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ASSOCIATION FOR EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION OF EVIDENCE FOR SURVIVAL

# Instinct, Intuition, and Reincarnation

*From a paper published in the* Journal for Psychical Research, *June 1945, titled "A Discourse Given Through Mrs. Leonard and Attributed to Sir Oliver Lodge." Condensed and edited by Miles Edward Allen, February 2014. Leonard is the most famous British medium, Gladys Osborne Leonard. Much, but not all, of the messages quoted herein come through Feda. her spirit control (go between). Thomas is the Rev. Charles Drayton Thomas, an investigator and the author of the original paper. Lodge was a physicist and one of the most widely respected researchers of the paranormal; he had passed on in 1940. The sitting took place on 20 April 1944.*

FEDA: Here is somebody who wants to talk to you, somebody Feda knows, and has been waiting to talk to you. Do you know who it is? It's Sir Oliver.

THOMAS: He is most welcome.

LODGE: I wanted to come before, but I felt it was not worthwhile until I had progressed in some of my studies and arrived at certain conclusions.

THOMAS: I shall be most interested to hear them.

FEDA: He wanted you to know that now he has gone back a considerable number of years, and that he found no difficulty in so doing, he calls it, so doing. He says, I think you might say that I have knocked off, he calls it, knocked off, about thirty to thirty-five years.

THOMAS: How very pleasant !

LODGE: And the processes of rejuvenation have been very easy. I don't think they are to all people, but they have been very easy to me.

THOMAS: Were they done voluntarily or automatically?

LODGE: They seemed to me, in my own case, to be more automatic than voluntary. It is on that subject that I wanted to speak to you today. You have brought up the question of voluntary versus automatic. Now this body, this body in which one finds oneself after death—is indeed a body. It seems to be very much more a body, a material body, than I had supposed would be possible. The status, the make-up, let us call it, of this body seems to be ready-made; that is, you see, we have made it during our earth-life; and I feel that there is a considerable difference in the content or make-up of each body. I see great differences in the grades and qualities of different individuals on this plane.

I would say that the condition of — now I am going to call it the spirit-body; I am not going to call it the etheric body or the astral body; I am going to call it the spirit-body— I would say that the condition of the spirit body is governed voluntarily during the earth life and automatically after passing. The process seems beyond our control now. This is a big, a very big subject, Thomas. It is very important, I feel, and I hope I can get something through to you about it. The process is more automatic after death than it is during what we call life on the earth. It is more within our power to bend, to shape, to govern that spirit-body during our earth lives than it is after. That is why it behooves us to have some knowledge, even of a simple and elementary kind, about these matters.

We do make, we create in a way, the quality, the strength, the power of our spirit-body during our earth lives. We pass into it, the body that we have made, and it is there, and, believe me, it is more difficult to shape it and alter it after than it is during the earth life.

Now I feel that what I am saying and what I may say to you on different occasions may arouse a certain amount of controversy, but I must give you my impressions, my deductions, the result of my observations, as they have come to me. And this opportunity, for which I have been waiting a considerable time — well, I have delayed making it so that I could be sure to my own satisfaction that I am giving you the correct deductions, that I am giving you facts founded on the observations I have made since my transition.

During the earth life I kept an open mind about this vexed question of what is called reincarnation. I didn't know. How could I know? I had no memory of previous lives. As far as I remember I was not told anything very definite about them as to whether I had, or had not, had any. But my wife had certain experiences and certain communications, I believe, a great many years ago, which interested her; but I let them be. There were other problems, questions of a vital character, that needed my attention. I let it be 'til I knew. Well, now I know that it is a fact. It is true, therefore I must state it as true, that, according to my personal experience, it is true.

I have had many talks with my friend Myers[1] about it. I have asked him why he did not tell me more about it, especially during my many sittings with Feda. He said that he thought that at times the medium had had an aversion to the idea. I think that has made a certain barrier, and possibly also she was acting in what I might call a conscientious sense about it, and was anxious that I should get what she felt was right and founded on what she calls fact. She was uncertain about it herself, thought there was a certain amount of imagination and what she calls rubbish talked about it, and I think that that built up a barrier.

This spirit body is unable to adapt itself completely, in complete harmony, complete unity, and therefore happily with the conditions of this side until it is perfected, let us call it, to a certain extent, until it has had certain experiences and benefitted by them. And, believe me, these experiences have to be all round. They have to be varied, and I think that there are few people who can get the sufficiently varied experiences and tests in one incarnation that will enable them to stay permanently on this side. They have to come back until the spirit body is built up. In other words, this body has to be made, it has got to be created. The spirit is there, but the spirit body has to be made like the garment clothing the spirit. And this garment takes a long time in the making, a long time. They tell me it is extremely difficult to adjust oneself to the conditions on this side.That is to say, if you are going to use your powers to their full extent, if you are going to avail yourself of the opportunities that are there.

Now I would say that the average individual is only able to avail himself of ten percent, of the opportunities that should be open to him. And of course, should he live such a life—that is to say, a ten per cent, life, let us call it, he stagnates. You cannot stagnate on this side. You can stagnate more easily and comfortably on the earth, but here you would lose identity, and that cannot be allowed. You lose what progress you have made, you lose your ten per cent, if you stay too long in that status of stagnation that you would undoubtedly fall into, drift into, without the weapons on which to sharpen your spiritual faculties. Thomas, do you see? You haven't the weapons here. You haven't the machinery here. You have got to go back to the earth to have them at your command

[1] Frederic W.H. Myers, M.A., philosopher and classicist, one of the founders of the SPR, died in 1901.

again. You must. You get a certain amount of help on this side, but nothing is done for you that you must do and should do for yourself.

But when it comes to the point, when it is seen that this person must come back, help is given. In other words, his education is taken in hand by those who are competent to deal with him, and he is told, as a child would be told, in what way he has to learn certain lessons and what other lessons there are in which he has failed, or which he must learn, and which he must go back into the school of life to learn. The testing ground, the school, as Myers always called it to me in communications with him, the school, the testing ground, the earth. And with that amount of understanding which is alive in him he can use it; he can use it because he is aware that others are doing things he cannot do. He looks up and he sees those who have, let us say, grown wings, those who can soar, those who can have adventures and experiences of a remarkably interesting kind from which he is debarred. He feels weighted. He knows there is something wrong, and he usually acquiesces in the suggestion that he should volunteer to go back.

And, if he is willing, he has the advantage of being taught and prepared to a certain extent for his next experience. He is taken in hand, and he is instructed in the things in which he is lacking. At least he is told what they are, broadly speaking, and he is told that these same instructors, teachers, will watch over him when he comes back to the earth, and that, if he should be willing and attain a sense of unity with them, believe in them, with which he is sent back to the earth, with which every human being is sent back to the earth, the knowledge of the spiritual embedded in his consciousness, embedded there, which is in us all. It is in us all — we can turn it out and refuse to admit it, but it is there, as you know — he is told that if he will react to that he will find himself in touch with these same leaders. He will probably be introduced to them should he have the good fortune, or the misfortune …

FEDA: He's looking naughty!

LODGE: … to become interested in psychic research. He will most probably have them introduced to him as the Guides. I remember hearing far too much about the Guides at several of my earlier sittings. In fact, I was rather bored with the Guides. But now I understand; I have met them and I have recognised[2] them as old-time friends, friends from a very long time ago, and I appreciate, I deeply appreciate, their faithfulness and their patience with me.

Now there is nothing whatever, as far as I can see, in the facts regarding physical incarnation and the ordinary processes of physical evolution as science has understood them, there is nothing that need contradict the foregoing. The physical processes by which man has evolved are not interfered with. He evolved, he reached a certain stage before he began to reincarnate. I feel the time will come when science will embrace so much more of what we have called the metaphysical. When science will find itself incomplete without a union with metaphysical knowledge. It must be so. There must be a true science of spirit, mind and physical. We cannot separate them; not one of the three can do without the others. That has been our trouble, Thomas. We have tried to monopolise one and concentrate on one and cut off the other two. Usually we allow the two, the physical and the mental. We cut out the third, the spiritual, for the purpose of what we call scientific investigation and scientific truth. It cannot be done. It is not complete.

Even those who are convinced that they are right in doing so much, see that there are certain conditions, certain facts, that evade them, certain questions, certain problems they cannot resolve.

[2] British spellings have been retained.

While they limit themselves to these two the processes of life cannot be solved in their entirety. We may evolve certain short-lived automatic processes, but we have not that eternal memory, that immortal process of life which comes from God. We cannot bring it down into the grossly material and divorce it from its spiritual origin. We must learn the laws, the spiritual laws, the Divine laws, and cooperate with them. Then there will be more hope for us; there will be a greater perfection in whatever we do or try to do with regard to the other two.

I have every reason to be extremely thankful that I allowed myself to be led from the material through the mental to the spiritual. I know there were those who railed at me, thought I had a bee in my bonnet and so forth, but I had a firm conviction that there was a beneficent Being above and beyond and in all things. I kept God in my life and in my plans and in my ideas, and I have every reason to be thankful that I did so. It gave me—if I may put it so at the risk of sounding somewhat self-complacent—it gave me a great advantage in my personal conditions, [in the next world] and in my ability to do that which I felt inclined to do and wished to do; a greater interest in the life into which I had recently come, a greater ability to enjoy the companionship of others who had been here longer than I, a greater zest for living. My faculties seem remarkably keen and clear.

I contrast my condition with the conditions of some people, people who have lived a long life on the earth, people who have attained a certain amount of eminence in their professions or their lives generally, yet who come over here and seem at such a disadvantage; who come over here and have to crawl, virtually crawl, whereas one can oneself walk and run and leap. I was overcome with the joy of life: and I see those others, (poor creatures!) coming over from what they would call material success on the earth and feeling at a great disadvantage. And those are the people, the only people, who wish to return to the earth.

I don't like to stress the fact of my joy, my feeling of satisfaction that I had allowed myself to be guided in my natural inclinations towards, shall I say? spiritual knowledge, spiritual thought, that I had allowed myself to be guided to, that knowledge which was augmented by my friend Myers and others while I was on the earth. I felt the deepest satisfaction that I had done so, the deepest satisfaction.

Now, to come back to this spirit body. The earth body is a covering made up of certain constituents. They are held together by certain processes and this physical body has only a temporary existence in the nature of things. The will of man can only help him to live a certain number of years, more or less. But this other body, this spirit body, it is within the power and the will of man to create and to shape so that it will have immortal and eternal existence after the death of the physical, after man has made it sufficiently harmonious to its spiritual conditions and surroundings, that is to say, those into which it will enter after death. If he is able to do that, it is not incumbent upon him to enter into another physical body at some later period and go through the same processes. It is not necessary. But most people find it necessary. Some at a very low ebb, you might call it a low ebb, are compelled to come back—at least, I don't want to say that word compelled, but they come back automatically. When I say compelled I think I mean there is no choice in the matter. They have to go back. They are drawn back. It is the spirit within them knows it must go back. There is an attraction for it to the earth to continue its progress or attempt at progress.

There is always that that we call, for want of a better term, the Divine Spark, that animates us automatically. We may commit crimes, we may sink into a slough of ignorance, and we may think there is no hope for us, we have got beyond hope. But the Divine Spark within us is alive, we cannot kill it. We can suppress it and keep it down, we can damp it so much we are scarcely aware of it,

but it is there, and it is Energy, Divine Energy. Small as it is, buried as it is, it is bursting with Divine Energy, the need to express itself.

Now, this being so, I think that we could speed up the evolution of man if we let him know why he must evolve and the trouble he will save himself if he chooses to endeavour to do this. If it is explained to him, Thomas, that these two bodies are his here and now, they are in his possession, and they can be the servants of his will, he will know it is worthwhile endeavouring to take not only himself, as he calls this limited physical body, in hand but to take his two selves, in hand and perfect them so that he has a second body, his spirit body, ready perfect to enter when the time of death comes.

[His death] is inevitable. One cannot escape it. He knows that. But I think in present conditions, the conditions of ignorance of this subject, he ignores death as much as he can. He doesn't embrace the idea and examine it and try to understand its possibilities. He ignores it. It spells or seems to spell extinction to him, or something which is so vague, so incomprehensible to him that it dismays him. Now, if we can take away that fear and show him there is the other body, the spirit body, and that it is within his power now to shape it, strengthen it, so that he will thoroughly enjoy living in it from the moment in which his physical body collapses, then I think, Thomas, he will begin to see to it, or, shall I say? a considerably greater number of people will see to it than do at present.

THOMAS: One would certainly hope so.

LODGE: I think they will. I do wish to emphasise that point, that it is within man's power to perfect and shape his spirit body and to become more and more familiar with it as he does so. And I think that as he becomes familiar with it, he may be able to enjoy certain excursions in it while he is still in his physical, which will give him an appetite for more and an idea of what advantages and adventures will be his after death.

Now this is also my own thought. I am not sure of this, but a deduction I have drawn, that the more people who are doing these things, who are studying and who are consciously and voluntarily following up the study of the spirit body and who are therefore able to enjoy a certain amount of exercise in it, the more it will grow. The more it will grow, because I think that these people will meet each other. One will inevitably meet one's neighbours out of the body and there will be a sense of familiarity which will grow until the whole custom and operation will become a more familiar thing to us.

I have noticed, Thomas, that in those who are able to exercise themselves in the spirit-body while still operating in their physical bodies, that should there be an instance of meeting their [someone] who is connected with the everyday events of mundane life, an occurrence of that kind repeated twice or three times prepared the mind for other occurrences and other opportunities and also for accepting them as part of the ordinary normal life.

THOMAS: Yes, that seems clear.

LODGE: We must make man understand that the spirit body is to a certain extent in his own power, his will power, that he can do as he pleases with it, that it is even more at his mercy than his physical body is. He has thought of the spirit body, if he thought of it at all, as something, elusive, something that is beyond him. It is exactly the contrary. He is shaping and making that body every hour of his life. He is dealing with it in every action and every thought, far more than he is doing with this physical body. This physical body, being temporary and being subject to certain inherited tendencies is not so much his as his spirit body is. His physical body belongs to the physical world. It has inherited, shall we call it “instinctive powers” which, in fact, have nothing whatever to do with the spirit body.

You might say the physical body has a mind, that is, it partakes of the great physical consciousness which we call instinct. The other mind, the greater consciousness which is always with us, which we take with us after death, is the intuition. The one is the intuition, the other is the instinct. They are both forms of consciousness, but the one of which I am speaking now, of which his physical body partakes, has come from the physical and can only last while the physical lasts. But it is a very strong one. It has more power of its own than man has ever had; while [man] has complete control and complete power over his spirit body. It is that that we shall have some difficulty in ramming home to him, because he has thought of it as being exactly the opposite.

This physical instinct is what is known as evil. Do you see? We talk, many have talked, as you know, philosophers, teachers, thinkers generally, of the spirits of good and evil. Well, I haven't come across any devil yet, or saint either. I haven't come across any embodiment of evil, but I look upon the purely physical instinct, or the great physical consciousness, which has existed down the ages as far as the history of man goes, I look upon that as containing whatever evil there is in the universe, and that the spirit of man, being pure, is separated from it, but that the will of man poised between the two states can be affected by the evil thoughts, the mass-consciousness, you see, of the physical. It is that that is tempting. But [the idea] that evil spirits tempted Him, Satan tempted Him — No! He is merely reacting voluntarily to the spirit of heredity, evil in the physical mass-consciousness, or instinct.

You see, there must be the intelligent desire for progress. And there must be the intelligent desire for effort, personal effort to attain that progress. As soon as the willpower reacts to that desire, the Spark helps. The will-power is the bellows that fans the Divine Spark into a flame from something which is so buried, so obscured that it is invisible — one cannot believe it is there. But it can be fanned by the bellows of the will-power.

I am not sure myself that this something that we call willpower, which is possessed by every man and woman living — I am not sure it is not an offshoot, a sort of secondary spark from the Divine Spark. At any rate it is not something that man has to attain or to develop; but he can develop it further. He has the nucleus of it. Nothing is beyond man—that is my point. God has not set a standard for man to attain which it is not within his power to attain. Make that point clear. Then we shall have less of this hopelessness of attitude and outlook, this "I can't hope to attain to such perfection". The truth is that I can attain any perfection that is possible to anybody. In other words, I can come back to God. That is to say, I can be as God, I can be Godlike. It is my inheritance. I can attain it when I am ready for it. I can attain it when I choose. It is in man's power to attain anything that is possible to any other man.

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