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# Spirit and Spiritualism

**Spirit** [13] Latin *spiritus* originally meant ‘breath’: it was derived from the verb *spirare* ‘breathe’ (source of English *aspire* [15], *conspire* [14], *expire* [15], *inspire* [14], *perspire* [17], *respire* [14], *transpire* [16], etc.), which probably came ultimately from the prehistoric Indo-European base *\*speis-or\*peis-*, imitative of the sound of blowing or breath out (source also of Old Church Slavic *piskati* ‘whistle,’ Serbo-Croat *pistati* ‘hiss,’ and Old Norse *fisa* ‘fart’). But in the Augustan period it gradually began to take over as the word for ‘soul’ from *anima* (source of English *animal*, *animate*, etc.) which itself originally denoted ‘breath.’ And in Christian Latin writings it was the standard term used.

John Ayto. *Dictionary of Word Origins*. Arcade Publishing, New York. Little Brown and Company. 1990

## Saul and the Medium at Endor – 1 Samuel 28:3-19 NKJV

<sup>3</sup> Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.

<sup>4</sup> The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. <sup>5</sup> When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. <sup>6</sup> He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. <sup>7</sup> Saul then said to his attendants, “Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her.”

“There is one in Endor,” they said.

<sup>8</sup> So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. “Consult a spirit for me,” he said, “and bring up for me the one I name.”

<sup>9</sup> But the woman said to him, “Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?”

<sup>10</sup> Saul swore to her by the LORD, “As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this.”

<sup>11</sup> Then the woman asked, “Whom shall I bring up for you?”

“Bring up Samuel,” he said.

<sup>12</sup> When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, “Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!”

<sup>13</sup> The king said to her, “Don’t be afraid. What do you see?”

The woman said, “I see a ghostly figure<sup>[a]</sup> coming up out of the earth.”

<sup>14</sup> “What does he look like?” he asked.

“An old man wearing a robe is coming up,” she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel said to Saul, “Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?”

“I am in great distress,” Saul said. “The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do.”

<sup>16</sup> Samuel said, “Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has departed from you and become your enemy? <sup>17</sup> The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. <sup>18</sup> Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. <sup>19</sup> The LORD will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines.

### Live Séance on TV Astonishes Viewers

Source and date: *New York Times*, 18 September 1967



Last night, the Right Reverend James A Pike, former Episcopal Bishop of California [former rector of Christ Episcopal Church, Poughkeepsie, New York], sat in a television studio in Toronto, Canada, with Arthur Ford, a minister of the Disciples of Christ Church and one of America’s best-known spirit mediums. They were about to hold a televised séance that had been arranged by Allen Spraggett, religion editor of the *Toronto Star* and frequent writer on psychic subjects. Ford put on a blindfold—to protect his eyes from the strong TV lights, he said—and went into a trance. During the trance, Ford’s spirit guide, “Fletcher” delivered messages allegedly from the spirit of Bishop Pike’s son, Jim Jr, who had shot and killed himself in New York a year earlier. According to Ford, “Fletcher” was the spirit of a long-dead French Canadian who regularly transmitted messages from the spirit world. Astonished viewers across the nation heard “messages” from the “spirit” of James Pike Jr and were assured that the “communications” were genuine. Bishop Pike admitted himself “impressed” but acknowledged that much of the information might have been acquired by normal means. He added, “But I do not think Ford has done so. I am convinced that during the séance Ford was in contact with the spirit of my dead son.” [This story appeared on the front page of the *New York Times*—the only time a psychic event has been given such prominence in the *Times*.]

Peter Haining, Editor, *True Haunting*. Konecky & Konecky, Connecticut. 2008