

Survival Milestones and Turning-Points

Developed from an original document compiled by Michael E. Tymn, this is an on-going project that aims to include all key occurrences and activities pertaining to the discernment of evidence for Survival.

- 11th Century – Catholic Church sets down formal guidelines for the investigation of miracles necessary for sainthood.
- 1741 – Swedish scientist Emanuel Swedenborg begins personal investigation of afterlife realms by means of clairvoyance and out-of-body travel, writes numerous essays on his explorations.
- 1778 – Mesmerism is introduced by Franz Anton Mesmer, an Austrian physician. While slow to catch on, it was an important precursor of psychical research and parapsychology.
- 1848 – On March 31st of this year, loud raps from a mysterious source give intelligent responses to questions at the home of the Fox family in Hydesville, New York. Thus begins a mediumship “epidemic” in the United States and Europe.
- 1851 – John W. Edmonds, Chief Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, begins a two-year personal investigation of mediumship. Intending to debunk the phenomena, he instead becomes a dedicated Spiritualist.
- 1851 – The Ghost Society is formed at Cambridge in England. One of the founders is Edward White Benson, later Archbishop of Canterbury. In 1853, Henry Sidgwick, Benson’s cousin and later a founder of the Society for Psychical Research (SPR), joins the group.
- 1852 – A Harvard University delegation, including poet William Cullen Bryant and Messrs. B.K. Bliss, William Edwards, and David Wells studies the physical mediumship of Daniel Dunglas Home, concluding that he is “a modern wonder.”
- 1853 – Dr. Robert Hare, a retired University of Pennsylvania Chemistry professor and renowned inventor, begins investigating mediumship intent on showing it is all to be fraud. He comes to accept it as real and then becomes a medium himself. In 1855, he writes a book, *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations*.
- 1853 – French author Victor Hugo is exiled to the island of Jersey and begins an informal investigation of mediumship.
- 1854 – French educator Hippolyte Leon Denizard Rivail (known as Allan Kardec) begins an investigation of mediumship. In 1857, he publishes *The Spirits’ Book*, which sets forth profound messages from the spirit world.
- 1860 – American editor and statesman Robert Dale Owen writes *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, discussing various psychic phenomena. Psychical researchers in the decades following would say that this book significantly influenced them in their decisions to investigate similar phenomena.
- 1866 – Alfred Russel Wallace, co-originator with Charles Darwin of the natural selection theory of evolution, issues his first writing on Spiritualism, *The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural*.

- 1869 – The Dialectical Society of London appoints a committee, including biologist Alfred Russel Wallace, to investigate mediumship. The committee returns a report that the phenomena exist.
- 1870 – William Crookes (later, Sir William), a renowned chemist, decides to investigate mediums. On April 21, 1870, he has the first of many sittings with medium Daniel Dunglas Home. In 1872, he begins an investigation of medium Florence Cook. He reports that both Home and Cook are genuine mediums.
- 1872 – Rev. William Stainton Moses, an Anglican minister and English Master at University College, begins investigating mediumship, assuming it to be all trickery and fraud. He soon becomes a medium himself, receiving profound messages from a high spirit calling himself Imperator.
- 1874 – Two Cambridge scholars, Frederic W. H. Myers and Edmund Gurney, visit Rev. William Stainton Moses to observe his mediumship. They are fascinated and are encouraged to further explore the subject.
- 1875 – Serjeant Cox, a lawyer who often sat with W. Stainton Moses, organizes the Psychological Society of Great Britain.
- 1876 – William Barrett (later Sir William), professor of physics in the Royal College of Science at Dublin, submits a paper to the British Association for the Advancement of Science on the subject of mental telepathy, then called thought-transference. The Association rejects it. When Alfred Russel Wallace protests the rejection, Barrett is allowed to deliver his paper but not publish it.
- 1879 – The Cambridge Society for Psychical Research is formed to conduct investigation of mediums. It is a forerunner of the Society for Psychical Research.
- 1882 – The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) is organized in London by eminent scholars and scientists, including William Barrett, Henry Sidgwick, Frederic W. H. Myers, and Edmund Gurney. Sidgwick becomes its first president.
- 1884 – Dr. Richard Hodgson, who had been teaching philosophy at Cambridge and law at University extension, is sent to India by the SPR to investigate Madame H. P. Blavatsky and the Theosophical Society. Hodgson submits a very controversial report that Blavatsky is a charlatan.
- 1885 – Professor William James of Harvard University begins an investigation of the mediumship of Leonora Piper of Boston, Mass., concluding that she is not a charlatan.
- 1886 – A 1,300-page book titled *Phantasms of the Living*, authored by Edmund Gurney, Frederic W. H. Myers, and Frank Podmore, is published. It strongly supports the telepathy hypothesis. It is Myers who gives the name “telepathy” to what was previously referred to as thought-transference.
- 1887 – The American branch of the Society for Psychical Research (ASPR) is formed with Richard Hodgson accepting the position as its first executive secretary. William James turns over the investigation of Leonora Piper to Hodgson. Hodgson will dedicate himself to observing and studying her mediumship until his death in 1905.
- 1889 – The SPR arranges for Leonora Piper to travel to England, where she is studied and tested by Frederic W. H. Myers and Professor Oliver Lodge. During the sittings with Lodge, Edmund Gurney, co-founder of the SPR who had died in 1888, communicates. Lodge and Myers begin to accept the spirit/survival hypothesis.
- 1891 – The American Psychical Society of Boston is formed by disgruntled ASPR members who feel that Richard Hodgson is devoting too much time to Leonora Piper and not delegating research projects involving other mediums to qualified researchers. Unitarian minister Minot J. Savage and B. O. Flower, an editor, are the founders, while Professor Amos Dolbear of Tufts University and author Hamlin Garland become the chief investigators.
- 1892 – George Pellew, an associate of the ASPR, is killed in an accident, and on March 22, 1892

- begins to communicate with Richard Hodgson through Leonora Piper. Pellew (given the pseudonym "George Pelham") gradually takes over as Piper's primary control. Hodgson abandons the secondary-personality hypothesis as well as teleteropathy (telepathy at a distance) and the cosmic reservoir theories, and adopts the spirit hypothesis based on Pellew's very distinct personality coming through at the sittings. Other researchers follow.
- 1894 – Professor Oliver Lodge, Frederic W. H. Myers, and Dr. Charles Richet of France, investigate the mediumship of Eusapia Palladino of Italy, concluding that she is a "mixed" medium, producing some real phenomena but occasionally cheating, although it is pointed out that much, if not all, of the cheating is "unconscious fraud."
- 1898 – Frederic W. H. Myers has the first of over 150 sittings with British trance medium Rosalie Thompson. Myers becomes fully convinced of the spirit hypothesis. 1901 – Frederic W. H. Myers dies and soon begins communicating with Professor Oliver Lodge through medium Rosalie Thompson. Over the next several years, Myers communicates through other mediums and offers what come to be known as the cross-correspondences.
- 1903 – *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, a 1,426-page book begun but not completely finished by Frederic W. H. Myers before his death, is completed by others and is published. It becomes the seminal work in the field.
- 1904 – Dr. J.L. Matla and Dr. G. J. Zaalbert van Zelst of Holland begin research into the ability of spirit entities to manipulate devices. In their book, *The Mystery of Death*, they state that there is no normal explanation for the consistent results they received and that they are convinced that unseen entities were the cause of the phenomena.
- 1905 – Richard Hodgson dies and soon begins communicating through Leonora Piper, the medium he had studied for 18 years.
- 1906 – Because of Richard Hodgson's death, the ASPR is reorganized and becomes the American Institute for Scientific Research under the direction of Dr. James H. Hyslop, formerly a professor of logic and ethics at Columbia University. The ASPR becomes a branch of the Institute. After Hyslop's death in 1920, it becomes the Boston Society for Psychic Research. In 1941, it is reintegrated into the ASPR with headquarters in New York.
- 1907 – Dr. James H. Hyslop begins investigating the mediumship of Minerva Soule ("Mrs. Chenoweth")
- 1909 – *The Survival of Man* by Sir Oliver Lodge is published, creating a stir in the scientific world.
- 1910 – Newspapers most everywhere report strange stories of a young man named Edgar Cayce who, it is said, can enter a trance and accurately diagnose medical conditions. Later, Cayce does thousands of "life readings" reviving great interest in reincarnation.
- 1911 – Stanford University establishes the first ESP lab under John Edgar Coover.
- 1914 – The mediumship of Pearl Curran, a St. Louis, Missouri housewife through whom an entity known as Patience Worth communicates volumes of wisdom, begins. She is investigated by numerous scientists and scholars.
- 1915 – David Wilson, a London amateur wireless operator, reports that he has apparently received messages from the spirit world by means of Morse Code.
- 1915 – Sir Oliver Lodge begins receiving messages from his son, Raymond, killed on the battlefield in France. Many of the messages come through Gladys Osborne Leonard, a trance medium. In 1916, Sir Oliver's book, *Raymond or Life and Death*, is published and becomes a best-seller, influencing many but inviting scorn from various scientists.

- 1917 – The Rev. Charles Drayton Thomas, an SPR member, begins sitting with Gladys Osborne Leonard, receiving many evidential messages from his deceased father and sister. The book and newspaper tests are developed providing evidence that the information communicated does not come by means of telepathy.
- 1921 – F. R. Melton of England reports that he has invented a “psychic telephone” in which many paranormal voices are received.
- 1925 – The “Margery” case, involving medium Mina Crandon, creates conflict and division among psychical researchers and a defection of key researchers from the ASPR, which never fully recovers.
- 1925 – Sir William Barrett, last of the SPR founders, dies. His unfinished book, *Death-bed Visions*, is published the following year.
- 1930 – Focus turns from survival research to ESP with Dr. Joseph B. Rhine, one of the dissenters in the “Margery” case, establishing the parapsychology lab at Duke University under Professor William McDougall.
- 1931 – The Association for Research & Enlightenment is established in Virginia Beach, Virginia to promote the work of psychic/medium Edgar Cayce, called “the father of holistic medicine.” This gives much impetus to a belief in reincarnation.
- 1937 – *New Frontiers of the Mind*, by Dr. Joseph N. Rhine brings ESP and PK to the public and popularizes the term parapsychology. The *Journal of Parapsychology* is founded.
- 1956 – *The Search for Bridey Murphy*, authored by Morey Bernstein, is a best-seller and creates further interest in reincarnation.
- 1959 – Raymond Bayless and Attila von Szalay report on their discovery of tape-recorded spirit voices in the January issue of *The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*. A few months later, Friedrich Jürgenson announces a similar discovery in Sweden.
- 1961 – Based upon a wide collection of mediumistic reports, Dr. Robert Crookall produces the first comprehensive book summarizing the afterlife environment. It is titled *The Supreme Adventure*.
- 1963 – Jane Roberts and her husband begin experiments that result in more than 20 books of “the Seth material,” which explores the nature of reality and mankind’s role within it.
- 1966 – *Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation*, authored by Dr. Ian Stevenson, is published, popularizing earlier articles by Stevenson on the subject.
- 1968 – Bishop James Pike publishes *The Other Side*, his controversial, best-selling account of events that led him to believe in the reality of communications with the spirit of his dead son.
- 1970 – Although not directly concerned with Survival, publication of the book *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* went a long way towards legitimizing interest in paranormal phenomena in general.
- 1971 – Konstantin Raudive writes a book about EVP, *Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*, which popularizes the phenomenon.
- 1971 – The Monroe Institute is established to study and explore consciousness and out-of-body experiences.
- 1975 – Dr. Raymond Moody gives a name to and popularizes the “near-death experience” with his bestseller, *Life After Life*”
- 1978 – The International Association of Near-Death Studies (IANDS) is founded to encourage further study of the NDE.
- 1982 – Sarah Estep founds the American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena.
- 1991 – Michael Talbot writes *The Holographic Universe*, one of the most popular, and readable, attempts to explain paranormal phenomena in terms of recent advances in science and technology.
- 1993 – The Scole Experiments in mediumship begin in England.
- 1994 – Dr. Michael Newton’s seminal book, *Journey of Souls*, reveals what heaven was like for 29 people regressed to the time they spent between lives. Unbeknownst to one another,

they report remarkably similar yet unexpected experiences.

2002 – *The Afterlife Experiments* by Dr. Gary Schwartz, an American researcher, is published, reporting on Schwartz's experiments with a number of clairvoyant mediums. He reports that the phenomena are real.

2005 – In his book, *Induced After Death Communication*, Dr. Allan Botkin, an American clinical psychologist, reports on a new therapy in which grieving people are put in touch with deceased loved ones.