualism, clarifies that, for non-reincarnation spiritualists, after death the spirit continues to evolve. *"Some believe they will go to a place similar to the heavens of Christianity, places often called Summerland, a term coined by Andrew Jackson Davis. Therefore, they do not believe in reincarnation."*<sup>25</sup> (p. 92)

Modern Anglo-Saxon spiritualism is based on the belief in spirit communication with the visible world. It was not based on the studies of Allan Kardec. It's been developed from 1840 onwards in the United States, with repercussions also in England. Some names are considered the pioneers of modern spiritualism, among them: Emanuel Swedenborg, Sisters Fox and Andrew Jackson Davis.<sup>27</sup>

The *ISF, International Spiritualist Federation* ([theisf.com](http://theisf.com)), founded in 1923 in Liège, Belgium, brings together spiritualists from around the world and promotes regular congresses. Arthur Conan Doyle, author of *The History of Spiritualism*, was its honorary president in the period 1925-1930 and his wife, Lady Conan Doyle, held the same chair in the period 1931-1940.<sup>28</sup>



the majority of Spiritists (93% of them), Umbanda (79%) and Candomblé followers (68%). Among Catholics, 44% fully believe in reincarnation. Among Pentecostal evangelicals, on the other hand, the rate of non-believers reaches 74%, 30 points above the average (cf. DataFolha Survey).<sup>26</sup>

### 1.3 Purpose of this book

The discussion about reincarnation among Spiritists is guided by deep and relevant differences and doubts, arising from two main causes:

1. The Christian religious view adopted by Spiritists and Spiritist institutions, especially in Brazil, is the majority. Kardec himself offered a basis for this, by inserting the Christian vision in his texts, especially in the works *The Gospel According to Spiritism*<sup>13</sup>, *Heaven and Hell*<sup>29</sup> and *Genesis*.<sup>14</sup> With time and especially after Kardec, the influence of the Christian religious vision grew and consolidated, especially in Brazil, reducing spiritism to an appendix of Christianity, now permeating it with concepts not adopted by Kardec and its main carriers - as well expressed by the writer Jaci Regis in his book *Uma nova visão do homem e do mundo (A new vision of man and the world)*<sup>30</sup> -, amplifying and making dominant the religious

character that the founder of spiritism had adopted in part of his work.

2. Spiritists and Spiritist institutions in general neglect – more than that, they are reluctant – regarding the need for continuous updating of spiritism, clearly proposed by Kardec and whose need has been demonstrated in numerous recent studies published by CEPA – International Spiritist Association.<sup>31, 32</sup>

Distinguishing from these two conducts, the free spiritist thought is still active, aimed at the continuous search for updating and for real insertion and interaction of spiritism in modern culture.

**Given the various existing views of reincarnation, with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of the spiritist view on the subject, this book aims to present the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation with a Kardecist, humanist and free-thinking approach.**

This work offers an introductory and summarized reading on the subject. Therefore, it uses an assertive and direct style about each of the concepts presented.

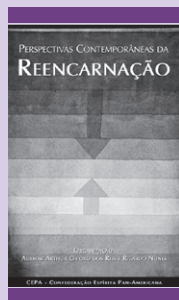
A greater deepening of them, the philosophical and scientific reflections they encompass and the

free spiritist approach itself can be obtained in the references indicated in the various topics and, in particular, in the readings of books, articles and portals indicated at the end of the text. Among these reference texts, a deserved special attention from scholars is to the book *Contemporary Perspectives on Reincarnation*, which brings together several studies related to the subject, selected from the works presented at the XXI Spiritist Congress of CEPA, held in Santos/SP, Brazil, in 2012.<sup>25</sup>

The next chapter presents the spiritist model of reincarnation.

***Perspectivas contemporâneas da reencarnação  
(Contemporary perspectives on reincarnation)***

Collection of studies selected from the works presented at the XXI CEPA Spiritist Congress, held in Santos/SP, Brazil, in 2012. It takes a tour through history and culture and reaches the modern world, seeking to discuss reincarnation from the perspective of actualization of spiritism based on new theories, conceptual models, the problem of language and contemporary investigations on the topic.





## 2 SPIRITISM AND REINCARNATION

*"Free thinking is just thinking."*

Millôr Fernandes (1923-2012),  
Brazilian writer and journalist

The Spiritist philosophy is permeated by the theory of reincarnation, as it touches on the purpose and meaning of life; in the spiritist vision of death, as well as in the destiny and evolution of the spirits after it; on the value and meaning of life individually, in the family and in society; and, above all, in the ethical and moral consequences of all these reflections.

This chapter presents the free-thinking spiritist model of reincarnation, an update on Allan Kardec's original proposal. This model aims to position

the spiritist view of reincarnation in the face of philosophical and religious alternatives that present themselves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It aims, in particular, to propose an alternative to the religious view of reincarnation, present in Kardec's work and, to a greater extent, in the hegemonic spiritualist religious thought developed after his work, especially through mediumistic literature. It begins by presenting the model of religious thought. Then, it summarizes the bases of the free spiritist thought, foundation of this proposal. Finally, it proposes, in short, the lay model of reincarnation, which unfolds in the next chapters. The models presented are not unique or absolute, they only serve to give better clarity to the points and counterpoints presented in this study.

## **2.1 Religious Spiritist model of reincarnation**

Aiming to present at a later stage the free-thinking approach to reincarnation as an alternative to the religious view, the religious model is exposed in this topic, in its general lines.

Kardec was assertive in all his work: Spiritism was not conceived with the character of a religion. However, the very founder of spiritism used religious concepts and references in his books, which certainly contributed

to many Spiritists and Spiritist institutions adopting the limiting path of closed belief, instead of continuing the work of building an open and free philosophy.

Allan Kardec inserted, in several of his texts, ideas related to guilt, penalty, punishment and reward. His work *Heaven and Hell*, for example, discusses future punishments, and presents a "*Penal Code of Life to Come*". In addition to the analysis that links suffering to the imperfection of the spirit itself, a basis for understanding the role of free will in the evolution of the spirit, there are also marks of the punitive Christian vision: every offense committed "*is a contracted debt that must be paid*".<sup>29</sup> (ch. VII)

Kardec thus offered the bases for the Christian religious spiritist model, despite the free thought structure that guided his work and reaffirming throughout his work the non-religious character of spiritism. It is necessary, however, to consider the context in which his work was developed. There were present, on one hand, the deep religious formation, and on the other, the need to respond to repeated attacks from the church during the development of its work. Faced with these attacks, he claimed that the spiritism led the materialist to spiritualism and thus made three-quarters of it for them to return to the church, leaving the church to do the rest.

The Christian religious spiritist model (oriented by the Judaeo-Christian tradition) is different from the Kardec model (free in its conceptual structure, although permeated by religious ideas). It was built and consolidated above all after Kardec, and today it is the majority in countries where spiritism has expanded.

In Brazil, particularly, religiosity has become the main mark of spiritism, since Kardec's philosophy arrived in the country, as shown by studies by José Luiz dos Santos<sup>33</sup> and Ubiratan Machado.<sup>34</sup>

The spiritualist religious model of reincarnation is based on the concepts of guilt, penalty, punishment and reward, always imposed after supposed mistakes or successes of past lives. It was strongly influenced by the religious vision of Roustaing, French writer contemporary with Kardec, organizer of the mediumistic work called *The Four Gospels*.<sup>35</sup> According to their texts, reincarnating spirits are those who, at the beginning of their journey, have fallen into error. The spirits that didn't make mistakes would not need to reincarnate.

The spiritist religious model is mainly exposed in mediumistic literature and is widely disseminated through books by Francisco Cândido Xavier, such as *The Consoled*, dictated by the spirit Emmanuel<sup>36</sup> and the series *Our home* (a set of books dictated by

André Luiz<sup>37</sup>). Many mediumistic novels of this and other mediums have their plots based on pain and suffering caused by past faults.

There is a set of fundamental structural elements in spiritualist religious thought. In literature and narrative, they appear in different degrees and forms, ranging from their explicit statement (“people affected by the pandemic are serving sentences arising from past misconduct”) to their implicit presence in the analysis (“the epidemic is a lesson which spirituality has sent to humanity, and each one takes advantage of it their own way”).

The main characterizing elements of religious thought – in its most explicit form – are summarized in the table below, according to the previous work of this author in the book *Contemporary Perspectives on Reincarnation*<sup>25</sup>:

### **Reincarnation: Christian religious spiritist model**

1. Imposed trials and expiations
  2. Detailed pre-planning
  3. Explanation for everything
  4. Justification of injustices
  5. Prize and punishment after death
-



### **1. Imposed trials and expiations:**

the objective of the incarnation is the improvement of the spirit, which is done through its submission to imposed and programmed trials and expiations.<sup>36</sup> (q. 186 and 246)

### **2. Detailed pre-planning:**

reincarnation has a detailed and deterministic pre-planning (everything that happens in life is programmed).<sup>36</sup> (q. 247)

### **3. Explanation for everything:**

the doctrine of reincarnation explains everything; pains and afflictions are caused by past faults and debts of the spirit; the spirit carries original guilt and sin during the incarnation.<sup>38</sup> (q. 55)

### **4. Justification of injustices:**

reincarnation explains and justifies social inequalities and injustices.<sup>36</sup>

### **5. Prize and punishment after death:**

after death, the spirit is rewarded or punished according to its conduct during the incarnation.

Reincarnation, while permeated by Judaeo-Christian ideological concepts, has become an instrument to justify human sufferings, to explain them based on supposed sins of the past, and even

to consider that they are necessary and imposed by God for our progress. Totally hurting reason, there is a discourse (always claiming to be divine justice) about possible causes for premature death, incurable diseases, serious accidents, violent deaths, and even murders and provoked violent actions. Moving away from reason, the ability to discover, investigate, question, doubt and analyse. Reason, the ability to discover, investigate, question, doubt, and analyze are removed. It abdicates, above all, the ability to recognize that life is dynamic and complex; that the explanations are not simple; that the vicissitudes of life lead us to situations beyond our individual planning and that we are all free to act and experience daily situations that are not predefined.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The belief in reincarnation is condemned by the Christian churches, especially by the Catholic Church. A set of arguments from Catholics can be found at: <http://www.montfort.org.br/bra/cadernos/apologetica/reencarnacao/>.

It should be noted that most of the “fundamentals of spiritism” cited and refuted there are part of the spiritist religious model.

## 2.2 Bases of free spiritist thought

The free spiritist thinking is the basis for the development of the free-thinking proposal of reincarnation.

This study is based on the proposal of Allan Kardec, who thus characterized spiritism in his work *What is Spiritism*:

*"Spiritism is, at the same time, a science of observation and a philosophical doctrine. As a practical science, it consists of the relationships established between us and the spirits; as a philosophy, it understands all the moral consequences that flow from these same relationships.*

We can define it like this:

*Spiritism is a science which deals with the nature, origin, and destiny of Spirits, as well as their relationship with the corporeal world."*

Secularism proclaims the autonomy of human activities in relation to religion. From the secular perspective, spiritism is freed from the structure of religious thought, but develops in full and continuous dialogue, with the most diverse forms of philosophical, scientific, and religious thought. Based on continuous research and discovery, on reason and science, Spiritist philosophy reflects on human beings, their origins, and their individual, moral, and social perspectives.

Pseudonym of Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail. French pedagogue, teacher and researcher, founder of spiritism.

He studied at the Pestalozzi School, in Iverduin, Switzerland, and developed a career as an educator. Taught classes of grammar, mathematics, and astronomy. He wrote several textbooks, including *Proposed Plan for the Improvement of Public Education*. He began his research on immortality and the communication of spirits in 1854, when he came into contact with the turning tables. In 1857, he launched *The Book of Spirits*<sup>2</sup>, a central work of spiritism, structured with questions and answers on themes of science and philosophy, including God, spirits, natural laws, reincarnation, morals, future life, and others.



**Allan Kardec**  
(1804-1869)

He wrote several other works, with thematic developments of the fundamental book, and created the *Spiritist Magazine*, a monthly journal. In his publications he presented the conceptual and methodological bases of spiritism.

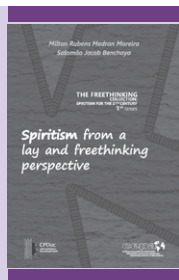
He was founder and director of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies.

In *spiritism from a secular and free-thinking perspective*, part of CEPAs Free Thought Collection, Brazilians Milton Rubens Medran Moreira and Salomão Jacob Benchaya present in a clear and

reasoned way the history and current situation of the non-religious view of spiritism.<sup>40</sup>

***O espiritismo na perspectiva laica e livre-pensadora (Spiritism from a secular and freethinking perspective)***

**Starting from Kardec's own work and the history of secular spiritist thought, the authors present the bases of secular spiritist thought.**



Kardec structured spiritism based on free thought. He researched, observed, analysed the phenomena, and freely proposed a scientific model for their understanding, establishing a new basis for the study of immortality and the communication of spirits.

In the proposed method, it established a path for investigation and discoveries. It can be summarized thus:

- a) It is experimental and deductive, based on observation. Kardec explains: *"New facts appear, which cannot be explained by known laws; he observes them, compares them, analyzes them and, going back from effects to causes, arrives at the law that governs them; then he deduces their consequences and seeks useful applications."*<sup>14</sup> (Chap. I, item 14)

- b) Mediums are selected.
- c) Communications are submitted to rational analysis.
- d) It uses the universal control of communications:  
*"There is only one serious guarantee for the teaching of the Spirits: the agreement that exists between the revelations that they make spontaneously, using a large number of mediums strange to each other and in various places."*<sup>13</sup> (Introduction)

It was also with the freedom of a legitimate thinker that Kardec built the foundations of the spiritist philosophy, clearly centered on the free discovery and analysis of its consequences. The Spiritist philosophy (Kardecian contribution to Philosophy) could not be summarized only in its most representative words – spirit, immortality, mediumship, reincarnation, morality, plurality of worlds and evolution. It has to be understood by the way in which Kardec dealt with these themes, his rationality and, above all, by the method of philosophical reflection, capable of facing, without imposed limits, the various questions that involve human beings in different times.

The legacy of free thought designed by Kardec, however, has been forgotten in several manifestations

related to spiritism. Many texts and oral expositions produced about spiritism, or even in its name, disregard free thought as an essential instrument.

In spiritist groups, there are sometimes bans on topics for lectures and studies (such as social issues, for example), restrictions on debates and freedom of thought, or even the fixation to the pure writing of biblical or spiritist texts, without proper critical analysis and contextualization.

José Herculano Pires, one of the greatest Brazilian spiritist thinkers, alerts, in his work *Curso dinâmico de espíritismo: o grande desconhecido* (*Dynamic course of Spiritism: the great unknown*)<sup>41</sup>, to the fact that spiritism is unknown, both by those who attack it and by those who defend it. Seen by supporters of the traditional religious spiritist movement as a closed doctrine and holder of a single truth, revealed from above, spiritism runs the risk of dying in the short or medium term. Kardec realized that this was not the best path, that it would be necessary to build a trail of discoveries capable of unraveling the most distressing questions of human beings, without the shackles of materialistic prejudices, on the one hand, and without the constraints of closed religions, on the other.

## What is the Spiritist Free Thought?

1. Kardecist
  2. Free production and expression of ideas
  3. Liberal and progressive
  4. Pluralist
  5. Humanist
- 

The following are characteristics of free secular spiritism<sup>32</sup>:

### 1. Kardecist:

it has in the work of Allan Kardec its conceptual and methodological bases, its essential reference.

### 2. Free-thinking:

the analysis and production of knowledge are free and rational, without imposing ideas.

### 3. Liberal and progressive:

it seeks the development of human beings and society; it also advocates the updating of knowledge – general and of spiritism itself.

### 4. Pluralist:

it proposes dialogue with the various segments of knowledge and society.



## 5. Humanist:

it values and is centered on the human being.<sup>42</sup>

The Spiritist philosophy requires freedom of thought and active reason for its development. By rescuing free spiritism, we continuously discover the effective contribution of spiritist philosophy and work for its continuity.

More than a set of closed and finalized concepts, spiritist thinking presents itself as a path for the production of knowledge and for reflection on its impacts on human motivations and actions.

In the free context, the study of reincarnation has a great potential range, as it reflects freely and rationally on human beings, their relationships and perspectives, without the closed structures of religions and the obstacles of materialism. The human spirit is seen as the driver of its own evolution and its actions are necessary for social progress. Intimidating and paralyzing feelings of guilt and punishment are replaced by the impetus to grow and build a fulfilling path. Social injustices do not receive unfounded transcendental explanations, they become a reason for indignation, for the protagonism of human beings, for libertarian and solidary action. These discussions are presented more extensively in the following chapters.

## 2.3 Spiritist freethinking model of reincarnation

The starting point for the discussion of reincarnation is to understand its purpose, in the Kardecist view.

The purpose of reincarnation is summarized in two key questions from *The Spirits' Book*, Kardec's fundamental work, which deals with the objective of incarnation and reincarnation, expressed in question 132 and complemented in question 167:

*"132. What is the purpose of the incarnation of spirits?  
God imposes incarnation on them in order to make them reach perfection. For some, it is expiation, for others, mission. But to reach that perfection, they must suffer all the vicissitudes of bodily existence: that's where the expiation lies. Incarnation also aims at another purpose: that of putting the Spirit in a position to support the part that touches it in the work of creation. To carry it out, in each world, the Spirit takes an instrument, in harmony with the essential matter of that world, in order to fulfil there, from that point of view, the orders of God. This is how, contributing to the general work, he himself advances.  
(...)*

*167. What is the aim of reincarnation?  
Expiation, progressive improvement of Humanity.  
Without this, where would justice be?"<sup>12</sup>*

For Kardec, with each new existence, the spirit takes a step forward in its search for progress. In addition to that, “everything is linked, everything is solidary in Nature”, since incarnation allows, at the same time, that the spirit contributes to the evolution of society and the world in which it lives (the work of creation) and finds a path to progress.

Reincarnation, in Kardec’s view, is necessary for the progress of spirits, as all “*are created simple and ignorant and are instructed in the struggles and tribulations of bodily life*”.<sup>2</sup> In the above-quoted questions from *The Spirits’ Book*, this necessity is expressed through the word **expiation**.

**A careful and integrated analysis of the two highlighted issues leads to the conclusion that Kardec links expiation to the need to “*suffer all the vicissitudes of bodily existence*”: it is an imperative of incarnation itself, not the payment of past debts.**

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of this book, the meaning and role of the expiation, suffering and pain for spiritualism are discussed.

Although the term expiation can be adopted in the context of free and rational thought, its use is open to misinterpretation due to the strong religious

connotation it carries. Therefore, aiming to characterize free spiritist thought with the least possible ambiguity, the word *expiation* is only used, throughout this book, in the few points where its strict concept is discussed. Trial, vicissitude, difficulty, problem, challenge, injustice, suffering and other terms, depending on the context, are preferred by the author.

The second objective proposed by Kardec for reincarnation – the spirit to perform its part in the work of creation – should deserve greater attention from scholars, as it has as high a value as the first. It points to the integrative character of reincarnation and allows us to think of life as a process of collective construction. Instead of following an isolated and solitary path (very widespread among sellers of salvation), the reincarnated human being gives meaning to his existence through his participation in the collective construction.

To what extent can we see the acting for the work of creation? In our current stage of evolution, still permeated by our restricted vision, ignorance, and selfish impulses, it makes sense to see the second objective of reincarnation as the opportunity that human beings must act in their closest environment, that is, in the society they live in. The role that each one can play in relation to the social environment is

visible and real. This discussion is present in Chapter 4.

The following chart summarizes the goals of reincarnation.

### Goals of reincarnation

1. Improvement, evolution of spirit
2. Participation of the spirit in society's evolution

These objectives interact and are integrated in the march of the spirit's evolution. Reincarnation offers you the opportunity to evolve individually and to contribute to social and universal progress. Forging the progress of society, in all areas within its reach, each reincarnated human being advances. The evolving environment, in its turn, drives the evolution of the spirits themselves.

The potential impact of the free view of reincarnation is great: if on the one hand we are exposed to the vicissitudes of earthly life (because we have to fight to survive, live, live together and grow), on the other we have the daily opportunity to build our own path of evolution.

The following table presents the free-thinking spiritist model of reincarnation. The concepts it presents are developed in the next chapters.

Each of these elements constitutes a trail for free construction and analysis, allowing for different approaches both from a conceptual and methodological point of view.

## Reincarnation: Spiritist free-thinking model

### 1 Conceptual basis

#### *1A Concept*

Reincarnation is the return of the spirit to material life. (cf. Chap. 2)

#### *1B Objectives*

The goals of reincarnation are:

1. Enhancement - spirit evolution
2. Participation and contribution of the spirit to the evolution of society (cf. Chap. 2)

#### *1C Necessity*

All spirits are subjected to successive incarnations and the vicissitudes of material life. (cf. Chap. 2)

#### *1D Plurality of worlds*

The reincarnations of the spirit can take place on Earth or in other worlds. (cf. Chap. 3)

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## Reincarnation: Spiritist free-thinking model

### 2 Philosophical reflection

#### *2A - Dialectic*

The dialectic of reincarnation: being born, dying and being reborn again. (cf. Chap. 3)

#### *2B Interexistentialism*

The philosophical approach of spiritism is existentialist: from the concrete reality of the incarnation, it seeks its possible essence and departs from it towards metaphysical inductions. Mediumship and successive lives lead to interexistence. (cf. Chap. 3)

#### *2C Rationality*

Reincarnation presents a rational vision for life, present and future. (cf. Chap. 3)

#### *2D Evolution*

Reincarnation aligns with universal evolution and promotes the interlacing of material and spiritual evolution. (cf. Chap. 3)

#### *2E Autonomy*

The law of justice neither punishes nor rewards, it is the human being who traces their own destiny, overcoming natural and social determinisms. There is no need for divine judgment or supernatural sanctions. (cf. Chap. 3)

## Reincarnation: Spiritist free-thinking model

### 3 Ethical, moral, and social consequences

#### *3A Family and social ties*

Reincarnation strengthens family and social ties. Life in society and in the family is necessary for the progress of the spirit. (cf. Chap. 4)

#### *3B Moral, social, and aesthetic consequences*

The spiritist theory of reincarnation has moral, social and aesthetic consequences. It tends to lead human beings to be better, to become more supportive, to seek the good of all. Reincarnation leads to a human ideal that propels progress and noble causes. (cf. Chap. 4)

#### *3C Social justice*

Social injustices are due to human selfishness and are not justified nor occur as a consequence of reincarnation. The fight against injustices and inequalities is imperative for the evolution of the spirit and society. (cf. Chap. 4)

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## Reincarnation: Spiritist free-thinking model

### 4 Scientific research

#### *4A Spontaneous past life memories*

The method for the investigation of spontaneous memories is defined, it is continuously improved, and is shown to be applicable.

Researchers from various countries work collaboratively. There is a large number of cases catalogued and analysed, constituting a useful database for continuing research and verifying the hypothesis of reincarnation. (cf. Chap. 5)

#### *4B Memory regression*

There is a large set of memory regression cases already studied. Being an experimental approach, it is possible to identify and control several variables, allowing the results to be reliable. (cf. Chap. 5)

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### 5 Renovation of concepts and vocabulary

#### *5A Heaven and Hell*

There is no heaven, hell, purgatory, angels, and demons: justice is done through the reincarnation process. (cf. Chap. 4)

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## Reincarnation: Spiritist free-thinking model

### 5 Renovation of concepts and vocabulary

#### *5B Expiation, guilt, sin, and punishment*

The concept rooted in the word expiation is not consistent with the dynamic and libertarian view of reincarnation. Reincarnation is a process of growth, not guided by guilt, penalties and punishments. (cf. Chap. 3)

#### *5C Trial: dynamic opportunity*

The static concept of predetermined exam is replaced by dynamic opportunities for learning and progress. (cf. Chap. 3)

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The free-thinking spiritist view of reincarnation is conceptually and structurally different from the Christian religious spiritist model. Instead of strictly programmed incarnations, static trials and expiations, penalties and rewards, it considers reincarnation in a libertarian process of perfecting the spirit and society, valuing human beings and their actions as drivers of their destiny and active participants in the dynamics of the universe, in an endless dialectic process.

### 3 REINCARNATION AND LIFE

*"To be born, live, die, to be born again  
and constantly progress, that is the Law"*

Phrase engraved on the tomb of  
Allan Kardec, unknown author

The essential questions related to the meaning of life are dealt with by the spiritist philosophy, which has reincarnation as one of its main thematic axes. Why do we live? Why do we interact? Why do I forget the past? Are we free to think and act or does life lead us? Is our destiny predefined?

More and better than answering them, the Spiritist philosophy offers a field and instruments for them to be the object of reflection, discovery, and

learning, opening new paths for human beings, and shedding light over them.

Spiritist philosophy is based on reason. The rationality of the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation has been present since *The Spirits' Book*, by Allan Kardec, the basis of Spiritist philosophy.<sup>2</sup> The reading of the chapters dedicated to the theme (especially II, IV, V and VII of Part Two) build a consistent and convincing design for the journey of evolution of the spirit through successive lives.

Gustave Geley, one of the founders, in 1919, with Friedrich Myers and Charles Richet, among others, of the *Institut Métapsychique International* (IMI, *Institute of International Metapsychics*) in Paris<sup>43</sup> and creator of the *Metapsychics Magazine*, points out, in

**French psychiatrist and metapsychic researcher.**

**Considered one of the most notable researchers in the field of materializations, a reference in the study of ectoplasm and its phenomena. He was the first president of the *Institut Métapsychique International* (*International Metapsychic Institute*), which also included Charles Richet, Camille Flammarion, Oliver Lodge, Ernesto Bozzano and other researchers.**



**Gustavo Geley**  
(1868-1924)

a letter sent to Dr. Innocenzo Calderone, founding director of the Magazine *Filosofia della Scienza* in Palermo and author of *Free Will, Determinism and Reincarnation*, the **rationality of the spiritist theory of reincarnation** (which he calls palingenesis), convinced that it presents a rational and credible vision for present and future life:

*"My dear friend, may you know that I am a reincarnationist and I was led to this for three fundamental reasons:*

- 1<sup>st</sup>) because, under the moral aspect, the palingenetic doctrine satisfies me completely;*
- 2<sup>nd</sup>) because, under the philosophical aspect, it is absolutely rational;*
- 3<sup>rd</sup>) because, from a scientific point of view, it is plausible and, even more, probably true."<sup>44</sup> (p. 118)*

Manuel Porteiro, an Argentine Spiritist thinker, also points to reason as one of the main foundations of Spiritist philosophy.<sup>45, 46</sup>

This chapter presents an introduction to the spiritist philosophy of reincarnation from a free-thinking point of view. The main differential in relation to the religious view is the philosophical inquiry as a method and as an alternative to ready-made answers that stifle reason, free thought, and individual and collective growth.

### 3.1 Spiritist philosophy of reincarnation

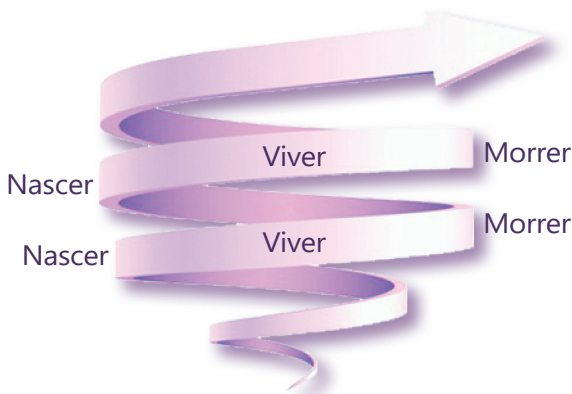
Spiritist philosophy was conceived by Allan Kardec based on observations and reflections. After objectively verifying the reality and nature of the communications of dead people's spirits, he began to investigate and analyze the philosophical and moral consequences of this phenomenon, always with the collaboration of spirits who answered his questions. This is how the spiritist philosophy was designed.

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation is one of the faces of this philosophy, which has its clearest exposition in *The Book of Spirits*<sup>2</sup>. There is a line that runs through the walk of the spirit. It is outlined above all in its Second Part and can be summarized as follows:

- the spirit is **immortal** and seeks to overcome its original ignorance;
- after a period of preliminary maturation, they are born into a **new incarnation** as a human being;
- **live** the human experience, learn, act, interact, grow;
- when the physical body **dies**, the spirit breaks free, carrying the essence of its experience;

- in the **spirit world**, lives new experiences and learnings, preparing for a new incarnation;
- **reincarnates**, and a new cycle begins.

This journey can be represented by a spiral in which each cycle leads to a new point never visited before.



The spirit gradually builds its trajectory of evolution. Each step is linked to the maturity it has already reached. Each new incarnation brings you the opportunities for improvement that you need and seek. This chaining gives meaning to life, not because it gives ready and hasty answers to human questions, but because it gives human beings the protagonism of their path.

The spirit synthesizes, at each stage, its own trajectory. It expresses, by itself, its past (impregnated in its intellect-moral structure), present (the reality it builds) and future (the path it draws to be followed). The spirit is the forger of its own evolution.

This causal link is even stronger if we consider it in the broad sense, that of the **interexistent being**, proposed by José Herculano Pires, in the conception of Spiritist Existentialism.<sup>47, 48</sup> For him, the spiritist philosophy is existentialist, as it faces the human being in the world<sup>49</sup>:

*"Thus, what we call Spiritist Existentialism is the Spiritist Philosophy of Existence, the part of this Philosophy that faces man in the world, in the same way as the being there that Heidegger referred to. Until the appearance of Spiritism, spiritualist thought was platonic: it accepted the assumption of a metaphysical reality from which all physical reality derived. Spiritism assumed the Aristotelian position: to seek in concrete reality its possible essence and from there to metaphysical inductions."<sup>49</sup> (p. 32)*

In Herculano's view, we are interexistent beings in a broad sense:

*"It is easy to understand that the philosophies of Existence, like what Kardec said about the Sciences, advance parallels to Spiritism up to a certain point*



*and then stop, perplexed before the mystery. The moment in which they stop is the threshold of interexistence, that intermediary in which the being is completed in death, but in which facts of mediumship also take place. It is at this moment that Existentialism transcends itself to transform itself into Interexistentialism.*

*The Spiritist Philosophy of Existence is not limited to existing in the world, as a simply phenomenal fact, but thanks to the concept of mediumship arising from objective scientific research and developed therein, it discovers existing in the intermundane (which the Greeks already knew as the existence of the gods ) and also discovers the succession of existences in the world as a palingenetic process inherent in all of Nature (which the Greeks also knew)."<sup>49</sup> (p. 34)*

While we are alive, we interact with the invisible, which greatly expands our life of interrelationship. The Brazilian writer Dora Incontri discusses this aspect of interexistence, which involves the role of mediumship for human beings:

*"Mediumship is an interexistential way of living, (...) it is a being in this world, open to other dimensions."<sup>50</sup>*

With each incarnation, the communicative relationship between the incarnated and the disembodied is renewed, in a continuous evolutionary process in both worlds.

The other aspect of interexistence transcends this life and allows us to look at our spiritual path: it is expressed through multiple existences. **The philosophy of reincarnation is the quest to unravel the interexistential adventure of the spirit in multiple incarnations.**

The realization that we inter-exist allows us to think that everything is linked and that there is a causal link in our trajectory. However, the causality of the existential process cannot be limited to the restricted and closed concept of cause and effect, widely cited by religious spiritism to explain the existential and moral phenomena of the human being in this life (supposed effects) from supposed past actions (alleged causes). Interexistence is complex, as much as the human being itself. All natural phenomena are of great complexity, multicausal, and sometimes it is impossible to determine a cause for a given effect, or even a combined set of causes. It makes sense, however, to study and understand the interexistential path that each spirit builds in interaction with the environment.

Manuel Porteiro uses, for this analysis of reincarnation, the **dialectical method**, whose focus is the opposition and contradiction of ideas that lead to other ideas. In his book *Dialectical Spiritism*, he

advocates that Spiritist philosophy is scientific (*"rests on experimental facts"*), rational (*"logically interpreted in the light of facts"*) and dialectical, *"because it considers things in motion, in constant succession and indefinite improvement, united or related by the law of causality, developing in virtue of opposite terms, necessary for the production of every phenomenon and of every evolutionary process and by the very fact of their palingenesis."*<sup>45</sup> (Chapter I)

The existential dynamic opposes birth (**thesis**) to death (**antithesis**), which are resolved by the **synthesis** of reincarnation. This becomes a new thesis, and a new cycle takes place.

The dialectical method allows discussing the most diverse aspects of human beings and society. Applied to social analysis by economists and social scientists since Hegel and Marx, this instrument receives new and broader perspectives with the spiritist vision. Society comes to be seen as the integration of interexistent beings.

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation recognizes in human beings the ability to think and act autonomously, as well as to guide their destiny, but recognizes the influence of the environment and other external factors (heteronomous) in human motivations and actions.

The journey of the spirit can be analyzed from the point of view of building autonomy. For Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis, this ability is built through multiple lives:

*"From reflexes, we develop automatisms and instincts. With the ability to make decisions, we acquire discernment. We select paths, we learn to reason. Reasoning develops intelligence, which in turn expands the possibility of choices and the degree of autonomy.*

*Consciousness progressively takes cognizance of the self, the outer world and its meaning. We develop temporal awareness and, therefore, the notion of past, present and future (perception restricted to the human species).*

*We use our free will more and more, thus expanding our responsibility and the possibility of choices, the ability to be more instituting than instituted.*

*Hence, we say that the evolutionary process is fundamentally intellectual and moral, as the spirit gradually conquers the awareness of the spirituality that surrounds it, allowing it to expand to other dimensions...*

*(...)*

*The spirit is the subject of its own destiny, as it enjoys freedom and has free will. But (...) experiences, at all times, the autonomy/heteronomy fold."<sup>25</sup> (p. 189;192)*

Autonomy is gradually conquered by the spirit. Morality, at the level of development in which humanity finds itself, potentially has a high degree of autonomy. Paulo Henrique de Figueiredo, in his book *Autonomy: the never-told history of spiritism*, rescues the Kardecist vision of morality centered on autonomy, which breaks with the pre-established rules by religions and calls human beings to decide on their own thoughts and actions.<sup>51</sup>

The human being is the conductor of their destiny. The studies of the Frenchman Léon Denis, recognized for his close connection with the Kardecian thought, his vigorous work, his ideas, his ideals and his spiritist activism, constitute a great contribution to the spiritist philosophy. The well-known work *The problem of being and destiny* contains, in essence, the bases of the philosophy of reincarnation. When discussing the problem of being, he concludes that it boils down to the problem of the soul itself, for which spiritism presents the essential key:

*"The problem of the being and the problem of the soul are summed up in one: it is the soul that provides the man with his principle of life and movement. The human soul is a free and sovereign will; it is the conscious unit that dominates all attributes, all functions, all material elements of being, just as the divine soul dominates,*

*coordinates, and chains all parts of the Universe, to harmonize them.*"<sup>52</sup> (p. 63)

Reincarnation is a central theme in Denis's discussion of the problem of fate. He analyzes the dynamics of the evolution of the spirit through successive lives, discusses his journey towards the

French writer, lecturer and spiritist leader, considered by many to be the main follower of Kardec. Self-taught, he always had a great interest in reading and knowledge.

At the age of 18, he had his first contact with *The Book of Spirits*, by Allan Kardec, becoming one of its greatest scholars and promoters.

He was honorary president of the French Spiritist Union, honorary member of the International Spiritist Federation, President of the International Spiritist Congress, held in Paris, in 1925. A researcher of mediumship, he directed, for several years, an experimental spiritism group in the French city of Tours.



**Léon Denis**  
(1846-1927)

A great spiritist speaker, he gave lectures to large audiences in several cities.

He is the author, among other works, of *The Problem of Being and Destiny*<sup>52</sup>, a compendium of Spiritist philosophy.

construction of happiness, establishes the need to experience good and evil as learning processes, and concludes that there is no fatality:

*"It is the man, by his own will, that forges his chains; it is he who weaves, thread by thread, day by day, from his birth to his death, the fabric of his destiny. Deep down, the law of justice is just the law of harmony. It determines the consequences of the acts that we freely practice. It does not punish or reward, it simply presides over the order, the balance of the moral world as well as that of the physical world. Any damage caused to the universal order entails causes of suffering and necessary reparation, until, through the care of the guilty one, the violated harmony is re-established."<sup>52</sup> (p. 187)*

A question can be asked about reincarnation: why don't we remember previous incarnations? Forgetting constitutes a difficulty for research on the subject. If, ordinarily, past lives were remembered, there would be no doubt about the reality of the plurality of existences. Kardec studied this issue and concluded that forgetting is necessary, because "forgotten of his past, he [man] is more master of himself".<sup>2</sup> (q. 392 and sgs)

Philosopher Brutus Abel F. Pimentel points out three **characteristics of forgetting the past** in the

spiritist view<sup>25</sup> (p. 115):

1. **it is not universal** (“there are human beings capable of remembering, with a greater or lesser degree of intensity, at least passages from their past reincarnations”).
2. **it is not absolute** (“human beings have ‘innate ideas’, instinct and intuition, ‘tendencies’ and insights”).
3. **it is necessary** (so that human beings “may have the opportunity to more fully attend to their present lives, without the embarrassment of the past, without the feeling of remorse or humiliation for the evil they may have committed, and pride or pride for the good they may have done”).

Finally, he concludes that forgetfulness “compels us not to neglect the present time and, consequently, not to compromise the future time, our own evolution and progress.”<sup>25</sup> (p. 124)

Forgetting the past is one of the greatest paradoxes of reincarnation. The limitations imposed by the material structure can, to a large extent, explain it, but they do not deprive scholars of reasons for scientific and philosophical inquiries yet to be unveiled about this process.



The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation, with a free view, is fully capable of supporting the construction of spiritist solidary thinking, which recognizes selfishness as the cause of humanity's ills, but which also highlights the full condition of human beings to act to overcome their individual and collective problems, without waiting for fate to build, by itself, a kingdom of peace and happiness. Of course, there are no ready-made, unique and closed solutions. Thus, our intelligence is constantly challenged to, together, propose and make it happen, overcoming our ignorance, our differences and divergences. That's the greatness of life.

### **3.2 Evolution and plurality of worlds**

The free-thinking spiritist view of reincarnation is completely associated with the concept of evolution. For spiritism, material evolution and spiritual evolution are the engines of the Universe and of life. Reincarnation promotes the intertwining of the various facets of evolution.

The writer Eugenio Lara expressed himself about these forms of evolution as follows:

*"Spiritism admits Darwin's thesis regarding the origin of species, natural selection, biological evolution. The evolutionist thesis does not clash*

*with spiritist philosophy, which is not restricted to it, since its object of study, the spirit, one of the constitutive elements of the universe, according to its cosmogony, is subject, in its individuation, to other processes, independent of and concomitant with material and biological evolutionism.*"<sup>53</sup> (p. 7)

It is necessary to differentiate material **evolution** from **spiritual evolution**.

**Material evolution** (biological, genetic, or organic) means the change of hereditary characteristics of a population of living beings from one generation to another. One of the phenomena that demonstrate this evolution is natural selection: hereditary traits in a population that contribute to survival and reproduction become more common, while detrimental traits become rarer. Although the link between biological evolution and progress is discussed among scientists, the majority view is that this evolution, studied by the Theory of Evolution, by Charles Darwin and Russel Wallace, **is not linked to progress**. Professor Francisco J. Ayala, from the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of California, in an article published in 2007 on what he called "*Darwin's greatest discovery*", makes it clear that natural selection does not denote an end goal and does not necessarily produce more complex and advanced organisms.<sup>54</sup>

Material evolution has other perspectives besides the biological one, studied by the different branches of science.

Added to these visions, from Kardec, that of **spiritual evolution**, presented for the first time in the second edition of *The Book of Spirits*. This evolution is also in nature, it is **progressive**, and its driver is the spiritual principle.<sup>2</sup> (Part Two, Chap. XI)

In the stage of humanity, the incarnated spirit is the driver of human and social progress, which is also expressed in cultural, scientific, historical, civilizing, and aesthetic progress. The human spirit builds this trajectory in continuous interaction with other spirits and other elements of nature.

Kardec included the **plurality of inhabited worlds** as one of the fundamental themes of spiritism. In this discussion, he aligned two concepts: evolution is done through the reincarnation of spirits on Earth itself or in other worlds.<sup>1,2</sup>

The plurality of worlds makes sense for spiritism: transmigrating between worlds, living different experiences according to the maturity it has reached at each moment, the spirit traces its path of evolution. However, it is a topic that requires caution to avoid hasty statements.

The plurality of inhabited worlds is above all a scientific hypothesis, with obvious philosophical consequences. It is up to science to investigate and unravel this phenomenon.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Astrobiology, or Exobiology**, an interdisciplinary area of science developed since the 1960s based on NASA studies, studies the origin, evolution, distribution, and future of life in the Universe. (55) It has made a great contribution to the advancement of studies on the plurality of inhabited worlds. Two high-impact scientific journals are dedicated to publishing the most recent research in this area: *Astrobiology*, since 1980<sup>56</sup> and the *International Journal of Astrobiology*, since 2002.<sup>57</sup>

### 3.3 Trials, Expiations and Suffering

Anguish, suffering, and pain are part of life and the evolutionary journey of the spirit. To understand its meaning and role for spiritism, it is necessary to conceptualize and discuss the meaning of trial and expiation.

Jaci Regis makes it clear that spiritism does not adopt the concepts of **guilt, sin, and punishment** that permeate the Christian religions. For him, natural law offers opportunities to the spirit:

Brazilian psychologist and spiritist writer. Considered a pioneer of the secular movement in Brazil. Born into a spiritist family, he participated with prominence in the youth movement in the State of São Paulo. He was one of the founders of the Municipal Spiritist Union of Santos (UMES), in 1951, being its first vice-president.

He participated in the Spiritist Youth Students of Truth (Mocidade Espírita Estudantes da Verdade - MEEV) and the Allan Kardec Spiritist Center. He was one of the founders of the Santos Kardecist Cultural Institute (Instituto Cultural Kardecista de Santos - ICKS).

He was the creator and president of *Editora Dicesp*, an organ from UMES, developing an intense work of spreading spiritism. He created, together with other young people, including the journalist José Rodrigues, the periodical *Spiritism and Unification*, which he directed for more than two decades, spreading innovative ideas for the spiritist movement, with emphasis on the Spiritization



**Jaci Regis**  
(1932-2010)

campaign. He later founded the periodical *Opening*, which became one of the references of free spiritism.

He is the author of 12 books, including *A New Vision of Man and the World*<sup>30</sup>, in which he discusses spiritism under the aegis of freedom of thought.

*"The Divine or Natural Law has an objective; it establishes norms to reach it. (...) this Law is not expressed in detailed codes, but in intention. Before this determinism becomes a restriction, it becomes an opening, an existential opportunity. Thus, by superficial analogy, it is possible to compare the amplitude of the Law, the divine determinism, with the amplitude of the oceans, for example, which although known to be limited, allow, due to their extension, an infinity of movements."<sup>58</sup>*

The **trials** are the experiences that the spirit lives and the challenges it faces. Every day we experience trials to overcome. They are, in general, derived from the decisions we make in life itself. Kardec considers that the spirit's free will allows it to choose the nature of the incarnation it will have and, therefore, the type of trials it will face (poverty, body type, potential prejudice and so on).<sup>2</sup> (q. 258) Leading and assuming the leading role in life, as proposed by spiritism, requires that the trials be effectively experienced and overcome. They can be seen as opportunities for learning, interaction and growth.

In Chapter 2, the spiritist concept of **expiation** was presented, based on questions 132 and 167 of *The Spirits' Book*: suffering the vicissitudes of bodily existence. Question 998 reinforces and makes this concept even clearer: *"the expiation is fulfilled during*

*bodily existence, through the trials to which the Spirit is subjected and, in the spiritual life, through the moral sufferings, inherent to the Spirit's state of inferiority*".<sup>2</sup> The difference between this vision and the one that is usually adopted by religious spiritist thinking is evident.

Despite having been proposed in these terms, it is undeniable that the term expiation is impregnated with a strong religious meaning, linked to punishment, suffering, serving a sentence, compensation for a previous crime, penance, or reparation. It has the connotation of divine reprisal for a sin. Therefore, many spiritist texts link it to the imposed reparation of past faults.

Kardec himself used the religious concept of expiation for faults (remission for past mistakes), both throughout *The Spirits' Book* and in other books of his and in the *Spiritist Magazine*<sup>59</sup> (especially in reports of communications from spirits). He states that the spirits choose their trials "*according to the nature of their faults, those that lead them to atone for these and to progress more quickly*".<sup>2</sup> (q. 264) He attests that, by way of expiation, the spirit can be constrained to unite with the body of a child who, "due to its birth and the position it will occupy in the world, becomes an instrument of punishment".<sup>2</sup> (q. 337) In addition, he analyses that the hatred

sometimes observed by a mother for a child can be an expiation for the one, "if he happened to have been a bad father, or a perverse mother, or a bad son, in another existence".<sup>2</sup> (q. 891)

It should be noted that several excerpts from *The Book of Spirits* allow for different readings. The meaning of each of them is conditioned by the previous concept that the reader has of the expiation. The impact of a rereading of these questions with a focus on the vision of expiation set out in question 132 is strong. This duality of Kardecian thought demonstrates his search for a differentiated, libertarian, and progressive approach, contrasting with the adherence to several religious concepts rooted in his formation. The reports of the spirits – including many ecclesiastics – recorded in the *Spiritist Magazine* and in several of its books, also denote a strong presence of these theses.

It is essential to recognize that liberation from this view is very difficult, as it composes the psyche and human relationships themselves: people blame themselves for their own actions or omissions. In addition, they identify blame on other people. In social life, they wish and propose punishments for those who commit an error or crime. The legal system reflects this human attitude: it is founded, to



a large extent, on the identification of guilt and the application of penalties.

Although they are beyond our control, since they come from the vicissitudes that life presents us with, although they are sometimes hard, even unbearable, incomprehensible, inexorable, expiations are also opportunities to learn and grow.

Facing the vicissitudes that incarnation gives us to survive, live and coexist constitutes an instrument of progress of the spirit. In addition to the natural challenges presented by material life (there being no necessary planning for their occurrence, nor a linear link with the past) are added the difficulties inherent to their greater or lesser maturity (caused or amplified, ordinarily, by ignorance or unpreparedness of the spirit itself).

Trials and expiations often express themselves through suffering and pain.

Leon Denis shows that the reaction to pain differentiates mature spirits from immature ones:

*"The first movement of the unhappy man is to rebel against the blows of fate. However, later on, after the spirit has climbed the slopes, when contemplating the rough path travelled, the succession of its existences, it is with tender joy that it remembers the trials, the tribulations, with which it was able to reach the top."<sup>52</sup> (p. 420)*

Pain has deep meaning and great impact for human beings. Some pains are fleeting and marginal, others dominate the entire dynamics of a life, bewildering, hurting hard. Leon Denis also discusses the meaning of pain and suffering in our journey:

*"The statue, in its ideal and perfect forms, is embedded, hidden, in the rough rock. When man doesn't have the energy, the knowledge, the will to sculpt it, then (...) pain comes. He takes the hammer, the chisel and, little by little, with violent blows, or else, with the slow and persistent work of the burin, the living statue is drawn in its smooth and wonderful contours, under the excavated quartz, the emerald shines!*

*Yes, so that the form stands out, in its pure and delicate lines, so that the spirit triumphs over the substance, so that the thought flows in sublime emanations, the poet finds his immortal phrases and the musician, his soft chords, our hearts they need the sting of fate, the mourning and tears, the ingratitude, the betrayals of friendship and love, the anguish and the lacerations; what is needed are the coffins of loved ones whose burial we accompany, the youth that flees, the icy old age that arrives, the disappointments, the bitter sadness that follow one another. Man needs suffering, like the fruit of the vine, the press that extracts its delicate liquor!"<sup>52</sup>*  
(pp. 423-4)

Pain is present in the path of evolution, it reflects to a large extent the stage of progress of the spirit and constitutes an opportunity for maturation, but it is not necessarily and automatically linked to rescues from past faults.

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation identifies the role of suffering and pain in the dynamics of progress and recognizes the role of the spirit in overcoming it.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Suffering has a different meaning and role in different religions. A literature review published in 2018 showed that Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and religions of Indian origin provide different views on why evil, and suffering occur in this world, although they all praise God's unlimited grace. For the Semitic religions, through evil and suffering, God offers good things to human beings. Religions of Indian origin emphasize that human beings suffer due to their karma.<sup>60</sup> In dealing with this issue, the Christian spiritist religious view of reincarnation combines Christian and Indian conceptions.**



## 4 REINCARNATION, MORALS AND SOCIETY

*“The aspiration for a higher order of things is an indication of the possibility of achieving it.”*

Allan Kardec (1804-1869),  
French professor and philosopher

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation has ethical, moral, and aesthetic consequences, as it breaks with the view of guilt, sin, and prize to propose to human beings a journey of moral and social transformation through discoveries, reflections, growth, integration, and action. The essential basis for this discussion is in Part Three of *The Spirits' Book*, which deals with moral laws.<sup>2</sup>

Although they can be treated as synonyms, the words **ethics** and **morals** are, in their origin, different. Ethics (or moral philosophy) is the study of the set of moral values of a group or individual.<sup>61, 62</sup> Morality, however, is the set of rules acquired through culture, of education, tradition and everyday life, and which guide human behaviour within a society. The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation allows reflection on the values that guide the morality of human beings and therefore has relevant ethical consequences. It also has moral consequences, due to the potential to discuss and propose improvements to the rules that govern relationships in society.

Kardec made no distinction between ethics and morals, but dealt with these aspects. For example, he touched on a moral issue when dealing with the death penalty, polygamy and equal rights between men and women, which are seen differently in different cultures, but have in spiritism a critical analysis and a transformative proposal. On the other hand, he discussed points studied by ethics such as free will, the limits between necessary and superfluous, and charity.

The conviction in a future life and in reincarnation tends to lead to a better human being, more solidary, who seeks the good of all, as it proposes

a transcendent and transforming alternative to materialistic and religious views.

**Moral development**, the structure of ethical-moral values of the spirit, is the most relevant element of the **reincarnationist social vision**, since the construction of a better society has its essential base in human beings. Reincarnation creates conditions for the spirit to perfect itself and, at each new opportunity, contribute more to social improvement. This is also the greater meaning of the second major objective of reincarnation proposed by Kardec: “participation of the spirit in the march of the Universe”.<sup>2</sup> (q. 132)

Question 793 points out some characteristics of true civilization, based on the values of the spirit: “where there is less selfishness, less greed and less pride”, “where habits are more intellectual and moral than material” and “where there is more kindness, good -reciprocal faith, benevolence and generosity”.<sup>2</sup>

The formulation of the moral and social vision based on the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation requires conceptual revision, new positions and actions in relation to old visions and postures.

The following table presents the bases of the **reincarnationist moral and social** vision. The following topics discuss these elements, aiming to update and propose new reflections.

## Bases of the reincarnationist moral and social vision

1. Humanism
  2. Love and solidarity
  3. Freedom and autonomy
  4. Equality and equity
  5. Respect
  6. Justice
  7. Art and transcendence
  8. Family
  9. Knowledge and education
  10. Work
  11. Sustainability
- 

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation is the essential basis of the spiritist moral and social vision, presented, above all, in the moral laws proposed by Allan Kardec in *The Spirits' Book*<sup>2</sup>, and summarized by questions 793 and 918 (this one presents the characteristics of a good human being).

### 4.1 Humanism

Reincarnationist morality is, above all, **humanist**: it is focused on the progress of human beings and

values their protagonism. This means that the center of the spiritist analysis is the incarnated human being, not the spiritist life and the future life. Studying mediumship, life after death, and reincarnation constitute instruments for the awakening of human beings, who will potentially become more capable of facing their great anxieties, will have the bases for their own development and will be able to build paths for the progress of the society in which he lives.

Eugenio Lara, in his book *Brief Essay on Spiritist Humanism*, elucidates the Spiritist view of the human being: instead of belittling earthly life and overvaluing life after death, the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation highlights the value of human existence in the process of evolution.<sup>42</sup>

By focusing on the human being, spiritism opens itself to dialogue and union with the most diverse philosophies, policies and active practices in society aimed at the defence of human rights. Its message is about overcoming selfishness, the key to building the well-being of all incarnated spirits.

## 4.2 Love and solidarity

The reincarnationist moral has in **love** the summary of all the feelings to be developed by the



human being. For Kardec, loving your neighbor is “doing him all the good that is possible for us and that we would like to be done to us”.<sup>2</sup> (q. 886) When dealing with good human beings, Kardec raises their characteristics and summarizes: “a good man is one who practices the law of justice, love and charity, in its greatest purity”.<sup>2</sup> (comment on q. 918)

Reincarnationist morality is **solidary**, as it is focused on the union of human beings and their purposes, contributing to greater unity and sharing, however plural and differentiated people may be. Reincarnation expands opportunities to recognize that differences bring us together. It allows discovering and increasingly incorporating the perception that everyone is looking for the same thing.

Spiritism impels human beings to love intensely and build a radically supportive society.

### 4.3 Freedom and autonomy

Reincarnationist morality contains **freedom** as the main instrument of autonomous growth. Autonomy, a gradual conquest of the spirit, paves the way for its effective progress, and for its action for a better world.

Tied down, the human being does not have the full condition to learn, experience, go and come back if necessary, but to follow. Free, with freedom lived and conquered, it strengthens and manages to solidify its path of progress.

Kardec made it clear that human beings have freedom of thought (“unlimited”), conscience and belief (“one of the characters of true civilization and progress”) and free will (without it, “it would be a machine”).<sup>2</sup> (q. 833, 837 and 843)

In question 793, Kardec points to freedom of thought and expression as essential for civilization (*“where intelligence can develop with greater freedom”*).

The human spirit is free, and this characteristic must be exercised from childhood, through education with freedom. Learning to be free is one of the main goals of the incarnate spirit.

The spiritist social vision proposes full **social freedom**. However, fully free reincarnation is still a challenge for the incarnated human being, as it comes up against the limit of damage that a human being can cause to others and even to himself. Hence the need to establish means and social agreements that make living together and learning together possible.

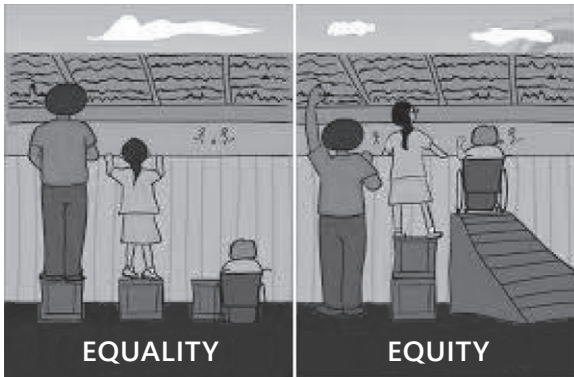
## 4.4 Equality and equity

**Equality** is an inherent flag of the reincarnation thesis. The awareness of reincarnation allows us to look at ourselves and in the eyes of those around us, seeking to understand a little of the history that each one carries, integrating with the richness of this universe and realizing that there is no reason for one person to overcome another.

We have millennial trajectories; we carry our values and differences. Kardec shows that a variety of skills is necessary: *"what one does not do, another does"*.<sup>2</sup> (q. 804) However, our differences do not explain and do not justify the inequalities of rights and obligations that we insistently construct in our family and social lives.

The Spiritist proposal of equality, closely linked to that of freedom, aims to build a society in which everyone has equal rights to education, health, culture, research, art, work, food, housing, and expression of thought. Taken, however, in its strict meaning, equality may not guarantee full social justice, as the histories, contexts, characteristics and needs of human beings are different. Recognizing these differences and observing the criteria of justice lead to **equity**, that is, the consideration of individual

aspects so that each human being has a decent level of well-being. The image of three people wanting to watch a game symbolizes the difference between equality and equity. If everyone has the same support, one will have more than he needs and the other will have much less. Equity is in allowing everyone to watch the game, each one receiving the contribution they need to do so.



Inequality is the result of human selfishness. It is not written by letters of destiny or marked by impositions from beyond. The conquest of greater equality and social equity is one of the main objectives of life in society, in the spiritist view. The table below presents a set of inequalities that urgently need to be overcome.

## Social inequalities to be overcome in the spiritist view

Gender identity  
Ethnicity  
Age  
Caste / Class / Income  
Health  
Education  
Home  
Work  
Access to information

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The different facets of inequality are expressed in fewer opportunities to study, work or simply live in peace, without barriers, prejudices and even violence.

Stigma and prejudice, incompatible with the reincarnationist view, are at the root of inequality. **Gender identity**, in particular, concerns how a human being feels about their own gender. In research published in 2019, Karen Blondeel and other researchers from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois (Chicago/USA) show that prejudice and violence related to sexual orientation and the expression of gender identity are very present in modern society.<sup>63</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

The LGBTQIA+ Spiritist Front ([espiritaslgbtqia@gmail.com](mailto:espiritaslgbtqia@gmail.com)) was formed in June 2020. Its members identify themselves as “a group of progressive spiritists, composed of lesbian, gay, bisexual, asexual, transvestite, transgender, non-binary, intersex, queer and people with other sexualities and dissident gender expressions (LGBTQIA+), family members, allies” and wish to be “an LGBTQIA+ representation within the spiritist movement, at the same time that we want to be a representation of spiritism among the public interested in knowing this subject better”. They aim to “show solidarity with LGBTQIA+ individuals who have suffered some violation of access to any spiritist institution or explicit or veiled prejudiced attitudes expressed as a spiritist position on the issues”.

The Manifesto for a spirituality free of prejudice and LGBTphobia can be found at:

[cartacapital.com.br/blogs/manifesto-por-uma-espiritualidade-livre-de-preconceito-e-da-lgbtphobia/](http://cartacapital.com.br/blogs/manifesto-por-uma-espiritualidade-livre-de-preconceito-e-da-lgbtphobia/).

The acronym LGBTQIA+ identifies Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and other groups and variations of sexuality and gender.

Prejudices of ethnicity, age, and class are also mainstays for maintaining inequality.

Health, education, housing, and work, historically managed according to the economic interests of the

groups that hold power in society, are also instruments for the generation and continuity of inequality.

Also deserving increasing attention is the inequality of **access to information**, the most valuable economic and power instrument in today's world.

Successive reincarnations allow human beings and social organizations to develop means so that, more and more, everyone has dignified living conditions and access to the care of their peculiar needs.<sup>2</sup> (q. 806)

## 4.5 Respect

**Respect** is the feeling and consequent attitude of treating other people with attention and deference, recognizing their meaning and value.

The spiritist social vision, showing that the ethnic, intellectual, moral, physical, economic, and social diversity of human beings reflects, on the one hand, their different reincarnationist trajectories and, on the other hand, the equally different conditions they face in their lives, naturally carries the message of **full respect and opposition to any and all types of prejudice**.

Question 793 of *The Spirits' Book* points out three elements of true civilization related to respect for all human beings: less caste and birth prejudices

*("they are incompatible with true love of neighbor"), protection of the weakest by the strongest, and respect for the life, beliefs, and opinions of each one.*<sup>2</sup>

The Brazilian spiritist writer Milton Rubens Medran Moreira, former President of CEPA, editor of the periodical *Opinion*, a prominent organ for the dissemination of free spiritism, shows, in his book *Law and Justice: a spiritist look*, that spiritist morality recognizes the role of the spirit human and natural right that it must build its own path with autonomy.<sup>64</sup> It proposes, on the one hand, that each being fight for this role and never give up on it. On the other hand, it respects the values and paths chosen by other human beings around them, establishing social limits only for actions that attack or cause harm to people or the environment.<sup>2</sup> (q. 875)

## 4.6 Justice

For Allan Kardec, justice is so much in nature that *"you revolt at the mere idea of injustice"*.<sup>2</sup> (q. 873)

The reincarnatory process carries natural justice, which Gustavo Geley called **immanent justice**, *"the result of the normal and regular game of terrestrial life"*<sup>44</sup> (p. 118): the human being – conductor of his destiny – builds his path, without the need for divine judgment,



at the same time that he gradually molds his own intellectual-moral structure, capable of grounding him in new adventures and discoveries, always in front of great uncertainties, inherent to the complexity of life.

Philosopher José Luis dos Santos, in the book *Spiritism: a Brazilian Religion*, assesses that the religious reincarnationist vision of justice seeks to preserve the Christian concept of **eternal punishment**, sometimes replacing it with that of **temporary punishment**, imposed and lived in a programmed way in reincarnation.<sup>33</sup> As already discussed in Chapter 2, the religious view links life's sufferings to the payment of past debts. That would be the justice of reincarnation. However, this concept is incompatible with the dynamic view of progress through multiple incarnations.

The free-thinking vision of reincarnation does not intend to explain our sufferings in remote, unknown, and uncertain mistakes of the past, but recognizes that the human spirit builds a trajectory of progress. The spirit carries its historical, millennial meaning.

**Justice is not in the imposed punishments (which would mean revenge), but in the renewed opportunities for revision, renewal and reconstruction that are offered in each incarnation.**

Psychologist and spiritist writer Jaci Regis advocates that spiritism **does not admit the existence of heaven, hell and purgatory**.<sup>58</sup> Kardec had already discussed the difficulties in using these Christian terms. The philosophy of reincarnation presents us with an incessant journey of progress and discards imposed penalties.

Social progress requires improving the **system of laws and justice** in society. The spiritist social vision is based on the idea that reincarnation offers human beings the opportunity to repeatedly contribute to the improvement of this system.

*The Spirit's book* points to a civilization in which the laws do not consecrate privileges and are applicable to all, without distinction ("they are the same for the last as for the first"). It also proposes that justice be exercised with "less partiality".<sup>2</sup> (q. 793)

## 4.7 Art and transcendence

Art is one of the most comprehensive and authentic expressions of the human spirit, as it allows, on the one hand, its manifestation and communication, and on the other, the historical record of beings, their creations, and the civilizations they build.

**Aesthetics** is a branch of philosophy that studies the nature, beauty, and foundations of art. (65) Kardec's books do not deal with aesthetic issues, but he opened a continuous space in the *Spiritist Magazine* for dissertations on art, sometimes brought by well-known disembodied French artists, such as the painter Louis Joseph César Ducornet, the composer Gioachino Antonio Rossini and others. These articles mainly discuss the new perspectives that spiritism brings to art.<sup>59</sup> In volume 11 (1868), for example, he discusses the art-soul relationship:

*"In effect, the sublime of art and poetry is to speak to the soul, to elevate thought above the matter that restricts us, and from which we aspire, without ceasing, to leave; but to make the strings of the soul vibrate, it is necessary to have a soul that vibrates in unison."<sup>59</sup>*

The Magazine has also published, over the years, countless mediumistic poems.

Manuel Porteiro is one of the few spiritist scholars to recognize that spiritism has aesthetic consequences: "as aesthetics, spiritism teaches how to create a new art in accordance with the spiritist conception of life".<sup>45</sup>

Through art, human beings can unveil themselves and build paths of transformation. It is vertical

Argentine Spiritist writer and philosopher, considered the founder of Spiritist Sociology. He had humble origins as a manual worker. Self-taught, he acquired with great effort an extraordinary intellectual formation. He was President of the Argentine Spiritist Confederation (Confederação Espírita Argentina - CEA), between 1934 and 1935.



**Manuel S.  
Porteiro**  
(1881-1936)

He participated, with Humberto Mariotti, in the V International Spiritist Congress, held in Barcelona, Spain (1934).

He has published several articles and three books, among them *Dialectical Spiritism*, in which he proposes the application of the dialectical method in the spiritist interpretation of man, life and the Universe.

transcendence, in the words of José Herculano Pires.<sup>66</sup> Art also makes it possible to explore and propose new paths for the social environment (horizontal transcendence).

Called to free itself, the incarnated spirit breaks the limits imposed by itself and by society's controls. Art and freedom are siblings.

Architecture, design, sculpture, painting, literature, music, dance, theatre, cinema and other endless

forms and combinations of them have been, over the centuries, the richest instruments for expressing the ideas and feelings of the human spirit.

## 4.8 Family

Reincarnation strengthens **family ties**.<sup>2</sup> (q. 773 and sgs) The family offers the reincarnating spirits the propitious environment for their first welcome, the first apprenticeships and the space for the structuring of their psychological and social base. With each new incarnation, these bonds are strengthened, making this relationship even more robust.

Contrary to what many critics of the modern transformations that families are experiencing think, this Kardecian concept is reinforced in this context, characterized by growing diversity and freedom of family cores.

In the reincarnationist dynamics, the family makes more and more sense. Its role in welcoming the spirit, in experiencing the first moments and in the exercise of essential values, gains even greater value, as the family structures in which the generous impulses to break with hegemonic values are suffocated. By experiencing learning and feeling free, the family contributes to building a better society.

The family is the core of society's relations, an essential basis for the progress of spirits.

It is fundamental to recognize that **love** and **affection** are the essential foundations, the real marks of a true family. Many traditional families, formed by father, mother and descendants are "non-families", as they do not cultivate these feelings. In addition to traditional families, other great opportunities present themselves to reincarnated spirits.

Recent sociological studies such as those by Júlio Henrique de Macedo Alves<sup>67</sup> and Maria Consuelo Passos<sup>68</sup> present us with some of these configurations:

1. **single-parent family**, in which only one person plays the role of father and mother, bearing all the responsibilities of raising their children,
2. **same-sex or homo-affective family**, in which same-sex couples are united, with or without children,
3. **parentless family**, formed only by children, without the presence of any of the parents,
4. **reconstituted family**, formed by the couple and child(ren) from previous relationships.

Same-sex families, as well as those formed by different gender expressions, have been persecuted by age-old prejudices, but a mature look recognizes

that many of them constitute nuclei of love and growth, deeper meanings of family.

The concept of family can be extended even further. There are groups that gather around a cause, such as Spiritist centers, churches, Narcotics Anonymous associations, etc. People form affinity groups to carry out life projects or simply to build happiness. Over time, they cease to be occasional unions and form a lasting and essential relationship. Love and affection begin to characterize these groups, which are organized as a true family. Reincarnation offers these opportunities for kindred spirits, who bring innate ideas about their points of convergence.

The different family structures can be studied from a transcendent point of view, opening up questions about the various forms of relationships and the new family dynamics that incarnated spirits build.

## 4.9 Knowledge and education

Free moral transformation, founded on discovery, reason and will, has **knowledge** and **education** as its essential instruments. Kardec made the pedagogical bias of his work clear when he discussed the value of moral education:

*"There is an element that is not usually weighed in the balance and without which economic science is nothing more than a simple theory. That element is education, not intellectual education, but moral education. We are not referring, however, to moral education through books, but to that which consists of the art of forming characters, to that which instils habits, since education is the set of acquired habits."*<sup>2</sup> (comment on q. 685)

**The search for knowledge and the education of the spirit** are basic components of the spiritist social proposal. The purpose of the reincarnation of spirits is essentially educational, as it provides progress in knowledge and morals. Kardec gave spiritism an educational character: the pedagogue considered that the contribution of spiritism and the various sciences to knowledge would support a better society.

The reincarnationist social vision has education as one of its foundations and assigns a great educational role to life in society. Improving education in the family, at school, at work and in the various social relationships is an imperative objective for building a true civilization.

Social programs focused on education receive important contributions from the Spiritist Theory



of Reincarnation. Among them, singularity and transcendence stand out above all.

**Singularity**, or respect for the differences between human beings, has its strongest foundation in reincarnation: we all carry our own trajectories and characteristics, and this deserves to be recognized by society.

**Transcendence** refers to the recognition that the human being overcomes, transcends, the material world. The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation reveals the interexistent being<sup>47</sup>, opening the way to understand it in a broad context. It encompasses not only material relationship life, but also the psychic potential and spiritual relationships of living beings with each other and with disembodied spirits.

José Herculano Pires, creator of the magazine Spiritist Education, made a great contribution by showing that, in the spiritist view, the student is a **reincarnated spirit**:

*"The object of education is the learner. In Spiritist Education he does not present himself only as the student of common conceptions. Before all, he is reincarnated."<sup>69</sup>*

Educator Dora Incontri and researcher Julio Peres discuss the educational and therapeutic role

Reporter, editor, secretary, parliamentary columnist, and Brazilian literary critic. Philosopher and spiritist writer, with extensive and profound work. The spirit Emmanuel, through Chico Xavier's mediumship, stated that Herculano was the meter that best measured Kardec.

He was president and professor at the Paulista Institute of Parapsychology in São Paulo and founder of the magazine *Spiritist Education*, published by Edicel.

He translated Allan Kardec's books into Portuguese and collaborated with Júlio Abreu Filho in the translation of the *Spiritist Magazine*.

Author of dozens of books on philosophy, essays, histories, psychology, pedagogy, parapsychology, novels and spiritism, most of which are devoted to the study, analysis and dissemination of spiritism.



**José Herculano  
Pires**  
(1914-1979)

Author of extensive and intense work, leaving a unique mark of public and fearless defence of spiritism, marked by commitment to truth and logic, more than with people and institutions.

The *Maria Virginia and J. Herculano Pires Foundation* ([fundacaoherculanopires.org.br](http://fundacaoherculanopires.org.br)) preserves and disseminates Herculano's legacy.

of the reincarnationist view. For them, a child or an adolescent, when seen as reincarnated spirits, are effectively respected and have their needs and desires recognized in the educational process. Adults, on the other hand, seen as evolving spirits, will also have greater opportunities and incentives to build their paths and learn throughout their lives.<sup>70</sup>

### DID YOU KNOW?

The *Brazilian Association of Spiritist Pedagogy* (*Associação Brasileira de Pedagogia Espírita - ABPE - pedagogiaespirita.org.br*) is a non-profit organization that studies, researches, and disseminates the spiritist vision of education. They define spiritist pedagogy as “the rescue of spiritism, as proposed by Allan Kardec, with its scientific, philosophical and moral/spiritual character, understanding that education is the existential goal of the human being, as a social, political, biological being and spiritual”. ABPE is characterized by intense and qualified intellectual production with publications, lectures, courses, and congresses.

## 4.10 Work

The reincarnationist social vision presents **work** as a natural law necessary for the progress of the spirit and society. Kardec proposes that “*every useful occupation is work*” and paves the way for valuing and respecting the most diverse forms of activity.<sup>2</sup> (q. 674 and sgs)

Even in the face of the technical progress that the last 100 years have provided, allowing human beings to multiply the productivity of work with the support of technology, it is still necessary to seek greater appreciation of the spirit through work, which is only possible through decent work, or that is, the type of activity that provides well-being to the body and spirit, guaranteeing a minimum of material and moral integrity, and allowing the individual to have respect and self-esteem. **In an advanced society, decent work is both a right and an opportunity for growth for all human beings.**

*The Spirit's book* clarifies that, in the reincarnationist view, **slavery** (submission of one human being to another) is absurd:

*"The human law that consecrates slavery is contrary to Nature, since it resembles man to the irrational and degrades him physically and morally."*<sup>2</sup> (q. 829)

There have been changes in the forms of slavery, but it continues to exist in many parts of the world. In contemporary forms of slavery, enslaved people are not bought, but enticed (the boss often spends only on transporting the worker to the property). According to the ILO - International Labor Organization, modern slavery is still a real and

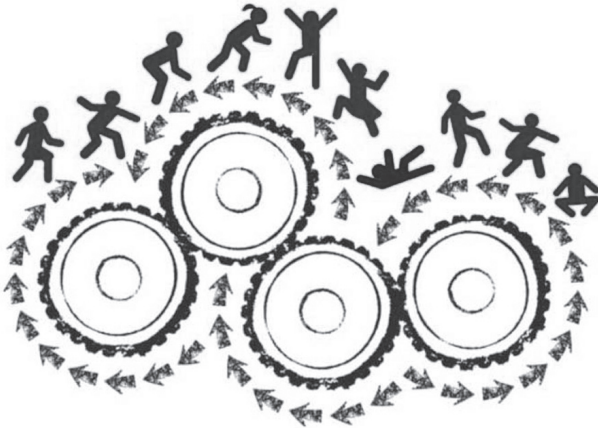
widespread phenomenon, affecting more than 40 million people globally.<sup>71</sup> The Global Slavery Index shows that, of this large contingent, 71% are women and 25% are children.<sup>72</sup> Modern slavery is present in all regions of the world, including in developed countries, participating in numerous global production chains. These are situations from which the victims are not able to voluntarily, dignified and safely extricate themselves.<sup>71</sup> The main ways are:

- forced labour,
- domestic servitude,
- servile forms of marriage and
- sexual slavery.

The *ILO Forced or Compulsory Labor Convention* defines **forced** or **compulsory labor** as all work or service required from a person under threat of a penalty and for which the person has not volunteered.<sup>73</sup>

The new slave labor (or analogous to slavery) is characterized by submission to excessive working hours, without freedom, with very low remuneration, without a pension plan and loaded with other undignified conditions. One of its forms is the so-called “uberization of work”, in which workers make use of their private goods (car, motorcycle, bicycle,

computer or simply their time) to offer services – on demand – through a digital platform. Without guarantees and with very low return, the worker assumes almost all of the risks of the work, being dragged, by the gears of the system, to exhaustion.



The reincarnated spirit needs the opportunity to develop its skills through dignified work. Dignity requires freedom, opportunity, and respect, avoiding all forms of exploitation of one human being by another.

#### 4.11 Sustainability

**Sustainability** is based on the idea that the use of natural resources to satisfy present needs

cannot compromise meeting the needs of future generations.

Discussing sustainability involves reflecting on the ability of human beings to interact with the world, preserving the environment so as not to compromise the natural resources of future generations. For Kardec, conservation is a natural law and human beings are fully capable of ensuring that natural resources are well applied:

*"The earth would always produce what was necessary, if man knew how to be content with what was necessary. If what it produces does not suffice for all needs, it is because it employs in the superfluous what could be applied in the necessary."*<sup>2</sup> (q. 705)

Kardec attributes to human selfishness the lack of means of subsistence for some, while there is abundance for others.<sup>2</sup> (q. 707)

The spiritist vision of reincarnation invites us to sustainable development, as it recognizes in the environment the intermittent stage of comings and goings of the reincarnated spirit in its search for learning, progress and action. Expanding the character of sustainability, it deals with all the elements necessary for the preservation and

continuity of the planet: organic and material sustenance (today and in the future) is completed by social justice, so that society can preserve and progress continuously, both materially and morally.

Gustavo Molino, an Argentine spiritist who studies the environmental issue, presents the spiritist view of reincarnation and sustainability as follows:

*"We must structure a sustainable reincarnationist spiritist theory that collaborates in the awareness of humanity and that allows awakening the sleeping minds by the consumerist system and false prosperity."*<sup>25</sup> (p. 157)



## 5 SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON REINCARNATION

*"Because, gentlemen, spiritism is not a religion,  
but a science, of which we only know the a, b, c.  
The time of dogmas has passed."*

Camille Flammarion (1842-1925), French astronomer,  
in a speech given at the tomb of Allan Kardec

Fundamental base of spiritism, the reality of reincarnation suffers, since Kardec, relevant questions from a scientific point of view. Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several researchers have dedicated themselves to this investigation. Some research groups structured themselves and published their results in relevant scientific journals.

This topic reports some of the work carried out and presents the methods used. Reincarnation research became more consistent with the work of Ian Stevenson and other researchers in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Venezuelan psychologist and professor Jon Aizpúrua classifies the evidence for reincarnation (which can be seen as lines of observation) into three main categories: direct, indirect, and experimental. They are summarized in the table below.

## **5.1 Lines of observation and research**

Research on reincarnation has, since its origins in the 19th century, multiple facets. The various lines of investigation produced reports of procedures, observations, results, and analyses that show that the hypothesis of reincarnation is scientifically qualified. Venezuelan psychologist and professor Jon Aizpúrua classifies the evidence for reincarnation (which can be seen as lines of observation) into three main categories: direct, indirect and experimental. They are summarized in the table below.

## Main evidence in favor of reincarnation<sup>4</sup> (Chap. VI)

### Direct evidence

Spontaneous memories of previous lives  
Information obtained via mediumship  
Obsessions

### Indirect evidence

#### *Birthmarks*

Amazing skills and knowledge (precocity)  
Innate tendencies that are reflected in personality and behavior

*Déjà vu* (feeling of recognizing someone, a place, or an object)

### Experimental evidence

hypnotic regression  
Modification of states of consciousness

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All the lines of evidence cited by Aizpúrua have generated, over the years, numerous reports of research centered on the hypothesis of reincarnation. Several methodological issues, however, arise and hinder its scientific recognition and its continuity. Among them, the most relevant one is the risk of polarization (bias) and influence of beliefs of the people involved in the observed results: a greater

or lesser belief in reincarnation can influence both researchers and researched. Developing methods and precautions to rigorously mitigate this polarization sometimes becomes the greatest difficulty in research.

Professor Alan S. Brown of *Southern Methodist University*, for example, has published a critical review of research related to *Déjà vu* (which includes reincarnation). The study shows that, despite the profusion of published research, there are several problems: significant differences in data patterns, non-homogeneous research questions and doubts about the potential bias of results.<sup>74</sup>

Research on **precocity** and on **innate ideas** has been carried out with increasing frequency in the areas of psychology and psychiatry, which opens opportunities for new studies focusing on the hypotheses of immortality and reincarnation.

Two lines of research have stood out for presenting rigorous methods and robust results: **past life recollections** and **hypnotic memory regression**. In the next topics they are focused.

## 5.2 Past life memories

Spontaneous reports of past life memories have been recorded and systematically analysed since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Researchers from

Europe, America and Asia have developed thousands of case studies along these lines, sometimes in collaboration.

The Indian Hemendra Nath Banerjee, Director of the Department of Parapsychology at the University of Rajasthan, India, reported on research carried out since the 1950s. He studied more than 1,100 cases in India, the United States, and other countries. A pioneer, he made a great contribution to the development of the research methodology for memories.

The Englishman Karl E. Muller, one of the presidents of the *International Spiritualist Federation*, reports in his book *Reincarnation based on facts* many cases of memories of children and adults, in addition to other types of investigations such as experimental ones and observations of psychic phenomena. Regarding children, he notes that their memories are peculiar, as they are characterized by spontaneity, without external stimuli.<sup>75</sup>

The most active and productive researcher of reincarnation was Ian Stevenson.

Professor of Applied Sciences Doris Kuhlmann-Wilsdorf, from the Department of Physics at the same University, considers that Stevenson was the founder of scientific research on human reincarnation.<sup>76</sup> Since he began to be interested in the subject until his

death, he catalogued and analysed a few thousand cases. The most typical are children who remember facts, scenes, places, and people with whom they lived in other lives.<sup>77</sup> Many of his works were published in reputable journals, such as *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* and *Journal of Scientific Exploration*.

In addition to the cases themselves, which represent an incomparable source for research and analysis (with spontaneous reports collected in various parts of the world), his contribution takes place in the field of research methodology. Stevenson and his colleagues developed and extensively applied a method, which can be summarized as follows<sup>79, 78</sup>:

- *collect information provided by the patient himself, or by close people who witnessed the facts or statements made by him (depositions taken separately, recorded, and compared),*
- *whenever possible, take the child to the **place** where he claims to have lived, for the search, analysis, and comparison of information,*
- *use the most varied means of **recording**: written notes, recordings, photographs, and filming,*
- *collect **additional data**: place and nature of the wounds received by the previous personality (if there was a violent death), duration of the period between the supposed incarnations, physical and psychological characteristics of the previous personality, etc.*

Psychiatrist, researcher and professor at the Department of Psychiatry and Neurology at the University of Virginia, USA. In 1967, he founded the *Division of Perceptual Studies (DOPS - med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies/)*. He is considered the founder of modern scientific research on reincarnation. He devoted himself to investigating cases of children who remembered their past experiences. He documented dozens of cases that he collected in countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Turkey, Thailand, and Burma. He is the author of *Twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation*<sup>78</sup> and several scientific articles on the subject.



**Ian Stevenson**  
(1918-2007)

- *differentiate solved and unresolved cases: only a part of the cases presents sufficient corroborating evidence, in order to be considered "solved" (cases considered unsolved are also kept, as they contribute to understanding the characteristics of the phenomenon under study).*

Careful in dealing with evidence, Stevenson established means of working with doubt, reducing it in each case studied, without precipitation, collecting, comparing, and consolidating data in profusion.<sup>80</sup> He always preferred to use the expression "suggestive cases", even when corroborated and consistent data

were at hand. In his book *Twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation*<sup>78</sup>, he presented a review of a representative group of studies.

Professor Doris Wilsdorf criticizes his excessive zeal, considering that the density of data collected in some studies and the large number of cases contributed to more objective conclusions:

*"Ian Stevenson (...) shied away from speculation and what was seemingly odd. (...) This was the only issue on which I fundamentally disagreed with him: It is true, certainty always escapes human beings, except what is established by definition, and therefore we cannot be certain that reincarnation has taken place, but neither can we be certain of Newton's laws, the theory of relativity or the theory of Darwinian evolution. However, the statistical probability that reincarnation does in fact occur, at least occasionally, is so overwhelming, established by thousands of already documented cases of remembered lives, and strongly supported by the incidence of birthmarks, in conjunction with many of their cases. well documented, which cumulatively, the evidence is not inferior to that of most if not all branches of science, be it physics, cosmology, or Darwinian evolution."<sup>76</sup>*

Despite this controversy, it is possible to assess that Stevenson's precautions – adopted as a rule by his collaborators – were valuable for a still incipient



scientific area, surrounded by methodological difficulties and the skepticism of the academy.

Other researchers from Stevenson's group and partners from various parts of the world also developed relevant studies, using the same methods and criteria, among them: Erlendur Haraldsson, Majd Abu Izzeddin, Satwant Pasricha, Titus Rivas, Ralph Shiley and Jim Tucker. Their works are available in the main scientific databases.<sup>81, 82, 83, 77</sup>

The methods of this line of research are continuously improved by researchers.

Erlendur Haraldsson of the University of Iceland studied persistent memory, observed in adults who remember a past life.<sup>84</sup> The approach to this phenomenon has some different characteristics in relation to children's memory and required the development of new protocols.

Jim Tucker, in turn, published in 2000 the strength-of-case scale (SOCS), used systematically by the Division of Personality Studies for the analysis of cases, which reached 800 at the time. based on four criteria:

1. if it involves **birthmarks/birth** defects that correspond to the supposed previous life
2. the strength of **statements** about the previous life

3. *relevant behaviors related to the previous life*
4. *an assessment of the possibility of a connection between the child reporting a previous life and the alleged previous life.*

In Brazil, several cases of reincarnation were also researched, especially by Hernani Guimarães Andrade. In 1976, he published his first study on cases of reincarnation in Brazil, entitled *A suggestive case of reincarnation: the case of Jacira and Ronaldo*. This and other surveys were later gathered in the book *Reincarnation in Brazil*.<sup>79</sup> When presenting the cases, he was careful to discuss the alternative hypotheses (fraud, cryptomnesia, super-ESP, genetic memory, and psychic incorporation) and the inapplicability of each one. Hernani kept in close contact with



**Hernani  
Guimarães  
Andrade**  
(1913-2003)

Civil engineer, Hernani Guimarães Andrade developed his career in the Department of Water and Electricity of the State of São Paulo, in Brazil.

In 1963, he founded the Brazilian Institute of Psychobiophysical Research (IBPP), dedicated to the investigation of reincarnation and other phenomena, such as the paranormal, mediumship, and obsession.

Ian Stevenson and his group and used the same methods and criteria.

The large number of cases catalogued and analysed constitutes a relevant legacy for the continuity of research in this line. The structure of this database should receive more information from new researchers from various parts of the world and, in this way, create increasingly better conditions for verifying the hypothesis of reincarnation.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Recent research has contributed to gather a robust set of cases, in broad international cooperation.

NUPES (Research Center for Spirituality and Health at the Faculty of Medicine of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora – UFJF, [ufjf.br/nupes](http://ufjf.br/nupes)), in partnership with the University of Virginia (USA) and, with funding from the Bial Foundation, Portugal, in 2019 started a survey entitled “National Survey of Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation in the Brazilian Population”.

The University of Virginia School of Medicine, Division of Perceptual Studies publishes multi-author articles relating to children remembering past lives. Can be found at: [med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies/publications/](http://med.virginia.edu/perceptual-studies/publications/)

### 5.3 Memory regression

Jeanetta W. Dunlap, in a paper presented at the 2007 *Annual Conference of the Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies*, names the studies by Stevenson and his group **past life memories recall** and identifies additional lines of research, including past life regression, related to **memory regression**. For her, *"hypnosis helps the individual to accept repressed memories and accept a new state of consciousness"*. It also shows that there are criticisms of this method, such as the difficulty of differentiating effective reminiscences from information obtained by normal means (such as readings, for example).<sup>85</sup>

Despite methodological difficulties, there are relevant studies based on past life therapy. In 2000, researcher Eric Christopher published extensive research on the effectiveness of past life therapy, which was submitted to the University of Wisconsin for a Master's degree in Couples and Family Therapy. Among the various hypotheses studied, reincarnation appears.<sup>86</sup>

The first memory regression carried out on an experimental basis is attributed to the Spanish spiritist José María Fernández Colavida, still in the 19th century. Using hypnotic techniques and taking several

scientific criteria to avoid polarization of the results, he obtained regressions of up to one or more lives.<sup>4</sup>

The Frenchman Albert de Rochas also used hypnotic procedures and obtained regression results, published in his book *The Susutivive Lives*.<sup>87</sup> One of the lines he studies is memory regression observed under the influence of an accident or at the time of death.

The American psychiatrist Gina Cerminara, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, identified that, in several clinical cases that she attended, better results were obtained when considering the links between current and previous lives.<sup>4</sup>

The American PhD in Psychology Helen Wambach published her regression experiences in the book *Remembering Past Lives: Testimonies of Hypnotized People*, with great repercussion<sup>88</sup>, as it followed rigorous scientific standards and contributed to the consolidation and respect for past life regression research.

In 1976, the German psychologist Thorwald Dethlefsen published his regression research, carried out using methods similar to those of American researchers, in the book *Past Life Regression as a Cure Method: The Experimental Proof of the Reincarnation Theory*.<sup>89</sup>

Past life therapy was also practiced and defended by the American psychiatrist Brian Weiss, author of *Many lives, many masters*<sup>90</sup>, who began to study the phenomenon after a patient of his (pseudonym "Catherine"), in a state of hypnosis, began reporting past lives.

In Brazil, several researches in this line have also been carried out since the 1980s. Psychologist Maria Julia Prieto Peres and many professionals linked to the Brazilian Society of Past Life Therapy (*sbtvp.com.br*) publish their research and offer PST courses.

## 5.4 Methodological aspects

New research areas always face conceptual and methodological difficulties. They are gradually being overcome. New hypotheses are formulated, new methods and research protocols developed. This is also the path of research on reincarnation.

In research on reincarnation, it is considered difficult (although necessary) to clearly formulate the **questions** and **hypotheses** to be investigated. Most researchers, when formulating them, avoid taking the existence and survival of the spirit as premises, as these assertions are still an object of investigation, as much as reincarnation itself. Ian Stevenson,

Jim Tucker, and others developed investigations with the hypothesis of continuity of consciousness after physical death. His studies do not deal with the possible existence of the soul (spirit) and its immortality.

The table below presents some examples of questions and hypotheses, similar to those used by several researchers.

## Examples of reincarnation research

### Spontaneous memory research

**Research question:** Is it possible to identify spontaneous memory that suggests the continuity of consciousness after physical death?

**Hypothesis 1:** Spontaneous memory that suggests continuity of consciousness after physical death is identified in a small portion of the population, especially in children younger than 7 years old.

**Hypothesis 2:** The religion or belief of the respondents and their families influences the identification of this phenomenon.

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## Examples of reincarnation research

### Memory regression research

**Research question:** Is it possible to identify, in a hypnotic process, memory that suggests the continuity of consciousness after physical death?

**Hypothesis 1:** Memory regression that suggests continuity of consciousness after physical death is identified in different age groups.

**Hypothesis 2:** The family's religion or belief influences the identification of this phenomenon.

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Research on reincarnation is still in its first stage of maturation, but has a wide perspective of development, with contributions from the most diverse areas of human knowledge.





## **6 LOOKING FORWARD**

A fundamental basis of spiritism, reincarnation is also an important driving motto of spiritist reflection. The conceptual, methodological and language update of spiritism necessarily involves a conceptual and methodological review of this important theme.

The Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation, with a free view, establishes a conceptual base of reference, of reflection and of action for scholars of spiritism and for society. Its formulation is simple and crystal clear. It respects human reason and therefore gradually receives greater support and interest from scholars, even those who, just out of curiosity, wish to know about spiritism.

The tree that Kardec planted has full opportunity to flourish along the path of free reflection on reincarnation. A free thinker and humanist, he established the foundations discussed here. In several points of his work, he still maintained conditionings that deserve revision. Resuming and rethinking them does not mischaracterize the Kardecian legacy. On the contrary, it contributes to a greater solidity of its conceptual and methodological structure, placing spiritism in full condition of dialogue with culture, science, and philosophy.

Spiritism – reincarnation, in particular – are not beliefs held by a downcast and embarrassed group of believers, isolated from the public debate that takes place in broad daylight in philosophical, social, and scientific forums. Nor are they the heritage of arrogant holders of a supposedly unique and final truth. Spiritism develops along with the human being, interacting with the various segments of knowledge. With this it grows and also makes its contribution.

From a scientific point of view, the Spiritist Theory of Reincarnation takes into account the advances already obtained and reflects on the next steps. The great challenge of making reincarnation an explicit and necessary object of scientific investigation is increasingly becoming a reality, giving continuity, and

consolidating the dream of pioneering researchers, with methods and means increasingly perfected and appropriate to the object of study.

Reincarnation is a phenomenon to be investigated with the best instruments of science. For this, there is no need to rush, desire or even want to impose ready-made truths and demonstrations. The dialogue with the different scientific areas that deal with the nature of the human being, interacting, learning, and proposing concepts and methods, is the path that free spiritism proposes. The first steps have already been taken by the pioneers, but there is still a long way to go on this journey.

For spiritism, the phenomenon is just the beginning. Unravelling the reincarnated human being and the meaning of life, in its most diverse facets and diversities, is the challenge that spiritism proposes, always dialoguing, listening and proposing a rational and philosophical debate. Reason calls, however, for limitless reflection, which also passes through the paths of emotion and love, two human mysteries that are also interesting to be unveiled.

The dialectical and existential approach of spiritism has in reincarnation the propellant of the incessant movement of the spirit in the different

dimensions and journeys. There is no more room for approaches that limited and tied him, making him look – without seeing anything – at his past. The new human being looks to the present and the future, as he is not bound by guilt, sins, and penalties, he only sees the opportunities for personal, family and social growth that incarnation provides. This philosophical reflection tends to be increasingly enriched by the free view of reincarnation, the dialogue with the other humanist areas of culture tends to strengthen, the commitment to building a better world – starting from a better human being – tends to establish.

Human beings are moral and social. The revisited and liberating reincarnation values its protagonism. He is not the victim of a prepared and already written destiny. It is the builder of history. He will live fully if he recognizes his directorial role, in full interaction with the various moral and social forces that surround him and with which he interacts. Fearless, he will seek his transformation and, recognizing the traces caused by human selfishness, he will fight to overcome it. The framework proposed by free spiritism for human action is a powerful spring for building a more just, free and advanced society.

## INDICATIONS OF INTERESTING READING

*What is Spiritism, by Allan Kardec*

*The Spirits' Book, by Allan Kardec*

*Perspectivas contemporâneas da reencarnação,  
organised by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis and  
Ricardo de Moraes Nunes*

*Los fundamentos del espiritismo, by Jon Aizpúrua*

*Spiritism from a secular and freethinking perspective,  
by Milton Rubens Medran Moreira and Salomão Jacob  
Benchaya (part of CEPA's Freethinking Collection)*

*Twenty cases suggestive of reincarnation, by Ian  
Stevenson*

*Reencarnação no Brasil: oito casos que sugerem  
renascimento, by Hernani Guimarães Andrade*

*La pluralité des existences de l'âme: conforme à la  
doctrine de la pluralité des mondes, de André Pezzani*

## INDICATIONS OF SITES OF INTEREST

CEPA (International Spiritist Association)

*<https://cepainternacional.org>*

CPDoc (Spiritist Research and Documentation Centre)

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

Kardecpedia (Interactive platform that facilitates the study of Allan Kardec's works)

*<https://kardecpedia.com/>*

NUPES (Spirituality and Health Research Centre of the Faculty of Medicine of the Federal University of Juiz de Fora – UFJF)

*<https://www.ufjf.br/nupes/>*

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