

Lesson Ten, The Evidence of Experience part 1

Were the phenomenon of the spirit, which is non-material in all its aspects, to be made the subject of experimentation, so that its autonomous existence became fully proven, despite its remoteness from sense perception, it would have a profound effect in causing men to believe more fully in the spirit. This would be the case particularly with those who are unable to understand subtle and complex questions and who are more inclined to accept empirical scientific data than they are the truths of philosophy.

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Spiritualism, the practice of communicating with the spirits of the dead, reached its highpoint in the nineteenth century when it became codified as a science. Numerous personalities throughout the world have observed the possibility of such communication, which may be counted as a living proof for the autonomy and immortality of the spirit.

Divesting themselves of all partiality and prejudice and impelled by genuinely scientific motives, a number of scholars have devoted themselves to painstaking research and study in order to discover the truth of the matter. With their achievements they have been able to demonstrate that the existence of the spirit is no longer a theoretical matter but something clear and straightforward.

Carefully executed experiments have shown that it is definitely possible to establish communication with the spirits of the dead. One may engage in conversation with them and ask their help in solving difficult problems. It often happens, indeed, that people who are utterly unable to solve the most complex problems confronting them are able to solve them through communication with the spirits of the dead.

Spirits have also been shown to possess the remarkable capacity of raising bodies from ground without the intervention of any material cause or bodily energy. (*Alam-i Pas az Marg*, section 11)

One of the prominent traits of those who enter a trance to communicate with the dead is that they function both as receivers and as transmitters. It may sometimes happen that while in that state they speak in languages they had never learned. They may also find themselves divulging secrets they were not in a position to know.

Still more remarkable is the fact that mediums are able while in a trance to read and to copy inscriptions on objects contained in sealed boxes, although they are quite illiterate!

In short, mediums engage in such inexplicable acts that we are obliged to follow them into the invisible realm of the spirit in our attempt to find an answer.

All we have mentioned has been proved by experiment and it constitutes a refutation of the claims of the materialists, for if the spirit were simply an effect of matter, a physicochemical property of the brain, it would be impossible to explain all these varied phenomena that have been verified experimentally.

We can escape the impasse to which materialist thought leads only when we admit the existence of a supramaterial force that creates such phenomena, for it is not conceivable that they should be the product of material factors.

Although age is not an important consideration for those who establish communication with spirits, those who enter on this path generally choose mediums from among children to receive messages from spirits. This removes the likelihood of trickery, deceit, and recourse to various contraptions, and thus puts an end to all possible objection.

At the same time, experienced and specialized researchers also take part in the sessions where contact is established with spirits. Repeated and careful experiments are carried out in order to remove any lingering doubts, to clarify all ambiguity, and to dispel any notion of autosuggestion on the part of the participants.

Although we can accept the matter under discussion as an established reality, it is like many other truths and realities exploited by those whose trade is trickery and deceit; they demean and dishonor it. One cannot therefore either trust all who claim to be able to communicate with spirits, or reject them with inappropriate arguments; both courses would be contrary to logic. It is a careful examination of the matter that will lead to a perception of the truth and the ability to distinguish the illusory from the real.

Farid Wajdi, author of the *Twentieth Century Encyclopedia*, lists the names of a handful of European and American scientists from among the many thousands that have worked in this field, and cites the clear evidence provided by the objective experiments they carried out. Many of them were skeptical or negative about the possibility of communicating with the spirits of the dead until it was proven to them; in fact they first entered the field with the intention of totally disproving its bases.

If someone had insisted on the possibility of proving scientifically communication with the spirits of the dead, they would have dismissed it unhesitatingly as an absurdity. But when they saw that whatever experiment was undertaken ended up supporting the claims of their opponents, they surrendered and accepted the facts. Earlier scholars had never taken the trouble to test the claims of the spiritualists, they even regarded the idea of conducting experiments on the subject with repugnance.

Farid Wajdi adds that specialists in the field believe in the principle that the spirit is not annihilated with the death of the body, because they are unable to explain the extraordinary phenomena that take place in their sessions except in terms of activity by the spirits of the dead.

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Those who do not have any serious arguments to offer try to explain these experimentally tested realities in terms of the unconscious.

Can we reasonably accuse all the scholars and experts who work in the field of having been straightforwardly duped by the tricks of swindlers and of placing the seal of scientific approval on a series of delusions? Of affirming the correctness of this science without exercising any caution, under the influence of the mediums?

It would be completely irrational and illogical to attribute error to all those scholars.

Alfred Russell Dulles, Darwin's partner in discovering the law of natural selection, declared his view on the matter as follows:

“When I began investigating the mysteries of communication with the spirits of the dead, I was an absolute materialist and denier of the spirit. No trace existed in my mind of non-material entities or a supranatural world. On the contrary, it was my intention to prove by scientific means the incorrectness of all belief in such things. But as I confronted the experiments that had taken place and the realities they had proven, I gradually came to believe in them myself. The reality of the spirit came to have such an effect on me that I came to believe in it firmly before I was able to find any explanation for it in my mind. I can neither turn away from it in denial nor can I find any material cause for it.” (*Ibid.*, p. 72)

Kroki, the head of the Royal Academy of Science in England, writes the following in his book entitled *Spiritual Phenomena*:

“Since I do indeed believe in the existence of these phenomena, it would be a kind of fear or literary cowardice if I concealed my testimony from fear of the criticism of mockers who know nothing at all of the subject and are unable to free themselves of their illusions. I will set forth in my book as clearly as I can what I have seen with my own eyes and tested repeatedly through careful experimentation.”

From all the experiments that have taken place in sessions for summoning up the spirits of the dead and the conclusions scholars have drawn from them, it is plain that man possesses an energy and personality that outlive his death. That energy undertakes various activities without any need of the physical body. Under certain special circumstances it is possible for the inhabitants of this world to establish communication with the spirits of the departed.

Another scientific advance that has contributed to the understanding of the autonomy and immortality of the spirit is hypnotism. This consists of concentrating the gaze for a lengthy period of a point of light to the accompaniment of prolonged suggestion, with the result that the subject enters an artificial dream state, quite distinct from ordinary dreams.

After the subject has fallen asleep, he hears out of all sounds that surround him only those produced by the hypnotist all of whose commands he obeys in his extreme impressionability.

The English scholar James Breed was able to build on the investigations of his predecessors to turn hypnotism into a fully fledged science by clarifying the principles according to which hypnotism functions.

After him other scholars in America and Europe devoted their efforts to further developing this science; we can mention in particular Richet, Emile Kue, Van Ouls and Charcot. The most important achievement of the last of these was his classification of the different degrees and stages of hypnotic sleep.

In artificial sleep, the hypnotist is able to make the subject submit to his will in such a way that he unhesitatingly executes his commands. The senses of the sleeper cease functioning; he shows no sign of being able to see or to hear, and his senses of touch and taste lack their customary power. Finally, the one thus put to sleep is so overcome by weariness and lassitude that he feels no pain, however much pressure be brought to bear on his body. (*Usul-i Ravankavi-yi Freud*)

Dr. Philip Carrot, a British anesthesiologist and specialist on hypnotism, wrote the following in the British Journal of Public Health:

“Many patients needing surgery have been successfully anaesthetized through the use of hypnotism.” He went on to state his belief that it is easier and better to use hypnotism on patients undergoing surgery, because it is a simpler and less dangerous procedure than drugging them. One of the advantages of hypnotism is that it is possible to keep the patient unconscious for many hours without his feeling any pain. (*Ittila'at* for 23/6/43)

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Magnetism is another branch of knowledge pointing to the autonomy of the spirit. It consists of a mysterious force present in everyone to different degrees. Magnetism differs from hypnotism in that when a person cultivates the magnetic force within him he will be able to influence animals as well as human beings. In addition, magnetic force can be exploited directly, whereas hypnotism requires the use of certain means in order to become effective. The power of magnetism is so effective in man that it enables one to render one's prey or enemy motionless.

Since the most ancient times, people have been aware to some extent of the effects of this mysterious power. It was however at the end of the eighteenth century that it was put forward for the first time as a scientific discovery. Specialists began to use magnetic waves as a means for curing the sick, and as

research progressed, it became apparent that hypnotic trances might be induced by means of magnetism.

Psychiatrists make use of artificially induced dreams to discover the causes for certain psychiatric disorders; they attempt to plunge into the depths of the mind and to discover the true thoughts of the unconscious, the thoughts that the patient would be reluctant to tell the doctor while in a waking state, out of embarrassment or other reasons. Likewise, the patient frankly confesses to certain things that he would never reveal while in a waking state.

The one sent into a trance is so fully subject to the influence of the magnetic force that he does whatever he is told by the one who puts him in the trance, without his own will having the least power to decide.

At more advanced stages, the body itself becomes totally numb, and if one of its limbs is rubbed it will be unable to move, resembling an entirely motionless body. The subject will be unable to hear sounds surrounding him; he sees and hears only the one in whose power he stands.

This passivity sometimes goes so far that he feels the pain of a needle inserted in by the one who controls his trance; and likewise if the controller begins to feel happy, so too will the subject! Other emotions anger, nervousness, excitement will be similarly reflected.

Persons in a magnetic trance are able to speak in languages they have not learned; they know of things that lie beyond the range of their knowledge; and their spirits travel to distant regions. Materialists attempt to explain all this in terms of suggestion and the loss of customary will on the part of the subject. However, their explanations are not convincing. For in addition to that which the material sciences attempt to explain there is a reality within man capable of accomplishing acts that are inexplicable in terms of material criteria. Anyone who tries to discover the truth of the matter will be led to accept this conclusion, step by step. (Farid Wajdi, *Da'irah al-Ma'arif*, Vol. X, p. 420)

What energy is it that can thus subdue the will of another person and rob his limbs of motion and feeling?

If man reflects carefully, will he not be convinced that his existence includes a spirit that is both mysterious and eternal? (*Alam-i Pas az Marg*, p. 46)

Is it not the method of science to base general laws on objective observations and to strive against delusion?

Without any doubt, every new discovery in the fields discussed above decreases still further any appeal the materialistic distorters of reality might have.

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Although men have been aware of telepathy at least to some degree for a long time, no careful scientific

study of the subject was undertaken before 1882. Beginning with that date, the English Society for Psychic Research has carried out numerous experiments and proven the reality of the phenomenon.

The communication of thoughts between two people is possible over both long and short distances. Communication over short distances takes place by means of the two people standing opposite each other and transmitting their thoughts to each other without speaking or making any gestures.

As for communication over a long distance and the size of the distance is of no importance at all it is enough for the two persons, at a prearranged time, to concentrate their thoughts on a single point in order to transmit their mental messages to each other.

These phenomena have been repeatedly tested and proven by specialists and they can be regarded as another remarkable manifestation of the spirit, acting in utter independence of the body.

Ought we not then to believe that the energy ruling over the mechanism of our body is fundamentally different from material energy and the phenomena it produces? As the psychiatrist Kennington puts it, “for the brain to exist and function a few centimeters outside the body is just as impossible as it would be for digestion or the circulation of the blood to take place outside the body.”

Henri Bergson writes: “The phenomena declared to exist by psychic science, at least some of which must be regarded as true, cause us to ask why we have waited so long to undertake such a study.

“We will not repeat the subjects we have already discussed, but instead restrict our discussion to a point that appears more certain than anything else. If after the accumulation of thousands of testimonies consistent with each other concerning manifestations of telepathy scientists still insist on denying the reality of this phenomenon, then we can only conclude that human testimony is unacceptable to science and rejected by it.

“It is true of course that we have to choose among the various results that psychic science presents to us; that science itself does not regard all its results as equally conclusive; and that it distinguishes between what is certain and what is merely probable or possible.

“But if we take into consideration only that part which psychic science regards as definite, it suffices to give us a sense of a vast and unknown realm that psychic science has only just begun to explore. (Du *Sarchishma-yi Akhlaq va Din*, p. 354)

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