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# **INSPIRATION**

**A NEW THEORY AND  
ITS IMPLICATIONS**

*by*

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## INSPIRATION\*

### A New Theory & Its Implications

AS we go through life we must all be struck by the great differences between people. Providence seems to have distributed her gifts very unequally. You meet all kinds of people—from the dull-witted person to the gifted genius; and in between are the great bulk of ordinary folk, in many of whom the spark of genius may reside, but who, either don't know it or haven't had the chance of bringing it out.

We can't all go down in history as reformers or writers, pioneers or painters, statesmen or merchant princes. But, couldn't we get a great deal more out of life if we only had the Royal Road pointed out to us and were given a fair chance?

For, as Bacon says, God has placed no limits to the exercise of the intellect on this side of the grave.

We may not, perhaps, aspire to become great musicians like Beethoven or Delius, great painters like Brangwyn or Turner or seriously hope to become poets like Shakespeare and Tennyson or a writer like Barrie, a great preacher like Wesley, or a great statesman and leader like Winston Churchill. Great geniuses are rare.

But there undoubtedly exists in all of us the seeds of goodness or greatness, which if they

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are made to germinate, may enable us to realise a larger or smaller part of our rightful heritage.

Latent genius is present in people in all walks of life. If it takes root it can be made to flourish; if neglected and left uncultivated it lies buried and dies.

If the laws governing the development and the use of Inspiration were better understood, they would, I am sure, be more freely employed. It is not merely a matter of using our native intelligence, but of finding the right way of tapping the mysterious influences that come to us.

#### **CRAFTSMANSHIP PLUS INSPIRATION.**

Let it not be overlooked that there are two pre-requisites for achievement in this world—the craftsmanship which proceeds from years of technical training and, secondly, a proper harnessing of inspiration.

The great inventor, Edison, said that genius is one per cent. inspiration and 99 per cent. perspiration, but the one per cent. is the essential foundation.

Inspiration may be a Heavenly gift, but its foster-parents are labour and patience.

As Wilcox says :

*“The lamp of Genius, though by nature lit,  
If not protected, pruned or fed with care,  
Soon dies, or runs to waste with fitful glare.”*

It is no use conceiving an idea for a picture without having the necessary skill with pencil or brush. You can't write a play or prepare a good speech merely because you have got a good idea. You have first to be trained in the use of words and cultivate the technique of assembling your ideas and expressing them in polished phrases.

Mere craftsmanship, important and laborious as it is, will not alone suffice. There must be the Spark of Inspiration which I hold is something

very much profounder than just a complex physical process.

#### **A GIFT FROM THE OTHER SIDE ?**

Dr. Fodor has defined Inspiration as a psychic state in which one becomes susceptible to creative spiritual influence of varying degrees, so that wittingly or unwittingly we lend ourselves as an instrument for through-flowing ideas.

As Emerson says, “God enters by a private door into every individual.” Truth has indeed many channels for entering the mind and conviction of Truth can be obtained during moods, not of active inquiry alone, but of passive receptivity.

Little being known in the 18th Century of the nature of Inspiration, the poet Schiller wondered where his thoughts came from. All he could say was that ideas frequently flowed through him independent of the action of his own mind. Mozart, also knowing more of the effect than the cause, wrote : “When all goes well with me, when I am in a carriage or walking, or when I cannot sleep at night, the thoughts come streaming in upon me most fluently; whence or how I cannot tell.”

#### **BEETHOVEN'S BELIEF.**

Beethoven very nearly sensed the truth when he said : “Inspiration, for me, is that mysterious state in which the entire world seems to form a vast harmony, when every sentiment, every thought re-echoes within me, when all the forces of Nature become instruments for me.” Dr. Peebles quotes Beethoven as saying : “I well know that God and the Angels are nearer to me in my art than the others. I commune with them without dread.” From the soulful beauties of Beethoven's music we must concede that he was able to tap a wonderful spring of harmony from some mysterious source or other.

Let us, therefore, to-night try to learn something of what I would call the mechanics of Inspiration. What is the nature and source of Inspiration? How may the source of Inspiration be tapped and applied by each of us to make our lives richer and our service to humanity fuller? What are the conditions that favour receptivity?

Putting it broadly but plainly, Inspiration is simply the act of getting ideas. "Getting ideas," like a strong, flowing river, implies a source. As the Rev. Maurice Elliott, in his "Psychic Life of Jesus," reminds us, "when a messenger of God, a guide, insinuates a helpful thought into our minds, we exclaim 'A bright idea has just come to me,' but if the 'bright idea' is of a saving solving nature, we exclaim: 'Thank God, I have found the solution.' We thank God for the power of the great I, rather than for the ministry of angels."

#### **PROBLEM NOT FINALLY SOLVED.**

While the problem has perplexed men of science, and even yet is not entirely solved, I want to put it to you that Inspiration is a definable force and that the first impact of all inspiration is on the sub-conscious mind. And it is the act of conveying an idea from the sub-conscious mind to the conscious mind that gives us an "awareness" of the idea. Upon the discipline and development of the conscious mind depends our ability to apply and put good ideas to practical use.

I think it is quite possible to train the mind so that we can seize and utilise to our own advantage every good idea that strikes us in this way. How many of us are struck suddenly with good ideas which we either instantly forget or neglect to make proper use of? A case of opportunity knocking at the door! How often is our happy inspiration put to no satisfactory purpose?

An understanding man trains himself to watch zealously for the arrival of bright ideas, makes prompt note of them and proceeds to employ them at the first suitable opportunity. They may come to him, as they did to Mozart, while travelling. They may come to him when he is in a state of

repose as between the state of sleeping and waking—as likely as not when lying in bed at night or early morning. Tacitus shared this view that genius and goodness are fostered by repose. The visitation frequently produces a sense of awe, we are possessed by a sort of momentary vividness which we can utilise if we have studied the "mechanics" of Inspiration. George Eliot speaks of "joining the invisible choir."

#### **WHEN THE MIND IS RECEPTIVE**

When the body is in repose and the muscles are relaxed, the mind is extraordinarily receptive of inspiration. Often it is in moments when we are not controlled by some dictated activity that we are most alive to the influences that restore our soul. It is as if natural energy no longer needed to carry on normal life is released and puts us in an exceptionally receptive state.

I do not advise anyone to make a habit of over-working the mind in this way when rest and sleep are the chief object of retiring; but if ideas do strike you in this state of natural repose, make a note of them; do not fling away the gift of bright ideas.

If we would develop our creative faculties to the fullest extent, we should, like Thoreau, appoint ourselves inspectors, observers of our particular surroundings. In spare moments, we can sharpen our senses by using one at a time. We can close our eyes, pause and listen to the lazy music of nature in the country, to the dynamic hum of life in the city. In the eternal symphony of Earth and Man there is grand stimulus for the human spirit.

#### **INFLUENCE OF NATURE AND MUSIC.**

The condition of Inspiration for many, says Sir Oliver Lodge, is induced by the song of the birds, by sunshine in the grass, wind in the tree-tops, or by the wild solitude of mountains. I find great assistance from hearing good music and there is no artificial aid I find of greater benefit

than a Chamber Concert coming into my study over the wireless. The music seems to act as a sort of carrier wave for the bringing of fine thoughts.

The best ideas do not come from forcing the brain, but if ideas do impinge upon your conscious mind, when you are in a receptive mood, it is folly not to make a note of them for subsequent development. Once you have captured the latent image, as it were, on your negative you can develop the picture at your leisure.

#### **A FOURTH DIMENSIONAL STATE.**

There is strong presumptive evidence that Inspiration is something that flows from a sort of reservoir outside of our physical bodies—a reservoir in a fourth dimensional state, from which each of us can draw according to some dimly-known law.

What is of immediate moment is that inspiration is a real active factor in all our lives, and that it definitely proceeds from a source outside our physical bodies. Hannen Swaffer, the great journalist, after interviewing a number of distinguished artists and writers, definitely ascribes the creative afflatus to a supernormal source. He says: "All inspiration is dependent upon the individual receiving aid from influences outside himself. Sometimes," he continues, "people have recognised that the inspiration comes from the Spirit World. At other times they have sensed an outside influence, although they were not conscious of its origin. You can easily see what a vast field of activity this is for denizens of the Spirit World and how this (earthly) world has been aided again and again."

My own premise is that all thought springs from a spiritual source, and definitely does not originate within our physical being.

#### **APPLICATION TO INDIVIDUALS.**

If we concede this and acknowledge our debt to Providence for a blessing hitherto vaguely understood, and if we know also that it is within

the power of all of us to harness this external spiritual power for our own individual benefit, then we may improve the quality of our output and find a happiness never before hoped for.

Now consider the application of my theory to us as individuals. By a little observation you may find that there are parts of the day when you are more receptive of ideas than at others. Sometimes you feel unusually receptive. Ideas, as it were, rush upon you. You feel that if you could only use even a fraction of them your work would multiply in value. At other times you may experience a sense of utter helplessness—you are bereft of any worth-while ideas.

Plotinus, the 3rd century philosopher, has left it on record that in the inspirational state which he often experienced, he wrote for hours at terrific speed, but found writing almost impossible when this state was inactive. He said, "the faculty by which the mind divests itself of its personality is ecstasy, and in ecstasy the soul becomes loosed from its material prison and becomes absorbed in the infinite intelligence from which it emanated." A rather amazing pronouncement for over 1,700 years ago.

#### **STUDY YOUR OWN TEMPERAMENT.**

We all have our moods. Dullness and brightness alternate with puzzling irregularity. A famous author one day can fill reams of paper, while at another time his pen is stupid and incapable of any original thought or lucid expression. Health is sometimes the factor, but generally there is a deeper cause for the mysteriously-uneven flow of inspiration beyond ordinary human control.

By studying your own temperament you can help a lot to harness your inspiration. I know of one business man who ascribes his success to the capture of bright ideas when they come to him while shaving in a morning. I have myself learnt to identify the peak hours of my receptivity and I use this time whenever possible.

So find out your own best creative hours. Be ever ready to seize on happy inspiration and make

prompt and careful note of your ideas. Watch for the "inner flashes." Obey your impulse, but put all ideas through a small sieve.

#### THE EVIDENCE FROM GREAT LIVES.

Biography is full of illustrations of the profound nature and value of inspiration.

Wordsworth acknowledged the genuineness of inspiration and said that his readiness to seize it was the foundation of his marvellous poetry. Calmness, he said, is a condition for the reception of inspired thoughts.

*"Has not the Soul, the being of your life  
Received a shock of awful consciousness  
In some calm season."*

Wordsworth, like other great men, had developed ability to contact inspiration from the spiritual world. He only used his craftsmanship to clothe his Heaven-sent ideas in imperishable phrase. Many other geniuses have been dimly aware of the process of inspiration and of its value for their great work without clearly understanding the nature of the process itself. It is not always necessary to understand the mechanics of phenomena to experience their benefits. Burne-Jones, the artist, simply thought of his inspiration as day-dreams which he sometimes tried to set aside by throwing stones into the river at Godstone because they were so painfully vivid and not always welcome. The arrival of ideas is often unheralded and instantaneous.

It is said of the novelist, Hardy, that he would wander about the countryside without a scrap of paper on him and then have to make notes of his sudden ideas on dead leaves or chips of wood picked up in the lanes.

#### THE ECSTASY OF INSPIRATION.

Lord Beaconsfield had intense moments of inspiration. He said: "My sensations are so strangely acute. Every object seems animated. I feel that my senses are wild and extravagant. I

am no longer sure of my own existence and often look back to see my name written there and then be sure of my existence."

Tchaikowsky, the composer, would become similarly possessed and in the ecstasy of his inspiration strove to put into music "that immeasurable bliss which comes over me. . . . I forget everything and behave like a madman. Everything within me starts pulsing and quivering."

Strikingly reminiscent of spiritualistic experience is the record about Swinburne, who, when a new poem was forming in his mind, would pace wildly up and down the room with "faint electric sparks playing round the wavy masses of his luxuriant hair." No doubt an aura so strong that people not ordinarily clairvoyant could behold the phenomenon. Uninstructed observers have set down this manifestation of ecstasy to a discharge of electrical energy; but students of psychic research will be able to assign a much profounder cause.

#### DICKENS AND THACKERAY.

Perhaps the most direct confirmation of my theory of inspiration comes from Charles Dickens, who declared that when he sat down to write a book "some beneficent power" showed him what to write; or from Thackeray, who said he felt that "some occult power" was actually moving his pen independent of his own effort. Elgar acknowledged himself "an all but unconscious medium."

The testimony of Sydney Dobell, a great Christian writer of the 19th century, will enlist our sympathy. He wrote, among other things, "Thoughts on Art, Philosophy and Religion," and modestly described himself as just "a receiver, a mouthpiece or instrument."

Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904) did his writing, as he says, "in periods of hysterical trance." He saw "things that were not and heard things that were not."

And, Harriet Beecher Stowe, the authoress of

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," said that to her it seemed that what she wrote was "blown through her mind as with the rushing of a mighty wind."

#### **HELP FROM THE SO-CALLED DEAD ?**

That great writer of "thrillers," Edgar Wallace, in *The Daily Express* of June 4th, 1928, asked, "Are we wildly absurd in supposing that human thought has an indestructible substance and that men leave behind them, when their bodies are dead, a wealth of mind that finds employment in a new book ? I personally do not think we are. I am perfectly satisfied in my mind that I have received an immense amount of help from the so-called dead. I have succeeded," he confesses, "far beyond the point that my talents justified." And, he adds, "so have you, and YOU ! I believe my mind is furnished with oddments of intellectual equipment that have been acquired I know not how."

"What is known as inspirational writing will," says Admiral Usbourne Moore, "be found, in years to come, to be the most effective means of communication between the discarnate and the incarnate spirit."

#### **LORD NORTHCLIFFE'S "MESSAGE."**

There is evidence we should carefully weigh in Hannen Swaffer's account of his conversations with the spirit of Lord Northcliffe. It was Hannen Swaffer's first inkling of how friends on the Higher Plane can, if we can believe what is attributed to them, use inspiration, give impressions and are anxious to guide us if only we will let them. Hannen Swaffer says that at a seance Lord Northcliffe's spirit used these words: "I shall give you confidence, poise, a foundation of spiritual strength. I will work through you mentally. I am practising with you now."

Then Hannen Swaffer asks: "What are the Angels of the Bible but the spirits of those who have passed on" ? A case of mind to mind, thought to thought ?

"Much of the world's inspiration and advancement," the Rev. Charles Tweedale claims in his recent book, "News from the Next World," "is due to the activity of those human angels. Inspiration does come and is a very precious privilege. It is probable," he says, "that many of the processes of Nature are brought about by the ministrations of spiritual beings."

I could offer you much more evidence from the recorded experiences of the Illustrious Great. But I submit that such testimony as I have found time to cite is reasonable proof of the accuracy of my premise that Inspiration, in any of its higher or lower forms, is a very definite and definable power which is exerted upon the human mind by agencies entirely outside ourselves and which operate in accordance with some yet dimly understood law of the spirit world.

#### **INSPIRATION INFLUENCES US ALL.**

Let me take you just one step further and suggest the great probability that the function of Inspiration operates not merely in the creation of great works of Art, Letters and Music, but also in the everyday life of most of us quite ordinary human beings.

There are, Sir Oliver Lodge assures us, many degrees of exterior influence — from vague intuitions and feelings of one's own, through various stages of mediumship, up to what may be called genuine inspiration, such as St. Paul experienced. And the amount of personality which gets through depends upon us and on the means available and on the circumstances and conditions at the time. Sir Oliver Lodge, speaking of the insight of great men, says, "All honour to those who with insufficient experience, but with the inspiration of Genius, caught glimpses of a larger and higher truth than was known to the Age in which they lived and who yet had the felicity of recording their inspiration in musical and immortal words."

It is a characteristic of Inspiration that it has

while in the flesh unless one is a messenger or a visionary.

But, it will be clearly apparent from what I have said, that wonderful powers beyond the grasp of the finite mind do exist. We ought therefore to be very tolerant towards those who have conceptions which, owing to our limited development, we are not able to understand. It is an undoubted fact that less-developed souls can receive waves of Inspiration in the same manner as those more highly developed, but spiritual contact with those waves which come from higher spheres seems to be reserved for those who have prepared themselves for super-normal receptivity.

#### INDICATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE.

However, after taking my subject so far, may I summarise the conclusions which proceed from my researches? I may be blazing a new trail, but I base my deductions upon the evidence and reach them without slavish regard for orthodoxy because conceptions that may have served an earlier and less enlightened generation are obviously unsuited to an age of clearer knowledge. We may be on the verge of a great revolution, the result of this scientific and philosophical research. And we may find in this revolution one of our greatest boons in the post-war world.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

Unhesitatingly, therefore, do I affirm :

1. That Inspiration is a real factor and an analysable factor in the lives of great men and women.
2. That Inspiration is not a physical process, but a definite and definable force impacting on the mind, and operating through the brain as its appointed instrument.

3. That the source of Inspiration is exterior to, and separate from, our physical bodies—that in fact, it proceeds from a fourth dimensional state, or what we are wont to call the spiritual plane.
4. That our conception of Inspiration may enlarge and become more exact as our knowledge grows and as our receptivity is developed.
5. That everyone of us possesses some measure of this latent gift which can be brought out under suitable conditions and utilised for our benefit if we gain the necessary knowledge and power.
6. That, since around us are evil spirits as well as good spirits or guides, it behoves every one of us to examine his or her intuitions and put them through the fine sieve of conscientious judgment, keeping the gold and rejecting the dross.
7. That the laws and mechanics of Inspiration may be formulated by psychic research. And, when we properly understand the processes of Inspiration we may stimulate the flow of ideas and, then, with the aid of our craftsmanship, put them to profitable use. This applies especially to artists, writer, composers and other workers in the realms of Art, whose actions are more particularly dictated by instinct than by cold logic.

With my examination of the foregoing evidence and with this summary of the con-



clusions which can be fairly drawn from that evidence, I shall have to close.

**"THE SPARK OF GOD."**

Just one thought in conclusion—I want all of you to feel that the Spark of God burns within you; that this Spark of God endows you with potential qualities which can be developed; and that when once we understand the mechanics of Inspiration we may be able to improve our own output or service while in this transitory life and add to the happiness of the rest of mankind.

Therefore, if what I have said induces any of you to develop your own receptivity and make your personal character a sublime force in the world, then I shall feel well repaid for indulging in these new speculations on a truly vital subject.

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