

*Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis  
Yolanda Clavijo Blas*

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

# Mediumship: exchange between two worlds



*Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis*  
*Yolanda Clavijo Blas*

***Mediumship:***  
***exchange between two worlds***

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



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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 Spirits' 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 Spirits' 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 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: 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 SPIRIT 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

Only a few opening lines to introduce the reader to a work whose content on mediumship has been painstakingly elaborated by two authors with deep knowledge of Spiritism, as well as an important academic heritage, Ms. Yolanda Clavijo and Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis, medical doctor.

It is an insightful labor that with a suitable language tells us about a skill that has been accompanying human beings since the dawn of time, and that has in Spiritism a safe promoter to avoid the risk of getting lost in cloudy and deviant practices, through marshy and therefore slippery terrain, which would allow it to drift aimlessly.

The sensible practice of mediumship constitutes an inexhaustible source of learning for all, since it shows us the innumerable situations in which the

spirit, once disincarnated, can find itself. Because death does not interrupt life; dying is not the final stage. We continue to be the same and we place ourselves in the vibratory belt that each of us has created through our continuous wandering.

With the exercise of mediumship, the door of communication with the other dimension of life opens; but Spiritism, codified by Allan Kardec after methodical studies, in-depth analysis and above all, always applying his great common sense is the master key to control that door, so that their practice would develop in a responsible way, acting with full awareness of the work that is being carried out. Common sense should always prevail as the most common of the senses. It is not for nothing that Camille Flammarion expressed in his speech before Kardec's grave: *"He was what I will simply call the embodiment of common sense."*

Allan Kardec, in *The Mediums' Book*, the main work to properly conduct the mediumship faculty, emphasizes the great importance of our analytical attitude when facing mediumship phenomena, so as to not fall victims to deceitful spirits who only wish to achieve prominence at the expense of anything else.

Spiritism is the compass of mediumship since it marks the path through which this faculty must travel.

In addition, it becomes a practice of mutual love: we offer guidance, suggestions, tools to those who need them, and, in turn, we are enriched by other people's experiences, drawing our attention to situations and/or aspects of life that perhaps are not very clear to us. Likewise, with due preparation and careful practice, it also favors the opportunity to establish relationships with educated entities that will be able to provide us with adequate instruction for our development.

Let us remember what Léon Denis wrote about this ability: *"Mediumship is a delicate flower that to flourish requires careful precautions and assiduous care."* If we are allowed to, we would add: It must be practiced seriously, with perseverance and rectitude; conscious of what having it in an ostensible manner entail, since it makes the person who possesses it an intermediary between the two planes of life. As with any human ability, it must be carried out with total responsibility and care.

At the end of the day, we are all the protagonists of our history, and, at the same time, ignorant of it. The task of every incarnated and disembodied spirit is to learn, work, and do everything possible to know how to place oneself in the place of the other in any circumstance of life. We are the builders of our

future. We not only learn with theory, but we also must know how to apply it and through the results obtained, we will always find the appropriate answer.

In this work, the reader will find interesting approaches to consider. Reading it will lead you to become aware of what we are: immortal spirits that constantly interact and that, through innumerable reincarnation stages, will be able to experience all the learning processes that are necessary, rebalancing past actions which will lead us to reach fulfillment, and consequently, the long-awaited happiness.

Pura Argelich

*Centro Barcelonès de Cultura Espírita – CBCE*

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To Milton Rubens Medran Moreira for the final review.



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## INTRODUCTION

The fundamental validity of Allan Kardec's work is indisputable. We could not speak about Spiritism or consider any of its aspects, in its absence. Kardec is the starting point; however, no current Spiritist thinker should entertain the claim that all is said. A separate issue is to review the language, the conceptions, the uncovered theories, the new investigations, the interpretation of the basic principles, to adapt them to our present context and the characteristic challenges of this century.

The development of objective thinking is a fact that cannot be ignored... Kardec had already foreseen it in his works. He was interested in studying and disseminating with due significance some little-known or poorly explained human phenomena, given the expansion of positivism. He himself, imbued with his influence, assumed a universal, concordant, and a

progressive attitude. Together, with the advice of the spirits, he structured a body of ideas based on the knowledge of his time, observation, experimentation, rationality, logic, and common sense, and gave shape to a spiritualist philosophy: the Spiritist doctrine.

In our intention to share a vision, it is necessary to emphasize some aspects. Spiritism and mediumship are fundamentally different: the first is a philosophical doctrine, the second is a natural phenomenon studied in its entirety by the previous one.

The historical trajectory of this phenomenon goes back to the most distant antiquity. In all cultures, with its lights and shadows, mediumship has been part of human civilization; however, it is in 1857 that it is integrated into the body of doctrine as one of its central postulates.

Its human, humanistic and progressive character, distinctive of the spiritist philosophy, is a basic element to access the correct understanding of the mediumnistic theme. The manifestations of spirits and the relationships between them are phenomena recorded in natural laws and takes place regardless of whether their agents have a biological organization. There is nothing supernatural in the existence, survival and evolutionary continuity of the soul or spirit, nor in its capability to act on matter.

In full harmony with the Kardecist teachings, we have allowed ourselves to present to the reader a joint work, through the elaboration of concepts, considerations that emerge from them, generalities, and the comparative analysis of different authors. Likewise, grounded on practical experiences within the present moment and Spiritist rationality and ethics, we are provided with an additional referent for the responsible exercise of mediumship.

The dialogue proposed here is based on the work and thought of Allan Kardec. It is intended, from a Kardecist, secular and freethinking spiritist vision, to identify and analyze the fundamental concepts of mediumship.

We present this approach as opposed to the treatment given to mediumship in religious and Christian spiritualism. There are substantive conceptual and practical differences between religious Spiritism and the secular view of Spiritism. Without wishing to establish ourselves as exclusive owners of the truth nor to account for all the dimensions in which a subject as complex as this can be approached, we invite the reader to carry out a critical and prudent analysis of mediumship based on the elements that are raised here.





# 1 MEDIUMSHIP

## 1.1 What is mediumship? Who is a medium?

The communications of spirits with incarnated beings date from time immemorial and are totally alien to all forms of supernatural facts, myths, and eccentricities. In the exchange with spiritual entities, it is convenient to develop an adequate understanding of the terms enunciated from the mind-brain link, that is, taking into account the incessant relationship that takes place between the human psyche and one's own or external biological organization.

This issue has particularly important implications. The Spiritist explanation maintains that the physical body and the soul that animates it are constituted

by different principles, which are related, but independent. The body is perishable, the soul, on the contrary, survives. While the organism disintegrates after death, the spirit retains its individuality and, what is more important, does not lose self-awareness, nor the possibility of relating to people on the physical plane. It is the seat of the intellectual and moral faculties. Intelligence and psychological characteristics reside in the spirit. This therefore leads us to believe that it can communicate. It also can act over matter, through an energetic, semi-material body that covers it: *the perispirit*.

### **What is the perispirit?**

The perispirit is the intermediate fluidic link between the spirit and the biological body. It acts as a transmitter of the spirit's will and at the same time as a receiver of the sensations that it perceives from the outside. It does not have intellectual attributes; it is not the seat of memory: it is the vehicle of thought.

The term *mediumship* derives from the Latin *medium*, which means intermediary. It is the natural ability to transmit mind to mind, using the psycho-physical structure (thoughts, feelings, and emotions), through a vibrational affinity mechanism that allows

spiritual exchange. The *medium*, characterized by representing another individuality that is not his own, is the intermediary or instrument that, through a particular conditioning, establishes relationships and interacts with embodied or disincarnated entities in an evident, clear, and verifiable way.

In this regard, Kardec expressed, in *The Mediums' Book* (question 159):

*"Any person who feels a degree of influence from the spirits is by this very fact a medium. This faculty is inherent in man and consequently not an exclusive privilege, and there are few persons in whom some rudiments of it are not found. Therefore, it can be said that practically, everyone is a medium (...)." (p. 181)*

From the experimental results it is concluded that this faculty, although it is natural in all human beings, is variable in everyone. In this sense, the condition of medium is reserved to those who show that capacity in an ostensive manner, through frequent manifestations and a certain intensity of force.

## 1.2 Static and dynamic mediumship

Some scholars, including Eng. WJ Crawford, established two divisions of mediumship with the idea of being more explicit. *Static mediumship* is attributed

to those who grasp the manifestations of spirits by light perception, occasional clairvoyance, sporadic premonitions, due to a natural predisposition of the spirit that allows it to expand, project and have relationships with other spirits.



**W. J. Crawford**  
(1881-1920)

*Researcher in the field of psychic phenomenology of physical effects*

Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Queen's University, Belfast, Ireland. With the use of the balance, he produced evidence that the translation and levitation of objects and raps are produced by *psychic structures* that emanate from the medium's body. He showed that the medium loses mass as the ectoplasm is externalized, although it partially recovers it when the phenomena cease. He verified in his research that the assistants contribute some grams of corporeal mass to produce ectoplasm.

To learn more, visit the link:  
<http://www.bvespirita.com> (Biografias - William Jackson Crawford)

*Dynamic* mediumship, meanwhile, consists of regular (periodic) manifestations of phenomena such as perception of, and communication, with the spirits, astral unfolding, and overlapping the perispirit of the communicating entity with that of the medium



causing different types of communications. This same concept was later adopted by the Brazilian spiritist philosopher José Herculano Pires.<sup>2</sup>

During the period prior to the systematization of Spiritism, it was common practice to ask trivial questions of spirits. Mediumship and the role of the medium began to acquire ethical hierarchy from the moment in which issues of human controversy (social, moral, philosophical, and scientific) were raised when questioning disembodied intelligences.

We must recognize that Kardec, with the help of spirits, gave a wide reorientation to the mediumnistic phenomenon by managing to extract it from the supernatural, miraculous, and magical-religious character which had been conferred to it, and placing it, through serious and rationalist experimentation, in the field of natural laws.

Dr. Gustavo Geley, scientific authority on mediumnistic research, quoted:

*"I would like to be able to establish that there are no supernormal things, just as there are no supernatural or unknowable things, and that the marvelous, mysterious and contradictory appearance of metapsychic phenomena comes from our ignorance or from not knowing the primordial and essential laws of life".<sup>3</sup>*



**Gustavo Geley**  
(1868-1924)

Gustavo Geley was born on April 13, 1868, in Montceau-les-Mines (France) and died in Poland, on July 14, 1924. Doctor by profession, researcher of psychic and mediumistic phenomena. Studious of the reincarnation process or multiple lives.

### 1.3 Mediumism and mediumship

The ignorance to which Geley referred and the desire to keep the manifestations of the spirits inserted in a syncretic, primitive context, also called **mediumism**, are obstacles that even Spiritism encounters, so that mediumship becomes an effective tool for knowledge and help to others.

The spiritualist philosopher J. Herculano Pires indicates substantial differences between mediumistic and mediumship, which are shown in the following table:

Similarly, other facts, such as charlatanism, commercialism, and fanaticism, cloud the pedagogical and enlightening objectives of mediumship when exercised as an ethical and responsible practice. Undoubtedly, this scenario has been generating a

## Main differences between mediumism and mediumship

### MEDIUNISM

- ✓ It does not open space for reflection on phenomena, their meaning and nature.
- ✓ Accept the facts without reasoning.
- ✓ It absorbs the magical heritage of the past and mixes with religions, beliefs, and superstitions of all kinds.

### MEDIUMSHIP

- ✓ It rejects infiltrations that can harm its rational nature and compromise its natural development.
- ✓ Integrated into the structure of Spiritism, which studies and investigates it through its cultural and scientific institutions.
- ✓ It is not related to religious, syncretic, ritualistic, or mystical practices.

complete distortion, not only of the real objectives of the mediumship work, but also significantly affects the credibility of Spiritist institutions and those who comprise them.

## 1.4 Different potentialities and uses of mediumship

Beyond the phenomenological dimension, the main purpose of mediumship is to produce evidence on the survival and immortality of the soul. However, mediumship is also a method of study, research,

generation of knowledge, which can and should be an important mechanism in revising Spiritism.

The exchange between the material and the spiritual world makes it possible to produce relevant and objective knowledge about what happens to the soul after the death of the physical body. This offers a novel and expanded view of the so-called spirit world.

Because of the relationships established in the mediumship exchange, it is possible to assist (support) disincarnated spirits in situations of psychic and moral suffering, as well as to have the support of the most evolved spirits, who come to comfort the sufferings and afflictions experienced by embodied spirits.

There is sufficient literary, genuine, and updated production, as well as field investigations that over the years have clearly defined the objectives of mediumship based on Kardecist teachings. These can be synthesized as follows:

- a) verification of the preexistence, existence, and survival of the spirit;
- b) production and updating of knowledge (various themes inherent to the realities and progress of the human being);
- c) consolation to relatives who have physically lost loved ones;
- d) orientation to suffering or obsessive spirits;

- e) therapeutic purposes;
- f) mediumnistic education and development of faculties.

## 1.5 Classification of mediumship

The study and careful examination of the facts allows us to confirm the different modified states of consciousness that mediums exhibit at the time the manifestations of the spirits take place. These are related to the lesser or greater depth of the mediumnistic trance, which we can describe as follows:

- a) **conscious**: state of wakefulness or slight lethargy, caused by prior relaxation and not perceiving visual stimuli, in which the medium, through verb structures that belong to his personal culture, transmits the message of the communicating entity and almost totally remembers its content;
- b) **semi-conscious**: a medium-intensity trance state observed more frequently in mediums who commonly do not fully remember the message received from the communicating entity and only confusedly manage to understand what is happening with the manifestation and their own mental and physical reactions. The tones, expressions and gestures correspond

to the spirit. The interference of the mind of the intermediary is insignificant, only slightly distorting the language and emotional tones;

- c) **unconscious**: the state of emancipation of the soul or depth of the trance is almost total, the interference of the psychic contents of the medium is minimal with respect to those of the communicating entity who, through the superposition of his perispirit, manages to control the nervous centers during the manifestation, and cloud the conscience of the person who serves as an intermediary.

Because of the depth of the trance in which the mediums are when used as tools by the spirits, Kardec called the mediums mechanics. When entities use intermediaries, but the inhibition of consciousness is partial, he gave them the name of **semi mechanics**.

Recent studies<sup>4</sup> indicate that the degree of interference of the medium in the content of a communication is independent of the depth of the trance. In this sense, it could be more related to the juxtaposition between the medium and the communicating spirit during communication. It is a peculiar and characteristic situation of mediumship: the medium's interference is an integral part of the mediumnistic communication process. In other

words, there is no communication that can be considered pure or at least devoid to some degree of the participation of the medium. In fact, Allan Kardec was convinced of this concept by the spirits, as evidenced in *The Mediums' Book*.

## **1.6 Types of manifestations, mediums and communicating spirits**

Kardec classified the main types of spirit manifestations into two categories: physical and intelligent.

The manifestations of physical or material effects are related to the possibility of seeing spirits, hearing them, or perceiving effects produced by them (rotating or talking tables, noise, blows, poltergeist, transfer of objects, materializations, contributions, transfiguration, levitations, healings, voice, and direct writing). Although less frequent at the present time, it follows that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, they fulfilled their objective of attracting attention and giving way to the movement called Modern Spiritualism.

After these primary manifestations, with the progress of human beings in general and the start of research, more complex forms of intelligent communication were developed. These included psychological, subjective, or intellectual effects and can be classified as mediumship.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In Hydesville, a town in the state of New York, in 1848, a series of mediumistic manifestations began in a systematic way, through the Fox sisters: Margarita and Catalina, who served as intermediaries to transmit the messages of the spirits. These were called at that time the phenomena of the rotating and talking tables.



*To learn more, we refer the reader to the book *History of Spiritism*, by Arthur Conan Doyle.<sup>5</sup>*

- **speaking or psychophonic**, the communicating spirit projects its energy into the cerebral cortex of the medium, affecting his sensitivity and using his vocal organs to establish a dialogue;
- **clairvoyance**, ability that empowers the medium to see the spirits;
- **scribe or psychographic**, in which three variants are distinguished: a) the spirit controls the hand of the unconscious medium, b) the spirit directs the hand of the medium, but he is aware of what he writes, c) the spirit has dominion over the soul of the medium and, through intuition or inspiration, he writes what he perceives from the communicating entity;



- **auditory**, ability that enables the medium to hear the spirits;
- **Intuitive**, in which the medium, in a conscious state, captures through thought the information that the spirit transmits, this has the variety of inspiration.

These are the different types of intelligent mediumship that we observe today. Other less frequent forms of mediumship manifestations are also observed, such as **xenoglossy**, which is characterized by speaking in a different and unknown language by the medium, and **xenography**, which consists of writing in a language unknown by the medium.

Although an extensive classification was made of the diversity of mediums who presented different aptitudes, qualities, sympathies or affinities and genders, all are circumscribed around the natural or involuntary, facultative, or voluntary mediums, linked to those mentioned above.

#### **TO LEARN MORE:**

For the reader interested in delving into spiritist manifestations, the different types of mediumship and mediums, and the nature of communications, which will be discussed later, we suggest reading chapters XVI and XVII of the second part of *The Mediums' Book*, by Allan Kardec.

The nature of the communications received from spirits or embodied beings ratifies the spiritist scale proposed by Kardec regarding the varied knowledge or ignorance of the entities that intervene as a product of the evolutionary level reached. Regarding the communications received from beings that possess a physical body, at times their soul is also projected through states of drowsiness, lethargy, or deep sleep; they regain their freedom to express themselves through the mediums at the mediumnistic worktables.

Today it is unnecessary to classify communicating spirits as good or bad. It is enough to know that this classification made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is determined by lower or higher thoughts, by wrong acts or positively valued or by the greater or lesser development of feelings; expressions all related to the intellectual and moral progress of the spirit.

However, to understand which beings we are dealing with, it is a priority to have a deep understanding of the elements that make up the psychological reaction, and the objective for which they are evoked or voluntarily presented. Although the law of affinity plays the most important role not only during the mediumnistic event, but practically in all events of the daily life, we attract and repel spiritual entities according to vibrational tuning. Other factors such as

the environment, the intention, the will, the energies, are also accessories of mediumnistic communication. Consequently, it is necessary to maintain strict vigilance of the psychological processes of the entities which will communicate, considering behaviors, ideas, emotions, language, and frequency in which they vibrate, essential factors for their identification.

The spirits of greater intellectual and moral backwardness, violent, aggressive, vulgar, prone to the material, promoters of deception and motivated by the lowest feelings, in which cruelty and treachery predominate, swarm always attached to the earthly plane. If they must appear in spiritist meetings, they are mostly related to obsessive processes.

From them on, with a variety of shades in non-linear ascending form, with their ups and downs, an array of spirits travels the scale of progress towards perfection.

From mocking, malicious, nosy, ignorant, who enjoy causing inconvenience and bad times; passing through those indifferent entities to whom it is the same to act in a positive or contrary sense, with tendencies close to the physical plane by their own tastes; even those who attribute to themselves a supposed wisdom that they do not possess, especially psychic contents that are still present from their stay as incarnates, all are part of the great concert of entities

that work in their evolutionary development. The batterers or disturbers continue in this order, although practically absent today in the spiritist manifestations this does not mean they have totally disappeared from this type of phenomenon.

Finally, on this progressive scale, more advanced spirits that we contextualize among those of greater conscience (noble, superior and those who have achieved absolute moral and intellectual perfection compared to the previous ones) complete the hierarchy of beings that populate the spiritual world. and that guide us not to be frequently deceived, by submitting communications through the filter of logic and reasoning.

The Kardecist proposal of the Spiritist scale consists of three orders and ten classes:<sup>6</sup>

- **third order:** imperfect spirits in which the material predominates over the spiritual (impure, frivolous, pseudo-wise, neutral, and disturbing);
- **second order:** spirits that direct their actions to the good and have reached a higher evolutionary level (benevolent, wise, prudent, and superior);
- **first order:** pure spirits who have reached the highest degree of spiritual progress.

**Kardec was not a simple secretary of the spirits.** In addition, to creating a whole system of thought, he carried out meticulous work in the complex study of the different personalities that appeared at the mediumnistic meetings, in order to provide certain measures that would minimize deception, ridicule, frivolity or the presence of unscrupulous entities of little knowledge; avoid mystifications and distinguish animism from mediumship. This allowed him to develop a method to identify spirits that does not present ambivalence nor possible misrepresentations, and it is still currently used.

Subjecting communications to examination, analyzing ideas, expressions, intention, penetrating the depths of the human soul, reasoning each revealed psychic content leads to the **evaluation necessary** to discard everything that lacks logic and good sense.

The **content of the message**, the language, and its quality helps us identify a higher value and deduce a greater degree of evolution of the spirits. This in turn allows us to **identify them** and have an idea of **the Spirit's scale**, if not absolutely, at least quite close to reality. Hence the importance of its study.

Another fundamental element would be **the principle of concordance**: to validate, once the infor-

mation offered by a spirit has been admitted as serious, that it is transmitted by different entities through different mediums, not linked to each other, and also ensues from different places, preferably mediumnistic work meetings in spiritist centers that, even though distant, use the same analytical and reflective method. This will be discussed more in the next chapter.

Relatives and friends, counselors, obsessors or troubled ones, a range of spirits, all of them wandering, of varied intellectual and moral development, with different tendencies, aptitudes, preferences, and feelings, approach the most akin mediums. Some, in search of help due to misunderstanding their new state; others to comfort family members affected by the physical loss of the loved one; the most advanced in order to raise awareness about the spiritual realities that contribute to the progress of the human being, and, in addition, to contribute with knowledge in scientific, literary, historical and philosophical matters. Finally, beings obsessed with a thirst for revenge who, longing for justice, mistakenly seek to avenge the fault committed, either in this or another existence, without this being an indicator of the moral inferiority of the medium.

In summary, in addition to what is expressed as a Kardecist-based proposal to be followed, the indispensable need for evaluation with a critical

sense, method, training, observation, reasoning, discipline, development of altruistic feelings, good sense, prudence and humility, is highlighted. They are all unavoidable ways to counteract the deviation from the mediumnistic practice not committed to rational and responsible behaviors.



**Ernesto Bozzano**  
(1862-1943)

The Italian Ernesto Bozzano was one of the most prominent researchers of mediumnistic and psychic phenomena. You can read more about the subject in many of the works published by this Genoese researcher. Two of these are: *Delle comunicazioni medianiche tra viventi (Mediumnistic communications among the living)*,<sup>7</sup> from 1927, and *Animism or Spiritism*,<sup>8</sup> published in 1938.

## 1.7 Animism and mediumship

Anima or soul in a general sense, means that everything is animated or has a soul. It is an extremely broad concept, and the use of it is due to the context used.

In Spiritist doctrine, the term animism is used to identify the manifestation caused by the spirit of the medium itself, which by **inhibiting** his conscience has access to the psychic contents of his recollection. In this case, the sensitive does not represent a

personality other than his own but expresses, as an intermediary of himself, the product of his thoughts, feelings, and emotions. At the origin of the mediumnistic fact we find the difference since the responsibility for the phenomenon belongs to a different spiritual entity, provided with a physical body or not. Both are variants of the potentialities of the human mind.

The animistic event takes place during certain modified states of consciousness. In them, intellectual experiences and physical effects can be generated. Kardec recognizes it as emancipation of the soul in *The Mediums' Book* (Cap. XIX, 243, p. 249) and he refers to it as follows: *"The soul of the medium can communicate like that of any other; if he enjoys a certain degree of freedom, he recovers his attributes of Spirit"*.<sup>1</sup>

In this sense, with the works of the researcher Alexander Aksakof in the field of experimental Spiritism, it is possible to recognize that psychic phenomena can be caused by both incarnated beings and spirits.

In the spiritist environment, the proper study of these issues is essential to distinguish when it comes to animism, mediumnistic, mystification or fraud. Animism is not synonymous with fraud or mystification. As we already expressed, in animism





**Alexander  
Aksakof**  
(1832 - 1903)

Russian writer, editor, translator and journalist, psychic researcher, who is credited with coining the term telekinesis. He is considered one of the first organizers of the mediumnistic sessions in Russia. He investigated in depth the faculties of the renowned mediums Eusapia Paladino and Elizabeth d'Esperance, among others. See his work *Animism and Spiritism*.<sup>9</sup>

the exteriorization of the mental forces of the medium are the ones that produce the phenomena, without his conscious awareness. menos, sem que esteja ele consciente da situação.

Fraud, however, is a deliberate act of producing supposed manifestations of spirits without their presence, carried out with the purpose of deceiving, either by not producing phenomena at the time of experimentation, or because the intention to deceive has been premeditated. In mystification, the communicating entity usurps the identity of another spirit by pretending to be who it is not. Often, in the latter case, impostors with bombastic names appear assuming personalities of celebrities from the world of art, philosophy, history, among others, which are denounced by the experts who direct the practices of mediumship.

Not all people with aptitude to express and manifest their psychic potency are necessarily mediums, in the most specific sense of the term. In most cases the development of mediumship has been preceded by psychic experiences.

Among the main phenomena produced by the forces of the unconscious of the human being incarnated without the participation of spiritual entities are:

- **telepathy** or transmission of thought;
- **clairvoyance** or capture through the extra physical vision of an objective event that happens at the same moment that the event originates, regardless of distance or place;
- **clairaudience** or perception at a distance through extrasensory hearing of objective events;
- **the precognition** or prediction of future events, which has as a variant **the retrocognition** or knowledge of past events that occurred in the near or remote past, unknown by the subject with sensitivity;.
- **the psychokinesis** or action of the mind to move and transfer objects or affect a physical system

Another extremely broad set of psychic events produced by the human psyche are studied by parapsychology. The Spiritist author Jon Aizpúrua,

in his work *Foundations of Spiritism*,<sup>10</sup> divides them into four groups, including those of a mediumnistic and psychic nature, which are explained in detail for greater understanding.

### Classification of Paranormal Phenomena<sup>10</sup>

- **Parapsychic:** related to cognitive processes (telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, hyaloscopy, psychometry, autoscopy-heteroscopy, psychodiagnosis, dowsing, precognition, doubling).
- **Paraphysics:** paranormal influences that exert tangible effects on physical reality (psychokinesis-telekinesis, levitation, contribution, poltergeist, electronic voices, psychophotography, kirliangraphy).
- **Parabiological:** physical and psychic manifestations exerted on living beings that cause modification in their constitution or functioning (hyperesthesia, dermo-optic vision, cenesthesia, biopause, demography, pyrobasia, transfiguration, prosopopesis, paratherapy, animal and vegetable parapsychology).
- **Paratanatics:** events caused by disembodied beings or involving some form of survival after death (extracerebral memory, life after death, mediumship).

*Source: Aizpúrua, J. (2000, pp. 282-287).*

## 1.8 Training of the medium

The comprehensive education of the medium has a significant value that must be considered. The necessary reading and deep analysis of the Spiritist work; the expansion of the cultural heritage; understanding of the psychological, physical and behavioral expressions, indicative of some mediumnistic capacity; as well as pecuniary disinterest or remuneration of any other nature; the essential higher objective of the meetings attended and the orientation of the faculties in a positive sense are a set of learnings that mediums have to internalize in order not to be objects of deception, fraud and avoid suffering alterations in their psychism.

In addition to the above, uplifting thoughts plus the development of feelings; and the indispensable seriousness, discipline, patience, good sense, constancy, and humility, are guarantors of the harmonic mediumnistic fact and also essential elements that mediums have to acquire and optimize as intermediaries between both planes (material and spiritual) with a view to educating their faculties with an ethical and responsible point of view.

Particular attention must be paid to mediums during their first experiences, when for a long

time no greater results are obtained or when only backward spirits (mocking, frivolous, perverse) make an appearance through banal manifestations, and, at times, worthless, inconvenient, and disrespectful. The trained mediums recognize that spirits with a certain degree of progress make use of the resource of generalization when addressing all those present, do not individualize when they make moral exhortations and, they do not impose their ideas. Their dissertations are concise, precise, and prudent. There is no ambivalence in their expressions that could generate doubts, nor indications, judgments, or questions.

Also essential are the complete control of oneself to accept or not the influence of the spirits, including rejecting profane or insulting expressions and words; the permanent defense against flattery and praise; the natural discernment of the quality of the spirits that approach through their presence, language, vibrations, or behavior in general. The medium is the one directing his faculty. He accepts the spiritual contact only if there are favorable conditions and should not be taken without prior acceptance or adequate predisposition.

Other essential requirements: follow the director's instructions before, during and to conclude the trance,

remain calm and stable during the communication process, recover the state of consciousness normally; avoid screaming, crying, blows with feet and hands, fuss, twisting, sudden breathing; accept mistakes; develop non-exaggerated self-criticism; refrain from sensitivity to indications or observations by the director; show real interest in personal growth, recognize that the medium is responsible for the manifestations he transmits. These are all conditions that Kardecist-based mediumship education has proposed with the aim of eradicating practices that call into question the Spiritist doctrine.

## **2 THE MEDIUMNISTIC METHOD**

### **2.1 Mediumship as spiritist basic principle and method**

As Allan Kardec encountered mediumnistic phenomena, he perceived the importance and potential of its utility, so he assigned to it well defined uses and purposes. It was through mediumship, as an investigative method, that the foundations of Spiritism were established.

From a practical point of view, such methodological rigor was also accepted by the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies (SPEE), founded by Kardec in January 1858.

Kardec understood that mediumship was a powerful way to reveal life's mysteries, and to bring

light into the great philosophical questions about existence and the self. This allowed even to transform into natural laws, that which until then was considered within the domain of the irrational and supernatural realm. For him, mediumship was basically a knowledge generating instrument that was able to amplify the comprehension of men and the world on the corporeal existence, the fate of the soul after the death of the physical body, and the relationships that exist between the material and spiritual world.

When he published the first edition of *The Mediums' Book*, on January 15, 1861, in Paris, Kardec had the explicit intention to offer to mediumship students and practitioners, a "guide for mediums and evokers" and at the same time assign a serious treatment with scientific foundations to mediumship itself.

He was opposed to the general perspective that would approach mediumnistic phenomena as a mere curiosity, because it was a novelty, a hobby, a frivolity, as something ludic to pass time in tea parlors that dispersed throughout Europe, after the turning tables phenomenon.<sup>11</sup> Kardec intended to share the data obtained by the experimentation he conducted since 1855, when he came in contact for the first time with the turning tables and direct writing. He



wanted theoretical-practical mediumship teachings, which originated from the systematic observation of mediumnistic phenomena and the relationships with spirits, may disseminate and be understood as a methodological foundation for a scientific philosophy. In other words, it was a method to bring rational sustainability to a new spiritualistic philosophy, which he named Spiritism, founded on experimentation and the use of the rational method.

At this experimental phase, in his own words, the objective was to produce "(...) *the theory for all types of manifestations, the means to communicate with the invisible world, the development of mediumship, the difficulties and obstacles that can be found in the practice of Spiritism*".<sup>12</sup>

This is the way he intended to answer all the questions related to the practice of manifestations. For him, the importance of this work (and the method included) was not just to explore all the nuances of mediumship, but also to diminish deception in mystification cases. He intended to teach methods to discover the mischief of fraudulent mediums and of mediums dedicated to charlatanism and prestidigitation, as well as to alert against the inconveniences and dangers of mediumship, obsession, and its variants.

For Kardec, *The Mediums' Book*, a product of extensive experimenting and dedication to the study of mediumship, was a complement to *The Spirits' Book*, which contained the philosophical part, meanwhile the new work enclosed the experimental part of the doctrine.

The spirits offered Kardec the theoretical explanation for diverse phenomena and conditions in which they can occur.

For his part, the founder of Spiritism tried to formulate a group of necessary principles for the development and practice of mediumship. Later on, he perceived and highlighted the difficulties of the experimental Spiritism, reasons behind deceptions and inconveniences originated by levity.

Meanwhile, beyond the phenomena themselves, he was able to verify through experimentation and affirm as fundamental principle, that the souls of people who once lived on Earth produced the communications. This way he stated, at once, two essential formulations.

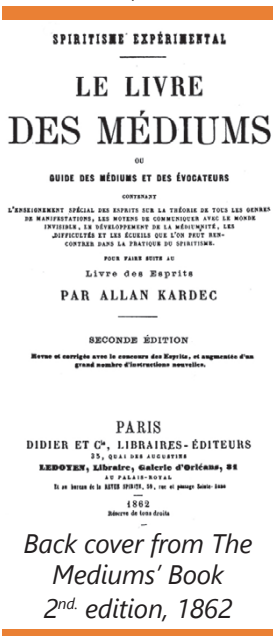
The first and most important one is the survival and immortality of the soul. The second one is that it was possible to establish communication between beings living in the material and spiritual worlds. That is, they survive in different planes of existence. He

accomplished this in a most singular way, different to the knowledge at the time, when he treated this relationship as a natural, rational, and recognizable phenomenon. It was an exceptional transformation, since the topic was restricted apart from religion, irrationality and the supernatural.

Since he treated such phenomena in a serious and systematic manner, he raised to another level what people considered a toy in Parisian parlors and other countries<sup>13</sup>. This gave status to the new spiritualist philosophy, product of experimentation.

It's in this sense that mediumship is, at the same time, one of the principles of Spiritism and the method that established the structure for the Spirit doctrine.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition from *The Mediums' Book*,<sup>14</sup> published in 1862, was more complete and the final one and it brought new instructions and new chapters, related to mediums, the identity of the spirits,



contradictions, the ways to distinguish between good and bad ones, the structure for mediumnistic meetings and frauds involving Spiritism. There was an addition of several questionable communications, along with observations to discover fraud. According to Kardec, the spirits reviewed the work and added new contributions.

We should point out the dimension the work reached. Arguments with the Catholic church were pretty intense, and they received a lot of public

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Barcelona's auto da fe was an expression used by Kardec to refer to the burning of 300 spiritist books. The event happened on October 9, 1861

Maurice Lachatre, French editor residing in Barcelona, had a bookstore there and asked Kardec about selling books in Spain. The books were confiscated from customs by order of the Bishop of Barcelona, Antonio Palau Termes (1857-1862), under the argument that the Catholic church was universal, therefore any book opposite to the Catholic faith, couldn't be tolerated by the government because they could corrupt the moral and religions of other countries.

Among the books burned, there Kardec works (*Spirit Magazine*, *The Mediums' Book* and *What is Spiritism*), in addition to books from other authors.

*If you want to know more, read the article "The Rest of the Medieval Times,"<sup>15</sup> published in the Spirit Magazine, on the November 1861 edition, available in: <https://kardecpedia.com/obra/16>*

dissemination, particularly after the attacks against Kardec and Spiritism through the *La Bibliographie Catholique* and the publishing of books and articles. **The Barcelona's auto da fe**, which resulted in the burning of Spiritist books, under the orders of the Catholic church, portrays the negative ambiance in which the Spiritist doctrine consolidated.

## 2.2 The Mediumnistic Method

An extremely important instrument to deal with everyday mediumship, formulated by Kardec and exposed in a clear and objective manner in *The Spirits' Book*, points out what he named, the universal agreement of the spirits teachings.

The method is about subjecting the content of every mediumnistic message to a critical analysis in a clear and objective manner; to observe the opinions and teachings of spirits in diverse groups and places, as the same questions, topics, doubts, and problems are subjected to different mediums and different communicating spirits. Finally, it intends to confront, compare, and analyze them with discernment and common sense.

In a sense, it pursues factual coherence, a pretense to universalize, but at the same time, a

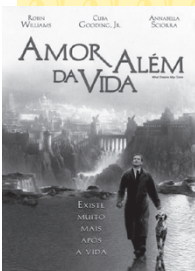
necessary gate to criticism and refusal. After all, an idea can be sustained only if it is eager to be analyzed and refuted.

The search for universal agreement in the teachings of the spirits, is fundamental to avoid that the spirits individual and isolated opinion end up as a dogma, belief, or religious revelation.

Dealing with mediumnistic facts presupposes, beyond the universal concordance of the spirits teachings mentioned before, the observation of other methodological positions, proposed by Kardec and still in effect.

The first one is that we have to discard the infallibility of spirits and mediums. Every one of the

## DID YOU KNOW?



The Hollywood production *What Dreams May Come* (1998), starring Robin Williams, portrays life after death in a way that is very consistent with the spiritist vision. In the final credits of the movie, there is a vast list of books consulted to inspire and make the movie possible. None of these works relate to Kardecian authors.

In general, arts and culture bring the possibility to recognize the universality of the spiritist teachings.

messages need to go through the sieve of reason; rejecting half-truths, anything that can't withstand against the consolidated scientific knowledge or whether they are opinions which should be observed until they are proven to be sustainable.

Besides prudent scrutiny and good use of common sense relating with spirits, it is imperative to adopt a position of equality in relating with spirits and to the analysis of teachings and opinions. Likewise, proper, and adequate discernment is imperative in the incorporation of new knowledge.

Kardec also advocated (and we think that preserving this position is more important every day) caution with the incorporation of concepts, theories and recently acquired notions. In his literary works, there are various examples that follow this position. One of them, important and classic enough, was the way he dealt with the evolutionist theory, much more considering that the general Theory of Evolution of the Species wasn't published until 1859.

Many spirits sustained the evolutionist thesis, in counter position with the creationist theory and the spontaneous generation, so fashionable at the time. In *The Spirits' Book*, April 1857, Kardec is cautious on this. However, in 1868 he positions himself as an author that assumes the evolutionist theory,

when he published *The Genesis, Miracles, and Predictions According to Spiritism*, his last work before disincarnating.

Spiritism, not being a religion, is committed with the progress and evolution of knowledge, and it allows the reversal of principles in case they are not in agreement with science.

*"Spiritism marching along with the rhythm of progress, will never be left behind because if new discoveries demonstrate that it's in the wrong on anything or a new truth is revealed, it will rectify itself."*<sup>16</sup> (p. 71)

Allan Kardec (*The Genesis-Nature of the Spirit Revelation*).



**Allan Kardec**

During weekly meetings that took place in the *Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies*, established in January 1858, closed to the public and organized in a systematic manner, was where Kardec structured and formulated a methodology to organize and perform mediumnistic meetings, which were instructive and safe.

He kept in contact with mediumnistic groups from various parts of the world, with whom he frequently



corresponded. He even traveled to meet them. This would allow the interexchange and dissemination of information, and it would contribute important elements to the desired universal agreement.

He used magnificently the monthly *Spiritist Magazine* – Periodical for Psychological Studies, which circulated under his direction, since 1858 until March 1869, as an qualified experimental laboratory. There, communications were first published, analyzed, and criticized, before their incorporation into the doctrinal body of Spiritism.



## **3 MEETINGS AND MEDIUMNISTIC GROUPS**

### **3.1 Some considerations for mediumnistic communications**

The first condition to have a mediumnistic communication is the existence of a medium and a communicating spirit, who can have an exchange. However, this by itself is not enough.

The mediumnistic meeting must relate to factors that can be controlled or at least can be interfered with to a certain degree. It is a known fact, that mediumnistic groups able to establish adequate energetic frequencies, expanding their vibratory field, qualify the mediumnistic environment. This makes it ideal for the performance of the work. Likewise,

the conditions for a mediumnistic meeting greatly improve when faced with appropriate management techniques, which allows for the dispersion of thoughts among the group of participants. All of this creates an ideal energetic flow (in qualitative and quantitative terms).

The preparation and protection of the mediumnistic meeting is essential because this contributes to the seriousness and purposes of the meeting. It should not be filled with too many expectations, nor excessive dispersion, since the mediumnistic meeting is a combination of energies and requires emotional equilibrium.

The conditioning of the meeting pertains to all counterparts (incarnate and disincarnate beings); therefore, it is important to prepare the right energetic and vibratory environment. Hence the importance of the assiduity and close quarters of the meetings. The harmonious groups can even receive punctual visits from serious persons, without perceptible alterations, but meetings cannot be open to the public. Heated or sterile debates should be avoided, though relaxation techniques would be convenient to stimulate adhesion and harmony.

For their part, mediums should be willing, tuned with an active and balanced frame of mind, and

eager to assist. After all, mediumship is much more than mediation, intermediation, interpretation, or filtering. It consists of a process, always based on doubts and uncertainties.

The will of the medium stays active during the process. In fact, there is a dual will and a confrontation of individualities in the mediumnistic communication. These two need to be sufficiently prepared and eager to make a communication flow and happen.

One aspect that is less valued is the amplifying of the cognitive capacity of the medium.

It is not about demanding an academic title to he who would deal with the mediumnistic phenomenon, but instead a mental attitude eager to study and open to knowledge.

According to spirits Erasto and Timoteo:

*"Whenever we find a medium with a brain enriched with knowledge acquired in life and his spirit rich with prior knowledge, ideal to facilitate our communications, we prefer to use him. We utilize him because with him, the communication phenomenon is easier, as compared to a medium of limited knowledge and insufficient prior knowledge."*  
(*The Mediums' Book*, chapter XIX; question 223)

If it is true that the mental capacity of the medium limits the content of the communication in

relationship to his knowledge, then this generates a paradox that requires consideration in the analysis of the mediumnistic phenomena.

The more a medium knows about the subject of the mediumnistic communication, the better his potential as an instrument to transmit ideas and thoughts from the communicating spirit. Otherwise it would be more difficult to verify the authenticity and originality of the communication. It is something that those dealing with mediumship on a daily basis end up recognizing and from which they cannot escape. It is a potentiality and at the same time a clear limitation to the use of mediumship; hence we designate this situation as the medium paradox. (4) This should always be considered when analyzing the mediumnistic production and in particular, the acquisition of new knowledge.

On the other hand, it is true that mediumship is not a privilege of spirits with a certain degree of knowledge. The acquisition of intelligent communications, with elevated moral value, is possible with illiterate mediums or with a low schooling. Healing mediumship, characterized by being one modality of physical effects, it is commonly expressed, without being a rule, through mediums known for being ignorant, illiterate, and even vulgar. Many of them

exhibit moral deviations and they take advantage of their mediumnistic potential to obtain either financial or some other remuneration, which makes them sometimes end up in police reports.

However, the medium portrayed before, is the one who captures, transmits, and serves as intermediary in the communication. He tries to perceive the intention of the communicating spirit, but he also transmits it in the form he can, the best way he can.

As much as it is possible, the medium should always try to create neutral conditions, even when he is presently in the process, as he is acting unconsciously. Even when many times he does not have a clear notion of whether he is producing the communication or what part of it the spirit is producing, without this being animism. The medium needs to learn to identify and discriminate the mental flow of the communicating spirit, and he should clearly perceive his own mental flow.

### **3.2 Notes on Mediumnistic Meetings**

Without seeking to develop a generalized pattern for all spiritist groups, it is crucial to keep in mind that all the faculties of the mediums, which are able to produce phenomena in a mediumnistic, whether the

meeting is investigative, to help, to shed knowledge, disobsession, or any other previously defined purpose, has required the implementation of a methodology with a minimum level of rationality. This does not imply a ritualistic, illogical order but instead the guiding compass of the teachings of Kardec and his followers. Said followers, even when they didn't write any norms, had meetings that set the standard on how to proceed when dealing with intelligent manifestations.

There are necessary steps for the development of mediumnistic ethical activities: harmony of attendees to the mediumnistic meeting, a clear purpose for the work, lifting and unity of thought, request for spiritual assistance, concentration and prevention of dispersion, preparation of the environment using a magnetic chain to which positive energies are transmitted, protection through the mental creation produced by the sum of thoughts coming from the attendees, comprehension of the activity to be performed, attendees visualizing themselves as a live collective cell integrated as a whole but without any participant losing his individuality, manifestation and closure of the session before the analysis and evaluation, and a qualified, calm and safe direction.

The starting of mediumnistic groups requires special attention, even when advanced mediums are

present. The discipline, respect among participants, the constant study, disinterest, fraternity, and humility are elements that need to be present as the foundation to establish positive human relationships that bring about learning.

On this topic, the Brazilian investigator and spiritist writer Herminio Miranda, on his work *Diálogo con las sombras*, expresses:

*"It's good to organize small groups, consisting of people who perfectly harmonize and are eager to perform serious and continuous work. Who do not allow themselves to be discouraged by difficulties or by the apparent insignificance of the first results, nor do they allow themselves to be fascinated by pseudo spirit guides. Little by little, the seriousness of objectives demonstrated, the work will happen, under the influence of advanced spirits (...) To each good group of incarnates, eager to do the task, will correspond an equivalent group of spirits."*<sup>17</sup> (p. 15)

The first sessions of different teams, identified as mediumnistic education and development of faculties, allow participants to: enhance concentration levels, uptake harmonization of the group energies and environment, animic expressions, perception and identification of vibrations (dense, subtle, astringent, cold, hot, repulsive, attractive,



among others), nearness of spirits, contact with them until achieving that the sheath or perispirit layer of the communicating spirit super imposes over the medium's perispirit and this is when the manifestation really happens.

This being a gradual process will allow attendees to gain experience, that with time, in case the spirit center performs disobsession meetings, will allow them to participate with the necessary and mandatory preparation. Besides the theoretical formation, the beginning phases that contribute to the development of faculties are *sine qua non* requisites for the practice of responsible mediumship.

The distribution of attendees on the mediumnistic table, takes place under rational criteria. We have to take into consideration the role that each member plays, beginning with the director, followed by the attendees, and including the mediums. Even though whoever guides the meeting is another fellow member, his experience, knowledge, and leadership will still contribute to harmonious and effective proposed objectives.

Active mediums as well as individuals with passive abilities participate in the mediumnistic work and equally contribute their energies to the development

of the meeting. Such individuals are as valuable as anyone attending the meeting.

Another influencing factor, worth mentioning or remembering, is that for many mediums, the excess of light seems to inhibit the radiating of ectoplasm necessary for the peri-spiritual connection. In general, neither absolute darkness, nor stunning brightness are ideal for meditation. A semi-dark environment facilitates serene concentration. We should mention that during the meetings, there can be manifestations of ectoplasmic physical effects, which are sensible to light.

Whenever there is a need to keep an illuminated atmosphere for scientific experimentations and even for the recording of images of the communication, it is possible to have a normal meeting, since mediums and the group as a whole can adapt to the situation. Therefore, beyond the conditioning related to obtaining patterns of physical and mental relaxation, which allow the adequate expansion of the mental field, harmony is a formal and absolute condition for a meeting to take place.

Arriving at the meeting place earlier to prepare the environment with a reading and psycho-physical harmonization of attendees; to be punctual; a

systematic attendance, without gasps that may bring notable differences to the vibrational level reached by the work group; caution in thoughts, actions and wording in everyday scenarios; sensible eating and eagerness for self-knowledge and constant study, contribute greatly to the development of effective and edifying mediumnistic activities.

As complements to the method, a high level of comprehension, discipline, positive delivery, and intention, are determining elements to help mediumnistic groups fulfill the intended objectives of high hierarchy Spiritist meetings.

The ethical dimension of the mediumnistic practice should receive special attention. The mediumnistic meetings should not be open to any interested party, nor should they take place in public, so they can turn into a spectacle. They should have a reserved, selective character and consist of a group as homogeneous as possible, whose members show clear objectives, rules, and dynamic performance.

### **3.3 Mediumship Distortions**

There are conceptions and inconvenient practices of mediumship, opposite to Kardec's conceptualization, and they are considered unacceptable.

Among others we can mention:

- to give a divine character to the communications, stating that the messages from mediums are coming from God, opposite to the non-anthropomorphic vision of the supreme intelligence, Creative Energy, and primary Cause of all things.
- to attribute absolute character to revelations. The Spirit scale assigns with clarity the evolutionary level of the spirits in hierarchy. This hierarchy, even when not determining, is related to a major or minor degree of knowledge, intentions, sentiments, acts and thoughts that identify those spirits. This classification, as practice confirms, only distinguish those beings designated as pure, as the ones who have reached the highest level of moral and intellectual superiority. Facing such a diversity of moral and intellectual values from the entities who manifest themselves, considering them as contributors of definite and unquestionable truths, would be an indicator of gullibility and ignorance.
- to continue to classify the phenomenon as supernatural or miraculous, without accepting that it obeys natural laws.
- to give mediums an exclusive capability that separate them from other mortals to perform

a mission. Wisdom compels us to discern: if it is a mission, who assigned it to us? Who gives more aptitudes and privileges to some beings over others? What mediumship really demands is to practice it with more responsibility and prudence.

- to idolize, exalt and glorify mediums and even grant them a unique power which they do not have and adore them as religious figures.
- to keep using mediums as a mean for consultation about trivialities or personal situations. There are still some mediums who, out of ignorance, use ridicule gestures and simulate altered conscience states that produce predictions, sightings and perceptions that do not even have a minimum level of rationality.
- the use of mediumship as a source of personal income.
- using mediumship for religious proselytism and exhibitionism, during meetings open to the public or without any previous requirements for the participants.
- to grant spirits an irrefutable authority which produces irrational affirmations like: “the spirits commanded me, the spirits said.” This brings the question; if this is so, where is the critical analysis suggested by Kardec in all of his work? What

about the individual's free will? What would happen with the medium's free will to guide their own conscience?

- to maintain a position that carries excess, abuse, and credulity about the healing mediumship.
- to perform disobsession processes during a mediumnistic session, using methods that lack the most elementary rationality.
- to insist on conceiving Spiritist practices with a syncretic religious and dogmatic character, with card reading, chiromancy, candles, incense, music, pyramids, talismans, images, cults, prayers, litanies, liturgies, ceremonies, rituals, pass-mania, and magnetized water. All of these resources, more than unnecessary, belong to obsolete practices.
- The utilization of the intimate reform as an element of questioning, trial or condemnation of participants or people seeking assistance.

On respect to this, Herculano Pires states:<sup>2</sup>

*"A medium should be spontaneous, natural, and a normal human creature which has no motifs to consider himself superior to others. Any faking or subterfuge within social relationships may push individuals to falsehood and deceit. The so-called schematic and forced internal reform don't*

*modify anyone, and it merely deceits those who follow the practice. The changes occur through his experiences in life, vital and conscious experiences that produce deep changes to his intimate vision of life and the world.*"<sup>12</sup> (p. 15)



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

Prominent and studious Brazilian disseminator of the Spiritist doctrine, journalist, philosopher, educator, writer, and translator. He translated Kardec's works and published dozens of philosophical studies and literary Spiritist works. Among others, we can mention: Mediumship (life and communication): mediumship's conceptualization and general analysis of its current issues (1978).

### 3.4 Consequences of the distortion of mediumship

During the mediumistic activities, it is never an inconvenience to warn about the necessary prudence and respect that should exude from the reciprocity within human relationships, whether this happens in either incarnate or disincarnate exchanges, to avoid mediocre results.

It is also necessary to point out the minimum requirements to obtain the desired objectives: the necessary knowledge to handle the energies, to

have the sessions in Spiritist institutions, as well as the edification of the leader and other attendees on the technical, cultural and moral aspects.

Included among the risks and consequences of a disorderly practice of mediumship we find: animism or conscious fraud, disturbances or alterations of the medium's psycho-physical balance or others attending the meeting, suspension of faculties, tuning in to lower spirits, obsessive-fascination processes, mystifications; plus the annihilation of the scientific, philosophical and moral character of Spiritism as a doctrine that studies the phenomenon.

Because of its importance, we will follow up on this topic later on.

Within the vast context of mediumship, there are topics that need to be dealt with specificity to shed any doubt, to examine concepts, to actualize based on investigations, to revise methods, to confirm or reject ideas and to propel us to continue towards a righteous path of the scrutiny of new knowledge.

Other chapters would require topics like healing mediumship, obsession and mediumnistic sessions. However, we will try to do a summary of these topics to allow the reader to have a clear view, despite the countless questions that may arise even in the Spiritist field.



## **4** **MAGNETISM AND HEALING MEDIUMSHIP**

The word magnetism is used in different ways in the field of physics. It can refer to the movement of bodies, the laws of attraction and repulsion, and the intra-atomic processes produced in the macromolecular field that have to do with the general movement of the Universe. However, we are going to focus on magnetism of a spiritual nature or what is currently called, personal magnetism, directly related to healing mediumship.

Since ancient times it has been known that people act as if they were magnets by causing reactions in others, either because we attract or repel. In a way, there was also the idea that human beings could

externalize a kind of force previously called fluid, now it would be energy, that can intentionally be used to heal or produce reactions according to will.

For this reason, in ancient Egypt we find inscriptions in the mastabas, the pyramids, monuments, frescoes, and in typical canvases of that great culture that show the pharaohs and priests laying hands on the sick and according to some papyri, with supposedly healing properties. The Egyptian practices were also present in Asia, Far and Middle East, Africa and in the peoples of the Caucasus. In the case of the Dervishes, for example, it was very common that in their frenzied dances, they also applied rhythmic movements of their hands, vibrations according to which they could produce healings through personal magnetism.

In Judaism, from which Christianity would later come, there was also the belief that the laying of hands, could be a way, within a religious environment, where prayer and invocation to God through the Holy Spirit, could also have positive results for the sick. Hence, the phrase of Jesus, the teacher of Nazareth, was taken as emblematic, in which he advised his disciples: "Lay on your hands and the sick will heal." Although a few centuries later, the development of this practice did not spread and was rather concealed

or even harassed to a certain extent. This reappears in contemporary times in movements of Christian renewal, of a charismatic type, whose habitual practices are the imposition of hands.

In American cultures, studies on shamanism reveal that it was common to place the hands in a certain magical context for the effect of healing. Modern shamanism has inherited the practice of magnetization, therapeutic applications with the hands, for healing purposes and without touching people.

All the magical-religious conception from different cultures about magnetism changed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the studies of German doctor Franz Anton Mesmer, who presented a work in his doctoral thesis on the influence of planets on living beings and the Influence of a Universal cosmic fluid that surrounds us in the planet and of which each person is a reflection and that, by possessing it internally, each being can be transmitted with healing properties.

Mesmer affirmed that, as the influence of an object in its own field can be measured, in that same way the influence of every person in its field is proportional to the force that it emits; therefore, not all people have the same vitality or magnetic

## DID YOU KNOW?

Franz Anton Mesmer was a German physician, who conceived the doctrine of animal magnetism. In 1779 he settled in Paris. His fame grew at a dizzying rate, and he had the opportunity to heal illustrious people. The number of patients increased so much that he was forced to devise a collective magnetization system, starting from the magnetization of objects or water. With the invention of the Mesmer vat, he attended 30 patients per session, for a total of 300 daily. The patients were attached to the bathtub with magnetized water, from which numerous iron rods came out. This was followed by various nervous or hysterical reactions, with healing effects in many cases. The patients were taken to two contiguous compartments, one for each sex, called seizure rooms. The case unleashed a scandal with great repercussions.



**Franz Mesmer**  
(1734-1815)

The clergy strongly protested against these practices. However, Mesmer obtained cures in many cases. It provoked mixed reactions: with fervent supporters and also with staunch enemies.

*To learn more, we suggest reading Mesmer: The denied science of animal magnetism, by Paulo Henrique Figueiredo and Magnetism, (18) vitalism and the thought of Kardec, by Ademar Arthur Chioro dos Reis.<sup>19</sup>*

force. Likewise, he expressed that, just as in physical magnetism, the forces are polarized generating an anode and a cathode, the human magnetic field is also polarized and there is a positive and a negative magnetic pole in it.

Mesmer's great contribution was to present the idea, accepted to this day, that the poles of the personal magnetic field are centered in the hands and that these, acting as magnets when moving in different directions, generate the desired effect.

In all schools, the application of magnetism is generally done by the hands. Mesmer also raised the thesis and used some new terms for the eighteenth century, stating that, if the hands moved, then it meant that the person who gave their magnetism, the donor, could transfer them to the recipient; therefore, he called the movements of the hands passes. The name magnetic passes come from the Latin *passare*, which means to pass, to carry from one place to another.

It means that the magnetizer transfers part of its magnetic force in small doses and according to the conduction, which is related to what the thought wants, if it is to benefit someone or if it is focused to achieve something concrete, either in the physical, perispiritual or spiritual plane.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the United States, schools, currents, movements dedicated to the application of magnetic passes with the intention of healing proliferated, which somehow diverge from the Spiritist vision of carrying out these practices.

However, prestigious magnetizers, such as the French Serge Léon Alalouf, the American Ambrose Worrall and the Russian Dzhuna Davitasvilian among others, demonstrated interesting capabilities when applying magnetism for therapeutic purposes. For decades very serious people have been working on research and important discoveries. The contributions of the Canadian physicist Barbara Ann Brennan, in her work *Hands of Light*, stand out. More recently, the contributions of the Argentine Raúl Horacio Drubich are highlighted, who, together with a group of Spiritist scholars, has presented the results of his work at international conferences. His books, especially the one entitled *Energy Healing*, deal with experiments on magnetism and healing mediumship.<sup>20</sup>

Magnetism in the Spiritist doctrine is incorporated as one of its basic elements. Before the phenomenon of the talking tables, Kardec had already been



**Raúl Drubich**  
Argentina

Graduated from the Universidad Nacional del Litoral, writer, essayist, national and international lecturer, member of the True Spiritism Society and researcher of mediumnistic and paranormal phenomena.

interested in the study and its practices, as well as being a member of a society of French magnetizers. A rationalist man like him, in the ranks of positivism, claimed that this radiation was a kind of variant of universal electricity and that human magnetism was found within the cosmic fluid. Although it is a common practice in most Spiritist institutions, especially in Brazil, in others of a philosophical or scientific nature, it is one of the concepts that are derived and developed within the basic postulates of Spiritism. In all Kardecist work we find considerations and research on the subject, such as the following:

*"Magnetism paved the way for Spiritism, and the rapid progress of the latter doctrine is unquestionably due to the popularization of ideas about the former. From magnetic phenomena, sleepwalking and ecstasy to spiritist manifestations there is hardly a step; their connection is such that, it is impossible to speak of one without speaking of the other. If we had left out the science of magnetism, our picture would be incomplete, and we could be compared to a physics teacher who refrains from talking about light."*<sup>21</sup> (p. 149)

From the spiritual point of view -- not only mesmerian -- starting from the premise that human beings as incarnated spirits, we generate a vibrant energy, there is a magnetism that we externalize at

will and another that we spontaneously radiate. With the first, by imposing hands accompanied by positive thinking, directed with the intention of healing, you can treat a physical condition, pain, depression, an emotional clinical illness, among others, producing truly therapeutic effects.

The answer transcribed in *The Spirits' Book* to question 424 made by Kardec confirms this:

*"Through timely care, can the bonds that are about to be broken be resumed and a being who would die definitively for lack of aid, can be restored to life? Certainly yes. Magnetism is often in this case a powerful means, because it restores to the body the vital fluid that it lacks, and that was not enough to keep the organs functioning."*<sup>6</sup>

In the second case, we refer to personal magnetism, which we all possess and can come out of us, radiate and flow around us spontaneously. From that vibration that is perceived in the magnetic field or in the aura of people, it produces reactions in others of liking, admiration, seduction, which some call charisma and this is directly related to what we think, feel, how we act and what we express, whether ethically oriented or vice versa.

From these statements it is easy to see the necessary relationship between magnetism and



healing mediumship. We understand the latter, as the faculty that some individuals have, when influenced by spiritual entities, to produce vibrations of a therapeutic type. These vibrations are perceived by the receptors to whom the thought is sent, the will is directed and the necessary qualities that holistically regenerate. In many cases they harmonize the physical and perispiritual structure of the being at its different levels. In this regard, the spirits in *The Mediums' Book* to question 176 responds:

*"Magnetic power resides, undoubtedly, in man, but it is increased by the action of the spirits whom he calls to his aid. If you magnetize with an intention to heal, for example, and invoke a good spirit that cares for you and your patient, the spirit will increase your strength and will, direct your fluid and give you the necessary qualities."*<sup>1</sup>

The coincidences and differences between the magnetizer and the healing medium must be considered. Either when only the psychic force of the healer is acting or, in fact, the intervention of the spirits is influencing in a decisive way therapeutically on the subject. Although both use the universal cosmic fluid, susceptible innumerable combinations, in the energy donor and the magnetic force is proportional to all its psychic, mental and emotional processes.

However, when human magnetism plus the one provided by the spirits are combined, the energy is enhanced and acquires qualities that the magnetizer lacks when acting alone. For example, among many, we have the case of the prominent and renowned Brazilian medium José Pedro de Freitas, better known as Zé Arigó, who helped around 200 people daily and performed surgeries. He also diagnosed and prescribed, all this in a trance state and directed by the disembodied Dr. Fritz. Similarly, the Mexican Bárbara Guerrero known as Pachita also performed countless surgeries, as well as the Filipino Tony Agpaoa. In particular, the American Edgar Cayce in a trance state spoke in medical terms that he was unaware of in a conscious state, relating the current illness to previous lives, diagnosing in the presence or absence of the patient, reading past lives, prescribing orthodox medications on some occasions and in others he resorted to alternative methods of a naturist or psychic type and suggested operations.

Regarding this, the researcher of mediumnistic phenomena, the Argentine spiritist Raúl Drubich establishes in his experiments, a clear difference between the energetic healer, the paragnosis or paranormal diagnostician and the paragnosis healer who should be the object of study. Adding the

## DID YOU KNOW?

The observations and research carried out on the healing medium Zé Arigó reveal the effects of analgesia, immediate healing of operative incisions, as well as homeostasis and blood clotting. It was also common that, although he intervened with unnecessary puncture-piercing objects, there was never the presence of infectious symptoms. The case of the operation of a blind young man from an early age, with the aim of regaining his vision, confirms this. The medium performed the procedure in both eyes of lowering the eyeball by levering it with a scalpel that rotated around the globe without causing any pain from the patient or the slightest bleeding.<sup>22</sup>

following to the conclusions of the work carried out by the mediumship team:

*"In the future we will also be able to discern between psychic healers and healing mediums and between paragnostics and paragnosis mediums, establishing how spirit activity influences the phenomenon, the energy performance curves and on the transpersonal information that the patient may give us. In fact, using clairvoyant mediums in the observation of energy transfers in the laboratory they inform us of the activity of spirits that collaborate in the process. These observations show energetic combinations between healers and spirits in a process of solidarity that responds to variables that we are just beginning to understand."<sup>20</sup>*

There is enough scientific, spiritualist and spiritist bibliography that reaffirms the effects of donating energy for healing purposes, the role of the sensitive or medium with these capabilities, if applicable, of even measurements about the energies that radiate at different frequencies, among a few things. However, the results of field work, deserve to be dealt with analysis and reasoning in the Spiritist centers. The observations confirm Kaderc's work:

- The healing medium, like all the others, possesses a natural ability, not of a divine nature, which he places at the disposal of his neighbor with the aim of serving unconditionally without any reward;
- Exposing a sui generis activity with promises of cures and exploits in the media for propaganda purposes distorts the ethical character of the mediumnistic practice;
- Faced with illnesses, the ideas of fatalism and determinism must be discarded, as well as the beliefs that the origin corresponds to faults of the past;
- It is not necessary to use sharp or pointed objects, or physical tools of any kind. Therapies or cures are energetic;

- The indications or prescriptions of drugs and medications correspond only to the physician;
- The understanding that energy therapies, face-to-face or distance passes, and healing mediumship are alternatives that do not replace treatment or conventional medical examination;
- The physical, psychological, and emotional conditions of the participants in the meeting have an effect on the healing action;
- The systematization of the work allows corroborating that the group should not separate its work in the meetings from its daily activities. On the contrary, in all orders, the care of the biological organism and the actions, the thoughts of the day to day strengthen the mediumnistic act during the donation of salutary energies. When the group as a whole is subjected to greater care in the days before work, through the practice of breathing exercises, visualization, meditation and comprehensive preparation, the effects are positive;
- compromising situations for the members of the work team (family problems, financial problems, worries, high levels of stress or of any kind) have a negative impact on the expected results;

- Although the energy pass is an element that is studied within Spiritism, it is not the central axis of this system of thought. The excessive and exacerbated practice of the pass in the Spiritist centers, even without request, are in violation of their autonomy or free will to decide whether or not they want to receive energy help. This is synonymous of misunderstanding the spiritual realities of each individual. In addition, the doctrine is once again compared as quackery, witchcraft, and magic, among others.

## **5 OBSESSION AND MENTAL DISORDERS**

Over the years, the subject of obsession, dealt by Kardec along with highly-evolved spirits, and investigated by other authors, did not undergo great variation. It was considered a human reaction to an offense, a mean act, an inappropriate behavior or simply a passionate act. Despite all this, what deserves careful study, because it has been the subject of important advances, are the procedures used in the processes of disobsession. These are especially relevant because they have among their main objectives to solve complex pernicious relationships between victims and perpetrators. Those fixations come from other lives and are really the

ulterior motives behind those ideas. When the ideas come from disembodied spirits through disobsession we may be able to eradicate feelings, ideas, and emotions which alter their mental field, affect the emotional state of the individual or, distress the psychophysical structure of the individual.

However, we will delve into its causes, the classification of obsession and how it affects those who are involved in low-frequency vibrations as a result of their actions. Likewise, we address the psychological and biological alterations it generates, the scope of the disobsessive process and the relationship with mental illnesses in the light of psychiatry and Spiritism, considered as a scientifically based doctrine which, among its elements, uses mediumship for the moralization of entities linked to each other by affinity of thoughts, behaviors, actions, present and past, that fully injure those who participate in such relationships.

The origin of the word obsession comes from the Latin term *obsessio*, which means siege. Most of the dictionaries and scientific literature (psychiatry, psychology, and psychopathology) on the subject define it as the state of mental disturbance characterized by the presence of an idea, a word or a fixed or permanent image, and the person is



unintentionally dominated by it, unable to suppress or avoid it easily.

It is likely that every person has, at some point in their life, an obsessive thought, compulsive behavior or irrational experience, although without much importance due to its transience or inconsistency. When these are recurrent, they are compulsions or behaviors of the subject herself, devoid of logic and produced involuntarily.

Materialistic science does not conceive the existence and survival of the spirit, reduces the obsession to a psychic pathology that must be treated by traditional aggressive procedures such as the intake of drugs, application of chemical substances, therapies, hospital confinement or other practices. It considers only organic, genetic, or environmental factors and most of the time rules out the possibility of the influence of spirits.

## **5.1 Concept of obsession**

Different times, coinciding ideas. The similarity in terms about the spiritual obsession of Kardec and other Spiritist authors, scholars on the subject, among them: Herculano Pires, Herminio Miranda and Jon Aizpúrua, have confirmed the presence

of these disorders throughout time with the same characteristics. Possibly the ways of expressing ideas change, but deep down, the definitions remain the same.

Kardec in his work *The Genesis* (Ch. XIV, p. 308) defines the following in this regard:

*"Obsession is the persistent action that an evil spirit exerts on an individual. It presents very different characteristics, from the simple moral influence, without notable external signs, to the complete imbalance of the organism and the mental faculties" (...)*<sup>16</sup>

Even when Kardec conceptually linked obsession to the action of an evil spirit, it is clear from study and practice that there are processes of obsession that unleash ignorant, less evolved spirits, which are not necessarily motivated by the desire to harm or harass, although cause a lot of damage. The study of mental disorders and their association with obsessive processes also shows that evil is not always the foundation of the established association of obsession.

In this sense, it is worth highlighting some definitions, elaborated by eminent scholars of Spiritism, which, rather than confronting Kardec's conceptualization, broaden the base of understanding on this complex matter.

### Some definitions of obsession:

"Obsession is characterized by the action of inferior spirits on the human psyche"<sup>23</sup> (p. 5)

*José Herculano Pires*

"Obsession is often a process of revenge. Without moral education, as Kardec says, the pursuing spirit seeks relief for its suffering by making the one who hurt them, suffer. Becoming both unhappy and also involving others in the plots of its misfortunes."<sup>17</sup> (p. 104)

*Hermínio Miranda*

"In the light of the teachings of Spiritism, obsession is defined as the pernicious influence that one spirit exerts on another, for various reasons and through ways, causing the victim numerous physical, psychological, and moral imbalances, which affect their health and alter their behavior."<sup>10</sup> (p. 241)

*Jon Aizpúrua*

## 5.2 Classification of obsession

Kardec classified the different human processes which he called spiritual obsessions. He classified them according to their characteristics, such as: the predominance of ideas in a negative sense, cancellation of critical thinking, mental and corporal dominance, symptoms, behaviors, and reactions. In accordance with that, he typified them as simple

obsessions, fascination, and subjugation. Obsessive processes can present themselves in any of these forms, without necessarily indicating a progression from one level to another. It should be noted that these relationships are not limited to those established between a disembodied spirit and an incarnate, they can also be produced between disembodied spirits, between embodied and from incarnate spirits to disembodied ones.

The experience amassed through countless cases, was that each and every one of them are different and vary in levels of complexity. The research by experts in the field allow us to suggest that the constitution of a mediumnistic group in any Spiritist center in the world has, among its objectives, to assist beings with spiritual disorders, that intimately disharmonize them, and such efforts should be based on the following principles:

- a) knowledge of the origins or causes that produce the obsession;
- b) carrying out a diagnosis based on the data provided by the person affected and by the spirits, including the perpetrators;
- c) the identification of the elements to solve it; and
- d) the conditions to definitively resolve this damaging relationship.

Although the morbid motives of obsessions can be diverse, the serious existing literature and practice identify revenge as one of the greatest human burdens that give rise to the most unfortunate situations of conflict and moral degradation. In some cases it transcends several incarnations. It has also been possible to determine, that a significant number of cases that seek assistance in Spiritist centers, when the obsessor believes he has the legitimate right to collect, focus on power and money, affective relationships, and possible abortive practices.

The mediumnistic sessions that aim to give assistance to beings involved in processes of obsession must be extremely careful, they cannot be improvised, because the practice does not forgive the lack of preparation and ignorance. As we saw previously, the spiritual world is populated by entities that have been on this earthly plane, nothing more than men and women like ourselves, and who are in different states of moral development. There, like here, are noble spirits endowed with advanced ethical values, but also a significant number of beings who are immersed in the painful extremes of degradation.

The alterations that occur in the psychophysical structure of the obsessed person and predominant

characteristics of each process vary from greater to lesser degree of complexity.

In simple obsession, repetitive and inopportune ideas, get into the victim's daily life, obstructing access to other entities of greater progress or loved ones, as well as supplanting them. Those peculiarities are present. In many cases, the individual can become aware of what is happening to himself, and although it may feel uncomfortable, there are only minor disturbances.

In fascination, the obsessor invades the mental sphere of the individual with the most absurd and extravagant ideas. Likewise, he has control of his will, but his critical capacity decreases. The obsessed person accepts conceited adulations that feed his ego even considering himself, in the case of mediums, the only and the best. The siege is of such magnitude, that his life is basically driven by the entity or entities that obsess him not allowing observations to correct their behavior. The illusion is practically total, through ideoplasties they appear with different forms. In these cases, the faculties of the mediums are reduced to tuning in with backward spirits and receiving burlesque and bizarre communications that question not only Spiritist practices but also the body of doctrine.

Subjugation can reach unimaginable pernicious levels, physical and psychological, the moral control exercised over the victim is complete; his will is totally annulled; he is induced to degrading behaviors such as: drug use, alcohol, unhealthy sexual practices. The spiritual entities involved in this type of affinity relationship transmit terrible thoughts, feelings, and emotions, charged with hatred; They project images that cause terror, induce lies, subdue the physically obsessed person, causing intense pain or sexually assaulting the victims through the projection of energies from one or more entities linked to the case. This alters his psyche in such a way that the process that possibly started as a high degree spiritual obsession can be linked to pathologies clearly recognized by psychiatry as mental illnesses.

Kardec in *The Mediums' Book*, in the chapter on obsession, makes clear reference to the fact of not making use of the terms possession or possessed in cases of subjugation. These terms were used in the past with a different connotations. However, he seems to have changed his mind later in the book *The Genesis, Miracles and Prophecies According to Spiritism*. We prefer not to mention that terminology so closely linked to Catholicism.

### 5.3 Causes of spiritual obsession

It is worth noting that the processes of obsession develop because those involved in similar relationships have in common a mental sphere of decadent thoughts and actions, they are in the same vibratory range, regardless of whether the “debts” of the obsessed with the obsessor come from this or from past incarnations, they may even transcend more than one existence. The continuity or the end of that plot will be proportional to the capacity to hate or forgive that the protagonists of that personal or collective story have.

In a disobsession “treatment” there is nothing more than the possibility of reorienting objectives and rebuilding relationships among those involved. The ideal situation would be, for the definitive solution, the recognition of the damage to all parties involved in this relationship, and the mutual and necessary forgiveness. If this is not possible, then deciding to close the door or the psychic gap that was left open is an alternative, along with being able to identify erratic behaviors that have allowed the perverse psychological and energetic penetration of the obsessed mind. This will also require that the person internalize and incorporate positive changes in their



life, therefore limiting access to his/her mind, and move away of the energy frequency in which both obsessed and obsessor are involved.

The sense of revenge is mostly related to reincarnation processes or experiences of the past. For example, we notice in mediumship meetings when the present aggressor was formerly a victim who in turn is currently in a situation of collector and can confirm ethical deviations or behavioral weaknesses. Promiscuity, child abuse, abuse and dependence on drugs, alcohol, and other narcotic substances; interest in pornography, gluttony, syncretic practices, especially with the intention of causing harm to third parties, and other reasons, are just some of the causes that also influence the development of obsessive processes.

Considering that thought is an irradiation of electromagnetic waves that tune in with others of the same frequency (emitter-receiver), this leads to an action driven by feelings, such as: anger, resentment, rage, hatred, pride, selfishness, vanity which, in turn, are a guarantee of obsessive processes at the door or in progress. Also, low acts like destructive criticism; the judgment of your fellow men; lies; deception; living off the work and effort of others; the evocation of spirits for unscrupulous purposes; rituals, among

others. Those are triggers that attract beings with levels of moral inferiority such that they are capable of destroying the obsessed individual, affecting their personal environment, at home or at work, in addition to compromising cognitive abilities and health in general.

It should be noted that not in all cases of obsession the person causing the damage is aware of the damage caused to the victim, such as, for example: the possessive and controlling mother who disincarnates and obsesses her child or, on the contrary, fixations from family members who have suffered the loss of loved ones and, without the intention of harming, desperately hold onto them through incessant memories, image creation, denial of reality, and depression, among others. The plastic properties of thought, known today to science as neuroplasticity, allow ideas to materialize by reorganizing and changing their molecular structure. The sender of a fixed idea can capture mental images on the receiver that have come to be photographed. You can also capture thought emissions for the purpose of healing because they are positively oriented. You can also receive those that come from backward entities with the intention of causing worry.

## 5.4 Complementary spiritist treatment

Let's suppose that assistance is requested in the Spiritist center by the subject who claims to feel possessed. First of all, this term is misused: spirits do not possess the body of another person; they magnetize their energies, project themselves, direct their thoughts; in this case, onto the victim. Second, some institutions proceed as follows: they previously request a psychiatric evaluation that rules out mental pathologies of an organic nature or induced by external factors.

Once the results have been obtained and the absence of known physical psychological alterations is noted, an interview is carried out on the obsessed person by one or more directors of the Institution. Among them is the director of the mediumnistic sessions who guides and directs the entire process from the beginning. Through this survey, whose content focuses on the psychological, psychopathological, family, and social aspects of the person involved, the causes that have developed the obsessive process can be identified and the victim is initially invited to self-analyze, to review, to recognize the possible origins of their condition, to internalize them and work on them incorporating positive changes that allow consolidating recovery.

At the same time, mediumnistic meetings are held where the intimacies of the case are respected, solutions are considered, and today's victim will make a turn at the helm of his/her life that takes them to a safe harbor, through personal transformation.

It should be noted that, although the pathology is of psychiatric origin, if the relatives request it, assistance can also be provided because the mental condition of the patient could attract entities related to these psychological processes, worsening the health status of the individual.

A definitive factor for the effective resolution of the obsessive relationship is the clarification and awareness, on the part of the obsessed, of the role he plays in the process. They need to understand that oneself must take a different mental posture; exercise control of our mind, feelings, and desires, and repel interference from the obsessor. Likewise, it must be understood that through mental attitude and will, the pernicious relationship that has been established will be interrupted. Hence the importance, in disobsession work, of safe orientation for the obsessed who must configure a new mental pattern, capable of producing more appropriate thoughts, of affective and energetic harmony.

There are important elements from the specialized Spiritist literature and particularities resulting from field work, which would be very useful to mediumship teams when considering giving assistance to those who are linked to pernicious relationships:

- understand from the beginning that both obsessor and obsessed should be treated as equals;
- Practice validates that the best method or strategy in the process of disobsession far from repression, guilt, or violence against the aggressor, is to recognize that, although he may yearn for justice and, therefore, feel with the right to collect the grievance, the procedure being used is not appropriate. This produces the effect of lowering anxiety and disarming any argument, from the moment that it is decided to listen to it without prejudice;
- The time for resolution cannot be determined. The spiritual reality of each involved, the evolutionary level, the ability of letting go, of feelings and decadent acts will determine the solution of the conflict;
- Mediumnistic groups that participate in disobsession processes require the necessary expertise to handle dense energies and deal with violent, aggressive, skilled, sarcastic, unscrupulous

beings. Lack of skill in these could cause serious damage. It is pertinent to previously acquire adequate training in study sessions or development of faculties;

- It is common for the spiritual team in charge of the processes of disobsession in the Spiritist centers, in some cases, to initially lead to the meeting the entities involved in the most aggressive conflicts in each event, often seen in depressing conditions due to the state of debasement. On other occasions, the person who acts as the intellectual author, or the executor, as if it were criminal organizations, is the one accompanied by a significant number of spirits. Although these are not directly related, they listen to what is expressed by the director or incarnate counselor, who must possess an authentic moral ascendant to deal with truly backward spirits;
- In all cases, if the person to be assisted has been medicated for a psychiatric pathology, the treatment suggested by the specialists should not be suspended. At all events, it will always be the physician who suggests or orders the suspension of medications when observing the improvement of his patient;

- the seriousness of some conflicts of a spiritual nature may derive or be related to psychological and physical pathologies. In turn, depression, or neurosis, can influence the development of obsessive processes of a spiritual nature;
- The assistance of a multidisciplinary team in the treatment of spiritual obsessions is decisive and positive. If among the members of the mediumnistic meeting there are professionals from psychology, psychiatry, or psychotherapy, they would be an added value for the resolution of cases. If this is not possible, it is advisable to refer to these specialists for joint work;
- In certain cases, regressions made by the director during the mediumnistic session to the entities that are led by the Spiritual team allows the clarification of a mind clouded by hatred;
- Magnetic passes are used many times with dual purposes: some, to help the medium so that superimposition of the perispirit of the communicating spirit on the intermediary or medium is carried out with relative calm, despite the density of its vibrations, and other passes, called dispersive, which allow the medium, once the trance is over, to gradually recover after the magnetization of energies of such a low frequency;

- The best help that can be given in cases of obsession is counseling. Today's victim must know that the control of one's mind belongs to oneself. It is he/she who definitely opens or closes the psychic gaps that lead to freedom or prison.

Confidentiality regarding individual information is essential. What is revealed, debated, and analyzed in a medium-sized environment must be kept and respected in accordance with the ethical conduct to preserve the right to privacy. Consequently, making use of mechanisms that allow anonymity to be preserved, it is necessary to refrain from commenting on any information outside the reserved space of the mediumship meeting. Otherwise, some kind of moral damage or scandal could be caused to the detriment of incarnate or disincarnated beings.

The paradigm shift on the subject of obsession is still pending. The concept of demonic conception should be discarded and be treated from the perspective of a natural and human process with elements corresponding to psychiatry, psychology. The self-transformation of those involved through mediumship, in Spiritist centers and even religions for those who are adept at them, would be an important advance. Spiritists with adequate training must persist in completely dissociating the obsession from



retrograde practices that are carried out to date, such as exorcisms or violent expulsion of demons, drugs that cloud consciousness and generate dependence, immobilization of the subject through so-called curses, hexes, and other degrading techniques that alter and further deteriorate the psychophysical structure of the person assisted.

## 5.5 Mental disorders

Having knowledge of the disorders that compromise the psyche and cognitive abilities, altering the behavior of affected individuals, is important for Spiritists, because it allows differentiating between the mental processes that come from organic, behavioral, sociological, or psychodynamic causes and those that have their origin in spiritual obsessions. Although at times they can be linked and even present similarities, not all of them stem from the same root. Even if a physician's diagnosis could be decisive and definitive, there are many cases where the act of talking to spirits clinically deduces the existence of a mental illness.

In psychiatric hospitals and other mental health institutions, numerous people with sensitivities and mediumnistic capacities are confined or treated daily. Illnesses such as neurosis, psychosis, or

schizophrenia, are treated with medications and, far from improving the situation, cause disorientation and permanent states of drowsiness, aggressiveness, discouragement, apathy, among others. Until materialistic science consciously admits the survival of the spirit, we will continue to have beings with psychic and mediumnistic faculties subjected to the traditional psychiatric medical treatments.

Various approaches are proposed by professionals regarding the birth of mental pathologies, from hereditary ones to neuronal dysfunction and brain biochemistry. Also behavior of the individual when interacting with the environment; as well as individual positions before family, political, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Even the output of the unconscious world related to the anxiety generated by the clash between pleasure and repression due to censorship, mentions clinical psychologist Jon Aizpúrua.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Aizpúrua, presents a scheme according to clinical practice, the etiology of mental illnesses attributing the presence of different factors: exogenous (head injuries, permanent exposure to radiation, drug use and bacterial infections); deficiencies (of vitamins, oxygen, hormones, sleep, sensory stimuli); stress; biochemical agents (decrease or elevation of neurotransmitters); as well as tumors and brain



**Jon Aizpúrua**

Clinical psychologist, educator, and writer. International speaker. Member of the University Council of the Central University of Venezuela (UCV). President of the Pan-American Spiritist Confederation (CEPA in Spanish), nowadays the International Spiritist Association (1993-2000) and president of the Spiritist Culture Movement (CIMA in Spanish).

lesions, degenerative processes (arteriosclerosis and senile dementia) and elements related to heredity. It also refers to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, prepared by the Psychiatric Association of the United States, to know in depth these pathologies organized by symptoms in hierarchical order. Finally, it complements with the different reactions and behaviors that characterize the various types of neurosis, psychosis, and schizophrenias, including spiritual obsessions as one more contribution that Spiritism makes to treat mental illnesses comprehensively and more effectively.

Herculano Pires, in his work *Dynamic Course of Spiritism: The Great Unknown*, makes the following statements, some of which coincide with Aizpúrua:

*"Psychiatry is the medical field with the greatest conflicts with Spiritism. And it is the Spiritist field*

*with the most intense activity and where Spiritists have obtained the greatest successes. The reason for this is evident. Most psychopaths are simply obsessed; and what exceeds the routine in psychopathies of psychological, educational, neurological, or cerebral origin is also shown to be infested by inferior spirits. Regarding this, the practicing spiritists and especially the spiritist-psychiatrists have no doubt"<sup>24</sup> (p. 47).*

Spiritism does not intend to oppose psychiatry or deny its achievements or those of psychotherapy in general, but it is evident that it offers this field of specialized treatment, new perspectives to advance scientifically proven etiological and healing research. It reveals to psychotherapists the hidden face of psychopathological reality, just as astronauts revealed to astronomers the hidden face of the moon.

Complementary Spiritist methods of treatment have proven their efficacy and continue to prove it daily throughout the world. Spiritism offers psychiatry a comprehensive theoretical and practical contribution, which psychiatry cannot reject based on assumptions and prejudices of a past long overdue.

## 6 INSIGHT INTO MEDIUMSHIP

Over one and a half century after the emergence of Spiritism in 1858 and the release of *The Spirits' Book* – the first and the most comprehensive handbook of theory and practice ever written thus far in relation to mediumship– there is evidence of the abandonment of the epistemic dimension of communication between the so-called alive and dead. Admittedly, over the course of time mediumship would be misunderstood and wrongly practiced insofar as its role continues being twisted or disparaged.

Neglected as knowledge generation, mediumship was misled into the reception of Evangelistic and Salvationists messages, aimed at appeasing the grief and reassuring the mourners, indoctrinating spirits

and solving psychic and moral concerns, attributed generally – and erroneously most of the time– to the practice or non-practice of the mediumnical activity. Notably, mediumship is exclusively or primarily used for healing; care of suffering spirits, obsessing and obsessed spirits; interpretative clear-sightedness of physical and moral ailments of the incarnated; search of news about the beloved ones who disincarnated, and the writing of works on mediumship, mostly repetitive and of a dubious quality.

Nowadays, mediumship is typecast in stereotypical behaviors, both of mediums and directors.

Rather than something natural, mediumship is mistakenly labelled as a moral attribute, a mission (in the Spiritist wording of Evangelic-religious style: mediumnate) to be accomplished inexorably by the medium, running the risk of suffering physical conditions or mental disorders and arrested spiritual development. Truly, it is a profoundly mistaken view. Someone with a remarkable potential of mediumship (e.g., dynamic mediumship) owns free will. Therefore, they may or not use their mediumship, and this is not at all a must for their destiny or physical and mental health.

Some give mediumship the dimension of a gift or mission. They cannot understand that mediumship

is a natural, physical, mental and energetic ability that may or may not be exercised, developed and perfected. Furthermore, mediumship is independent from the evolutionary and moral level of the medium. On the contrary, the experience in dealing with the phenomenon points to the possibility of finding mediums of variable potential in different intellectual and moral conditions.

Mediums of loose morals and ethics can produce exacerbated phenomena of an enormous relevance and use their mediumship for worse or for financial and personal profit. As a matter of fact, the use, the destination of the mediumnical ability is what should be considered.

There are no mediums of right or wrong. Nor all mediums of a high intellectual and moral level enjoy full mediumnical abilities, just because mediumship is not a moral virtue. The matter at issue is the ethical sense of mediumship. Some use it for the practice of goodness, knowledge generation, solidarity and love. Some others –even though they must have a great potential for mediumship– might use it to satisfy their material needs, as a tool for power, to jeopardize others, abusing of their good faith and ignorance, of the psychological weaknesses and of the moral feebleness of many who regard mediumship as a

lifeline for their problems. Being a medium means practicing mediumship. Therefore, it does not necessarily afford less or more morality, which is directly related to the method of practice.

Allan Kardec bequeathed to scholars, practitioners and persons interested in mediumship some fundamental methods, developed after years of experience and research into mediumnical meetings led by him at the Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies (SPEE).

The first issue **warns against relying on the identity of spirits.**

In the practice of mediumship, the name of the person who shows up or the person to whom the communication is attributed does not matter. Teasing, pseudo-wise and obsessing spirits frequently use the names of famous persons to trick or make an impression on anxious, desperate or credulous interlocutors. Such spirits use and abuse of the identity of persons who played a salient role in history, artists, politicians, scientists, philosophers or religious leaders. Such a risk underlies behind both evocations and spontaneous communications, including psychographic, psycho-phonic and psycho-pictographic messages. A critical, accurate, sober and responsible review of the communication is advisable to prove easily any pretended identity of the communicating



## Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies (SPEE)

Founded in Paris on 1 January 1858, the Parisian Society for Spiritist Studies (SPEE) is regarded as the first Spiritist institution. Managed by his first president, Allan Kardec, its purpose was, in accordance with Article 1, of the Bylaws: *"the study of all phenomena related to Spiritist manifestation and their application to moral, physical, historical and psychological sciences."*

Chapter XXX of *The Mediums' Book* contains the Regulations of the SPEE. In this connection, Kardec purported to *"aid start-up societies, which may take as guidelines the provisions they consider useful and applicable to their own set of circumstances. Even though they are presented in simplified form, their structure may be reduced still further with small individual groups, which only need to establish measures for their internal structure, precautions and regularity of their work."*

spirit, who many a time catches in on this work to catch, like a sitting duck, the attention of the unwary.

The second issue is a frequent and common mistake among the beginners in mediumnical meetings – but also among the persons who have dealt with mediumnical phenomena for a long while who might be taken unawares– which is to be impacted by the way of the communication.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Psycho-pictography** or **mediumnical painting** is a mediumnical power used by certain spirits to express themselves with drawings or paintings by using diverse techniques.

In *The Mediums' Book* (item 190), Kardec defines painting or designing mediums as: “[t]hose who paint or draw under the influence of spirits.”



Psycho-graphed texts and oral communications characterized by a highfalutin, scholarly, eclectic or hermetic wording sometimes come from the same kind of the above-mentioned spirits and for identical purposes.

One of the most important precautions is to put the content of the communication –no matter the identity, the format or the language– through the sieve of reason, good sense, taking good care of not being impressed or considering it beforehand as true, only on the assumption of being authored by a presumed authority or because of their literary, enlightened or cultivated enunciation.

Nor should regularly established groups, composed of renowned and seasoned mediums where spirits usually deliver their messages, dispense

with this work. A critical stance should never be ignored or put aside. The directors of the meetings and all the stakeholders ought to ponder on delivered messages. It is not generalized, sudden distrust, but the need to take a vigilant, critical, analytical, and permanent posture concerning the mediumnical event.

A third issue has to do with the identity of mediums. No matter their lofty dedication in terms of time and energy, their accumulated experience, their distinguished position and seriousness, and their generous devotion, not even the most renowned and venerate mediums are unfailing.

Allan Kardec and the leading persons who continued the dissemination of the Spiritist doctrine, for instance, seldom identified the mediums used for their research. At most, these mediums were designated only by the initials of their names, mostly in order to keep their identities confidential.

The most relevant mediums with whom Kardec worked on the corpus of the Spiritist doctrine are barely renowned. They were young, plain women and men who made their contribution anonymously.

Towards the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the personality of the medium super star would be consolidated. They ceased to play their original role

of intermediaries to become the main characters, authors of best-sellers, regarded and followed as enlightened spirits, prescribers of conducts and the owners of absolute truth, filling gyms, flattered by and flattering politicians and the rich and famous, drawing a big audience in radio and TV shows, even in the cinema, and striking astronomical sales of works on mediumship, again, sometimes repetitive and of a dubious quality.

Nonetheless, it must be granted that they wildly succeeded in the dissemination of Spiritism, particularly its Christian-Evangelistic branch, mostly due to the capitalization of Spiritist concepts and works. Take, for instance, *The Gospel according to Spiritism*, mistaken as the fundamental work of the Spiritist doctrine, even as the Spiritist' Bible. As a matter of fact, it should be just a book for the study and interpretation, under the Spiritist point of view, of Jesus' lessons on morals.

Particularly for the mass –morally afflicted and impressed by the spectacular nature of mediumnical phenomena– these worshipped mediums eventually form an entire herd of followers, who idolize both the mediums and their spirit guides, hardly willing to the study of Spiritism, self-transformation and upgrade of society. Certainly, they tend to reproduce the conservative

relationship of the religious movements of the masses and take on a messianic stance, sort of spiritual Darwinism, as opposed to the evolutionist perspective which is the cornerstone of the Spiritist philosophy.

There is still another serious and concerning distortion, which is present even in Spiritist centers and family groups, where a medium is assigned the role of senior medium, with the power to define, from operational matters within the organization (for instance, who will be the next president, changes in meetings, reforms of the cadaster or of the bylaws, etc.) to people's destiny, diagnosis of the obsession and other conditions, including treatment, even if the condition is of an organic origin. In this way, sort of obsession with the so-called senior medium is ultimately established.<sup>25</sup>

At bottom, in all the scenarios described above – the identity of the famous spirit, the godlike medium or the elaborated format of communication– there is the intended argument of authority, able to substantiate positions –no matter their absurdity or inability to withstand the scrutiny of reason– like a truth that ought to be taken as absolute and irrefutable. And this is precisely what mediumship should not be subordinated to.

Such is the lay and free-thinking perspective, laid down, for instance, in the Position Statement of CEPA Brazil.<sup>26</sup>

*"CEPA does not foster idolatry either of mediums or spirits; nor does it afford any special authority or infallibility to their information. Mediumship is not a divine gift, grace or miracle that turns its carriers into privileged persons. It is an asset that all of us have to a greater or lesser extent."*<sup>26</sup>

Again, as described in Chapter 2, the observance of the universal consistency of the spirits' lessons is a very important methodological strategy when dealing with mediumship. Notwithstanding, mediumnical communications and works produced single-handedly continue being mistaken as divine revelations. Opinions, stories and experiences narrated by spirits, while valid as singular contributions to knowledge, depict their particular and specific points of view. However, they are taken as absolute truth, failing to submit the content of such messages to a critical analysis.

These messages purport to be universal, yet they are not open to criticism or refusal. They claim to be authority arguments. There is advocacy of the need to have faith in the ideas that sustain these messages. Thus, they turn into crystallized dogmas, a religious revelation. Lay and free-thinking Spiritism

rebels precisely against that, in conformity with the postulates of Allan Kardec.

Failure to understand the different kinds of spirits is a matter of concern as relevant as the risks and problems described above. This topic has been addressed in Chapter 1. Such a situation implies restrictions in the ability to comprehend what the spirits want do address and delve into.

One lesson learned from the interaction with spirits is that the higher their intellectual and moral development, the more careful are they in dealing with the topics tackled in mediumnical meetings. In his *Posthumous Works*, Kardec warned us, based on his practical experience.<sup>27</sup>

*"One of the first results of my observations was that spirits, being nothing more than human souls, were endowed with neither supreme knowledge nor supreme wisdom, that their knowledge was limited to the degree of their evolution, and that their opinions had value only as personal opinions. I recognized this truth at the start, and it enabled me to avoid the grave mistake of believing that spirits were infallible, and it also kept me from formulating premature theories based on the opinion of only one or a few of them." (p. 238)*

Again, spirits are just those individuals who depart from the bodily existence for a while. The dead are not any wiser or capable of responding all questions. Whenever they are allowed and willing to attend a mediumnical meeting, they address topics according to their limited knowledge, prejudices, view of the world. Hence, mediumnical meetings seldom get revelations or answers to complex issues. While they can and do manage to deal with moral issues –surely, many experiences and good advice can be drawn from them– in dealing with scientific, philosophical or any kind of topics, involving the future of each one of us or our society, they give their opinions same as a wise incarnated analyst could do.

This does not mean that mediumship is useless, but we need to be keenly aware of the limited development of each disincarnated who communicates with us. In addition, while it is true that we can be inspired by and establish valuable and productive interactions with spirits, the responsibility to generate knowledge and build the future – individually and as a society– is a task that we, the incarnated, cannot delegate.

Another controversial issue has to with the seeing mediums. Some groups of a serious and dependable track record in mediumship usually have them at



hand. Sometimes, seeing mediums act as control mediums, responsible for supporting and even leading the works. Thus, they say the final word or play a decisive role in the analysis of what is happening and of the truth or not of any other communications. Kardec already warned in *The Mediums' Book* against the risks of meetings that take clear-sightedness as the baseline. This is true because it is not possible for the directors and other participants in the meeting to check the impressions transmitted by the seeing medium only. Therefore, extreme care must be taken with this kind of mediumship, which requires the same check mechanisms as those for any other kinds of mediumship.

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*If you want to know further about seeing mediums, you can read Chapter XIV of The Mediums' Book.*

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Which additional consequences could the above-mentioned risks bring about in the daily routine of the mediumnical phenomenon? Why should we worry about such questions?

Well, failure to observe these matters in the practice and analysis of mediumship could lead to miscomprehension of mediumship and Spiritism itself. It could be like granting a divine origin and nature of the Spiritist doctrine and infallibility of mediums and

spirits. The works of Kardec and of famous mediums and spirits could turn into sacred texts. The update of knowledge and of the corpus itself of the Spiritist doctrine –a must for any science or philosophy– could be like the exclusive incumbency of the higher spirituality, composed, of course, of the spirits linked to the organizations that get the upper hand in the Spiritist movement or that sustain the theses championed by them.

Lay and free-thinking Spiritist are at odds with the Spiritist movement being subject to a supposed determination of the higher spirituality, turning it into Evangelistic, religious doctrine with some backup on Kardec's works, but without the rationality proposed by Kardec.<sup>26</sup>

To the mind of the *statu quo* conservatives, Allan Kardec is just a secretary of spirits. Many honor Kardec, but as performing the secondary function of coder, relegating to the background his extraordinary role, that is, founding Spiritism and laying the foundations for its continuous update, in order to make its valuable contribution to the advancement of humankind.

Kardec was not just a clerk of spirits. He was the systemizer, author, coder and founder of Spiritism. Disparaging his role and extolling the spiritual

mentors is a maneuver to expunge any potential failure. When labelling Kardec as an assistant, there is the chance of making the spirit revelation divine, sacred and untouchable.<sup>26</sup>

Concomitantly, mediums and spirits are deified, contributing to unequal relationships of dominance. Hence, the moral and intellectual authority of the incarnated to continue Kardec's work is negated. Sometimes, the flag of the doctrine purity is hoisted. The important thing is that nothing must change so that everything can stay the same. Such approach promotes a stationary view of Kardec's nature and work.

Thus, mediumship assumes a religious and dogmatic character, regarded as a conservative and mystic practice, taking issue with the proposal of lay and free-thinking Spiritist. Take, for instance, the following articles from the Position Statement of CEPA Brazil:

*6.3 – CEPA has reservations as to the copious mediumnical production, self-help style, to the detriment of philosophical-scientific works on Spiritism.*

*6.4 – CEPA pursues to recover the role of mediumship in terms of research and verification of immortality, under scientific criteria, not just as a tool of aid for afflicted spirits or healing of psychosomatic conditions.*

*6.5 – CEPA disagrees with the artificial guidelines set through renowned mediums and selected spirits, like divine spokespersons of the higher spirituality, whose revelations are beyond any presumption and the necessary questioning, assembled in the advocacy of purely moralist ideas of inner reform, confessionalism and welfarism."*

The term "mysticism" has multiple meanings: from a tendency to believing in supernatural forces or entities to the belief that human beings are incapable of communicating with the divinity or receiving from the divinity any signals or messages. It encompasses, before all, a wide variety of practices, speeches, texts, institutions, traditions and experiences likely effecting human transformation. Nevertheless, it could be a tool to play with the illusions and justify force, fraud or duress to usurp individual values.

Then, the question arises: Has the Spiritist practice been consistent with its foundations? It is not unusual to observe syncretism, where mediumship is interspersed with mystic practices separate from Spiritism, namely: cartomancy, snails, chiromancy, drapery, uniforms, ornaments, candles, lights, incense, music, pyramids, stones, metals, images, worship, prayers and litany, among some other eccentricities. As a result, mediumship, mediums, directors and participants in

mediumnical meetings, and even the dissemination of the Spiritist ideas is easy prey for charlatanism and quackery, oversimplification and distortion. Mediumship enters the terrain of the supernatural, wherein concealed reality results in conservative and dominant relationships of dominance.

It is true that magnetism precedes and has significantly influenced Spiritism. It is also true that the early Spiritist centers established worldwide revolved around the circles of magnetism,<sup>28</sup> inasmuch as the advocates of this secular practice joined Spiritist groups. However, mediumship should not be confused with the use of magnetic passes, fluids and other practices of Mesmerism. 19 At the end of the day, the essence in the process of mediumnical communications is the mental transmission of emotions, feelings and thoughts, characterized by the medium's willingness to represent another, different person, yet real and out of body.<sup>4</sup>

According to Wilson García, an expert in communication theories and Spiritism, communication is basically the exchange of ideas, which may be accompanied by feelings and emotions, through symbols, including, but not limited to, signs and words. Feelings, but not emotions, can be communicated by using symbols. However, the

recipient can decode or interpret emotions.<sup>29</sup>

Hence, lay and free-thinking Spiritism affords a critical dimension to the questions posed by religious spirits as minor issues, misrepresenting mediumship. Take, for instance, mediumnate, construed as a divine mission of mediums; idolatry or infatuation with mediums and spirits; mediumship as an article of faith, including the adoption of non-critical and mostly absurd ideas, from mediumnical works intended to dictate what is true or not; bedazzlement of participants –mediums or not– with mediumnical activities; unreasonable use of healing mediumship, sometimes replacing or contraindicating the conventional treatment, and the concession of a divine mandate to Spiritist leaders, supported on a mediumnical prompt..

Of note, many of these stances are associated with an emphasis on self-serving charity, interested in exploring the future place in the spirits' world, the so-called spiritual plane, on the basis of a backward point of view that any kind of problems is to be explained as punishment for wrongdoing in previous reincarnations. The theory of karma –and the modern Spiritist view of reincarnation releases us from this concept– is used to prescribe that everything will be sorted out only through "inner reform." Such

an idea is apart from the evolutionary perspective, according to which nobody else apart from us is responsible for our individual and collective evolution during successive lives, leveraged by experience and learning –the only way towards intellectual and moral development.

Lay and free-thinking Spiritist postulate that Spiritism contemplates the natural evolution of humankind, advising to get rid of the moralist and conservative concepts that permeate Christianity, premised upon guilt, sin, suffering and punishment. The point is not to turn Spiritism, as J. Herculano Pires said, “into a doctrine of giants in the hands of Pygmies.”<sup>31</sup>

From the free-thinking perspective, Spiritism is set to educate autonomous subjects, the main characters of their own story, looking for knowledge and a state of calm and love, with hope and taking on responsibility for the future.

At this point, remembering Kardec is worthwhile. According to the master born in Lyon, the entire Spiritist doctrine is a protest against mysticism, insofar as it tends to redirect all beliefs towards the positive field of the laws of Nature.<sup>32</sup> In his own judgment, religiosity and mysticism were not construed as positive, considering that the notion of spirituality waives it.

Hence, it can be asserted from this perspective that mediumship offers a different view of spirituality, understood as

*"the conviction of playing an undeniable role and purpose in life, bringing about the responsibility for accomplishing our full potential as human beings and, therefore, achieving a sense of peace, happiness or transcendence."*<sup>33</sup>

Certainly, it is naturalized spirituality, as Solomon notes concomitantly (2003):

*"A sense which is not religious, not institutional, not theological, not based on writings, not exclusive of spirituality; a sense which is not hypocrite, not based on any belief, not dogmatic, not against science, not mystic, not acritical, neither blissful nor perverted."*<sup>34</sup>

This view is in line with the way of thinking of lay, Kardecian and free-thinking Spiritist, members of CEPA. Certainly, such position does not mean neglect of mediumship. It is a new, critical and reasonable attitude, in keeping with Kardec's precepts. It helps to cash in on the varied potential of mediumship, valuing research and exchange between the material and the spiritual world, to prove the survival of soul and the evolution of the spirit. It is a way of dealing with mediumship for it to be effective and



used mainly as a method of study, investigation, knowledge –and also to streamline Spiritism.

On this assumption, if mediumship were to be used properly, it could be also an effective tool to support incarnated and disincarnated spirits in a condition of psychic or moral suffering. Surely, there is still a long way ahead concerning mental health.

Mediumship could be used together with and in addition to mainstream health care for a notable practice of comprehensive health. Meanwhile, there is the need to break with unacceptable concepts and practices, based on fatalism and determinism, the attribution of diseases to past failures, healing mediumship as a divine mission, deification of healing mediums and medical spirits, like the ubiquitous Dr. Bezerra de Menezes and Dr. Fritz, for instance.

It is necessary to stop the so-called Spiritist psychiatric therapy as a means of oppression, resulting in chronic conditions and perverse, anti-democratic practices that vilify citizens, such as confinement in despicable madhouses.<sup>35</sup> There is an urgency to break with the promises of healing and exploration that are broadcast on mass media, replacement or discontinuance of the conventional medical treatment, the use of puncture-penetrating

objects, the prescription of drugs and medicines – even herbs– over the counter, trade and commerce of the mediumnical treatment and the failure to prove the outcome of such practices of mediumnical healing.

Beyond the mediumnical potential, it is worth mentioning, by way of conclusion of this chapter, that the true contribution of Spiritism to humankind and the world, as Jaci Régis suggested, is not the Spiritist phenomenology, but an expanded view of life, liberation for the spirit, and the proposal of a renewed dimension of life and death.<sup>36</sup>

Ultimately, the great contribution of Spiritism, from the lay, humanist, Kardecian, progressive and free-thinking point of view lies on its philosophy –for which mediumship played and will continue playing an essential role– based on the existence of spirits, immortality of souls, successive lives, evolution *ad infinitum* and education for death.’.



## **7 MEDIUMSHIP IN THE 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

The expansion and diversification of mediumnical activities in multiple Spiritist institutions requires some specialization in the functions performed by the mediums. For instance: some will think that they have the power to communicate only with familiar spirits; some others will think that they can communicate only with obsessing spirits, being unable to act as intermediaries for some spirits possibly dealing with any other kind of topic in education or research meetings. It is a must to define in a clear and specific way the objective of the meeting and diversify the action of mediums and directors. The goal is to prevent specialization in a certain kind of meeting

or selectivity on the basis of the intellectual or moral standard of selected groups of spirits.

For decades now mediums' training and development courses have been offered. In Brazil, for instance, in light of the ground-breaking work of the *Luz Eterna* Spiritist Center, at Curitiba, many institutions implemented the course on guidance and study of mediumship (COEM)<sup>37</sup> or alike. Regrettably, though, there is absence of study courses on theory and practice of mediumship, aimed at the classification and standardization of coordination practices and development of systematic processes for the mediumnical works.

Delving into the study and expanding the potential for knowledge generation through the mediumnical method, with rather reliable results, depends not only on the most trustworthy mediums, but also on directors highly proficient in carrying out their important tasks in the mediumnical area. All in all, consider that the medium's performance is strongly influenced by the degree of confidence in those who make use of the medium's mind and the meeting directors, both the incarnated and disincarnated.

Moreover, there is the need to redirect the approach of mediumship in elementary courses on Spiritism, courses for Spiritist children and adolescents, conferences and public events, by showing in a clear

and coherent manner the purposes, risks, limitations and possibilities of mediumship.

There is the possibility of a systematic exchange with research groups into mediumship all over the world, facilitated by the use of internet and shared data banks, properly protected and subject to a code of conduct. This could give access to researchers and capitalize in a dynamic and specific way on the universal consistency of the lessons of spirits, by comparing their differences and similarities.

Sure enough, this will require, to some extent, multiple renewed approaches and restructuring of the spiritual teams engaged in mediumnical meetings, upon the establishment of research groups of the disincarnated, of different fields of expertise, prepared to be assessed. Nonetheless, the experience shows that the affinity law is applicable to these circumstances, and that the afterworld will respond consistently to the prompts on this side in this relationship.

In mediumnical research, evocation beforehand, giving time for the disincarnated to get ready too, can be used for a selected spiritual entity or based on topics. It should be arranged and be preceded by scripts previously written by researchers, including thoughtful questions. The scripts should be submitted

to several spirits, in distinct meetings, by different mediums and, wherever possible, in dissimilar groups. Note that the intellectual education of the incarnated should be continuous.

Reincarnation has been a subject matter of enquiry in universities and research centers. Take, for instance, research started by Ian Stevenson, at the University of Virginia in the 1960s, and continued to date by modern researchers. In this connection, we deemed it essential to take mediumship up to the level of scientific research.

Over the past two decades, Spiritism has been included as a subject matter in universities and research groups in multiple countries. Notwithstanding, contrary to the foresight of many leaders and followers, completed and on-going research are not focused on the experimental field. Rather, they basically take Spiritism as a social fact or phenomenon or movement, by means of academic studies, conducted in the most varied areas of knowledge.<sup>38, 39, 40</sup>

Such enquiry has been undertaken mostly by research groups and think tanks linked to graduate courses of Arts, whose findings have been presented in a diversified and ample series of master's dissertations, doctorate thesis, peer review articles and scientific books, let alone the enormous production

## *Brazilian-style Spiritism*

Professor Sandra J. Stoll advises a revision of both the historical narrative and the anthropological interpretation of the trajectory of Spiritism in Brazil. She analyzes in her book the configuration of the features assumed by that doctrine in France and Brazil. Three characters lead the story: Allan Kardec, the founder of the Spiritist doctrine, opens the debate. Main characters include two world-class Brazilian mediums –Chico Xavier and Luiz Antonio Gaspareto– whose life stories mark the production of a Brazilian Spiritist way, split into two branches.

In Stoll's words, Chico Xavier departed from the scientific nature of Kardec's doctrine and got closer to Catholicism with his discourse of virtues and the notion of Christian sanctity –one of the reasons for success of Spiritism in Brazil. For his part, an attractive and flamboyant Gaspareto, regarded as a dissenter, painted pictures in amazing sessions, incorporating Picasso, Monet and Toulouse-Lautrec, among others, while preaching the theory of prosperity.<sup>41</sup>



available on internet. Enquiry is conducted by scholars connected or not with Spiritism, who chose it as the subject matter in various disciplines of human sciences, including, but not limited to, social sciences, political sciences, anthropology, sociology, education, psychology, philosophy, history, communications, semiotics, religion sciences and theology.

A sample of scientific production in the field of human sciences is an article by Dr. Luiz Signates, an expert in Spiritism, a member of CEPA and the Program on Religion Sciences at the Federal University of Goiás and the Pontifical Catholic University of Goiás, released in Caminhos review.

Mediumship, from Prophecy to Rite –Spirituality transformation in Kardecist Spiritism.<sup>42</sup>

*Overview: In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Brazilian Spiritism went through a silent –albeit significant– transformation on the understanding that it took the notion of mediumship as a primary component of the spiritual realization within its belief system. In this work, we specify three ways of spirituality, perceived from the way in which, in each stage, Spiritist dealt with mediumship, due to the growing process of institutionalization of Spiritism –no rite, contact rite and separation rite.*



**Luiz Signates**

*Keywords: Spiritism, mediumship, ritualization, spirituality.*

Although still lukewarm in the area of experimental science, some initiatives, like the works led by Brazilian and US researchers, are set to show the alterations found in the brain function of seasoned psychographs by means of neuroimaging.<sup>43</sup> Some other works have been undertaken at the Research Center for Spirituality and Health (NUPES) at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, spearheaded by Alexander Moreira Almeida, including diverse books and articles in prestigious magazines.<sup>44</sup>

To this end, mediumship –communication through a medium from a spirit who previously lived on planet



Earth— needs to be treated, rather than an article of faith, as a scientific postulate, open to criticism and refusal, taking into consideration all and any explanatory hypotheses, until becoming scientific evidence, able to explain phenomena in a better and rather coherent manner. This will happen only by changing the way of thinking and practicing mediumship by the Spirit movement around the world.

### **Neuroimaging of the mediumnical trance**

Researchers at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora at São Paulo, the Federal University of Goiás and the University of Pennsylvania carried out a research study with cutting-edge technology equipment during the mediumnical trance and production of texts out of trance. The scanning yielded substantial differences between the states. During the mediumnical trance, images showed a reduced blood supply and diminished brain activity. However, the psycho-graphed content was far more complex, as compared to the control group. This is consistent with the hypothesis that mediums would not be the authors of the psycho-graphed texts. Likewise, similarities were found in the brain activity of mediums falling into a trance, who are in good mental health, and the brain activity of schizophrenic patients. The latter finding involves the necessity for further research.

Read the whole article in: Peres JF, Moreira-Almeida A, Caixeta L, Leao F, Newberg A (2012) Neuroimaging during Trance State: A Contribution to the Study of Dissociation. *PLoS ONE* 7(11): e49360.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0049360>

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

For decades the practice of mediumship evolved on the fringe of the method proposed by Allan Kardec. It was exclusively devoted to spiritual assistance, disregarding its potential for research and knowledge generation. Resuming this epistemological perspective, not putting aside some other powers dedicated to the mediumnical practice, is the great challenge for mediumship nowadays.

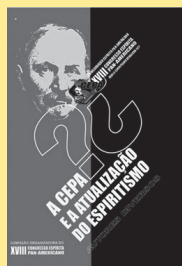
The addition of new concepts or the update of the corpus of the Spiritist doctrine should not rely only on the moral ground of the medium or the communicating spirit; it should not be taken as absolute truth, thus ignoring the scientific method.

The endeavors at delving into mediumnical communication itself, through education and the guidance of mediums and leaders in a new way of

## You can read more about CEPA and the update of Spiritism:<sup>45</sup>

In this book you will find some of the works produced at the XVIII Pan American Spiritist Congress, held in Porto Alegre, on 11-15 October 2000. The authors, in alphabetical order, are:

Ademar Arthur C. dos Reis, Alejandro Martin Ruiz Díaz, Dante López, Dinorá Fraga da Silva, Jaci Régis, Jon Aizpúrua, Krishnamurti de Carvalho Dias, Luiz Signates, Mauro de Mesquita Spínola, Milton Rubens Medran Moreira, Reinaldo Di Lucia, Sandra Jacqueline Stoll, Wilson Garcia, Yolanda Polimeni de A. Pinheiro and Salomão Jacob Benchaya (host).



Available at: <http://www.cepabrasil.org.br/portal/loja-virtual/livros/a-cepta-e-a-atualiza%C3%A7%C3%A3o-do-espiritismo-detail>

being acquainted with this process and disincarnated spirits is among the prevailing challenges.

Some myths will need to fall down to face and explore mediumship as research tool, within the templates used by Kardec and his successors. Validation of the information obtained through mediumship should be subject to sound

methodological foundations, critical analysis, monitoring, and universal consistency of lessons, as posited by Allan Kardec.

The significant contribution of spirits to structure Kardec's work must be acknowledged. However, Spiritism was never a deliverable, a finished product. Kardec himself remarked that the work was a matter of human make. Additionally, he affirmed that the final word about Spiritism had not been said.

Even though the full knowledge obtained over the course of more than 160 years is highly appreciated, the task of keeping the dynamic and current character of Spiritism primarily falls to individual learners committed to the doctrine. Likewise, rescuing, studying and comprehending the corpus of the Spiritist doctrine are of the essence. Finally, as Léon Denis said: "Spiritism will be in the future whatever Spiritist may do with it."<sup>46</sup>

Having said that, a shift in the position and attitude as to the form and destination of mediumship is pivotal, so as to break with "the mental schemes created and stratified through the repetition and adventures in reincarnation cycles, settled down in the spirit. Breaking with such structures is indispensable for any positive and real renewal."<sup>26</sup>

Allan Kardec and his master work on mediumship, particularly *The Mediums' Book*, continues being an obligatory and safe reference for anybody, researcher or not, embarked upon the study of mediumship and the practice of communication with spirits.

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