

The Spirits' Book
165 Years of Truth and Light!

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Summary

The epic journey lived by professor Hippilyte-Leon-Denizard Rivail 1804 - 1869) was superficially known until the moment he had the first contact with the round-table phenomena in 1855. Two years later, a character came to light, someone who would unsettle not only France but the entire civilized world: Allan Kardec. What difficulties did he face? As an educator in Paris, had he already manifested the grand mission the Spirits had entrusted him? What would an interview with Allan Kardec be like?

Key- Words

Rivail; Allan Kardec; missionaries; Spiritism; The Spirits' Book

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It Happened in Paris

In Paris a simple lamp post is never erected. In Paris they create an art piece that has a lamp. They never built just a bridge for the carriages to driver over. A bridge must have something pretty, It must be part of the culture. The city's title *City of Lights*, as most believe, did not originated from the improvement brought by electrical illumination of its street in 1667, as a response to street violence of the time.

Undoubtedly, by illuminating Paris, Gabriel-Nicholas de la Reynie, the first-lieutenant police appointed by king Louis XIV, reduced criminality by scaring criminal away. Gas lamps replaced the old large torches, illuminating even the further away alleys.

The Blossoming of a Missionary

One of these stars, Hippolyte-Léon-Denizard Rivail (1804-1869)ⁱ was born in Lyon, a large city between Paris and Marseille. He grew up in Bourg-en-Bresse and Saint-Denis-lès-Bourg, where his parents and maternal grandmother resided. He immersed himself into Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's (1746-1827) knowledge and pedagogy in Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's school, Switzerland. There Mr. Rivail acquired the spirit of research, the experimental method, patience, prudence and good sense that would one day characterize his work as an educator and a missionary. He began building his work in Paris in 1822 when he started dedicating himself for the education of Parisian children and youth.

April 18th, 1857

- I have lived in the heart of Paris for two years and have had no knowledge about mediumship.¹

This phrase spoken by professor Rivail to Mr. Dufaux during the memorable first encountering during the evening of The Spirits' Book's release in his residence at # 8, *Rua dos Maryrs*, in Paris, reveals that in 1857, after only two years in contact with the Spirits, he was able to launch the work that would affect France's intellectual and religious worlds. Additionally, such a short period of time demonstrates that this individual

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was endowed with effulgent intelligence, capable of executing such prodigious work. The Spirits' Book's original manuscript was handed in to Madame Mélanie (Dentu Publisher) at the end of 1856.

A Refused Masterpiece

Rivail had reasons to worry about. After all, the work that would mark the starting point of Allan Kardec's missionary life had already been refused by two other publishers.²

It was refused initially by his friend Didier who considered that the book material had no future, especially by an unknown author.³ After that, the manuscript was also rejected by Edouard-Justin Dentu (1830-1884) who received Rivail with evident ill will as he considered the manuscript's subject meaningless and out of vogue, arguing that France no longer cared about the rotating tables.⁴ That embarrassing situation did not get worse thanks to Madame Dentu saving action. Disregarding her own son's negative opinion about the matter, said in a loving way:

- Have you finally brought your notebooks, professor? It will be an honor to publish your book.⁵

Later on, Edouard, Madame Dentu's son, agreed to take a look at the material. He read the first lines of the Spirits' Book's preface. Attending to his mother's incessant requests, who had read and meditated on the manuscript and had considered it truly impressive. She reported that reading it had done her good. Soon after, Edouard finally realized that he had been going deep into the reading and found himself accepting the author's

² Allan Kardec was a heteronym Mr. Rivail chose for himself taken from an ancient incarnation in Gaul.

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arguments to the point that he confessed to the Dentu widow that she was absolutely right about the book's content as it was splendid.

A Jornalistic Breakthrough

In a sunny and flowery Spring Saturday in Paris, a horse carriage stopped close to the *Palais Royal* to deliver the first 1,200 units of *The Spirits' Book* to Dentu Bookstore. The book had 501 questions that had been judiciously asked to discarnate Spirits. It had taken four months to be printed in the De Beau printing shop. It was finalized on April 18th, 1857.

Either by coincidence or a journalistic cunning planning, *Courrier de Paris'* journalist Du Chalard saw that there was new reading material coming into the bookshop. He went up the small stairs of the bookstore's upper room thus receiving directly from the hands of the Dentu brother the first book that was ready for sale. In July 11th, 1857, the journalist wrote his critique here summarized:

“Editor Dentu has just published a remarkable work; we would say rather curious, but there are things that refute any ordinary qualification. “*The Spirits' Book*” by Mr. Allan Kardec is a new page in the great infinite book and we have been convinced that a book maker will signal this work. We would be desolated if you would think that we are making here a bibliographical advertisement; if we could imagine that it would be such, we would break our pen right away. We absolutely do not know the author, but I openly confess that I would be delighted to get to know him. The one who wrote the introduction of *The Spirits' Book* must have and open soul to all noble sentiments.”⁶

Three Years Later

Professor Rivail enjoyed good reputation, social respect and a comfortable economic position until he became close to the mediumistic phenomena and codified the Spiritist Doctrine. What did he have to say after he became Allan Kardec? Based on several biographical works and texts from the book *Posthumous Works* as well as some lucid interpretations by the well-known and celebrated Brazilian writer Hermínio Miranda, we wish to present a hypothetical interview with Allan Kardec, the encoder of the Spiritist Doctrine.

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Our virtual reporter was at that moment crossing the Senna River through the *Pont du Carrousel*. That is not only a bridge but an art piece that integrates the Parisian landscape. He took the coup through the *Place du Carrousel*, turning right on the side of the *Musée du Louvre*, took the *Avenue de l'Opéra* and then turned right on *Rue Sainte-Anne*. He rode less than a kilometer and parked two blocks from the end of the road, between *Rue Rameau* and the *Rue Cherubini*, right in front of *Passage Sainte-Anne*, where there was access to the steps of the building where Monsieur Allan Kardec lived.

Stringent, but very serious, the encoder received the reporter with the courteousness that had always been his characteristic. Taking the initiative to dialogue, he faced the reporter's unexpected silence when he met a figure of such significance. Allan Kardec then requested that, in respect and prudence, questions about João Huss should be avoided. There was probably a close relationship between him and Mr. Huss' family as it was revealed in 1857 through the mediumship of Mademoiselle Ermance Dufaux.

The reporter knew what Kardec was talking about. It was the XIX Century Europe, agitated by transformations in several human areas, aiming social reorganization according to principles of rationality. The Illuminist criticism was against tradition and authority of those who dared lead thinking through the monopoly of religion and what is sacred.

Ecclesiastic authorities were in alert to any mention to past madness that could lead to a mood aggravation against Kardec. Certainly, that would bring serious negative consequences to the Doctrine that was just being born. As always, Kardec had the good sense to avoid any controversy. Agreeing to a possible incarnation as João Huss as suggested by the reporter would bring to life the clergy's past misconduct which João Huss had been a victim of.

As he had already planned for that afternoon, the reporter understood the message and began to address the topic that truly interested him: Spiritis' Encoding. After that serious introduction, Kardec relaxed, giving a wide smile, leaving himself available to answer any of the reporter's questions or objections.

The journalist soon was impressed with the clarity of thought and flawless logic that emanated from that great man. Despite being well educated with high cultural standards, he quickly noticed that he would have a lot to learn with Kardec, the encoder and with Rivail, the man.

The Interview

Reporter: - Mr. Allan Kardec, Is the spirit of the Spiritist Doctrine that you encoded completed or is there a need to any addition?

Allan Kardec: With the publishing of the second edition of the Spirits' Book, we consider that the main foundation of the Spirits' great work have been accomplished. Since 1861, we have had a judicious philosophical expansion as well as the consolidation of the scientific experiments.

Reporter: *What about the ethical structure?*

Allan Kardec: That is not our preoccupation at this moment. That will come in the right time. We are avoiding, the best we can, controversies and misunderstanding, focusing only in the Gospel moral teachings.

Reporter: - There are comments back stage of our newspaper room - Courrier de Paris – that the Spiritist Doctrine will be exposed to the strongest confrontations: What do you have to say in this regard?

Allan Kardec: Each attack will determine the exacerbation of our introspective process as well as our self-analysis so that the Doctrine's viewpoint may remain unassailable.

Reporter: *How about the scientific community? Do you fear any reaction?*

Allan Kardec: A feeling of safety as well as a growing respect to the Spiritist Doctrine's postulates has begun to spread in the scientific community. The Spiritist Doctrine is ahead of its time. Its ideas and concepts, such as reincarnation, the plurality of inhabited worlds, and we could also mention the existence of the perispirit, have begun to receive the confirmation by important scientists who have taken their time to seriously examine it.

Reporter: - Don't you fear that scientists may discover something that will be in conflict with what Spiritism asserts?

At that moment, the answer given by Kardec provoked surprise to the reporter due to the interviewee's demonstration of courage and assuredness.

Allan Kardec: - Spiritism is prepared to modify itself in any issues that may have been mistaken and in conflict with science. However, if one day there will be a change in the Doctrine's encoding, that can only happen in its secondary aspects but never in its basic structural concepts.

Reporter: *Does Spiritism answers to every human questioning?*

Allan Kardec: - Not all questions related to the human existence have been resolved in its smallest implications. It will be humanity's role – he predicted – to develop the great ideas' seedlings that are in the Spirits' Book. The Spirits will not do on our behalf the job that is our own.

Reporter: *Did you create Spiritism, Mr. Kardec?*

Allan Kardec: The Encoding's first book's title expresses well its origin. The work belongs to the Spirits, it's not mine. The birth of Spiritism was meticulously planned and thoroughly executed. It is evident there is pre-establish conscious intelligence who coordinated the effort between incarnated and discarnate spirits who were in charge of the initial tasks as well as those that will follow in the right place and time.

Reporter: - *When did you find out it was your mission to become the Encoder?*

Professor smiled and described his own surprise when his spiritual guide – the Spirit of Truth - reveled it to him.

Allan Kardec: An evening in April, 1856, at Monsieur Roustan's residence, through the medium Ruth Japhet, the basked had pointed towards my direction, causing me certain emotion. It gave me the following message:

- As of you, Rivail, here is your mission: a constructor that will build what has been demolished. Our assistance will never abandon you, but it will be useless, if from your part, you do not do what it is necessary.

Reporter: - *Did it ever occur to you failing your mission?*

Allan Kardec: - I asked the Spirits what could lead to my failure; could my capabilities be insufficient? They answered that would not happen, but warned me the mission of reformers is full of choices and perils and that mine would be hard as it meant to transform and affect the entire world.

Reporter: - *Did that really happened?*

Allan Kardec: Almost 11 years have passed after those recommendations were given to me, I can attest that they came to fruition, exactly in every aspect and every difficulty it had been predicted. I was never able to know the meaning of having a rest. More than once I succumbed to the excessive volume of work. I had my physical health in jeopardy, my existence was compromised.

Reporter: - *Did you ever faint or feel discouraged?*

Allan Kardec: - Thanks to the Spirits' assistance and protection who gave me clear proves of solicitude, I never felt any discouragement or faint. I pressed on with the same zeal developing my task without worrying about the wrongdoings I was constantly subjected to.

Reporter: - *Mr. Kardec, your resilience to all the struggles truly surprises me. To what do you attribute such resilience?*

Allan Kardec: - When a disappointment appeared, or any other difficulty, I elevated my thought to beyond humanity and put myself in the Spirits' realm, and from that high position I can see my future arrival. That way, life's miseries have passed over without affecting me. It has become so habitual to act this way that the loud noise of the evil ones has never disturbed me.

Reporter: *How did the transition from the worker Rivail to the leader and a missionary of truth's program take place?*

Kardec then assumed a stern posture and remembered the words said by his spiritual guide on the evening of April 12th, 1856. He looked as if he were living that unforgettable moment again.

Allan Kardec: - I do not see what could justify in me such a blessing, especially when so many others possess talents and qualities that I do not have.

The Spirit's answer came back to his mind right away:

- *Do not forget that you may triumph but you may also fail.*

- I understood – commented Kardec – that if I failed, someone else would come to replace me as God's designs cannot be at the whim of a single man.

For the reporter's surprise, right there and then, Kardec confessed that initially he saw a considerable distance between a diligent scholar and the coordinator of a doctrine. From the moment he accepted the task, he begun a journey of self-discovery with determination and courage.

Reporter: *What about the future, what's coming next? Will you continue to rely on the Spirits to continue the mission?*

Allan Kardec: - Initially, I looked for answers to my own question. In the process, I found out that there is a new world being born; it can be affected and transformed if the work is executed correctly.

Reporter: - *So the quartet concert finished and gave space to a soloist?*

Surprised with the reporter's intelligence and sagacity who was vividly fascinated by the work of his interviewee, as someone who sees a giant canvas that he then proposed to compose, Kardec smiled and said;

- Your image is pretty close to reality. Without even noticing, I was elaborating a new doctrine. No longer through the direct dialogue with the Spirits, but based on my own reflections and conclusions.

I regret that the interview is coming to an end, the reporter made the last question:

Reporter: *Are there the so-called Spirits organizers?*

Allan Kardec: Spirits organizers are those called by the Highest Plan to discipline ideas, discover their connections and consequences, and organize them at the human mind's reach. I have always been well aware of their existence and importance and I hope that I will continue to count on the assistance of these tough synthesizers.

Smiling, the reporter shook hands with Kardec, holding the absolute conviction that his interviewee was one of those Spirits organizers.⁷

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Rivail's biography as well as the work completed by Kardec are not the only ones that must be studied. Mainly his attitude towards the work should be understood because "... everything in this spirit is a lesson of great magnitude in a man who does not wish to be great."⁸

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Thank You Kardec

Kardec, while you receive the world's homage, we ask you to help us associate our simple work of love to the recognition chants that exult your gigantic work towards spiritual liberation. We are not referring to the emeritus professor that you were, but to the disciple of Jesus who made it possible the rise of the foundation of Cristian Spiritism whose structure defies the passage of time. [...]

All of us, those who you raise from the dust of uselessness or the gall of disenchantment to the blessings of living, we are also in front of you! We all identify ourselves in the condition of your most abnegated admirers and

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as the last of your poorest friends, full of commotion, in your celebration, we
ask you permission to say:

Kardec, thank you! Thank you very much! – Brother X⁹

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Interview – Both questions and answers of the hypothetical interview used in this article were created and adapted base on:

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