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"Unshakable faith is only that which can face reason face to face in every Humankind epoch."

Allan Kardec

HEAD QUOTATION

"Many of my readers will, no doubt, feel oppressed by the strange and apparently supernatural phenomena here brought before their notice. They will demand that, if indeed they are to be accepted as facts, it must be shown that they form a part of the system of the universe, or at least range themselves under some plausible hypothesis.

There is such an hypothesis old in its fundamental principle, new in many of its details which links together all these phenomena as a department of nature hitherto entirely ignored by science and but vaguely speculated on by philosophy; and it does so without in any way conflicting with the most advanced science or the highest philosophy. According to this hypothesis, that which, for want of a better name, we shall term "spirit," is the essential part of all sensitive beings, whose bodies form but the machinery and instruments by means of which they perceive and act upon other beings and on matter. It is "spirit" that alone feels, and perceives, and thinks that acquires knowledge, and reasons, and aspires though it can only do so by means of, and in exact proportion to, the organization it is bound up with. It is the "spirit" of man that is man. Spirit is mind; the brain and nerves are but the magnetic battery and telegraph by means of which spirit communicates with the outer world." (...)

"It appears, then, that all the strange facts, denied by so many because they suppose them "supernatural," may be due to the agency of beings of a like mental nature to ourselves - who *are*, in fact, ourselves - but one step advanced on the long journey through eternity." (...)

"These are characteristics of a new truth, not of a delusion or imposture. The facts therefore are proved."

Alfred Russel Wallace

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EDITORIAL

ARIGÓ: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife

A book by *John G. Fuller*

A Brief Review

Mr. John G. Fuller's [Arigó: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife](#), mentioned in the article by *Brian Haughton*, **José Arigó: Psychic Surgeon and Healer** is a remarkable reading that we highly recommend to our readers. By reading it one will undoubtedly have a more comprehensive approach in regards to the healing powers that people like Arigó possesses. In saying this, I am not implying the idea that one will be promptly convinced about the facts in the book, nor will one necessarily accept the rational explanation offered in the book, but it will provide one with a better perspective rather than just unreasonable denials or cheap theories such as the one provided by the "infallible" pundit James Randi.

One of the problems that restrains people from having a better understanding of these phenomena and the faculties which enable people like Arigó to provide a cure where orthodox medicine fails to do so, is the inappropriate attitude of simple denial or the one which sees the matter as something paranormal or miraculous.

The scientific doctrine compiled by Allan Kardec and known as **Spiritism** provides a rational solution to the problem. One of the five books that comprise the basic principles of the doctrine, *The Mediums' Book*, explains in a very systematic way the broad aspects of the faculty of mediumship, only one of which is the power of healing, and demonstrates that neither the phenomena nor the faculty of mediumship are paranormal or miraculous. They are obviously aspects of the natural laws that need further attention and investigation from the part of the scientific establishment. This alone, rather than denials or stubborn skepticism, is what will eventually lift the veil of suspicion that still prevails in the field.

One of the many investigators mentioned by the author of the book is the professor of philosophy *J. Herculano Pires*, who wrote extensively about Spiritism and mediumship. One of his books was actually written to clarify, under a scientific view, the phenomena that Arigó so profusely mediate in his life, which is entitled [Arigó: Vida, Mediunidade e Martírio](#) (Arigó: Life, Mediumship and Martyrdom). Here is what he has to say about the matter in Mr. Fuller's book:

"It is simply ridiculous, to deny that the phenomenon of Arigo exists. It is also completely unscientific to state that Arigo is a paranoid or a psychotic of any kind. Medical specialists, famous journalists, intellectuals, prominent statesmen, and those who have been cured from hopeless conditions, have all had ample chance to witness the phenomena at Congonhas do Campo. These simply cannot be denied or misrepresented. If no formal scientific committees have been organized to verify the many cases, there have been many verifications by many reliable scientists individually. Among these are the medical testimonies given at court. To deny the paranormal capacities of Arigo is simply an act of utter stubbornness." [p. 143]. (...) "Pires also felt that it wasn't necessary to either accept or reject the bizarre concept of Dr. Fritz. Fritz could be explained in any number of ways, depending on the attitude of the observer. Fritz could be an element of mythology, of Arigo's unconscious, or of a clearly defined spirit personally, as the Kardecist spiritists believed. Whatever the truth, the fact is that it worked. It was that simple. ... "With Arigo being unprecedented, the job remained as difficult as ever. Dr. Pires, who unquestionably had probed deeper into the mystique of Arigo than any other Brazilian, had searched long and hard among the medical and psychiatric professions to try to bridge the gap between the rational and the inexplicable." [p. 213; and 217].

One of the scholars to whom the author makes many references in the book is the Harvard professor [William James](#). He was a physician, psychologist, philosopher, president and vice-president of the [SPR-Society for Psychical Research](#) from 1894-4 and 1890-1910, one of the founders of the [ASPR-American Society for Psychical Research](#), and a veteran in the field of Psychical Research. Despite his rank and credentials as a learned man and a true scientist, he was much humbler and wiser than the deniers of

the first hour. In the following article "[The Final Impressions of a Psychical Researcher](#)" he points to the necessary approach on these matters by saying:

"In most things human accusation of deliberate fraud and falsehood is grossly superficial." (...) "How often has "Science" killed off all spook philosophy, and laid ghosts and raps and "telepathy" away underground as so much popular delusion. Yet never before were these things offered us so voluminously, and never in such authentic-seeming shape or with such good credentials. The tide seems steadily to be rising, in spite of all the expedients of scientific orthodoxy. It is hard not to suspect that here may be something different from a mere chapter in human gullibility. It may be a genuine realm of natural phenomena." (...) "I find myself believing that there is "something in" these never ending reports of physical phenomena, although I haven't yet the least positive notion of the something. It becomes to my mind simply a very worthy problem for investigation. Either I or the scientist is of course a fool, with our opposite views of probability here; and I only wish he might feel the liability, as cordially as I do, to pertain to both of us."

The crude reality behind Arigo's story is this: rather than fulfilling its primary mission of achieving knowledge through research to discover new ways of healing the sufferings of mankind, the Brazilian medical establishment found an easier and convenient way to put an end to the uncomfortable and perhaps threatening situation, as the author informs us in the following:

"Puharich and his interpreter finally cornered Arigo for a serious talk. He asked if any doctors had come to Congonhas and made a serious study of his work. Arigo said that very few had come, and although some supported his work, the Brazilian Medical Association was dead set against him, as well as the Roman Catholic Church. Arigo deeply regretted the later, he said, because he had considered himself a devout Catholic, and he still put all his faith in Christ. He took no personal credit whatever for what he did." [pp. 44-45].

Amazing partnership indeed. Not surprisingly on the part of the Roman Catholic Church if we recall on the number of heretics sent to the stake, and its fierce zeal to combat and suppress all kind of new scientific discovery since immemorial ages. I would have no doubt in my mind about Arigo's fate if it was up to the Roman Church, but progress has pushed us forward and the method of stake is no longer an allowance. In any case, in order to push their agenda and to send a message, new methods are implemented. This is what one can read in the following excerpt from the book:

"Arigo's detractors did everything they could to deny the reality of what they saw. But this was impossible to do in the face of facts, and Arigo remained above their barbs, except on legal technicalities." [p. 213].

The subject treated in this book is in fact a complex one, but certainly it is not through evasion, denial, indifference or the aforementioned partnership that men and women of science will lift the veil of suspicion that still shrouds the phenomena discussed in the book. The closing of the presentation of the book's back flap points to the right approach that the subject deserves, as following:

"What Arigo did, then, was real. How he did it remains a mystery and a challenge for science. The American doctors could only say that what they had witnessed defied any explanation in terms of orthodox science. In this spellbinding book, John G. Fuller has reconstructed the weird, incredible, story of Arigo. Meticulously researched, carefully documented, it is a fascinating account of the Brazilian peasant who confounded modern medicine and healed thousands."

The author of the book himself, a veteran writer on matters of complex fashion and mainstream acceptance, initially struggled with the idea of writing this book, given the scope of the subject, but was ultimately convinced that it was a worthwhile endeavour. The following statement clearly tells us that he knew that he was stepping over fertile and solid terrain:

"My contacts with American and other journalists made it abundantly clear that whatever Arigo was, he wasn't a fake. Their personal knowledge was verified in the files of the newspaper morgues and the court records over a twenty-year period. This was a good foundation to work from, because I had planned to go directly back to the States if Arigo's life and work appeared even slightly ambiguous." [Epilogue, II, p. 245]

In his book, *A Pluralistic Universe*, William James made this remarkable and powerful statement, which is still relevant in modern times, although one has to acknowledge that these matters of the so-called "paranormal" have improved substantially.

"We may be in the universe as dogs and cats are in our libraries, seeing the books and hearing to conversation, but having no inkling of the meaning of it all." ¹

We highly recommend Mr. Fuller's book to our readers. For those who are truly seeking understanding and enlightenment, we would like to advise them to be patient and persistent in their studies of these matters, always keeping "The Will To Believe" that drove Mr. James throughout his entire life in the pursuit of the truth.

¹ Richardson, Robert D. *William James: In the Maelstrom of American Modernism*. First Mariner Books, edition 2007.

Antonio Leite - Editor

ARTICLES

AN "INTERVIEW" WITH FRENCH EDUCATOR, SCIENTIST & PHILOSOPHER ALLAN KARDEC, Esq.

By *Michael Tymn*

Abstract: Allan Kardec was one of the pioneers of psychical research. This "interview" with him is based on his several books. Except for words in brackets inserted to provide a transition or flow, the words are his. The questions have been tailored to fit the answers answers.

The spiritualism epidemic ignited by the so-called "Rochester Knockings" in the United States during March 1848 reached France in 1850. According to French historian Ernest Bersot, people sat around tables for hours in anxious expectation of hearing from the spirits. During the winter, there was no other social occupation or topic. The Catholic Church condemned it, but few paid attention.

It was in 1854, at the age of 50, that Hippolyte Léon Dénizarth Rivail (October 3, 1804 to March 31, 1869), a French educator, scientist, and philosopher began investigating mediumship. He adopted the *nom de plume* of Allan Kardec when he began writing about his findings. (He is hereinafter referred to as Kardec.)

Born in Lyons to a distinguished family, Kardec was educated at the Institute of Pestalozzi at Yverdon. He had intended to enter the legal profession, as had his father and grandfather, but in 1828 he purchased a school for boys and devoted himself to education. In 1830, at age 25, he began giving gratuitous lectures to the public on chemistry, physics, comparative anatomy, and astronomy. Under his given name, he authored a number of works aimed at improving education in the public school of France, including *A Plan for the Improvement of Public Instruction* and *A Classical Grammar of the French Tongue*

"Foreseeing the vast importance to science and religion of such an extension of the field of human observation, he entered at once upon a careful investigation of the phenomena," Anna Blackwell, who translated Kardec's works from French to English, explained Kardec's interest in mediumship in the preface to *Le Livre des Esprits (The Spirits' Book)*, published in 1857.

Blackwell, who lived in England, further explained that a friend of Kardec's had two teen-aged daughters who were mediums. Most of the messages coming through the two young ladies, the Boudin sisters, was frivolous or mundane, but when Kardec was present the messages became serious and profound. When Kardec inquired as to the cause of the change in disposition, he was informed that "spirits of a much higher order than those who habitually communicated through the two young mediums came expressly for him, and would continue to do so, in order to enable him to fulfill an important religious mission."

Among the enlightened spirits purportedly communicating with Kardec were John the Evangelist, St. Augustine, St. Vincent De Paul, St. Louis, "The Spirit of Truth," Socrates, Plato, Fénelon, Franklin, and Swedenborg.

Kardec would meet with one or both of the mediums a couple of evenings every week and put questions to the spirits. According to Blackwell, the information received by Kardec was well beyond the comprehension of the two mediums and "they were as little capable of appreciating it as of inventing [it]."

Kardec approached his investigation scientifically, searching for mechanistic explanations. He explained that the earliest manifestations of intelligence were made by the legs of tables moving up and down a given number of times to reply "yes" or "no" to questions asked. Fuller replies were later obtained by a number of tilts or raps corresponding to the number of each letter of the alphabet, so that words and sentences began to be produced in reply to questions. But more rapid responses were later received with the planchette, a basket with a pencil centered in and moved by the same occult power that moved the tables and gave the raps. It was a form of "direct writing," the spirits delivering messages by means of the pencil with no human hand holding the instrument.

The sessions with the Boudin sisters went on for nearly two years before Kardec decided to put the messages in book form. His spirit instructors sanctioned the publication and Kardec was told by them that he should adopt the name Allan Kardec, apparently an old British name in his mother's family, although another explanation is that it was his name in a prior existence.

The first publication of *The Spirits' Book* contained only information gleaned from the spirits communicating through the two sisters, but a revised edition, the one remaining in circulation, includes messages from other spirits through other mediums. According to Blackwell, the book "sold with great rapidity, making converts not in France only, but all over the Continent, and rendering the name of Allan Kardec a household word..."

Kardec called the philosophy coming from the spirits *Spiritism*. While the body of knowledge Kardec was developing was similar to what in England and the United States was developing as *Spiritualism*, Spiritism was more unified, and, unlike much of Spiritualism, embraced reincarnation. Its basic tenet is that we are immortal souls continually evolving through higher and higher realms of existence.

Kardec continued communicating with spirits until his death at age 64. He also wrote *The Gospel – Explained by the Spiritist Doctrine, The Medium's Book, Heaven and Hell, and Genesis*.

Sir, your research seems to have been more concerned with learning higher truths than with proving that spirits are actually communicating.

"Spiritism consists of two parts: one of these, the experimental, deals with the subject of the manifestations in general; the other, the philosophic, deals with the class of manifestations denoting intelligence. Whoever has only observed the former is in the position of one whose knowledge of physics, limited to experiments of an amusing nature, does not extend to the fundamental principles of that science. Spiritist philosophy consists of teachings imparted by spirits, and the knowledge thus conveyed is of a character far too serious to be mastered without serious and persevering attention."

What did you find evidential in your investigation?

"When the spirit who manifest himself is that of some one personally known to us, of a relative or friend, for instance, and especially if of one who has been dead but a short time, it is generally found that his language is perfectly in keeping with what we know of his character; thus furnishing a strong presumption of his identity, which is placed almost beyond reach of doubt when the spirit speaks of private affairs, and refers to family matters known only to the party to whom he addresses himself. A son could hardly be mistaken as to the language of his father and mother, nor parents as to that of their child. Most striking incidents often occur in evocations of this intimate kind – things of a nature to convince the most incredulous. The most skeptical are often astounded by the unexpected revelations thus made to them."

There were some pretty famous names among those who communicated with you. How do you know they are who they say they are?

"As for inferior spirits who assume honored names, they soon betray themselves by the character of their language and statements. If someone, for instance, calling himself Fénélon gave utterances to remarks at variance with common sense or morality, his imposture would at once become evident; but if the thoughts expressed by him were always noble, consistent, and of the elevation worthy of Fénélon, there would be no reason to doubt his identity, for otherwise we should have to admit that a spirit whose communication inculcate only goodness would knowingly be guilty of falsehood. Experience shows us that spirits of the same degree, of the same character, and animated by the same sentiments, are united in groups and families; but the number of spirits is incalculable, and we are so far from knowing them all, that the names of the immense majority of them are necessarily unknown to us."

Do the higher spirits retain their names?

"In proportion as spirits are purified and elevated in the hierarchy, the distinctive characters of their personality are, in some sort, obliterated in the uniformity of perfections, and yet they do not the less preserve their individuality. This is the case with the superior and with the pure spirits. In this condition, the name they had on earth, in one of their thousand ephemeral corporeal existences, is quite an insignificant thing. Let us remark again that spirits are attracted to each other by the similarity of their qualities, and that they thus form sympathetic groups or families."

But I recall reading that some of those claiming to be persons well-known to history are not really who they claim to be, and yet they are not impostors. Would you mind explaining?

"Again, if we consider the immense number of spirits who, since the beginning of time, have reached the highest rank, and compare them with the very restricted number of men who have left a great name on the earth, it will be understood that, among the superior spirits who can communicate, the greater part must have no name for us. But as names are necessary to us to fix our ideas, they can take that of any known personage whose nature is best identified with their own; thus our guardian angels most often make themselves known under the name of one of the saints we venerate, and generally under his name for whom we have most sympathy. It thus follows that if a person's guardian angel gives his name as St. Peter, for instance, there is no actual proof that it is the apostle of that name. It may be he, or it may be an entirely unknown spirit belonging to the family of spirits of which St. Peter makes a part."

It sounds like what is called the "Group Soul," one in which individuality is retained.

"[Perhaps]. The superior spirits form, so to say, a collective whole whose individualities are, with few exceptions, totally unknown to us. The matter of interest to us is not their person but their teachings. Now if this teaching be good, it matters little whether he who gives it calls himself Peter or Paul. We judge by his quality and not by his signature. If a wine is bad, the trade-mark will not make it better. It is otherwise with private communications, because it is the individual, his very person, that interests us, and it is right that, in this case, we should be particular to assure ourselves that the spirit who comes at our call is really he whom we wish."

As you may have heard, the Toronto Society for Psychological Research decided in 1972 to invent an imaginary spirit, to whom they gave the name "Philip" and invented his life history. It wasn't long before Philip began responding to their questions by table raps. There are many who feel this case supports the Super ESP theory. How can it otherwise be explained?

"Invoke a stone and it will answer you. There is always a crowd of spirits ready to speak for anything...If you invoke a myth, or an allegorical personage, it will answer; that is, it will be answered for, and the spirit who would present himself would take its character and appearance. One day, a person took a fancy to invoke Tartufe, and Tartufe came immediately; still more, he talked of Orgon, of Elmire, of Damis, and of Valire, of whom he gave news; as to himself, he counterfeited the hypocrite with as much art as if Tartufe had been a real personage. Afterward, he said he was the spirit of an actor who had played the character. Trifling spirits always profit by the inexperience of interrogators, but they take good care never to address those who they know are enlightened enough to discover their impostures, and who would give no credit to their stories."

Why is it that some of the messages received are sometimes in conflict with each other? For example, we have some spirits saying reincarnation exists and others saying it doesn't or they know nothing about it?

"Spirits differing very widely from one another as regards their knowledge and morality, it is evident that the same question may receive from them very different answers, according to the rank at which they have arrived; exactly as would be the case if it were propounded alternately to a man of science, an ignoramus, and a mischievous wag. The important point is to know who the spirit is to whom we are addressing our question."

The Church warns against spirit communication because of the inferior spirits you have mentioned. How do you respond to that?

"It is an incontestable fact that there are among them bad, crafty, and profoundly hypocritical spirits, and against these we must be on guard; but because we meet in the world with bad men, is it a reason for withdrawing ourselves from society? God has given us reason and judgment to appreciate spirits as well as men."

Would you mind explaining a little about the various table phenomena?

"We have seen the table moved, raised, and strike blows under the influence of one or of several medium. The first intelligent effect that was remarked was to see these movements obey the word of command; thus, without changing its place, the table would rise alternately on the designated foot, then, in coming down, strike a required number of blows, answering a question. At other times, the table, without personal contact, would walk across the room, going to the right or to the left, forward or backward, executing divers movements, at the order of the assistants. It is very evident that we set aside all supposition of fraud, that we admit the perfect loyalty of the assistants, proved by their honor and perfect disinterestedness."

Weren't there times when the table would rise well above the floor?

"[Yes,]...though this requires considerable mediumistic power, it is entirely detached from the floor, and maintained in equilibrium in space, without support; sometimes rising to the ceiling, so that persons may pass under it, then descending slowly, balancing itself like a sheet of paper; or it sometimes falls violently to the ground, and is broken, which proves very decisively that it is from no optical illusion."

What about raps?

"[Yes, it is] another phenomenon very often produced, according to the nature of the medium, is that of raps in the very tissue of the wood, without movement of the table; these raps, sometimes very weak, at other times very strong, are heard as well in the other furniture of the room, against the walls and the ceiling. . .When they take place in the table, they produce in it a vibration very perceptible to the fingers, and very distinct when the ear is applied to it."

It has been said that rapping spirits are very low-level spirits. Is that true?

"All spirits, good or bad, may use it, the same as the other methods. It is the elevations of the thoughts that characterize superior spirits, and not the instrument they use to transmit them; doubtless they prefer the most convenient, and, above all, the most rapid means, but, in default of pencil and paper, they do not disdain to use the ordinary talking table; and the proof is that some of the most sublime things have been obtained in this way. We ourselves do not use it; not that we despise it, but simply because, as a phenomenon, it has taught us all we can know; it can add nothing to our convictions, and the extent of the communications we receive requires a rapidity incompatible with typology. Thus, all spirits who rap are not rapping spirits; the name should be reserved for those who may be called rappers by profession, and who, by the aid of this means, are pleased in amusing a circle, or vexing them by their impertunity. On their part, spiritual things may sometimes be received, but never anything very profound. It would be a waste of time to ask them any scientific or philosophic questions. Their ignorance and inferiority have justly won for them the title given to them by other spirits – that of the clowns or mountebanks of the world of spirits. Let us add that, which they very often act on their own account, they are also often used by superior spirits, when these desire to produce material effects."

Your books talk about "familiar spirits" and "sympathetic spirits." What is the difference?

"Familiar spirits attach themselves to certain persons for a longer or shorter period in order to be useful to them within the limits of their possibilities; they are generally well-intentioned, but sometimes rather backward, and even frivolous. They busy themselves with the everyday details of human life; and only set by order, or with the permission of the spirit guardians.

"Sympathetic spirits are those who are drawn to us by personal affection and by a similarity of tastes in good or in evil. The duration of their relationship with us is almost always dependent on circumstances.

"[Let me also mention that] an evil genius is an imperfect or wicked spirit who attaches himself to a man for the purpose of perverting him, but he acts on his own motion and not in virtue of a mission. His tenacity is proportionate to the more or less easy access accorded to him. A man is always free to listen to the suggestion of an evil genius, or to repel them."

As I understand it, you moved from table tilting or turning and raps on the table to the planchette. Would you explain that?

"[Of course.] The first communications of this kind were by adjusting a pencil to the foot of the table, held lightly on a sheet of paper. The table, moved by the influence of the medium, began to trace characters, then words and phrases. This process was successively simplified by using little tables, the size of the hand, made expressly, then baskets, card-baskets, and afterward simple planchettes. The writing was as flowing, rapid, and easy, as with the hand, but it was afterward found that these objects were only appendices, pencil-holders, with which they could dispense by themselves holding the pencil: the hand, carried along by an involuntary movement, wrote under the impulse given by the spirit, and without the concurrence of the will or thought of the medium. From henceforward, the communications from beyond the tomb had no more limits than correspondence between the living."

I know you are referring to the automatic writing form of mediumship. What if a medium knows only French and a non-French speaking spirit wants to communicate?

"The foreign spirit doubtless understands all languages, as languages are expressions of thought, and as the spirit understands by thought; but to render this thought he needs an instrument; this instrument is the medium. The soul of the medium who receives the foreign communication can transmit it only by the organs of his body; and these organs cannot have the same flexibility for an unknown language which they have for the one familiar to them. A medium who knows only French might, incidentally, give an answer in English, for instance, should it please the spirit to do so; but spirits who already find the human language too slow, considering the rapidity of thought – thought they abridge as much as they can – are impatient of the mechanical resistance they experience; this is why they do not always do it. This is also the reason a novice medium, who writes laboriously and slowly, even in his own language, usually obtains but very brief and undeveloped answers; so the spirits recommend that only simple questions be asked through him. For those of higher bearing it needs a formed medium who offers no mechanical difficulty to the spirit. We would not take for our reader a scholar who spells. A good workman does not to use poor implements.

"Let us add another consideration of great gravity in what concerns foreign languages. Trials of this kind are always made from curiosity and for experiment, and nothing is more antipathetic to the spirits than the trials to which persons endeavor to subject

them. The superior spirits never lend themselves to it, and leaves as soon as this is begun."

Such an attitude certainly doesn't help convince non-believers.

"To that the spirits answer, 'Our cause has no need of those who have so much pride as to consider themselves indispensable; we call to us those whom we wish, and they are often the least and most humble. Did Jesus perform the miracles demanded of him by the scribes, and what men did he use to revolutionize the world? If you desire to be convinced, you have other means than by tricks; begin first by submitting yourselves; it is not in order that the scholar should impose his will upon his teacher'."

I've heard that physical manifestations are produced by lower-level spirits, not higher ones. Is that correct?

"It has been said that the density of the perispirit (spirit body), if one so may express it, varies according to the state of the worlds; it appears that it varies also in the same world according to individuals. Among the morally advanced spirits, it is more subtle, and approximates to that of the elevated spirits. Among the inferior spirits, on the contrary, it approximates to matter, which is the reason these spirits of low state preserve so long the illusions of the terrestrial life; they think and act as if they were still living; they have the same desires, and we might almost say the same sensuality. This coarseness of the perispirit, giving to it more affinity with matter, makes the inferior spirits more fitted for physical manifestations...The perispirit, being to the spirit what the body is to man, and its density being according to the degree of inferiority of the spirit, it takes the place of muscular force; that is to say, gives him, over the fluids necessary for manifestations, a greater power than those whose nature is more ethereal. If an elevated spirit desires to produce such effects, he does what delicate people amongst us do; he has it done by a spirit of the trade."

So many of the physical manifestations seem nonsensical.

"The physical manifestations have for their motive to call our attention to something, and to convince us of the presence of a power superior to man. We have said, also, that the elevated spirits are not engaged in these kinds of manifestations; they employ inferior spirits to produce them, as we employ servants for coarse work, and that with the motive we have indicated. This end once attained, the material manifestation ceases, because it is no longer necessary."

What actually takes place in the materialization of a spirit?

"When the spirit appears to us, he puts his perispirit into the state necessary to render him visible; but for that his will alone is not sufficient, for the modification of the perispirit is effected by his combination with the fluid (ectoplasm) of the medium; but this combination is not always possible, which explains why the visibility of spirits is not general. It is not enough that the spirit desires to be seen; it is not enough that a person desires to see him; it is necessary that the two fluids may combine, that there should be between them (spirit and medium) a kind of affinity; perhaps also, that the emission of the person's fluid should be sufficiently abundant to effect the transformation of the perispirit; and probably still other conditions, to us unknown; it is also necessary that the spirit should have permission to make himself visible to the person, which is not always granted, or granted only under certain conditions, for reasons we cannot always appreciate."

What determines how the spirits present themselves?

"Being able to take all appearances, the spirit presents himself under that by which he could be most readily recognized, if such is his desire. Thus, although, as a spirit, he has no corporeal infirmity, he will show himself disabled, lame, humpbacked, wounded, with scars, if that is necessary to establish his identity."

What about clothing?

"As to the costume, it is ordinarily composed of a drapery ending in long, floating folds, or with hair in flowing, graceful curls, the appearance of spirits who have preserved nothing of terrestrial things; but the common spirits, those whom one has known, usually wear the costume of the latter part of their life. They have often the attributes characteristic of their elevation, as an aureole, or wings for those who may be considered as angels, while others have those which recall their terrestrial occupations. Thus, a warrior might appear in his armor, a savant with his books, an assassin with a poniard, etc. The superior spirits have a beautiful countenance, noble and serene; the more inferior something ferocious and brutal, and sometimes still bear the traces of the crimes they have committed or the punishments they have endured. The question of costume and of all these accessory objects is, perhaps, what most astonishes."

Can a living person bi-locate himself?

"The spirit of a living person isolated from the body can appear the same as that of a dead person, and have all the appearance of reality; and further, for the same causes that we have explained, it can acquire a momentary tangibility. It is this phenomenon called *bi-corporeity* that has given individuals whose simultaneous presence has been verified in two different places."

You mentioned the case of St. Alphonse de Liquori, who was canonized because he was seen in two places at the same time. You invoked St. Alphonse for an explanation. Would you mind relating what he had to say?

"[Certainly. I will here provide his own words]: 'Man, when he is completely dematerialized by his virtue, when he has elevated his soul toward God, can appear in two places at once, and in this way. The incarnated spirit, feeling sleep come, can ask God to transport him to some especial place. His spirit or his soul, as you would call it, then leaves his body, followed by a [part of his perispirit], and leaves the unclean matter in a state bordering on death. I say *bordering on death* because there remains in the body a tie which attaches the perispirit and the soul to matter, and this tie cannot be defined. The body appears then in the place desired.'

"The soul does not divide itself in the literal sense of the word; it radiates on different sides, and thus can be manifested on several points without being divided; the same as a light, which can be reflected simultaneously in several glasses."

There is much evidence of survival of consciousness but it falls short of absolute proof. Have the spirits told you why they can't give absolute proof?

"If the certainty of a future life had been permitted man before his mental vision was prepared for such a prospect, he would have been dazzled thereby, and the seductions of such a certainty, too clearly seen, would have led him to neglect the present life, his diligent use of which is the condition of his physical and moral advancement."

What, then, is the point of studying mediums and exploring the prospect of a future life?

"In proportion as man arrives at a true comprehension of the future state, his fear of death diminishes; but as, at the same time, he also comprehends more clearly the uses of the earthly life; he awaits its ending calmly, without impatience or regret. The

certainty of a future life gives another direction to his thoughts, another aim to his activities. Before acquiring this certainty, he labored only for the things of the present life; having acquired this certainty, he labors for the life to come, yet without neglecting the duties and interests of his present life, because he knows that the character of his future will be decided by the use he will have made of his present existence."

Thank you, Sir, for your comments. Any parting thoughts?

[Yes]. We have questioned many thousands of spirits having belonged to every class of society. We have studied them at every period of their spirit-life, from the instant of their quitting the body. We have followed them step by step in that life beyond the grave, with a view to ascertaining the changes that should take place in their ideas and sensations; and this examination – in which it has not always been the most commonplace spirits that have furnished us the least valuable subjects of study – has invariably shown us, on the one hand, that the suffering of spirits are the direct result of the misconduct of which they have to undergo the consequences, and, on the other hand, that their new existence is the source of ineffable happiness for those who have followed the right road. From which it follows that those who suffer do so because they have so willed it, and have only themselves to thank for their suffering, in the other world, as in this one."

Note from the Editor: Michael Tymn is a writer and the editor of [The Searchlight](#), a quarterly magazine published by the [Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies](#). He is also the Chairman of the *Publications Committee* of the latter, runs his own Blog at <http://metgat.gaia.com/blog> and is the author of a recent published and well praised book on the field of Psychological Research: [The articulate Dead](#).

ELECTRONIC BOOKS

ON MIRACLES AND MODERN SPIRITUALISM

BY

ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE,

D.C.L., LL.D., F.R.S.

REVISED EDITION, WITH CHAPTERS ON
APPARITIONS AND PHANTASMS

LONDON
GEORGE REDWAY
1896

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THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECT OF THE SUPERNATURAL

VIII

THE THEORY OF SPIRITUALISM

Many of my readers will, no doubt, feel oppressed by the strange and apparently supernatural phenomena here brought before their notice. They will demand that, if indeed they are to be accepted as facts, it must be shown that they form a part of the system of the universe, or at least range themselves under some plausible hypothesis.

There is such an hypothesis old in its fundamental principle, new in many of its details which links together all these phenomena as a department of nature hitherto entirely ignored by science and but vaguely speculated on by philosophy; and it does so without in any way conflicting with the most advanced science or the highest philosophy. According to this hypothesis, that which, for want of a better name, we shall term "spirit," is the essential part of all sensitive beings, whose bodies form but the machinery and instruments by means of which they perceive and act upon other beings and on matter. It is "spirit" that alone feels, and perceives, and thinks that acquires knowledge, and reasons, and aspires though it can only do so by means of, and in exact proportion to, the organization it is bound up with. It is the "spirit" of man that is man. Spirit is mind; the brain and nerves are but the magnetic battery and telegraph by means of which spirit communicates with the outer world.

Though the spirit is in general inseparable from the living body to which it gives animal and

intellectual life (for the vegetative functions of the organism could perhaps go on without spirit), there not unfrequently occur individuals so constituted that the spirit can perceive independently of the corporeal organs of sense, or can perhaps wholly or partially quit the body for a time and return to it again. At death it quits the body for ever. The spirit like the body has its laws, and definite limits to its powers. It communicates with spirit easier than with matter, and in most cases can only perceive and act on matter through the medium of embodied spirit. The spirit which has lived and developed its powers clothed with a human body, will, when it leaves that body, still retain its former modes of thought, its former tastes, feelings, and affections. The new state of existence is a natural continuation of the old one. There is no sudden acquisition of new mental proclivities, no revolution of the moral nature. Just what the embodied spirit had made itself, or had become that is the disembodied spirit when it begins its life under new conditions. It is the same in character as before, but it has acquired new physical and mental powers, new modes of manifesting the moral sentiments, wider capacity for acquiring physical and spiritual knowledge. The great law of "continuity," so ably shown by Sir William Grove in his presidential address to the British Association at Nottingham, to pervade the whole realm of nature, is thus, according to the Spiritual theory, fully applicable to our passage into and progress through a more advanced state of existence, a view which should commend itself to men of science as being in itself probable, and in striking contrast with the doctrines of theologians, which place a wide gulf between the mental and more nature of man in his present and in his future state of existence.

Now this hypothesis, taken as a mere speculation, is as coherent and intelligible as any speculation on such a subject can be. But it claims to be more than a speculation, since it serves to explain and interpret that vast accumulation of facts of which a few examples only have been here given, and to furnish a more intelligible, consistent, and harmonious theory of the future state of man than either religion or philosophy has yet put forth.

And first as to the interpretation of facts. In the simplest phenomena of Animal Magnetism, when the muscles, the senses, and the ideas of the patient, are subject to the will of the operator, spirit acts upon spirit, through the intermediation of a peculiar relation between the magnetic or life power of the two organisms; and thus the magnetiser is enabled by his *will* to affect both the mind and the body of the patient and to induce, in him for a time an ideal world. In the higher phenomenon of "simple clairvoyance," the spirit appears to be to some extent released from the trammels of body, and is enabled to perceive by some other processes than those of the ordinary senses. In the still higher clairvoyant state termed "mental traveling" the spirit would appear to quit the body (still connected with it, however, by an ethereal link) and traverse the earth to any distance, communicating 'with persons in remote countries if it has any clue by which to distinguish them, and (perhaps through the mediation of their organization) perceiving and describing events occurring around them.¹

Under certain conditions disembodied spirit is able to form for itself a visible body out of the emanation from living bodies in a proper magnetic relation to itself; and, under certain still more favourable conditions, this body can be made tangible. Thus all the phenomena of "mediumship" take place. Gravity is overcome by a form of life-magnetism, induced between the spirit and the medium; visible hands or visible bodies are produced, which sometimes write, or draw, or even speak. Thus departed friends come to communicate with those still living, or at the moment of death the spirit appears visibly, and sometimes tangibly, to the loved ones in a distant land. All these phenomena would take place far more frequently were the conditions that alone render communication possible more general or more cultivated.

It appears, then, that all the strange facts, denied by so many because they suppose them "supernatural," may be due to the agency of beings of a like mental nature to ourselves - who *are*, in fact, ourselves - but one step advanced on the long journey through eternity. The trivial and fantastic nature of the acts of some of these disembodied spirits, is not to be wondered at, when we consider the myriads of trivial and fantastic human beings who are daily becoming spirits, and who retain, for a time at least, their human natures in their new condition. But the *generally* trivial nature of the acts and communications of spirits (admitting them to be such) may be totally denied. If we saw two or three persons making strange gestures in perfect silence, we might probably think they were idiots; but if we found that two of them were deaf and dumb, and the three were conversing in the language of signs, we should become aware that the gesticulations of their bodies were no more intrinsically absurd than the movements of our lips and features during speech. So if we realize to ourselves the fact that spirits can in most cases only communicate with us in certain very limited modes, we shall see that the true "triviality" consists in objecting to any *mode* of mental converse as being trivial or undignified. Then, again, as to the matter of the communications, said to be generally "unworthy of a spirit;" the real question is, are they generally such as would have been unworthy of the same spirit when in the body? We should remember, too, that in most cases the spirit has first to satisfy

the inquirer of its existence, and in many cases to do so in the face of a strong prejudice against the very possibility of spirit communication, or even of the very existence of spirit. And the undoubted fact that hundreds and thousands of persons have been so convinced by the phenomena they have witnessed in the presence of mediums, shows that, trivial though they may be, these phenomena are well adapted to satisfy many minds, and thus lead them to receive and inquire into the higher phenomena, which they could otherwise never have been induced to examine.

This hypothesis of the existence of spirit, both in man and out of man, and their possible and actual inter-communication, must be judged exactly in the same way as we judge any other hypothesis - by the nature and variety of the facts it includes and accounts for, and by the absence of any other mode of explaining so wide a range of facts. The truth and reality of the facts, however, is one thing - the goodness of the hypothesis is another, and to find a flaw in the hypothesis is not to disprove the facts. I maintain that the facts have now been proved, in the only way in which facts are capable of being proved viz., by the concurrent testimony of honest, impartial, and careful observers. Most of the facts are capable of being tested by any earnest inquirer. They have withstood the ordeal of ridicule and of rigid scrutiny for forty-six years, during which their adherents have year by year steadily increased, including men of every rank and station, of every class of mind, and of every degree of talent; while not a single individual who has earnestly devoted himself to a thorough examination of these facts has denied their reality. These are characteristics of a new truth, not of a delusion or imposture. The facts therefore are proved.

Before proceeding to consider the nature of the doctrine which Spiritualism unfolds, I would wish to say a few words on a work by an acute philosophic writer, in which the facts of Spiritualism are for the most part admitted, but are accounted for by a different hypothesis from that which I have here briefly explained. Mr. Charles Bray, author of the *Philosophy of Necessity; Education of the Feelings, &c.*, has published a small volume whose title is *On Force, its Mental and Moral Correlates; and on that which is supposed to underlie all Phenomena; with Speculations on Spiritualism, and other Abnormal Conditions of Mind*. The latter half of the work is entirely devoted to a consideration of the facts of modern Spiritualism, and to an attempt to account for them on philosophical principles. Mr. Bray tells us that he has himself witnessed but few of the phenomena, yet enough to satisfy him that they may be true. He seems to rely more on the overwhelming testimony to the facts by men of admitted intelligence, and to the facts themselves being often of such a nature that they cannot be explained away. He has doubtless been led to this less skeptical frame of mind than is usual in philosophic writers by his acquaintance with cases of clairvoyance, of one of which he states his experience as follows: "*I have heard a young girl in the mesmeric state minutely describe all that was seen by a person with whom she was en rapport, and in some cases more than was seen or could be seen, such as the initials in a watch which had not been opened, and also describe persons and scenes at a distance, which I afterwards discovered were correctly described, beyond a possibility of doubt*" The italics in this sentence are his own.

Judging from the works mentioned in his book, Mr. Bray seems to have but a limited acquaintance with the literature of Spiritualism, which is the more to be regretted as he has so little personal experience of the phenomena, and is therefore hardly in a position to form a satisfactory hypothesis. He considers, however, that he has formed one which "will account for such facts as are genuine," although he admits that he has not made that searching examination which would alone entitle him to decide which facts were genuine, and which were due to fraud or self-delusion. The theory which he propounds is not at all easy to exhibit in a few words. He says that the force which produces the phenomena of Spiritualism "is an emanation from all brains, the medium increasing its density so as to allow others present to come into communion with it, and the intelligence new to every person present is that of some brain in the distance acting through this source upon the mind of the medium, or others of the circle" (p. 107). Again, he speaks of "a mental or thought atmosphere the result of cerebration, but devoid of consciousness till it becomes reflected in our own organisations" (p. 98). It seems to me that this theory labours under the great objection of being unintelligible. How are we to understand an "emanation from all brains," a "thought atmosphere," producing force and motion, visible and tangible forms, intelligent communications by sounds or motions, and all the other varied phenomena imperfectly sketched in these pages? How does this "unconscious thought atmosphere" form a visible, tangible, force-exerting hand, which can carry flowers, write or play complete tunes on an instrument? Does it even account for the simpler yet still marvellous phenomena of clairvoyance? Let us take one of the best authenticated cases observed by Dr. Gregory. Mottoes enclosed in nutshells are purchased at a shop, and the clairvoyant reads them accurately. Now we may safely assume that in this case no human mind knows the particular nutshell in which each motto is enclosed. How then does the theory of an "emanation from all brains," or that the clairvoyant is through this emanation acted on by "some mind in the distance," explain the reading of these mottoes? If this "emanation" has the power of reading them itself, and communicates them to the clairvoyant, how can we deny it personality, and in what does it differ from that which we term spirit? If the theory of "spirit" is, as

Professor De Morgan says, "ponderously difficult," is not this theory of "brain emanation" still more so? I submit, therefore, that Mr. Bray's hypothesis is not tenable, and that nothing but the supposition of personal minds, existing without as well as with a human body, and capable, under certain conditions only, of acting on us and on matter, is able to account for the whole range of the phenomena. And this supposition has, I maintain, the advantage of being both intelligible and philosophically probable.

It is, however, very satisfactory to find a writer of Mr. Bray's standing recognizing the subject at all, as one which possesses so much truth in it as to require an elaborate theory to account for the phenomena. This alone is a proof of the convincing nature of the evidence for those facts which our men of science neglect to investigate as *à priori* absurd and impossible. The appearance of Mr. Bray's book may perhaps indicate that a change was then taking place in public opinion on the subject of clairvoyance and Spiritualism; and it may do good service in drawing the attention of thinkers to a class of phenomena which, above all others, seem calculated to lead to the partial solution of the most difficult of all problems the origin of consciousness and the nature of mind.

¹ It is possible that this appearance of the spirit leaving the body to obtain information of distant events is deceptive, and that what really occurs is the representation to the clairvoyant of mental pictures of such events by spiritual beings. This explanation of the facts has been given by spirit communications, and to the present writer now seems the more probable one.

Next: IX – THE MORAL TEACHINGS OF SPIRITUALISM

Note from the Editor: *The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural*, was translated into Portuguese by Jäder dos Reis Sampaio and published by [Publicações Lachâtre](#), under the title of [O Aspecto Científico do Sobrenatural](#).

THE CODIFICATION

GENESIS: THE MIRACLES AND THE PREDICTIONS ACCORDING TO SPIRITISM

BY **Allan Kardec**

Author of "*The Spirits' Book*," "*The Mediums' Book*," and "*Heaven and Hell*."

Translated By The Spirit-Guides of *W. J. Colville*

[Colby & Rich, Publishers - 1883 - Boston - USA]

The spiritual doctrine is the result of the collective and concordant teachings of spirits.

Science is called in to make the statements in Genesis agree with the laws of nature.

God proves his greatness and power by the immutability of his laws, and not by their suspension.

For God the past and the future are the present.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL URANOGRAPHY - SPACE AND TIME - MATTER - LAWS AND FORCES - FIRST CREATION - UNIVERSAL CREATION - SUNS AND PLANETS - SATELLITES - COMETS - THE MILKY WAY - THE FIXED STARS - THE DESERTS OF SPACE - ETERNAL SUCCESSION OF THE WORLDS - UNIVERSAL LIFE - SCIENCE - MORAL CONSIDERATIONS.

PART ONE

Space and Time. - Many definitions of space have been given. The principal one is this: Space is the extent which separates two bodies; from which certain sophists have inferred, that, where nobody is, there can be no space. Doctors of theology have taken this idea as the base of their belief,

that there is necessarily an end to space, alleging that bodies limited to a certain number cannot form an infinite succession, and that where bodies no longer exist is also the end of space. Yet another definition of space is, the place where worlds move, the void where matter acts, etc. ... Let us leave, in the treatises where they repose, all these definitions, which define nothing.¹

Space is one of those words which represents a primitive and axiomatic idea, self-evident, to which the diverse definitions which are given serve only to obscure its meaning. We all know what space is; and I desire only to establish its infinity in order that our subsequent studies may find no barrier opposing itself to the investigation of our ideas. Now, I say that space is infinite for this reason: that it is impossible to suppose any limit to it, and that, notwithstanding the difficulty of gaining a conception of infinitude, it is however, easier to think of going eternally through space, than to decide upon a stopping-place in it beyond which no more space extends. In order to grasp as far as is possible with our limited faculties the infinitude of space, let us suppose ourselves departing from the earth, lost in the midst of infinitude, towards any point in the universe, and that with the exceeding celerity of an electric spark, which traverses thousands of leagues in a second. Scarcely have we left our globe, than, having passed over millions of miles, we find ourselves in a place whence our earth will appear to us only under the aspect of a pale star. An instant after, following always the same direction, we shall arrive near the far-distant stars, which you can scarcely distinguish from your terrestrial station; and whence not only the earth is lost to our sight in the heavenly depths, but also your sun's splendor is eclipsed by the distance which separates us from it. Propelled incessantly at the same lightning speed, we pass over planetary systems at every step as we advance in space, over islands of ethereal light, over starry ways, and glorious places where God has scattered worlds profusely, as he has sown plants on terrestrial prairies. Now it is only a few minutes since we took our departure from the earth, and already hundreds of millions of millions of miles separate us from the earth, thousands of worlds have been displayed to our sight, and yet listen! We have in reality advanced but one step in the universe. If we continue for years, ages, thousands of centuries, hundreds of millions of earthly periods of time, to traverse incessantly with the same lightning speed the fields of space, on whatever side we may go, toward whatsoever point we may direct ourselves from this invisible grain which we have quitted, and which is called earth, the same immensity of space will be ever before us. This is space. Time, like space, is a self-evident fact. One can make a better estimate of it by establishing its relation to the infinite worlds.

Time is the succession of things. It is bound to eternity in the same manner as things are joined to infinitude. Let us suppose ourselves at the beginning of our world, at that primitive epoch where the earth was not held in equilibrium by the divine impetus; in short, at the commencement of Genesis. Time has not arisen from the mysterious cradle of nature, and no one can tell at what epoch of the ages we are, since the pendulum of the centuries is not yet in motion. But, silence! the first hour of a new-born earth resounds through the air, and henceforth are night and morning. Beyond the earth eternity remains impassive and immovable, although time marches with steady feet in other worlds. Upon the earth time is enthroned, and during a series of generations years and centuries of it will be counted. Let us now transport ourselves to the last day of this world, to the hour when, its power for good being paralyzed by age and decay, it will be effaced from the book of life never more to re-appear. Here the succession of events is arrested, the terrestrial movements which measure time are interrupted, and time is ended with them. This simple exposition of natural things which give birth to time, perpetuate it, and then allow it to be extinguished, suffices to show that, seen from the point where we must place ourselves for our studies, time is a drop of water which falls from the cloud into the sea, of which the fall is measured. There are as many different and contradictory times as there are worlds in the vast expanse. Beyond worlds eternity alone replaces these ephemeral inheritances, and quietly fills with its light immovable the immensity of the heavens. Immensity and eternity without limits, - such are the two grand properties of universal nature. The eye of the observer who traverses untiringly the immeasurable distances of space, as well as that of the geologist who peers into the secrets of the ages, descending even into the depths of a yawning eternity, where they will some day be engulfed, act in concert, each in his way, to acquire this double idea of infinitude, duration, and extent. Now, in preserving this order of ideas, it will be easy for us to conceive that time being only connected with transitory things depending wholly upon things which can be measured, if, taking the terrestrial centuries for units, we piled them thousands upon thousands in order to form a colossal number, this number will never represent more than a moment in eternity, just as thousands of leagues joined to thousands of leagues are only a speck in boundless extent. Thus, for example, time being unknown in eternity, and the ages being totally distinct from the ethereal life of the soul, we could write a number as long as the terrestrial equator, and suppose ourselves aged by this number of centuries, without making our soul one day older; and, adding to this uncountable number of ages a series of similar numbers as long as from here to the sun, or still more yet, imagining ourselves to live during the prodigious succession of cyclular periods represented by the addition of those numbers when we should have passed through them, the incomprehensible accumulation of years which would weigh upon our heads would be as though they were not; an entire eternity would always be before us. Time is only a comparative measure of the inheritance of transitory things. Eternity is susceptible of no measure as regards duration of time; it owns no

beginning or end; the present only belongs to it. If centuries upon centuries are less than a second compared with eternity; what comparison does the duration of human life bear to it?

Matter. - At first sight nothing would appear so profoundly varied, so essentially distinct, as the diverse substances which compose the world. Among the objects in art or nature which daily pass before our eyes, are there two objects which can be accused of a perfect identity? Is it not only a parity of composition? What dissimilarity at the point of view of solidity, of compressibility, of weight and multiple properties of bodies, between atmospheric gas and a thread of gold, between the aqueous molecules in the clouds, and those of the mineral which forms the bony framework of the globe! What diversity between the chemical tissue of the varied plants which decorate the vegetable kingdom, and that of the no less numerous representatives of animal life upon earth! However, we can state as an absolute and fundamental truth, that all substances known and unknown, however dissimilar they may appear, either in view of their constitution or in regard to their reciprocal action, are only different forms through which matter presents itself, only varieties into which it is transformed under the direction of forces innumerable which govern it. Chemistry, of which the progress has been so rapid since the epoch in which I lived, which its adepts themselves banish still to the secret domain of science, - this new science, which one can justly consider the child of this century is, we observe, uniquely based, far more solidly than its elder sisters, upon the experimental method. Chemistry, I say, has had fair play with the four primitive elements which the ancients agreed to recognize in nature. It has shown that the terrestrial element is only a combination of diverse substances varied to infinitude; that the air and water are equally decomposable, that they are the product of a certain number of equivalents of gas; that fire, far from being itself a principal element, is only a state of matter resulting from the universal movement to which it is submitted, and is of a sensible or latent combustion. In return it has found a considerable number of primates until then unknown, which have appeared to form, by their determined combinations, diverse substances. Different bodies, that it (chemistry) has studied by following certain laws, act simultaneously, and in given proportion, in the works operated in the grand laboratory of nature. These primates it has named *simple bodies*, indicating by that that it considers them primitive and indecomposable, and that by no known operation can they be reduced to parts relatively more simple than themselves.²

But there, where the appreciation of man is checked even when he is aided by the most impressionable of his artificial senses, the work of nature continues; there, where the common herd accept appearance for reality, is where the practitioner raises the veil, and distinguishes the beginning of things. The eye of him who has detected the mole of nature's action sees alone under the constitutive materials of the world the primitive *cosmic matter*, simple and alone, varied in certain countries at the epoch of their birth, divided into solidarities during their life, which at length have become disjointed, and received into the receptacle of life's boundless whole by decomposition.

It is of these questions that we ourselves, spirits, lovers of science, speak, when we assert that the opinions we express are merely conjectural. Upon these questions I will either keep silence, or prove my knowledge. To those who then would be tempted to see in my words only a dangerous theory, I will say, Learn, if possible, by investigation the multiplicity of the operations of nature, and you will recognize, that, if one admits not the unity of matter, it is impossible to explain, not only the science of the suns and spheres, but, without going so far, the germination of a seed in the earth, or the production of an insect. If one observes such a diversity in matter, it is because the forces which have presided at its transformations, the conditions in which they are produced being unlimited in number, the various combinations of matter must be unlimited also. Then the substance that one desires to comprehend belongs properly to fluids; that is to say, imponderable bodies, or it may be those dressed with the ordinary properties of matter. There is in all the universe only one primitive substance, - the cosmic matter, or cosmos of uranography.

Next: PART TWO – LAWS AND FORCES

¹ This chapter is an extract, word for word, from a series of communications dictated to the Spiritual Society of Paris, in 1862 and 1863, under the title of Uranographical studies, and signed, GALILEO, M.C.F. *Medium*.

² The principal simple bodies are, among non-metallic bodies, oxygen, hydrogen, chlorine, carbon, phosphorus, sulfur, and iodine; among metallic bodies are gold, silver, mercury, lead, pewter, zinc, iron, copper, arsenic, sodium, potassium, calcium, aluminum, etc.

SPIRITS' MESSAGES

HEAVEN AND HELL

Or

The Divine Justice Vindicated in the Plurality of Existence

Concerning

The passage from the earthly life to spirit-life,
future rewards and punishments, angels and devils, etc.

Followed by numerous examples of the state of the soul,
during and after death.

BEING THE PRACTICAL CONFIRMATION OF "THE SPIRITS' BOOK"
BY **Allan Kardec**

Translated from the Sixtieth Thousand - By *Anna Blackwell*
[London: Trubner & Co., Ludgate Hill - 1878]

Part First - Doctrine

CHAPTER V

PURGATORY

Part Two

5. He who suffers in the present life should therefore say to himself that he suffers because he failed to purify himself thoroughly in his preceding existence, and that, if he fails to accomplish his purification in his present life, he will suffer again in his next existence. And this is both just and reasonable. Suffering being inherent in imperfection, we suffer as long as we remain imperfect; just as we suffer from disease until we are cured of it. Thus, so long as a man remains proud, so long will he suffer from the consequences of his pride; so long as he remains selfish, so long will he suffer from the consequences of his selfishness.

6. The guilty spirit suffers, first, in the spirit-life, in proportion to the degree of his imperfections; and, next, in the return to terrestrial life which is granted to him as a means of repairing his past wrong-doing; and it is to this end that he finds himself thrown into the society of those whom he has wronged, or placed in the midst of surroundings similar to those in which he did the wrong-doing that he has to expiate, or in a situation which is its opposite: as, for example, in a state of poverty, if he has made a bad use of riches, or in a humble position, if he has been proud.

As previously remarked, the spirit's expiation of wrong-doing is effected both in the spirit-world and also upon the earth; but this expiation does not constitute for him *a double punishment*, because the expiation of the earthly life is only the *continuation* and *complement* of the expiation which had been previously begun by him in the spirit-world, and is imposed on him in order to help forward his intellectual and moral improvement, by giving him the opportunity of *putting into practice* the lessons he has learned through his suffering in the world of spirits; it is for him to profit by the opportunity thus afforded him. Is it not better for him to come back to the earth, even many times, with the possibility of eventually winning perfect happiness as the result of repeated efforts on his part, than to be condemned to everlasting misery, once and for ever, on quitting the earthly life? The new opportunity thus given him of working out his own purification, and consequent felicity, is a proof of the wisdom, the goodness, and the justice of God, *who wills that each human being should owe everything to his own efforts, and should be the artificer of his future*; If he be unhappy, for a longer or shorter period, he has only himself to blame for it, and, whatever may be the intensity or duration of the suffering he may have brought upon himself, the door of repentance, amendment, and rehabilitation is always open for him.

7. On considering how great is the suffering of certain guilty spirits in the invisible world, how terrible is the situation of some of them, to what harrowing anxieties they are prey, and how much their sufferings are intensified by their inability to foresee the end of them, we might well apply the term *Hell* to express the abyss of suffering and horror in which they find themselves, were it not that this word has been adopted as implying the idea of an eternal and physical punishment. Thanks to the light that has been thrown on this subject by the higher spirits, and to the examples which are placed before us by the ostensible communication now being generalized between incarnate and disincarnate souls, we know that *the duration of expiation is subordinate to the amendment of the wrong-doer*.

8. Spiritism, therefore, does not deny the doctrine of the future punishment of the guilty; on the contrary, it asserts, explains, and justifies that doctrine. What Spiritism denies and destroys is the idea of a localized, physical Hell, with its fires and pitchforks, of unpardonable sins and eternal punishment. It does not deny the reality of Purgatory, for *it proves that the world in which we now are is a Purgatory*, that is to say, a place of punishment and discipline; and, by the explanation it thus furnishes of the sorrows and trials of the earthly life, it defines and gives precision to the vague idea which has hitherto obtained in regard to Purgatory, and, by so doing, renders it credible and acceptable to those by whom it was formerly rejected.

Does Spiritism reject the idea of praying for the dead? It does just the contrary, since the suffering spirits, with whom it brings us into communication, earnestly implore of us to pray for them; it shows us that to do so is one of the duties imposed on us by charity, and it also shows us the efficacy of prayer as a means of *bringing them back to goodness*, and, thus, of shortening their sufferings.* Addressing its doctrines to the intelligence, Spiritism gives religious belief to the unbelieving; it *proves* the value of prayer to those who formerly mocked at it. But Spiritism also shows that the efficacy of prayer is in the *thought* it embodies and not in *the words* in which it is clothed, that the most efficacious prayers are those of the heart and not those of the lips, those which a man offers of his own motion, and not those which he causes to be said by others for money.

9. Whether the chastisement of the guilty takes place in spirit-life or upon the earth, and whatever its duration, it has always a term, more or less near, more or less distant. There are, therefore, for a spirit, only two alternatives, viz., *Temporary punishment, proportioned to the degree of culpability*, and *Reward, proportioned to desert*. Spiritism rejects the third alternative, viz., that of eternal damnation; it regards *hell* as a *symbol* of the severest forms of suffering endured by them; but it regards *Purgatory as a reality*.

The word *Purgatory* suggests the idea of a circumscribed locality, and it is therefore more appropriately applied to the earth, considered as a place of expiation, than to the infinity of space in which suffering spirits undergo the expiations of the disincarnate state; moreover, the earthly life is, by its very nature, a veritable expiation.

When men shall have grown better, they will furnish only good spirits to the invisible world; and these spirits, on incarnating themselves in the earth, will furnish only improved elements to the human race. The earth will then cease to be a world of expiation, and its human inhabitants will no longer have to endure the miseries which are the consequence of their present imperfection. This transformation is being effected at the present day; its accomplishment will raise the earth to a higher rank in the hierarchy of worlds.
**

10. Why did Christ not speak of Purgatory? Because, the idea of Purgatory had not then been conceived of by the the human mind, and there was, consequently, no word by which to express it. He employed the word *hell*, the only one then in use, as a generic term, to designate the entire subject of future punishment in general, without reference to details. If, in contradistinction to the word *hell* he had employed another word equivalent to *purgatory*, he would have been unable to define its precise meaning without opening up a question which was reserved for the future; and he would also have appeared to declare the existence of *two* regions specially devoted to punishment. The word *hell*, in its general acceptation, suggesting the idea of *punishment*, necessarily implied the idea of purgatory, which is only one of the models of penalty. The future, being destined to enlighten mankind in regard to the nature of future punishment, was also destined, in so doing, to reduce the idea of hell to its true proportions.

The fact that the Church, after the lapse of six centuries, considered it necessary to supplement the teaching of Jesus by asserting the existence of Purgatory, about which he had been silent, is an admission, on the part of theologians, that he did not reveal everything during his sojourn upon the earth. Why, then, should not his teachings be progressively supplemented, in course of time, in regard to other points that were purposely left in abeyance by him, as this has been?

* Vide *The Gospel Explained by Spirits*, chap. xxvii., *Action of Prayer*.

** Vide *The Gospel Explained by Spirits*, chap. iii.

Next: CHAPTER VI. DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Part Second - Examples

CHAPTER VIII

TERRESTRIAL EXPIATIONS

SZYMEL SLIZGOL

He was a poor Jew of Wilna, who died in May, 1865. For thirty years he begged in the streets, a little wooden bowl in his hand. Everybody in the town was familiar with this cry: "*Remember the poor, the widows, and the orphans!*" During that time, Slizgol collected 90.000 roubles; but he never kept a single kopek for himself. He took care of the sick, whom he tended with his own hands; he paid for the schooling of destitute children; he divided the food given him among the needy. His nights were spent in making snuff, which he sold for his own living; and whatever remained from this modest source of gain, after providing for his wants, he gave to the poor. He was alone in the world; but, on the day of his funeral, all the shops were shut, and the greater part of the population of the town followed his bier.

(Spiritist Society of Paris, June 15, 1865.)

(*Evocation.*) - A. Very happy, and having reached, at length, through long effort, the height of my ambition, I have been in your midst, since the beginning of the meeting. I thank you for thinking of the poor beggar who will do his best to reply to your questions.

Q. A letter from Wilna has informed us of the leading peculiarities of your life. The sympathy which these have excited in our minds has prompted the desire to converse with you. We thank you for coming at our call, and we shall be interested in learning your position in the spirit-world and the motives which decided the character of your last existence.

A. Let me, first of all, say a word in reference to the surprise that has been expressed - not here, nor by spirits, but elsewhere - at the imposing proportions of the manifestation of respect and sympathy that accompanied, to their last resting-place, the mortal remains of the poor beggar whose charity had won for him an appreciation, so unusual, on the part of his fellow-townsmen. There is really nothing in such a fact that should create astonishment. The practice of kindness makes, even on the minds of the most materialistic, an impression that never fails to manifest itself by marks of respect; even those who do wrong in their own persons pay homage to goodness in the person of another.

I now haste to reply, as briefly as may be, to your question concerning the causes which decided the choice of my last existence.

Several centuries ago, I lived on this earth with the title of King, or, at least, of a Sovereign Prince. Within the limits of my power - narrow in comparison with the States of the present day - I was the absolute master of the lives and fortunes of my subjects. I was their tyrant, or, to speak more correctly, their torturer and their executioner. I was imperious, violent, grasping, and sensual; you may imagine what was the fate of the unhappy people subjected to my sway. I employed my power to oppress the weak, and I imposed taxes on every sort of industry and of labor, on all passions, and on all sorrows, for the pampering of my vices. I carried my greed to the extent of establishing a tax on begging; no starving wretch could hold out his cap to the passers, but I took from him the greater part of the alms that had been thrown to his misery. I did even worse; in order not to lessen the number of beggars among my subjects, I forbade the wretched recipients of charity to give, to their friends or relations, any part of the pittance left to them by my exactions. In a word, I was utterly pitiless for suffering and misery.

I lost, at length, what you call "life," in horrible torments; my death was a subject of terror for all those who, on a smaller scale, imitated the atrocities of my rule. I remained a wanderer, in the spirit-state, for three centuries and a half; and when, after this lapse of time, I had come to understand that the aim of incarnation is something very different from that which my gross and obtuse senses had caused me to pursue, I obtained - by dint of prayers, resignation, and regrets - the permission to undertake the task of enduring, in a new earthly life, the sufferings I had inflicted on others. I obtained, also, the permission to add, of my own accord, to the moral and physical tortures of the life I had chosen. Thanks to the higher spirits who gave me their help, I persisted in my resolve to suffer with patience and to devote myself to doing good.

Since then, I have been enabled to accomplish another existence, which, through its abnegation and charity, has redeemed the

cruelty and injustice of my past. I was born in poverty; left an orphan very early, I learned to shift for myself at an age at which a child is usually supposed to be incapable of acting with discernment. I passed my life alone, without love, without affections; and I had to bear, in my childhood, the brutalities I formerly wreaked upon others. You have been told that I devoted the whole of the money I collected by begging to the relief of my fellow-creatures; such was the case; and I may add, without vanity, that I often imposed on myself very severe privations, in order to increase the amount of good which the charity of the public enabled me to do.

My death was peaceful; for I knew that I should obtain the recompense of my abnegation, and I am rewarded, in truth, beyond my most sanguine aspirations. I am very happy to be able to assure you, from my own experience, that, while it is true that "he who exalteth himself shall be abased," it is equally true that "he who humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Q. We beg you to tell us the nature of your expiation in the spirit-world, the length of time that elapsed between your death and the period when your fate was modified by the effect of your repentance and of the good resolutions which you had formed, and the cause of the change which took place in your ideas in the spirit-state?

A. You recall to my mind very painful images! How horribly I suffered! But I do not complain; I *only remember!* You wish to know in what my expiation consisted; listen to the recital of it, in all its horror!

Having been, as I told you, the torturer and the executioner of all around me, I remained for a long, long time attached by my perispirit to my decaying body; and I felt, until its putrefaction was complete, the gnawing of the worms that were devouring it! When, at last, I was delivered from the bonds that had attached me to the instrument of my punishment, I was subjected to another, even more terrible. I was brought into the presence of all the victims on whom I had wreaked my cruelty. Periodically, and under the action of a force greater than my own, I found myself face to face with all my evil deeds. I *saw*, physically and morally, all the sorrows and sufferings that I had caused to be endured. Oh! Friends, how terrible is the constant sight of those whom we have wronged! You have a slight example of this, among yourselves, in the confrontation of the assassin with his victim.

Such is, in short, what I suffered for two centuries and a half; until God, taking pity on my grief and my repentance, and solicited to that end by the guides who assisted me, permitted me to undertake the life of expiation of which I have told you.

Q. Had you any special reason for choosing to be born as a Jew in your last incarnation?

A. I was advised to do so by my guides. The quality of a Jew added another humiliation to my life of expiation; for Jews are generally despised, and, especially, Jewish beggars.

Q. In your last existence, how old were you when you began to put in practice the resolutions you had taken in the spirit-world? How did the thought of doing so arise in your mind? While you were practicing charity in that way, and with so much abnegation, had you any intuition of the cause which had led you to adopt such a life?

A. My parents were intelligent, but very poor and avaricious. While still very young, I was deprived of the affection and caresses of my mother. My grief for her death was all the deeper because I was entirely neglected by my father, who was absorbed in his desire of gain. My brothers and sisters, all older than myself, seemed to be quite unaware of my sufferings. Another Jew, moved rather by selfishness than by charity, took me into his house and taught me his trade. He recouped himself, largely, from the proceeds of my labor (which often exceeded my strength), for what I cost him. After a time, I threw off this yoke, and worked on my own account. But whether I was working or resting, the remembrance of my mother's caresses followed me everywhere; and the older I grew, the more deeply that remembrance became engraved in my memory, and the more sadly did I miss her care and affection.

Erelong, I remained the only one of my name; death carried away every member of my family in the course of a few months. It was then that the way in which I was to pass the rest of my existence began to be revealed to me. Two of my brothers had left orphans. Moved by the remembrance of what I had suffered, I wished to preserve the poor little creatures from a childhood such as mine had been; and, as my labor was not sufficient to keep us all, I began to beg, not for myself, but for them. But I was not to be allowed the consolation of succeeding in my efforts; the poor little things left me for ever. I saw clearly what they had lacked; it was their mother. I therefore determined to implore the charity of the public for the unfortunate widows who, unable to maintain themselves and their children, impose upon themselves privations that send them to their grave, leaving poor little orphans who remain abandoned to the same torments that I myself had endured.

I was thirty years of age when, in the prime of strength and health, I began to beg for the widow and the orphan. The beginning of this work was very painful to me, and I had to bear many a humiliating taunt. But when it came to be seen that I really divided among my poor pensioners all that I collected in their name, when it was known that I added to this the surplus of my labor, I acquired a sort of consideration that was not without its charms.

I lived for over sixty years, and never did I fail in the task I had taken upon myself. Nor did any inner consciousness ever lead me to suppose that a motive, anterior to the life I was then living, was the mainspring of my action. One day, however, before I began to beg, I heard these words, "Do not, unto others, what you would not that others should do unto you." I was much struck with the wide moral reach of these words; and I often found myself supplementing them, thus, in my own mind: - "But do unto others, on the contrary, whatever you would that they should do unto you."* Sustained by the remembrance of my mother and of my lonely and neglected childhood, I continued to walk unflinchingly in the path which my conscience told me was the one for me to follow.

I bring this long communication to an end by repeating "Thank you!" I am not yet perfect; but, knowing that evil leads only to evil, I shall again devote myself to doing good, as I have done already, knowing that I shall thus prepare for myself a harvest of happiness.

SYZMEL SLIZGOL

* Born a Jew, and left without education, he seems not to have known "The Golden Rule" as spoken by Christ. - TR

NEWS, EVENTS, BOOK REVIEWS AND MISCELLANEOUS

José Arigó - Psychic Surgeon and Healer

Article by Brian Haughton



Known mainly from the Philippines and Brazil, psychic surgery is a supposedly paranormal medical practice where tissue is removed from the patient's body by a 'psychic doctor' in a painless operation, performed without the use of anaesthetics or antiseptics. The procedure is often undertaken with bare hands or extremely basic medical instruments and leaves little if any trace of the skin having been broken. Most of the medical profession today considers psychic surgery a complete fraud, an irresponsible practice giving false hope to those suffering from fatal diseases. However, there have been one or two psychic surgeons who have baffled medical doctors both with their methods and with their skills.

In Brazil in the late 1950s many 'spiritual doctors' were associated with the philosophical doctrine of 'spiritism', founded in the mid 19th Century by French school teacher Léon Rivail, using the pseudonym Allan Kardec. One of the first and most famous of these Brazilian psychic surgeons was an ex-miner known as Arigó. José Pedro de Freitas (he took the name Arigó when he became famous as a healer in 1950) was born in October 1921, on a farm 6km outside the mining town of Congonhas do Campo, east-central Minas Gerais, in the Brazilian Highlands. Arigó came from a poor family, he left school at 14 to begin work in the local mines.

When he was 30 years old Arigó began suffering from depression, and experienced fierce headaches, nightmares, sleep-walking and hallucinations. Unable to get any relief from the town doctors the distraught young man went to a local spiritist named Olivera, who prayed for him and told him that the cause of the problem was a spirit attempting to work through him. One dramatic event was to convince Arigó of the truth of this statement.

Arigó's early Psychic Surgery

According to the story, in 1950, state senator Bittencourt apparently invited Arigó along with some other miners to attend a rally in the city of Belo Horizonte. Arigó was staying at the same hotel as the senator, who had recently learned that he was suffering from a cancerous tumour which required immediate treatment. The senator was intending to travel to the US to undergo surgery after the rally. That night Arigó entered Bittencourt's room apparently in a state of trance, carrying a razor.

The senator passed out only to awake the next morning to find his pyjama top slashed, blood on his chest and a neat incision in his ribcage. In a state of profound shock the senator went to find Arigó who remembered nothing of the incident but helped the dazed man to a taxi which took him to his physician. After taking several x-rays senator Bittencourt's doctor informed him that the tumour had inexplicably disappeared.

Overwhelmed by his seemingly miraculous cure Bittencourt started talking about it to his friends and associates and even included it in his political speeches, thus leading to instant fame for Arigó.

Another spectacular case occurred some time in 1956. Apparently, Arigó and his family were gathered round the bed of a female relative dying from cancer of the uterus. With the priest about to administer the last rites Arigó suddenly ran out of the room into the kitchen, grabbed a knife came back and thrust it swiftly into the woman's vagina. Twisting the knife around for a few seconds he rapidly extracted the bloody tumour which he threw, together with the kitchen knife, into the sink. He then collapsed, and subsequently stated that he could remember nothing of the operation. The understandably stunned relatives immediately called a doctor, who confirmed that Arigó had indeed removed a tumour from the woman, without apparent pain or haemorrhaging. The relative soon recovered completely from the disease. The account of this miraculous cure is, like the majority in the case of Arigó, anecdotal, so it is impossible now to verify the truth of most of the stories.

The Spirit of Dr. Fritz

Arigó claimed that he performed his operations whilst in a trance state possessed by (or channelling) the spirit of a German doctor called 'Dr Adolphus Fritz', who had apparently died in 1918, during World War I. This was the spirit that Olivera had said was trying to work through him, and after Arigó began his work as a psychic surgeon his severe headaches stopped and only returned when he later decided to temporarily discontinue his surgery.

To perform his surgeries Arigó opened a small clinic in his home town of Congonhas do Campo, where he would carry out his swift operations free of charge. He possessed no medical knowledge whatsoever, worked in unsanitary conditions, and used only his hands, a rusty knife or occasionally a pair of scissors; his only concession to cleanliness was to wipe his knife on his shirt before and after surgery. Despite these apparently dangerous conditions he performed perhaps a million successful operations over a twenty-year period, regularly treating hundreds of people a day in his surgery. During the operations there would be little bleeding and the patients would feel no pain. There was no need for stitches and wounds would heal remarkably fast; there is also no record of a patient ever having become infected, despite the unsterile conditions.

Carlos Paranhos da Costa Cruz, a dentist who worked in Belo Horizonte, reported how his sister-in-law Sonja had been diagnosed by several physicians, including her own father, with cancer

of the liver. The condition being inoperable, in desperation she, her father and Cruz travelled to see Arigó at his primitive surgery. They waited in line with everybody else and when Sonja's turn came, before she could say anything, Arigó informed her she had cancer of the liver and that he would perform a quick operation. He lay her down on the newspaper covered floor and made a quick incision, apparently into the girl's liver, with his penknife. Stunned, Cruz and the girl's father waited for the expected hemorrhaging, only to see a mere trickle of blood coming out of the wound.

According to Cruz, things then got even stranger, as Arigó inserted a pair of scissors into the wound and immediately took away his hand. The scissors appeared to move of their own accord. After a few seconds Arigó pulled out the scissors, reached into the wound and removed the tumorous growth, slapping it into Cruz's hand when he was finished. He wiped the incision with a piece of cotton, quickly placed a crucifix against it, and without stitches it closed up. Sonja was dazed but not in any pain, and was able to get up and walk around. She was cured. A biopsy of the growth which Arigó had removed confirmed that the growth was indeed cancer. Neither Cruz nor the girl's father had any explanation for what they had witnessed.

Other eminent individuals taken to Arigó to be treated were Brazilian President Kubitschek's daughter, his pilot and the head of his security police, all of whom reportedly came back cured from the great healer. Arigó always operated in bright light, and allowed anyone who was interested to come and watch his surgery, including doctors. One of the many physicians who witnessed Arigó's psychic surgery was Dr. Ladeira Margues of Rio. During an operation on a Mrs. Maria Silveiro, Margues saw Arigó remove a piece of tissue 78.7 cm (31 inches) long and 38 cm (15 inches) wide from her ovaries. During the brief operation Margues also claimed he saw the scissors moving alone, as if being taken by another hand, and described hearing 'the sound of metals and tissues being cut.' When Arigó saw that the wound had begun to bleed, he immediately stopped what he was doing and said 'Lord, let there be no more blood.' From that moment on there was no further hemorrhaging during the operation.



Unfortunately, the publicity and fame which Arigó's abilities attracted brought him the unwanted attention of the Brazilian government, who, in the spring of 1957, arrested him for practicing medicine without a license, despite pleas from thousands of his patients. Perhaps due to friends in high places Arigó was subsequently pardoned and released without serving his sentence. However, in 1964 he was arrested again, this time on charges connected with witchcraft, and given 16 months in jail, despite the fact that the authorities were unable to find anyone to testify against him amongst the hundreds of thousands he had treated by that time. He was to serve seven months of a 16-month prison sentence, though he was allowed to continue treating people while held in jail.

One example of Arigó's psychic surgery performed whilst in prison was witnessed by a Roman Catholic Judge called Filippe Immesi, who went to investigate the legendary psychic surgeon for himself. He described an eye operation as follows -

'I saw him pick up ... a pair of nail scissors. He wiped them on his shirt and used no disinfectant. I saw him then cut straight into the cornea of the patient's eye. She did not flinch, although perfectly conscious. The cataract was out in seconds ... Arigó said a prayer and a few drops of liquid appeared on the cotton in his hand. He wiped the women's eye with it and she was cured.'

Puharich's Investigations

In 1963 American psychical researcher Henry (Andrija) Puharich, M.D, and businessman Henry Belk visited Brazil to begin a detailed 5-year-long investigation into Arigó's alleged healing powers. Puharich claimed to have witnessed thousands of Arigó's operations during the investigations and himself had a benign tumour removed from his arm in a few seconds, completely without pain. This example of psychic surgery was filmed, along with many of Arigó's operations at this time, and showed Arigó slitting Puharich's arm with an unsterilised penknife, removing the growth and slapping it in Puharich's hand. The whole operation had taken five seconds, there was little bleeding and no infection afterwards. Puharich's research into the Arigó revealed that such operations as he had undergone himself were commonplace.

Puharich's studies included tests on the blood from tissue Arigó had removed from patients, in order to ascertain that it did indeed belong to the person who had been operated on. He also taped interviews with numerous patients and observers, made audio tapes and films of Arigó's surgeries

and diagnoses, and took numerous photographs, some of which can be found in J.G. Fullers book about the case (see sources). Puharich found that apart from his psychic surgery, Arigó was also able to diagnose illnesses, advise appropriate treatment at a glance, and write out complex prescriptions, often for dangerously high doses of drugs, or for medicines that were obsolete or even illegal. Investigations showed that Arigó's prescriptions worked, even on terminal cases, although, as with his surgery, there was no known medical reason why they should do so.

Some time in early January 1971 Arigó began telling his friends and associates, including former President of Brazil Kubitschek, that they would not see him again, as he would soon die a violent death. A few days later on 11 January he was killed in a car crash. Arigó's hometown of Congonhas do Campo reportedly came to a standstill at the tragic news, flags flew at half mast and the mayor declared two days of mourning for the great healer.

Other Psychic Surgeons

Apparently the death of Arigó did not mean the end of the shadowy Dr. Fritz, the Brazilian's supposed spirit guide. Other Brazilian psychic surgeons claimed to be channelling the spirit of the German doctor, including Oscar and Edivaldo Wilde, and a gynaecologist from Recife called Edson Queiroz. The Wilde brothers both died violently in car crashes, while Queiroz was stabbed to death in 1991. Currently, Rubens Farias Jr, a former São Paulo engineer and computer programmer, claims to be the channel for the spirit of Dr. Fritz, who has chillingly predicted a violent death for Farias.

The Sceptics

Understandably, considering the startling nature of the subject, there are those who believe that Arigó's psychic operations were a complete fraud, and that the wily Brazilian accomplished his 'miracles' by relatively basic conjuring tricks, combined with the willingness of his patients to believe he was blessed with some kind of divine healing power. Psychic surgery is admittedly fairly easy to duplicate, at any rate for a trained stage magician like James Randi (who on his website mistakenly attributes J.G. Fuller's book *Arigó: Surgeon of the Rusty Knife* to Puharich), so the theory goes that it must also have been easy to fake for the uneducated Arigó. Debunkers have suggested that Arigó never pierced the patient's skin at all, but probably pinched or rolled it back over the area to be operated on, placed his hand under the roll of skin and 'removed' a piece of bloody animal tissue he had concealed in his clenched fist, or perhaps under the operating table.

Whilst this is undoubtedly true of a host of fake psychic surgeons, it is difficult to believe that Arigó was able to fool a million or so patients, not to mention the numerous doctors and other qualified observers who witnessed and verified his operations over a twenty year period. It must be borne in mind that in all this time Arigó was never detected in fraud; he was accused of it, but never by anybody who actually saw him at work. How, for example could Arigó have faked the eye surgery mentioned above, especially in front of other medical practitioners?

The evidence, in the form of thousands of testimonies by patients and doctors, photographs and movie films, is certainly impressive in the case of Arigó. But sceptics remain unconvinced that an uneducated working man with no knowledge of medicine could perform complex surgery, often on people given up as hopeless by physicians, whilst in some sort of trance state, which resulted in the restoration to health of the patients. More incredible perhaps is that Arigó apparently did these operations usually in less than a minute, more often a few seconds, without using sterilised instruments or antiseptics. According to published accounts, there was little bleeding, no infection and the wound never required stitches. It also must be borne in mind that Arigó never at any time accepted payment for his services, he had to maintain his day job in order to provide for his family. While this does not seem to be the behaviour of a hoaxer, sceptics remain unconvinced.

How Arigó accomplished his surgical feats is a disputed point. If his healing abilities were faked, which is a distinct possibility, he was still able in some way to remove all sense of fear and pain from his patients, to affect their minds in an extremely powerful way. Beyond this, all is conjecture. On one occasion, when Arigó was shown a film of himself operating, he fainted. When asked for his own explanation of this incredible ability his reply was disarmingly straight forward - 'I simply listen to a voice in my right ear and repeat whatever it says. It is always right.'

It is bewildering, but perhaps predictable, that no professional medical body ever thought it worthwhile to undertake a detailed study of this unique man, even to disprove his alleged abilities.

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