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Introduction to Part 1

The information in this book took me a decade to research and assemble, and I feel the findings are truly remarkable; not only in their meaning but also for how they could potentially impact society. However, just because a book could have an earth-shattering impact does not necessarily mean book publishers will be interested in taking a chance on an unknown author. So after much soul searching, I decided to embark on an uphill battle to self-publish in order to get the findings in this book into the hands of society. Self-publishing is an uphill battle because as an independent author, I do not have a large marketing budget or specialized resources to help sell my book. Neither can I easily get the book onto shelves in bookstores or retail outlets where most of the mass market shops. By default my potential customer base is largely limited to those early adopters of e-readers who would be willing to take a chance on an unknown author.

Therefore, to encourage those potential customers to take that chance on me, I have created a free sample of my work that covers the first half of my book. This free sample, part 1, establishes an important baseline for the rest of the book's logical sequence. This section is heavy on scientific evidence, but was intended to be a quick and easy read, drawing in the reader and leaving them feeling excited and eagerly wanting more. Therefore, I feel confident that after completing part 1, most readers will be compelled to continue on to the conclusion in the full version of my book.

The concluding chapters are very important to me because the most amazing and life-changing information is found in the last half of *The Hidden Truth*, once the important baseline of part 1 has been established. If you like what you read, please help me spread the word about this interesting book so others can share in the benefit it could impart to society.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Before we get started with a discussion of the nature of reality, I think you deserve to know who I am, why I embarked on a study of the nature of reality that resulted in this book and what I hope you might be able to get out of it.

As an infant, I was baptized in the Catholic Church but to be honest, like many “Catholic” families I spent virtually no time at church as a child. My parents were burnt out on organized religion from their own childhood experiences and did not feel the need to impress upon us the same strict upbringing. My brothers, sister and I were raised to believe there was a God and Jesus was the Son of God who died for our sins. It sounded like a nice, feel-good story and I was curious enough in the matter that of my own volition I read and reread the Gospels and much of the rest of the bible before I began to think that something was wrong with the entire concept of organized religion. However, as a young child, one’s misgivings are not easily rectified with logic. Neither was there an easy way to seek alternative information for a broader understanding to answer my questions, so the matter was relegated to limbo for most of my childhood as I pondered.

One of my most vivid memories as a young child was walking outside and suddenly wondering, “What if life were but a dream?” What if there was a greater being out there and I was but a figment of his imagination? Now, that is an odd thing for a child to ponder!

It either sounds like fantasy or is so ridiculously deep in philosophical implications that assuredly such a thought was not dreamt up in the mind of a child. But it fostered in me a feeling of curiosity about life that stuck with me. I was certain my existence did not begin with life as a child, but I could not fathom from whence I came or why. As it would turn out, that farfetched childhood idea remained with me, in the back of my head, for more than two decades. As a child I was not ready to tackle this philosophical challenge, but as an educated adult I gained the tools to reconsider this problem and address it with a deliberated purpose that was both logic-based and analytical. That journey took a decade to complete as I gathered wide-ranging evidence across many diverse genres to support answers to the questions that haunt us all, and would eventually result in a personally acceptable answer, manifested in the form you see as this book.

Along my search for answers, I considered many other problems I had with organized Western religions. Of course the easiest conundrum was the one that vexes man almost daily: If God loves us, then why does he make us suffer with floods, earthquakes, tornados and a plethora of other natural disasters? Alternately, if God is perfect, then why would he put us on a world where human conflict and competition leads us to commit war, rape, and pillage against our common brethren? The answer to these questions and many more, I’m happy to say, are in this book, since the typical answers provided by most preachers, Imams, Fathers, deacons, etc. in the world’s organized religions was simply not satisfactory to me.

Similarly, I wondered: Why are some people ridiculously rich or beautiful or famous while the vast majority are poor, hungry or quite simply mundane? How is there justice in a world where slavery and famine still exist; or where murderers and thieves still lurk in the dark

no matter how many are placed in overcrowded, inhumane jails? If a child lives but a few days, months or years, how can one say God loves us all equally when someone else lives past 100? And why must there be disease, cancer and accidents that result in death well before our time? Where is the fairness? The answers are in this book, and quite logically satisfying, unlike the so-called answers I heard from organized religion.

There have been many books written on the subject of, ‘What is the purpose of life?’ Unfortunately, many point to their own religion as containing *the* -- “one and only” -- answer, but again as I read the theories proposed in those books I knew deep down that the books were either partially or completely wrong. They were often mere feel-good books that had underlying motivations: their particular religion was the *only* answer so one should listen to that particular author, or face the wrath of a vengeful God at death if the message were ignored. I was troubled that it seemed odd how many preachers and sects of Christianity thought their particular interpretation of the Bible was *the only one* that was right, and must be followed implicitly in order to ‘thread the eye of the needle’ to enter Heaven. This is not to say that these self-help and religious books did not have many good points. Yes, it is important to love your neighbor as yourself and one *should* love God, but how can that be the summation of the whole purpose of creation? Surprise, it’s not! Again, organized religion does not hold a logically-sound answer for the question concerning the purpose of life, but I’ll help you learn your own purpose herein.

I think the one thing that upset me most about organized religion was the absolute insistence that each religion has claimed to have *the* answer, and only the followers of that particular religion could claim a hold on the truth and the way to “salvation,” if indeed there is even a need for salvation; an answer that I think might surprise many readers. Consider the implications if that religion were but the smallest subset of a larger belief, such as and probably most especially Christianity. Then only that church’s “true believers” could hope for salvation

and the rest of the seven-plus billion people in the world were simply out of luck. I'm sorry but that to my mind is the ultimate counter-argument for their religion's own validation because I cannot fathom how a loving God could create a universe some 12-14 billion years ago to reach its current state, so that mankind could evolve on earth over the most recent one million-year period, all for the sole prospect of saving a few thousand to a million-plus of that religion's followers – who follow a particular subset of a religion or preacher, and tithe to the “appropriate” church or cause. Doesn't that strike anyone else as counterintuitive at best?

It struck me as asinine. There must be an answer, and I was going to find it. So in my spare time I started reading, researching and postulating; a process that would last more than a decade. There was no one book to go to that could provide all the answers I sought. If there was, I certainly wouldn't need to write this book. It took years because one book was as likely to provide a half-dozen more leads to follow as have nothing of use in it at all, and only a few of those leads would ultimately prove productive. It was a grueling effort to separate the wheat from the chaff in order to find consistency on issues that indicated solid, evidential support of basic underlying truths. But there were a few books that asked some thought provoking questions, and other books that helped me start an internal discussion, or provided studies on information that led me down yet more tangents, or provided bibliographic clues as to where else I should look. The search resembled a scavenger hunt, to say the least, in my quest to find and then assemble all the pieces into one cogent theory of reality and meaning of life.

I've read many dozens, if not hundreds of books on the subject by this point, and I've found that many needed to be re-read a second or third time because without a clear guide to follow to assemble the understanding I needed, I was not ready to understand and assimilate all of the information in each of the most important works at the times I initially read them. Many glossed over highly important information because such might be tangential to the main

discussion but when I returned to the piece a second time, a minor point or sentence hidden within a larger thought often times suddenly seemed to be a key to understanding or helping corroborate important information somewhere else completely – sometimes in an entirely different genre of study. For example, near death or out of body experiences might provide information of amazing import within the context of understanding principles of quantum physics.

Now at this point you probably need to know a little more about me. I am not a new age hippy, living off the land and making sure I have a zero carbon footprint – though I certainly have nothing against living a responsible, sustainable lifestyle. I have been a Soldier most of my adult life, and like many Soldiers, I'm probably more conservative than I am liberal, though I cannot be type-cast so limitedly.

I am a very cerebral-type person. I have a Master's degree in Strategic Intelligence and a Liberal Arts B.A. in Natural Sciences and Mathematics. I found my niche in the Army in the intelligence field because I liked the mental challenge of the specialization, including analyzing unknowns and assessing how best to discern means to acquire information for or otherwise overcome strategic challenges. Obtaining a master's degree was an easy choice and accomplishment for me: I like to read and write, and assembling papers that proved a thesis statement was hardly a challenge; it was a pastime and something I did most every day at work anyway. And thus, the challenge of determining for myself the true nature of reality was a massive but feasible endeavor for a goal-oriented, highly motivated "student" of knowledge. The process simply took a lot longer than completing a college degree, but the basic work path was an old familiar one: read information that was most readily available, take notes, make assumptions, follow leads to obtain information that was less readily available, assess and compile ideas, assemble/modify a working outline and thesis, and repeat.

So what you will find herein is a thinking man's examination of the nature of reality. I would like you to know that I was a skeptic who did not accept most of what I read on any subject until I had massive amounts of corroborating evidence in hand, especially if that evidence was merely anecdotal. I have an ingrained preference to insist on argumentative agreement from multiple sources across completely separate fields of research before lending weight to any proposed ideas. Thus this guide, if it does the job I hope to do, should help fellow skeptics understand the path I took to discovery and the reader can then decide whether the presented logic is sound and transferable to their own experience-set and level of acceptance.

Historically, I have found it very hard to read most new age-type, spiritual books because the authors tended to discuss various, possibly harebrained concepts as if they were a given truth – with no intention of convincing a skeptic to believe those points, and expecting every reader to already exist on their same baseline of understanding. I hope not to repeat those mistakes.

Even after writing this book, I am still a skeptic and if I have not experienced something personally or had it proven to me logically, then the item of interest still resides in potential fantasy-land for all intents and purposes. I'm sure that many would be readers and personal growth explorers have been similarly turned off from the new age-genre because of that disconnect, so it has been my intention not to make the same mistake here. With this book, I hope to break down those stereotypical walls and create a methodology that engenders general acceptance from the common man.

This book can be considered a study guide – a path of research that I walked over many years time to come to a greater realization of the nature of reality and the meaning of life, and the peace of mind that knowledge brings. However, one should be aware that this book is not presented in the same order by which I eventually came to these conclusions. Writing a book that mimicked my own path of discovery would have resulted in a disjointed sequence, so I

needed to impose some logic and structure on the thesis ideas so a beginner could more quickly come to their own decision on the logical merits of my work.

This work will mostly concentrate, therefore, on presenting the body of evidence for each listed topical area. The reader is invited and encouraged to research further by exploring the references used in each chapter as those authors – mostly scientists, doctors and professional researchers – have all done exhaustive research in their own specialty. I could not possibly do justice to their work by presenting all of their collective ideas, evidence and work in my own summarized, analytical piece, so those references are an excellent continuation point for a reader's own exploration of truth. The cited bibliography of this work is also by no means exhaustive on the topical areas, but merely a starting point that is stilted towards my own experience and research path in the search for the truth. It does not include every important work on the covered research topics because I simply could not reference or cite all of the thousands of books and academic papers written on each topical area of research. Also, many works that I did read are not referenced herein, for one reason or another. Many were secondary sources providing information that would be better cited in my work by primary sources, or otherwise did not offer substantive information necessary for this book. Nevertheless, many more sources contributed to my search for the truth as I sought an overwhelming consensus from the body of available information.

The following chapters then provide a cross reference of corroborating evidence between the various genres of research I explored. The study begins with the most scientifically sound evidence available and moves down a continuum of esoteric, though solid anecdotal evidence within increasingly metaphysical genres. This includes the fields of quantum physics, near death experiences, out of body experiences, reincarnation, hypnosis-studies, including inter-life sessions and spirit guide interviews, and finally channeling. The evidence is intended to

convince even skeptical readers to reach similar conclusions to my own on the true nature of reality and meaning of life. The evidence leading up to the conclusion is obviously the most important component of this book as without it, my conclusions would make little sense to the reader, and indeed the journey to the conclusion is most of the enjoyment of the experience anyway. Still, I ask you not to take my word for any of the ideas presented herein, but to consider the evidence provided, read the material referenced throughout for further information, and then come to your own conclusion.

I hope you enjoy the journey.

Chapter 2

Quantum Physics

Introduction:

Of all the diverse fields I researched on the subject of the nature of reality this one was the most divergent and the most scientifically sound. Information provided in this genre sets the stage early for whether or not a skeptic should even consider plausible, anecdotal or less scientifically sound evidence discussed in the rest of this book. The reader will also note through the later chapters that topics highlighted here are then repeated in so many other genres of evidentiary study, ideally lending weight to such evidence given their consistency of agreement. Therefore it made sense to me to place this weighty chapter at the front.

In order to aid understanding and enjoyment of this chapter, I will include virtually no mathematical equations so as to try not to lose anyone's interest or compromise their full understanding. I caveat this endeavor with a warning that this amounts to a matter of translating one imprecise language – mathematics – for another: English. Translating reality as scientists have observed it at subatomic levels into mathematical formulas is imprecise in itself and may never achieve what Einstein had proposed was the ultimate goal of physics: an equation that defined *all* of reality. Unfortunately, without the perfect equation that defines *all* of reality, the process of translating pieces of observed reality into mathematics results in an inexact

representation of that reality. Therefore, translating those imprecise mathematical equations into simple English for the common reader's enjoyment further clouds that reality, but provides a close approximation that should help most people understand the implications of this astounding field.

As I compiled my thoughts on the nature of reality, aimed at eventually winning over skeptics like myself, it was clear that some of the most important evidence for that goal would be found in quantum physics, a highly technical field contributed to by such eminent personalities as Albert Einstein, Max Planck, Niels Bohr, and many others. As might be expected, none of these celebrated personalities embarked on their ground breaking work as physicists with any intention their efforts would be utilized to forward a theorem on the existence of a universal spirituality. Indeed, some among them were ardent atheists who could not conceive of a God-personality or even life after death. It is quite ironic, therefore, that some of the best proof on the true nature of reality derived of quantum physics would end up, decades later, leading others in their field to acknowledge an unexpected truth – that there must be something behind that which mankind perceives in the physical world that allows 'reality' to function. Indeed, there is.

Modern physics is not the sterile, boring discipline some might perceive it to be. It is a rich, profound venture that has become inseparable from philosophy; an amalgamation blending the hardest of hard sciences with the softest science of academia. However, delving into the philosophical tenets underlying the meaning of some modern discoveries of physics is not generally encouraged in the field of hard sciences like physics. A pseudo-agreement known as the Copenhagen Interpretation provided the interpretation of Quantum Theory accepted by the bulk of the scientific community in the early 20th century. This agreement stated the proper goal of science was to provide a mathematical framework for organizing and expanding life's experiences, rather than seeking to provide a picture of some reality that could lie behind those

experiences.¹ From the Copenhagen point of view, quantum theory was satisfactory as it was; i.e. as impersonal mathematical equations concerning the behavior of subatomic structures. Thus, the Copenhagen Interpretation found the effort to understand the philosophical and spiritual implications underlying hard science theories was not productive for the betterment of *science*. My aim herein is to show that an understanding of quantum physics is an integral beginning for setting the stage for the philosophical and spiritual basis of the nature of reality.

Classical Physics:

Quantum mechanics is important because it took cutting edge research in physics from a literal dead end, following Newton's classical ideas of mechanical physics, to a nearly boundless new field with findings that have eerie similarities to statements by spiritualists, mediums, and Eastern and new age religions. In the age of Newton, physics was seen as a field of defining life's processes as cogs within a massive machine. If one could understand how or why the smallest parts functioned as they did, then – the theory presumes – it should be possible to extrapolate how all the larger parts of the universe, seemingly connected to it directly through physical, chemical or gravitational connections, would function in turn. Thus, like Einstein, they hypothesized it might be possible to create a physics equation that would define not only how everything in the universe functioned, but to extrapolate that function forward to determine what would occur at any point in space and time in the future. They saw life, thus, as preordained, following a regimented course that was begun as required by the 'equation of life' since the Big Bang initiated the forward movement of time. Every future event thereafter was predestined to occur.

Newton's great work showed that the earth, moon and planets were governed by the same laws as falling apples – gravity. The French mathematician, Rene Descartes, invented a way of drawing pictures of relationships between different measurements of time and distance, known

as analytical geometry. Analytical geometry is a wonderful tool for organizing a wealth of scattered data into a meaningful pattern; for example, combining huge tracts of apparently unrelated experience into a rational framework of simple concepts like the laws of motion. The starting point of this process was a mental attitude that initially perceived the physical world as fragmented and different experiences as logically unrelated. Newtonian science, then, was the effort to find the relationships between these pre-existing separate parts.²

The problem with Newtonian, *classical relativity*, physics was that exceptions to the rules kept popping up in the equations. Mercury's cycle around the sun, for example, did not follow the standard equations defining other planets' gravitational relationships with the sun. Classical physicists also followed Newton's line of thinking in that matter could be broken down into its smallest constituents – essentially small, indestructible 'balls' or atoms – and therefore there either was matter or there was a void. The Newtonian model of physics also provided for the conservation of matter, and claimed matter was essentially passive.³ These classical assertions were contradicted, however, by new discoveries in quantum physics. Thus 19th century physicists were reaching a dead end trying to make old theories fit modern observations of both macroscopic and sub-atomic reality.

Newton's mechanistic world view – i.e. the classical laws of physics – was appropriate for most macroscopic observations of the world, but became completely insufficient and contradictory at the sub-atomic level. This forced twentieth century physicists like Albert Einstein, Neils Bor, and many others to create new laws, theories and mathematical languages in order to explain their observations of these new phenomenons. These laws became known as quantum theory.

Whereas classical science started with the assumption that separate parts worked together to constitute physical reality – thus the parts determined actions and events of the whole –

quantum mechanics was based on an opposite epistemological assumption: the whole could influence actions and events of the smallest parts.⁴ Indeed, the ‘smallest parts’ – the void – was not a void at all, but rather constantly in a state of flux of sub-atomic particles coming into and going out of existence in microseconds, based on mathematical probabilities.

A fundamental difference between Newtonian physics and quantum theory was that Newtonian physics predicted events and quantum mechanics predicted the probability of events. According to quantum mechanics, the only determinable relation between events was statistical – that is, a matter of probability, but those events could not be stated with absolute certainty as Newton had tried to claim.⁵ These observations showed another surprising truth about sub-atomic particles: they could not be isolated as independent entities. They may exist for a period of time, but they could not be isolated or confined to a specific location at a specific point in time. Rather, scientists found probability relationships that certain sub-atomic phenomena might occur within a given set of parameters, but they could not be definitively described as having an independent reality with a specific energy at a given time and location, as will be further described shortly. For centuries, scientists tried to reduce reality to indivisible entities. Imagine how surprising and frustrating it must have been for them to come so close, only to discover that elementary particles did not have an existence of their own! Thus, there were profound differences between Newtonian mechanics and quantum theory.

These generalities may seem confusing in a broad brush stroke, so we will spend a little more time considering each of these points in isolation.

Quantum Mechanics:

A quantum is a specific amount of energy or action, and first entered the physics lexicon when Max Planck discovered a specific amount of energy was realized depending on the amount of light that hit photographic plates. The amount of energy could never be divided into fractions

smaller than that amount provided by a single photon, but always presented itself in whole numbers, or specific amounts – i.e. quanta – of energy. This discovery further led to Einstein's discovery that light photons displayed characteristics of both waves and particles. The problem with this association was that previously items were either waves or particles, but they could not be both. Waves seemingly lacked physical mass, and particles seemingly had no reason or ability to move as waves. And yet a photon apparently had both energy and mass but still moved like a wave, providing it a duality characteristic that would extend into the realm of sub-atomic particles and help reshape physicists' understanding of the nature of reality.

Quantum theory would demonstrate that subatomic particles were not the indestructible particles of classical physics: they also exhibited both wave and particle characteristics – similar to light. Rather than being permanent entities or independent particles with definite and enduring mass, sub-atomic matter reacted according to waves of interconnectedness; spider-web-like relations where the part was dependent upon and connected to the whole. Thus, nature was impossible to break into its constituent parts to consider how it might react according to the behaviors suggested by its building blocks but rather must be considered as a whole where the whole directed the manner in which the 'building blocks' would behave. This was the exact opposite conclusion suggested by classical physics.

The wave phenomenon added another aspect to modern physics, identified by Einstein as probability waves. An atomic event could never be stated or anticipated with any certainty but rather could only be predicted as a probability wave that showed how likely something was to occur. When given a beam of electrons, for example, quantum theory can accurately predict the probable distribution of those electrons over a given area in a given amount of time, but quantum theory cannot predict, even in principle, the course that a single electron will take along that path.⁶ Because they are not tangible or permanent particles, subatomic particles demonstrate

only *tendencies* to exist and *probabilities* to behave, move or be located in any particular area at any point in time. The idea that matter might wink in and out of existence in microseconds or less was certainly not a concept considered by Newton.

When two subatomic particles collide with high energies, they generally destroy themselves by breaking into pieces, but these pieces are **not** smaller than the original particles; nor are they components of the original from which the original is always made! The new particles are merely *different* sub-atomic particles based on the energies available during the collision. In this way, matter can be divided again and again, indefinitely, but we never obtain smaller pieces because we just create new particles out of the energy involved in the collision process. Subatomic particles are thus destructible and indestructible at the same time.⁷

Sub-atomic particles should not be thought of as basic building blocks, but rather as waves that exist as stable entities based on probabilities of the ‘quanta,’ or amount of energy present in the wave. Excited states may exist for short periods of time before excess energy is released and a more enduring, stable probability state is then realized. Expanding upon these ideas, Louis de Broglie dropped a bomb on the physics community that demolished what was left of the classical view of physics. He showed that not only were waves particles as Einstein had proven, but he claimed that particles were also waves!⁸ De Broglie’s equation determined the wavelength of ‘matter waves’ that corresponded to matter. It says simply that the greater the momentum of a particle, the shorter is the length of its associated wave.

This explains why matter waves are not evident in the macroscopic world. De Broglie’s equation tells us that matter waves corresponding to even the smallest object that we can see are so incredibly small compared to the size of the object that their effect is negligible. However, when we get down to something as small as a subatomic particle, like an electron, the size of the electron itself is smaller than the length of its associated wave. Under these circumstances, the

wave-like behavior of matter should be clearly evident, and sub-atomic particles should behave different than ‘matter’ as we are used to thinking about it.⁹ Only two years after de Broglie presented this hypothesis, Clinton Davisson at the Bell Telephone Laboratories verified the hypothesis experimentally. Both were awarded Nobel Prizes for their work.

Atom:

In Newtonian physics matter was understood as being physical objects which could be broken down to ever progressively smaller items until the smallest solid, physical component was finally realized. A mountain, for example, might be composed of boulders, composed of rocks, composed of dust, composed of silicate molecules, composed of silicone and oxygen atoms, etc. As scientists came to understand atoms, they realized atoms were not the solid particles envisioned by classical physicists. Atoms, measuring on the order of a billionth of an inch in diameter, are composed of a nucleus and outer electron shells. Protons, neutrons and electrons comprise the main subatomic particles that make most stable atoms, and in turn are a hundred thousand times smaller than the atom itself.

Imagine a baseball blown up to the size of the Earth. Each of the baseball’s atoms would then be about the size of a grape, each placed snugly against the others. In order to better understand an atom’s structure, one would need to imagine that grape-sized atom further blown-up to the size of a football stadium. As such, the nucleus of the atom would measure no larger than a grain of rice and electrons would be dust particles flying around the stands at unimaginable speeds near the speed of light. Matter is indeed mostly empty, ghostly space, as the early twentieth-century British physicist Sir Arthur Eddington characterized it. Or to be a little more precise, it is closer to 99.9999999 percent empty space.¹⁰

One might wonder then why it is not possible to walk through a wall if it is in fact almost purely empty space. The answer lies in the powerful atomic attractions that keep electrons

moving in a stable 3-dimensional orbit around the nucleus of the atom at near the speed of light. Imagine a fan spinning its blades, creating the impression of a circle. One realizes logically it would be impossible to stick your hand through the spinning fan without getting cut even though there is more open space than solid fan blades between oneself and the goal of the other side. Similarly, the speed at which electrons are spinning around the nucleus creates an impenetrable shell through which most other particles cannot normally pass. Atoms may be tightly packed against one another, but they are not intermingled and do not pass through one another. Their electron orbits behave as if they were solid objects.¹¹

Inside the atom are the three primary sub-atomic particles: protons, neutrons and electrons. Scientists had theorized that these sub-atomic particles would in turn be comprised of other sub-atomic particles but the surprising answer to this theory caused the field to develop an entirely new line of study within quantum physics. Scientists learned how to smash these sub-atomic particles against one another in such a way that they divided into yet new sub-atomic particles. Interestingly, different sub-atomic particles were created after each collision based on probabilities, and not because a proton was comprised of distinct, ever smaller sub-atomic pieces. Indeed, collisions between a proton and another sub-atomic particle always create even **larger** particles. For example, a collision between a proton (mass 1836) and a negative pion (mass 273) may create a neutral Kaon (mass 974) and a Lambda Baryon (mass 2183). These two new particles are each larger than the original particles from which they were derived, and are themselves highly unstable; each existing for less than a billionth of a second before decaying into more stable forms: the neutral Kaon into positive and negative pions (mass 273 each); and the lambda decays into the original two particles, a negative pion and a proton(!), thus creating more mass out of nothing but the energy of the original collision.¹²

It is evident here that one of the first classical physics laws broken in this Feynman Diagram, which describes the evolution of sub-atomic particles through collision and eventual decay, is the law concerning conservation of mass. In the above example, two lighter particles created two heavier particles, which in turn created four lighter particles, all of which were heavier than the two originals. Some mass was seemingly created from thin air for the first transformation, and then lost into the nothingness again for the ‘final’ decay. The answer to this conundrum is that matter is not actually made of matter!¹³ Any search for the ultimate ‘stuff’ of the universe from which all other ‘stuff’ is derived ends with the discovery that ***there isn’t any.*** What we’ve found is that if there is any ultimate ‘stuff’ of the universe, that ‘stuff’ is pure energy. More specifically, subatomic particles are not actually made of energy, they simply *are* energy. This amazing find was already apparent to Einstein when he theorized it in 1905.¹⁴

Einstein’s famous equation, $e=mc^2$, where e stands for energy, m stands for mass, and c stands for the speed of light, shows that there is a direct relationship between energy and mass. As an item’s energy increases, so does its mass and vice versa. How could this be possible, if atoms were made of ever smaller pieces and somehow gained even more of those pieces as they increased their energy? Remember, it is possible to increase one’s energy in a variety of means, most commonly visualized by moving faster. Quite simply, the old Newtonian physics could not account for this observation. Realizing that everything is made of energy because everything simply is energy – in some form of stabilized state – made sense to Einstein. It also helps to explain how mass changes can occur with impacts between sub-atomic particles. Protons moving at a high rate of speed acquire more energy with their increasing rate of speed, thus providing sufficient energy needed to create heavier, albeit unstable, subatomic particles upon impact. When the heavier particles seemingly lose mass to decay into smaller particles, they

may actually be shedding energy to reach a more stable form; energy that may be in another form altogether, such as light or heat.

What we have termed matter is actually constantly being created, annihilated and created yet again. This occurs both as particles interact and, quite literally, out of nowhere. Within a vacuum, particles may appear and vanish again in nanoseconds and faster. Thus, in particle physics there is no technical distinction between empty, as in the vacuum of space, and not empty, or even between something and not-something. The world of particle physics could be described as a world of sparkling energy forever dancing with itself as particles twinkle in and out of existence, collide, transform and disappear yet again.¹⁵

Newton's void was summarily rendered all but obsolete. What one might perceive as the great emptiness of outer space was merely a perception, albeit a false perception.

Perceptions of physical reality:

Our life is full of false perceptions, but those perceptions are designed to help us deal with life in a physical reality. As a quantum physicist-philosopher might note, physical objects observed by a human may or may not exist as perceived by the human conscious. A simple example of this philosophical challenge would be to consider colors. Colors are simply an impression made on the human eye, relayed to the human consciousness, but are actually a subjective quality of a light-wave's specific frequency. There is no color green for example – simply a light-wave which is translated in the human conscious to help humanity deal with the physical world surrounding it. Thus, the color green exists as a subjective experience perceived only in one's mind.¹⁶

This provides the barest impression that there is some level of disconnect or separation between physical reality and human consciousness. One could note we never actually see light itself. When light strikes our eye we only become aware of this fact through the energy that is

released on contact. This energy is then transmitted to the brain and is in turn translated into a visual image in the mind. Although the image our mind interprets appears to be composed of light, the light we ‘see’ is actually an interpreted quality, appearing in our consciousness. However, because of this disconnect we can never actually directly see or know what light is.¹⁷

Returning to the earlier discussion about sub-atomic particles moving into and out of existence based on probability factors and wave functions, one could extend the implications of this observation. Particles also do not seem to have an independent existence. Particles are represented in mathematical theory only by wave functions, and the meaning of the wave functions lie only in their correlations with other macroscopic things.¹⁸ This idea is astounding because it implies that seemingly ‘solid’ objects like chairs and tables are macroscopic objects that are simply organizations of energy that merely provide some means by which our consciousness gains an impression of what physical reality must be like.

These impressions are such that we can believe that physical objects have a persisting existence in our reality, and have a well-defined location in space-time that is logically independent of other physical objects. Nevertheless, the concept of independent existence disappears when we zoom down to the level of individual particles. The limitation of the concept of independent existence at the level of particles emphasizes that even chairs and tables are, for us humans, but tools for correlating our experience in physical reality.¹⁹

The problem can be rectified by understanding the simplicity of the human mind when interpreting life in physical reality. In other words, the real problem is that humans are used to looking at the world in the simplest terms possible. We are accustomed to believing that something exists or doesn’t simply because we can or cannot see it, touch it, hear it, taste it, smell it, etc. Whether we can look at it or not, for example, we immediately reach a conclusion in our mind that it is either there or it is not there based on the results of our physical senses. Our

experience in this regard has taught us that the physical world is solid, real, and independent of us. However, quantum mechanics asserts that this conclusion is simply not so.²⁰

Indeed, the implication that colors do not exist is expanded by quantum mechanics to imply that even light photons themselves do not exist *independently*. Rather, all that exists in physical reality is an unbroken Unity that presents itself to us as webs of relations, according to quantum mechanics. Individual entities become idealizations, which are then correlations made by us to better experience the illusion of physical existence.²¹ The implication here is that nothing can exist without consciousness to intend and then realize a physical reality wherein independent entities are then perceived. The implication could be further expanded such that what consciousness expected to perceive might then be realized as a result. The Cartesian partition between one's self and the surrounding world, between the observer and the observed, or the scientist and the observed particle, cannot be made when dealing with atomic matter.²² One interacts with and affects the other! These ideas have been proven in the lab by quantum physicists, and will be further described shortly. In the meantime, we will continue our discussion on perceptions.

Geometry, or more specifically, Euclidean geometry was developed by Greek mathematicians more than two thousand years ago to help describe relationships in space. Geometry was considered a proven mathematical discipline, but unfortunately its rules do not translate to a "real" three-dimensional world. Consider the rules of a square or parallelogram: four 90-degree angles connecting straight lines. Now consider a person standing at the North Pole and beginning a trek south. At the equator the person turns right ninety degrees and walks westward some distance. The person then turns right ninety degrees and walks north again. Eventually that person will reach the North Pole again, thereby creating a triangle, though the "rules" of a triangle prevent it from having two ninety-degree angles, and the 'rules' of a

parallelogram required it to have four sides, not three. Two-dimensional geometry was thus insufficient to fully and accurately describe reality in three-dimensional space. But mathematicians like Henry Margenau have noted that geometry is a construct of the intellect but is not actually inherent in nature.²³ This was a central precept of Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Distance, or space, is naught but a mode of particularization for the benefit of a particularizing consciousness, but has no real existence of its own.²⁴ This idea can be proven experimentally through the concept of super-luminal thought, further described below. However, perhaps even more astounding is that this assertion similarly applies to our concept of the idea of time.²⁵

Space-time continuum:

Einstein developed the idea that space and time were **NOT** separate, independent concepts, but were inexorably linked in a four-dimensional reality called the space-time continuum. In the space-time continuum, events do not proceed from one moment to the next, they just are. In other words, if we could observe our reality in a four-dimensional way, we would see that everything that now seems to happen before us, seemingly because of the passage of time, already exists *in toto*, as if it were painted on the fabric of space-time. From that outside vantage point, we could see *all*: the past, present, and future exist at once.²⁶ While Einstein's four-dimensional space-time continuum has been proven mathematically, even physicists cannot visualize it. Humans live in a three-dimensional reality wherein consciousness seems to flow through time thus allowing human senses to experience what appears to be causality and the development of events based on cause and effect over the passage of time.

Hermann Minkowski conducted much work on the mathematical explorations of space and time, developing a simple diagram that showed the mathematical relationship between the past, present, and future. Amongst the wealth of information contained in this diagram, one of the most striking details was that all of the past and all of the future, for each individual, forever

meets at a single point, ‘*now*.’ Furthermore, individuals can never experience anything other than *now*, and that point will never be found in any other place than *here*.²⁷ The implication of this finding will become more astounding as we begin to consider the philosophical and spiritual aspects of this work – an area normally not considered by mathematically-minded scientists.

The Phenomenon of Light:

When Galileo developed *classical relativity* he postulated the laws of physics were the same in all uniformly moving frames of reference. Consider, a ball dropped inside a steadily flying airplane would appear to a passenger in the airplane to bounce straight down and up, and would not slam into the back of the airplane at 500 mph. Similarly, a car moving at 60 mph that passes a truck moving at 55 mph would appear to be moving ahead of the truck at only 5mph, the difference in their respective rates of velocity. The problem with classical relativity was that it did not apply to light.

The speed of light is 186,282 miles per hour. So under classical relativity, a speeding electron moving at 186,281 miles per hour would be passed by light at a relatively slow 1 mile per hour (the difference between the two), but in actuality, light from the perspective of the electron would be seen to be moving at 186,282 miles per hour! This was the basis of Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity – light moves at the same speed in all frames of reference. This theory has been proven experimentally though the idea defied ‘common’ sense. Einstein reasoned where common sense and experimental findings were in violent disagreement then common sense must be wrong.²⁸ Obviously this puts light in a special category all to itself since it does not behave as common physical phenomenon.

Indeed, as previously noted, light behaves with a dual nature, with characteristics of both a wave and a particle.²⁹ But light has a uniqueness that separates itself from matter. Experimentally and mathematically, it has been shown that objects increase in mass as they

increase in speed, ultimately reaching infinite mass at the speed of light. Of course this conundrum seems impossible: it would require infinite energy to move an infinite mass. Thus, nothing could ever attain the speed of light – except, that is, for light itself.

Another interesting item about light's uniqueness is that time seems to slow with increased speed – a phenomenon that has also been proven experimentally. Mathematically it has been shown that time would slow to a complete standstill at the speed of light. This might make one wonder if time cannot move forward at light speed, how does light continue to flow – at the speed of light – regardless of the speed of the frame of reference? Some physicists have concluded that whatever light is, it seems to exist outside of space-time, in a realm where there is no past or future; there is only *now*.³⁰ Einstein's theory of relativity and quantum theory both suggest that light transcends the physical world, and indeed is beyond the entirety of space-time; it just *is*.³¹

Energy and mass:

Einstein's relativity theory showed that mass has nothing to do with any physical, tangible substance, but was a form of energy in his famous equation, $E=mc^2$. Energy is a dynamic quantity associated with activities or processes. When one considers that a particle's mass is equivalent to a certain amount of energy, one must realize that the particle can no longer be seen as a static object. The particle must be reconceived as part of a dynamic pattern; a process involving energy which then manifests itself as the particle's mass.³² The terms 'energy' and 'dynamic' imply there is no such thing as absolute stability in matter; there must always be change so that energy can convert from one form to another. Further, Einstein's formula shows a direct proportionality between mass and energy; as one increases so too must the other.

Now take a step further and consider Max Planck's ground breaking finding that proved light was always associated with a specific unit of energy (i.e. a quantum). Planck's Constant, as

it became known in physics, equates light with a unit of energy; so light is therefore also equal to a specific amount of energy.

Utilizing the mathematical transitive property, that is, if $a = b$ and $b = c$, then $a = c$, one would have to conclude that matter is actually just a mass of stabilized light, where mass = energy = light.³³ Again, the implication of this finding in quantum physics seems to have more application to the philosophical and religious fields than the hard science field from which it originated, and will be further discussed later in this work.

The Conundrum of Consciousness:

Though perhaps counterintuitive, consciousness cannot be easily sidelined from scientific examination. Doctors have found a person's state of mind can have significant effects on their body's ability to heal itself.³⁴ While that anecdotal observation has not provided enough solid evidence to cause every doctor to prescribe meditation as a form of medicine, quantum physicists have found definitively that at the sub-atomic level, the act of observation actually affects the reality being observed.³⁵ This fact became known as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle: one cannot observe a phenomenon without changing or affecting it.³⁶

Some physicists have wondered whether the universe in some strange sense might be brought into being by the participation of those consciousnesses that have chosen to participate.³⁷ The term 'participator' then has become an incontrovertible new concept given by quantum mechanics. It strikes down the idea of passive observation, given by classical theory, and shows that the vital act is the act of participation. In this way, there can no longer be a scientist who stands safely behind a thick glass wall and watches what happens in an isolated manner from the observed experiment without influencing the outcome simply by observing it. Quantum mechanics insists such isolation cannot occur.³⁸ Nobel Prize-winning physicist Wolfgang Pauli

described that from within one's inner center our psyche seems to move outward, experiencing, influencing, and even creating the physical world through the act of participation.³⁹

Thus physicists have found themselves, through the study of quantum mechanics, to be in the unanticipated field of the study of the structure of consciousness.⁴⁰ Christian de Quincey likened this phenomenon to being in the odd position of having to confront daily the indisputable fact of one's own consciousness, and yet having no way of being able to explain it.⁴¹ What is consciousness and where does it come from? That is a philosophical question that dates back thousands of years. We can conclude consciousness is not composed of matter. But we have only assumed thus far that matter does not possess consciousness.⁴² We must still ask, 'From whence then does consciousness originate?'

Greek philosopher Descartes was famous for his ability to doubt any given theory or philosophy. He could doubt what people said. He could doubt the validity of what his eyes showed him of the world. He could doubt himself; his own thoughts and feelings. He could even doubt that he was present in a physical body. But the one thing that he could not doubt was the fact that he was doubting. This revealed his one and only certainty: he was thinking. Descartes thus concluded if he was thinking, he had to be a conscious, experiencing being. As he put it in Latin, *Cogito, ergo sum*: I think, therefore I am.⁴³

This was and is the paradox of consciousness. Its existence is quite undeniable, and yet it remains totally inexplicable. For the materialist meta-paradigm, consciousness is a monumental anomaly.⁴⁴

Religious people may claim God is the creator and the source of all creation. But physicists might say the same of consciousness.

Philosophically, the implications of quantum mechanics are mind blowing. Not only does quantum mechanics insist that we influence our reality, but also, at least to some degree, we

actually create our reality. Because quantum mechanics tells us that we can know either the momentum of a particle or its position, but not both, we are forced to choose which of these two properties we will want to determine. Metaphysically, this is very close to saying that we will create those specific properties because we have chosen to measure them. In other words, it is possible that we can create something at a specific position, like a particle, for example, simply because we were intent on determining some *thing* existed at that position.⁴⁵

Returning to our earlier discussion of conscious' interpretation of the physical world, it can even be argued that our entire physical world – everything we can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch; as well as our private, inner world – every thought, feeling, fantasy, intimation, hope, and fear – is a form that consciousness has taken on for our benefit. Thus, consciousness becomes both the source and creator of everything we know.⁴⁶

Consider the concept of correlation. Things are not correlated in nature; they simply are. Correlation then is a concept that humans use to describe connections between objects or events that we perceive. For example, there is no concept or word, 'correlation,' except as is created by people. This is because only people use words and concepts, and 'correlation' is a concept. Likewise, particles are also correlations. If people weren't here to construct concepts, none would exist. In other words, without people, or more specifically without experiencing consciousness, there wouldn't be any particles!⁴⁷

This train of thought could be likened to the idea of multiple possible outcomes, or wave functions, of a photon and all realities connected to it – the detector/measuring system, the “observing”/participating technician, etc. When one intends to follow and measure the path of an electron, the possible outcome of the wave function is unknown until a perception is made and mathematically, the wave function collapses. The scientist thus realizes where the electron hit the detector plate once he determined he wanted to make a measurement, but in the absence

of that intention, the electron could have seemingly struck anywhere or indeed, nowhere. The wave function collapsed because a perception was made as intended by consciousness. Looking outward from the photon to the detector to the technician to the supervisor, we could continue until we include the entire universe. But who is looking at the universe, or alternately, how is the universe being actualized?

To find the answer to this question, we must come full circle. All indications are that *we* are actualizing our universe. Since we are part of the universe, the universe must be self-actualizing. This train of thought compares closely with many aspects of Buddhism. This idea could well become one of the more important contributions of quantum physics to future models of consciousness.⁴⁸

Geoffrey Chew noted one important aspect of quantum theory, known as the hadron bootstrap conjecture, is the logical conclusion that the existence of consciousness, along with all other aspects of nature, is necessary for self-consistency of the whole.⁴⁹ In other words, consciousness (i.e. the light) creates matter, and without which nothing could exist. Consciousness can thus also transform matter and make matter what it wills.

Quantum Field Theory:

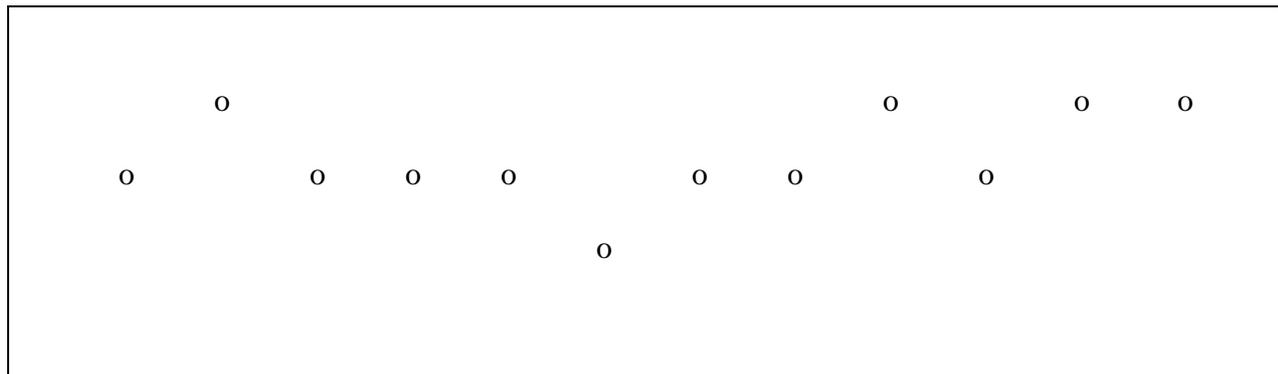
With Zukov's last statement, it should come as no surprise that some quantum physicists would take the next step and consider the idea that physical reality is essentially non-substantial, but rather a momentary manifestation generated by some underlying energy or influence. This idea is the basis of a branch of quantum physics, known as quantum field theory. Theories, of course, are unproven ideas that tend to have some measure of support, whether mathematically or experimentally, but may not have been definitively proven or accepted by the scientific community at large. Quantum field theory contends underlying and interacting fields, similar to

an electro-magnetic field, permeate all of reality, and the fields' interactions seem particle-like because fields interact both instantaneously and in very minute points of space.⁵⁰

This idea originated from the realization that photons are also electromagnetic waves. Since those waves are also vibrating fields, quantum physicists concluded the photons must be manifestations of electromagnetic fields. Hence they coined the idea of a 'quantum field,' or a field that can take on the form of particles, i.e. 'quanta.' This was an entirely new concept that has since been extended to describe all subatomic particles and their interactions with one another, where each type of particle corresponded with a different field. Within these quantum field theories, the classical contrasts between solid particles and the space surrounding them is overcome. A quantum field is seen as *the* fundamental physical entity on which physical reality is formed; a continuous medium that is present everywhere throughout space. Particles, then, become merely local condensations of the quantum field; concentrations of energy that can come and go, losing their individual character and dissolving into the underlying field in an instant.⁵¹

As noted, there is significant evidence for field theory including a realization that Isaac Newton's concept of the void of space was false. Quantum physicists determined particles were constantly being spontaneously created and annihilated in vacuums without any nucleons or other interacting particles having originally been present.⁵² According to field theory, such should be expected to occur forever, without end, because the fields permeate all of reality – regardless of the presence of matter or a seeming void.

Another laboratory observation provides a similar oddity for field theory to consider. When an electron passes through a photographic plate, a visible 'track' seemingly marks its track through space. This track, under close examination, is actually a series of dots. Each dot is actually a grain of silver formed by the electron's interaction with atoms in the photographic plate. When the track is closely examined under a microscope, it may look something like this:



Because the scientist expected to see the track of the movement of an electron through the photographic plate, the scientist may assume the bubbles correspond with one and the same electron. However, this assumption would be a mistake. Quantum physics tells us the same thing Buddhists have been saying for more than two millennium: Connections between the dots are a product of our imaginations and are not really there. In rigorous terms, proving the moving object to be a singular particle with an independent existence is an un-provable assumption.⁵³ Quantum field theory might suggest instead that each of the bubbles was an independent manifestation of interacting fields that just happened to correspond with an *anticipated* track of a sub-atomic particle that had been expected by an observer, the scientist, to occur at a certain place and time.

Field theory provides a further basis for at least two other mind-blowing developments in quantum mechanics: superluminal connections and Bell's theorem.

Super-luminal connections:

Superluminal connections, known as the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen effect, have been hypothesized and mathematically proven through the realization that two sub-atomic particles may be instantaneously connected such that their rotational spin on an axis will always match their pair.⁵⁴ Consider if the particles were placed into two separate boxes, and then an outside

influence such as an electromagnetic field were applied to one box to change the spin of that box's particle. The particle in the other box has been experimentally proven to change immediately in response to the stimulus applied to the paired particle, despite their physical separation. Now take that idea a step further and remove one box to an impossibly far distance. When the experiment is repeated, the *instantaneous* response of the particle at the farther box still occurs and thus proves that a connection between two particles has occurred faster than the speed of light. Light has a specific speed, taking a certain amount of time to move between two fixed points, but the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen effect is instantaneous, regardless of distance.

This discovery in quantum physics implies telepathy or other superluminal connections that provide for the instantaneous transfer of information may not only exist, but are indeed a part of everyday life.⁵⁵ As we shall see in the next section, Bell's theorem proves that for quantum theory to work, it requires connections that appear to resemble telepathic communications.⁵⁶

The concept of Oneness:

The pioneers of quantum physics observed a strange 'connectedness' among quantum phenomena during their experiments in the early twentieth century.⁵⁷ Then in 1964, J. S. Bell, a physicist at the Switzerland-based European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) zeroed in on this strange connectedness, creating a new mathematical proof, known as Bell's theorem. Bell's theorem proved that if the statistical predictions of quantum theory were correct, then some of our commonsense ideas about the world were profoundly mistaken: at a deep and fundamental level, the 'separate parts' of the universe were connected in an intimate and immediate way.⁵⁸ Bell's theorem states there is no such thing as 'separate parts.' In other words, everything in the universe is connected in an intimate and immediate way that was previously claimed only by mystics and other scientifically-objectionable persons.⁵⁹

Bell's work found that either the statistical predictions of quantum theory or the principle of local causes (i.e. cause and effect) was false. It did not say which one was false, but only that both of them could not be true. Physicists Stapp, Clauser, and Friedman, confirmed that the statistical predictions of quantum theory were indeed correct. The startling conclusion was inescapable: The principle of local causes must be false! However, if the principle of local causes was false, and hence, the world was not the way it appeared to be, then one must wonder what is the 'true nature' of our world?⁶⁰ Physicist David Bohm concluded when there was no separate parts in our world, i.e. locality failed, and so the idea that events were autonomous happenings must be an illusion.⁶¹

Instead, parts must be seen to have immediate, unbreakable connections, in which their dynamic relationships depend on the state of the system as a whole. Thus, one is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness throughout the entire universe. This denies the classical idea of the world being analyzable by its 'separate,' independently existent parts.⁶²

Bell's theorem may be the most important single work in the history of physics, and has direct applicability to the connection between the hard science of quantum physics and the philosophical science of spirituality.⁶³

When one achieves the enlightened state, a common description of the spiritual experience is that of an all-pervading Unity. The concept of separation between entities no longer applies; we are all *One* and everything is but a manifestation of that Unity. The Source of that manifestation seems beyond description and is at the heart of the experience itself.⁶⁴ The Source is simply That Which Is, or perhaps more accurately, All That Is. Everything is thus a manifestation of All That Is.

Conclusion:

The material and ramifications of this section have been very deep, and I have contrived to condense tomes-worth of hard, mathematical information into a few pages of very brief overviews. Indeed the reader may find it beneficial to read this section twice over or even thrice, both before and after the rest of the book's material, to grasp the metaphysical implications inherent therein. The ideas exhibited by quantum theory – once understood – should shock the uninitiated.⁶⁵

An important take-away from this chapter would be to realize there is a lot more to life and the nature of reality than most of us learn in school, from our parents, or even from most organized religions. I would therefore ask you to consider what has been discussed in this chapter, and to keep an open mind about what will be discussed in the coming chapters in this book. I will eventually seek to bring some level of conformity between what will be discussed and what has been discussed so that some of the more fanciful-seeming topics might be brought back around to some semblance of plausibility or scientific basis. By seeking to find the hidden truth therein, we may finally come to know the true nature of reality.

Chapter 3

Near Death Experiences

Introduction

The topic of near death experiences (NDE) is an appropriate first step into a discussion on metaphysics because it has been a highly studied field of interest to doctors, psychologists and scientists of all sorts, and therefore has a wide field of respectable research backing the phenomenon. NDEs as a category have certain characteristics that are observed by all who have a near death experience regardless of their prior religious backgrounds or beliefs, including atheists who had no prior belief in an afterlife before their experience. NDEs are also quite common. In 1980 (published in '82), a Gallup Poll found approximately 8 million American adults had experienced an NDE, accounting for nearly one person in twenty, or five percent of the adult population.⁶⁶ Surveys in Australia and Germany suggested as high as 15% of a population might have had NDEs.⁶⁷ According to the Near-Death Experience Research Foundation (NDERF), an estimated 774 NDEs occur every day, many of which are reported to and publicly available through the NDERF website.⁶⁸

Dozens of studies have been conducted on NDEs, including such topics as what comprises an NDE, what attributes people have who experience an NDE, and what proof there is to support the validity of an NDE.

NDEs stand apart in the field of metaphysics because, if true, NDEs would prove that the human body (or mental conscious) has a soul that survives bodily death. People who have seemingly died from common ailments such as heart attacks and accidents are routinely brought back to life through the marvel of modern medicine. Following resuscitation, many report the most fantastic stories of an experience when they seemingly exited their bodies after the medical event. Again, an interesting aspect about NDEs is that the experiences tend to have a set of commonalities across cultural and religious boundaries, thus lending some credence to the value of anecdotal reporting.

Can an NDE be considered just a dream or the hallucination of a dying mind, becoming overactive as its neurons fire their last bursts? In short, no. Doctors and scientists have proven in many cases the mind of ‘dead’ persons who subsequently came back to life and reported NDEs had no EEG activity that might account for a vivid imagination.⁶⁹ Further troubling to that idea is the story of Dr. George Grigorievich Rodonaia, M.D., Ph.D., a Soviet dissident who was killed, but returned to life after *three days*. For obvious reasons, his account is particularly compelling within the field of NDEs. His story is compiled here from multiple sources.

Dr. Rodonaia

Before immigrating to the United States from the Soviet Union in 1989, Dr. George Rodonaia worked as a research psychiatrist at the University of Moscow. Dr. Rodonaia underwent one of the most extended cases of a clinical near death experience ever recorded.

From his work assisting in the publication of *IBERIA*, an underground freedom newspaper in the former Soviet Union, Dr. Rodonaia became known as a vocal dissident and was dubiously honored by allegedly being placed on the KGB's hit list.

In 1974, at the age of eighteen, life became complicated for Dr. Rodonaia when he was invited to pursue advanced research at Yale University in the US. Dr. Rodonaia was thrilled at

the thought of studying at Yale and living in the United States, but since he did not have a wife or family members in the Soviet Union that might discourage him from seeking asylum in the US, the Soviet government would not allow him to leave their country. By 1976, however, Dr. Rodonaia was married and had a son, and the Soviet government grudgingly agreed to allow him to study in the United States.

However, on the day of his scheduled departure for the United States, the KGB allegedly tried to kill him. While waiting for a taxicab on a sidewalk in Tbilisi (now modern day Republic of Georgia) he saw a car jump the curb, drive onto the sidewalk, avoid a few trees, and head directly towards him. In an instant, Dr. Rodonaia was hit head-on at a high rate of speed and flew about ten meters, landing facedown, when the car ran over him again a second time, seemingly to ensure he was actually killed. Dr. Rodonaia suffered broken ribs, torn muscles, and mangled feet among a slew of massive and critical internal injuries.

Devoid of any signs of life, Dr. Rodonaia was shortly pronounced dead at the scene and was deposited in a Tbilisi morgue for three days. Morgues in Tbilisi are not like those in the United States. There, bodies are quick-frozen immediately and kept in that state for three days before an autopsy is performed or the body is otherwise dispensed. Dr. Rodonaia's body was stone-cold **dead and frozen for three days** as it laid in the morgue in Tbilisi, Georgia, USSR.

To Dr. Rodonaia's sense of self, however, there was no loss of consciousness. He experienced one of the most extensive and convincing Near Death Experiences ever recorded if based on no further input than the fact he was clinically dead and his body was frozen in a morgue for three days during which his near-death experience occurred. It is therefore worth considering Dr. Rodonia's NDE as he related it, in summary.⁷⁰

The first thing Dr. Rodonia could recall about his NDE was that he discovered himself in a realm of total darkness. He had no physical pain, and was still aware of his existence as

‘George,’ but he did not understand where he was or why. The darkness that surrounded him was utter and complete darkness – the greatest darkness he could ever imagine; darker than dark, blacker than black. The darkness seemed to press upon him as a physical entity and the experience terrified him. He was shocked to find that he still existed, and realized that he should be dead following the car crash, but his current state confused him. The one thought that kept rolling through his mind was: How can he be conscious when he knew he should not? The conundrum troubled him.

Slowly he got a grip on himself and began to think about what had just happened to him in order to try to figure out what was going on. The exercise, however, resulted in no beneficial conclusions. He could not understand why he was in the darkness and could not figure what he should do to rectify the situation. And then he remembered Descartes' famous line, *Cogito, ergo sum*: “I think, therefore I am.” The realization relieved him of a huge burden for it was then he knew for certain he was still ‘alive,’ although inexplicably located in a very different dimension of reality. Interestingly he pondered if he continued to exist that should be just cause for a positive outlook on the situation. He would be happy merely with the comfort that he continued to exist.

Expanding that thought, he wondered what could be positive in darkness. The answer was immediate and obvious: light would be a positive turn of course. Immediately, with that thought of light, there was light and Dr. Rodonia was in the light. The light was bright white, shiny and strong; exceptionally bright. At first the brilliance of the light was almost painful and he could not look at it directly. However, little by little he began to relax. Within the light, he realized that he felt warm and comforted, and all of a sudden everything seemed okay. Any concern he previously had for his body melted away, because it was clear to him at that point

that he did not need his body anymore. The body was suddenly seen as a limitation of one's true self.

Once Dr. Rodonia was in the light, he gained the impression that the sequence of events merged together as if time as he had known it had suddenly come to a halt; past, present, and future were inexplicably fused together in a timeless unity.

Dr. Rodonia recalled experiencing a life-review process, during which he saw his life from beginning to end, complete and in perfect detail but the entire sequence was relived in an instant though perfect in every detail. He participated once again in the real life dramas of his 'past' life, almost like they were holographic images in which he was immersed. During the review he did not experience any sense of guilt or remorse for things he had done, and neither did he feel concern about his faults or joy about his achievements. Rather, his life had simply been an experience for what it was and he was content with that. He accepted his past life for the experience of what it was.

Throughout this entire period, the light radiated a sense of peace and joy to Dr. Rodonia, and he was happy to be in the light. Suddenly, he understood what the light meant and what it was. He learned that all the physical rules of human life were nothing when compared to the unified reality of the light. He also came to see impressions of darkness were just another aspect of the infinity that is the light. He realized this reality was everywhere: The light was everywhere. The light was an integral part not only of earthly life but also of the infinite life. Because of the light, everything was not only connected, everything was also 'One.' Dr. Rodonia felt a perfect connection to and wholeness within the light; a sense that all was right with himself and the universe. All was as it was meant to be.

After three days in the morgue, Dr. Rodonia's body was removed from the freezer vault and wheeled to an autopsy room. A team of doctors then commenced splitting apart his lower

torso. As the blade cut through flesh, Dr. Rodonaia amazingly and spontaneously came back to life, felt the pain of the incision and opened his eyes. One doctor, thinking this a mere reflex, closed Dr. Rodonaia's eyes, but Dr. Rodonaia promptly opened his eyes again. Again the doctor closed them and once more Dr. Rodonaia's eyes popped open, only this time the doctor jumped backward – and screamed.

Dr. Rodonaia's body was cold from being dead and frozen in a morgue for three days and he began to shiver. The team of doctors immediately stopped the autopsy and took Dr. Rodonaia to the hospital, where he remained in intensive and rehabilitative care for the following nine months, most of which were spent under a respirator.

Another notable feature of Dr. Rodonaia's NDE – and this is common to many – is that he was radically transformed by the experience. Prior to his near death experience, Dr. Rodonaia worked as a neuro-pathologist. He was also an avowed atheist. Yet after the experience, he devoted himself to the study of the psychology of religion and eventually obtained a second Ph.D. in that subject. He became an ordained priest in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and served as an associate pastor at a Methodist Church in Nederland, Texas, until he passed away in 2004.

NDE Traits

Near Death Experiences were seemingly made famous through the extensive work and publishing of Dr. Raymond A. Moody, M.D. who published his famous treatise *Life after Life: The investigation of a phenomenon; survival of bodily death* in 1975. Dr. Moody found that there were at least nine, and as many as 15 typical traits of Near Death Experiences.⁷¹

Despite many striking similarities among various NDE accounts, no two accounts are ever identical. Further, the order in which a separated conscious experiences the various stages or traits of a near death experience may vary and are not stuck to a hard-and-fast model. Dr. Moody found there was no one element of the composite experience that every single person

reported. However, a few of the elements of near death experiences come fairly close to being universal experiences.⁷² Extremely few persons experience all of the common NDE traits, and even persons who have had more than one NDE in their lifetime may experience different traits in each of the subsequent NDEs; again, no two NDEs are ever exactly the same.

Dr. Moody hypothesized the number of traits experienced and the depth of the near death experience itself may be connected to the manner in which death occurred and the amount of time a person was considered clinically deceased. Generally, persons who experienced death for longer periods of time had more developed experiences, including more traits of the common NDE model, than did those persons who were merely on the verge of death, or were quickly resuscitated.⁷³

Following Dr. Moody's groundbreaking work in the field, NDEs have been widely studied by doctors, scientists, and many others, thus adding to the template model of common NDE traits. Given the fact that no two NDEs are ever the same, people experience individual traits within their NDE, and no one experiences every *possible* trait that has ever been reported in the NDE literature. Thus, there is no one standard clinical NDE model of the 9 - 15 accepted NDE traits. Therefore, a composite model of NDE traits is presented herein of example traits I found to be common throughout much of the NDE literature.

Composite Model Near Death Experience Traits include:

- 1) **A Sense of Being Dead.** This may include seeing one's 'dead' physical body, remembering the event that caused one's death, or simply realizing their consciousness was no longer in a physical body or physical state of reality.
- 2) **Peace, Calm and Painlessness.** The process of physical death often includes abrupt physical pain so the sudden absence of that pain may come as a striking reality where feelings of peace,

calm and painlessness suddenly fill one's reality and focused attention with their prior expectation for continued physical pain.

3) **Out of Body Experience.** A consciousness that leaves a physical body may still have occasion to witness physical reality for a brief time in the region near where the body remains. This experience can add much for "proving" the validity of NDEs, especially when a person is resuscitated and is able to describe physical events, persons or items for which they should not have otherwise been aware during the time they were "dead."

4) **Tunnel Experience.** Many NDErs describe being sucked into a dark tunnel shortly after exiting their physical body, and then sense their movement towards a bright light at the end of the tunnel.

5) **Rising Rapidly into the Heavens/Light Phenomenon.** Once the consciousness has left the physical body it is rarely allowed to remain long in or near the physical realm. In the absence of a tunnel experience, the consciousness will likely feel that it is rapidly ascending above the Earth and into "the Heavens" where it soon enters "the Light." NDErs describe everything in Heaven as being composed of light: plants, buildings, people, etc. Differences between entities as well as perceived levels of heaven tend to be based on the frequency of one's light and the concentration of conscious energy therein.

6) **Seeing People of Light.** Once in the light, the recently deceased consciousness may see other people in the light. Descriptions of these people attest to them being comprised entirely of light. Oftentimes those people are deceased loved ones and friends who are greeting them upon entry into the light. Sometimes spirit guides will assist a recently deceased consciousness to find the tunnel/light, and encourage them to move towards and enter the light.

7) **Experiencing a Supreme Being of Light.** A Supreme Being of Light is often described as an entity far above – wiser; more loving and powerful – one's normal friends and family

members gathered to greet the recently departed upon entry into the light. The Supreme Being of Light is always reported to emanate love and make the newly deceased consciousness feel welcome and secure. The Supreme Being of Light may lead a life review, and is often attributed as the force that insists on the spirit's return to the physical body.

8) **A Life Review.** A life review is always described as having occurred in a manner outside of the normal concepts of time. A person's entire life events are witnessed *in toto* while a guide or the Supreme Being of Light discusses each of the events with an attitude of querying what knowledge was gained or what benefit was attained by the experience as a consequence of a person's actions. Further, life events are re-experienced as if the soul was living them again, but not only from a first-person perspective but also from the perspective of everyone touched by the event. If one caused pain, that pain is thus experienced from the other person's perspective. The NDEr thus understands the emotional and wider ranging impact of their humanly actions on Earth.

Amazingly, NDErs report there is no external judgment or condemnation in this life review process. Any judgment of right/wrong for any individual action is applied only by one's own self during the life review. The guide or Supreme Being of Light often acts as intermediary so that one does not place too much negative self judgment on the actions conducted during life, but rather encourages the soul to learn from the experience; a tacit imploration to improve and make better decisions upon one's return to physical life.

9) **Altered Concepts of Space and Time.** Space and time seem to function differently than when one is in the physical body; i.e. linearly in a forward direction. Generally, time in the nonphysical realm is described as being an infinite state of *Now* with no past, present, or future differentiation.⁷⁴

Spatial relations are likewise different in that travel across seemingly infinite space can be instantaneous, and yet there are sometimes impressions that even space itself does not exist when there is only a “Unity.” The latter concept is extremely hard for a human to consider as having any range of validity, but in a nonphysical reality where nothing exists but consciousness, and consciousness creates the reality it desires to experience, space and spatial separation or distances are theoretical constructs that only exist in one’s imagination for the benefit of the consciousness and the experience(s) consciousness desires to create for itself.

10) **Complete Knowledge of Reality.** NDErs often describe their experience in the nonphysical realm as being more real than reality.⁷⁵ Senses tend to be heightened, and experiences are not only instantaneous but completely transparent and fully understood. It is as if a veil of amnesia was suddenly lifted from the consciousness and the spirit suddenly understands the meaning and purpose of life. The fact that one can experience a high level of consciousness while physically unconscious or clinically dead is medically inexplicable. Further, the NDEr understands their connection to everything around them, and a seeming flood of information about life and the nature of the universe suddenly becomes available and completely clear to them. Thoughts become clear and incredibly rapid, and communications between the soul and other entities is instantaneous via a form of telepathy.⁷⁶

11) **Being One with Reality.** NDErs may experience infinite connections with everyone and everything around them, and that experience often has a very tangible effect on their behaviors upon return to the physical world of the living. This is especially so when coupled with the effects of learning the tangible impacts and consequences of their own actions on others, and having experienced self-judgment of those actions during the life review. As such, returning NDErs may feel one of the most important commandments for a fulfilling life on Earth is to love – everyone and everything around them – and to be nonjudgmental of others’ actions.

12) **Reluctance to Return.** The experience of heaven is euphoria. NDErs uniformly characterize their experiences as ineffable, i.e. inexpressible.⁷⁷ It is hardly surprising that once a near death experience must be concluded, the consciousness is reluctant to leave and must be forcibly returned to the body even though the spirit may plead or resist the need to return. Upon return, the conscious is often described as feeling a need to shrink or somehow squeeze to fit back into the physical body. The physical body is also characterized as a restrictive coat of heavy/dense energy; quite a shocking change from being a free-floating, light-based energy form.

13) **Disappointment at Being Revived.** There can be unpleasant feelings, including loneliness and depression, even anger or tears at the realization they are now back in their physical bodies and no longer in the utopia experienced on the other side.⁷⁸

There are many more potential traits not included here because: not every trait is universally perceived; not every person is equally impacted by the trait, limiting its spontaneous recall; and lacking foreknowledge of the potential trait, an interviewer might not specifically query every possible trait's presence within the near death experience.

For example, one experiencer related there was a problem trying to express what had happened during the NDE. The human vocabulary is based on words needed to describe three-dimensional experiences but life in the NDE was distinctly multidimensional. As such, the reporter did not have an adequate vocabulary or means to relate the experience.⁷⁹

Returning to the near death experience related by Dr. Rodonaia, despite the fact that he had an exceptional NDE that lasted three days in human, physical terms, even he did not experience all of the so-called common NDE traits listed above. This simply reinforces Dr. Moody's conclusion that everyone's NDE is unique to their own circumstances. The absence of any NDE trait does not deflect from the potential validity of their experience. Further no NDE

trait could be required to occur for researchers to positively identify whether or not an NDE occurred.

I would suggest descriptive experiences of NDEs should be both compared to the template model for potential conformity as well as anecdotal correlations, if any, sought when conducting analysis of the probability of the validity of any near death experience. This idea seems to correspond to a reporting structure also followed by the Near Death Experience Research Foundation (www.nderf.org), which posts and summarily analyzes NDE reports from respondents all across the globe.

Logical and Medical Support of NDE Traits

Dr. Jeffrey Long, M.D. and journalist Paul Perry collaborated on one of the most important works in the NDE research field, *Evidence of the Afterlife*. According to Dr. Mario Beauregard, Ph.D., Neuroscientist at the University of Montreal, Canada, Dr. Long's work on NDEs provides compelling evidence that mind and consciousness cannot be reduced to merely overactive brain activity at the moment of death. Thus pointing to a need to reconsider the possibility consciousness could plausibly survive bodily death. Further, using the treasure trove of data from first-hand accounts of NDEs available from the NDERF website, Dr. Long found medical evidence fails to explain these reports, eventually concluding there was only one plausible explanation – that people survive bodily death and have traveled to another dimension during their NDE. The following are some of the arguments that would support a conclusion that the human's consciousness does not expire after death:

1. **Consistent Traits.** Elemental traits in NDEs are generally consistent in all age groups, religions and ethnicities around the world. They are also irrespective of gender, social class, education level or marital status. This fact refutes the possibility that NDEs have any relation to dreams or hallucinations, which are never universally congruent.⁸⁰

NDEs from non-Western countries are also incredibly similar to those that occur to people in Western countries.⁸¹ That is, NDE traits may be similar, but their interpretations may allow for cultural and religious differences. Christians may experience the ‘Supreme Being of Light’ to be Jesus while Muslims might interpret the being to be Mohammad, and Spiritualists to consider the being a high-level spirit guide.

Within these cultural filters, there is no right or wrong perception. That which is presented to the departed conscious is that which the consciousness is ready and prepared to experience, and so it makes sense that a Christian might believe the loving, Supreme Being of Light is Jesus. The belief and interpretation of the experience is neither right nor wrong; it is simply culturally appropriate according to their preconceived expectations. There will be more on this topic later in the book that will help the reader understand why this experience is culturally appropriate while fulfilling the conundrum of being neither right nor wrong.

2. Realistic Out-of-Body Experiences. Out-of-body experiences (OBEs) are one of the most common elements of NDEs. What NDErs report seeing and hearing of physical, earthly events in the out-of-body state is almost always realistic. When the NDEr or others later seek to verify what the NDEr observed or heard during the OBE, the OBE observations are generally confirmed as accurate. Even if the OBE observations during the NDE included events that occurred far from the physical body’s location on Earth, and thus far from any possible sensory awareness of the NDEr, the out-of-body observations are still almost always confirmed as accurate. This fact alone rules out the possibility that near-death experiences are related to any known brain functioning or sensory awareness. This also refutes the possibility that NDEs are unrealistic fragments of memory from the brain.⁸²

3. Heightened Senses. Not only are heightened senses reported by most who have experienced NDEs, but also normal or supernormal (panoramic) vision has occurred in those with

significantly impaired vision, or even legal blindness. Several people who have been totally blind since birth have reported highly visual near-death experiences, which shall be further covered later in this chapter. In many cases, adventitiously blind NDErs have described medical equipment being used on their ‘deceased’ bodies that was not even invented before they became blind and thus could not have been imagined or otherwise described accurately if the items were not somehow observed visually during the out-of-body state as a result of the NDE. This is medically inexplicable.⁸³

4. **Consciousness During Anesthesia.** Many NDEs occur while under general anesthesia – at a time when any conscious experience should be impossible. While some skeptics claim that these NDEs may be the result of too little anesthesia, this ignores the fact that some NDEs result from anesthesia overdose. Additionally, the description of an NDE differs greatly from that of one who experiences anesthetic awareness. The content of NDEs that occur under general anesthesia is essentially indistinguishable from NDEs that did not occur under general anesthesia. This is strong evidence that NDEs are occurring independently of the functioning of the physical brain.⁸⁴

5. **Perfect Playback.** Life reviews in near-death experiences include real events that previously took place in the lives of those having the experience; even if the events were forgotten or happened before they were old enough to remember.⁸⁵ While such memories can be dredged from the subconscious through such means as hypnosis – thus showing those memories are accessible – this does not explain how one having an NDE could somehow experience the emotions, feelings and effects of their actions on persons around them, as is always reported of those experiencing a life review during an NDE.

6. **Family Reunions.** During an NDE, personalities encountered are virtually always deceased, and are usually spouses, relatives and/or friends of the person having the experience – sometimes they are even relatives who died before the NDEr was even born. Were the NDE only a product

of memory fragments, they would almost certainly include far more living people, including those with whom they had more recently interacted and thus were a more prominent part of their nearer-term life experiences.⁸⁶

7. **Children's Experiences.** The near-death experiences of children, including very young children who are too young to have developed concepts of death, religion, or near-death experiences, are essentially identical to those of adults. This refutes the possibility that the content of NDEs is produced by preexisting beliefs or cultural conditioning.⁸⁷

8. **Aftereffects.** It is common for people to experience major life changes after having NDEs.⁸⁸ These aftereffects are often powerful, lasting, and life enhancing. The changes also generally follow a consistent pattern, as the NDErs themselves almost always believe that NDEs are, in a word, real.⁸⁹ Aftereffects of NDEs will be considered further later in this chapter.

Descriptive Comparison of NDE Traits

Given the interest in NDEs in the research field, it is not surprising that a number of comparative surveys are available to statistically consider the frequency by which NDErs experience many of the traits identified by Moody, *et al.* Not every poll measured every trait, so there are comparative discrepancies by placing the various surveys side-by-side. However, it is interesting to note statistical averages between them in order to gain, potentially, a better view on the prevalence of polled NDE traits.

NDE Trait	Survey #:				
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
Out of Body Experience	26%	70.9%	37%	66%	67%
Accurate visual perception	23%				48%
Audible sounds, music or voices	17%				33%
Feelings of peace, calm, painlessness	32%	74.5%	60%	70%	95%
Light phenomena	14%	56.4%	16%	62%	38%
Life review	32%				19%
Perception of being in another world	32%	34.5%	10%	18%	
Encountering other beings	23%				57%
Tunnel experience	9%	38.2%	23%	32%	38%

Survey footnotes:

1. Gallup, George, Jr. and Proctor, W. (1982). *Adventures in Immortality: A Look Beyond the Threshold of Death*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
2. Lindley, J. H., Bryan, S. and Conley, B. (1981). Near Death Experiences in Pacific Northwest American Population: the Evergreen Study, *Anabiosis: The Journal of Near-Death Studies*.
3. Ring, Kenneth. (1980). *Life at Death*. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
4. Green, Timothy and Friedman, Penelope. (1983). Near-death experiences in a Southern California population, *Anabiosis: The Journal of Near-Death Studies*.
5. Ring, Kenneth and Cooper, Sharon. (2008). *Mindsight: Near Death and Out-of-Body Experiences in the Blind*, 2nd ed. New York: iUniverse.

Near Death Experiences of the Blind

Near Death Experiences of the congenitally or adventitiously blind are particularly important to the scientific study of the field of near death experiences. The blinds' descriptions of experiences, especially visual experiences during an NDE, lend particular credence to the validity of the near death experience phenomenon. For example, persons born blind do not experience visual dreams because they have no concept of light or visual images.⁹⁰ Further, children who lose their sight before age seven also do not generally retain visual imagery in their dreams.⁹¹ Dreams of the blind, even the adventitiously blind, thus tend to emphasize their other physical senses for which they can readily relate: hearing, touch, taste, and smell.⁹² When they suddenly experience sight during an NDE, including colors, light, and visual impressions of their surroundings, it is often the first such experience of their lives and is thus particularly remarkable to them and inexplicable to medical researchers.

What follows, are two very brief summaries of anecdotal accounts of NDEs for two separate blind experiencers originally reported by Dr. Kenneth Ring in his groundbreaking book, *Mindsight*. The accounts may serve as scene setters for the validity of near death experiences of the blind.

Vicki Umipeg experienced two separate NDEs, approximately a decade apart. She was born blind, and as such could not even understand or comprehend a description of or the nature of light. During her first NDE, she found herself out of her body and able to see her surroundings for the first time in her life. During both NDEs, she perceived her own non-physical body/soul to have a distinct form, which seemed as if it were made of light.⁹³

Vicki experienced multiple standard NDE traits; the most personally surprising of which was crystal clear visual perception. Vicki experienced her death, and an out-of-body experience, including witnessing her deceased body. Shortly thereafter, Vicki felt pulled into a tunnel, and

when she emerged she was in a place of incredible light.⁹⁴ Vicki noted the brightness of the light was not unpleasant. Rather it was incredibly warm, beautiful and intense.⁹⁵

Vicki described the light was more than what humans typically consider light to be: The light could be seen as well as felt. Additionally, the light conveyed information and feelings: words, music, and energy, but mostly, love. Further, the light came from everywhere, so love was everywhere. It seemed as if love came from the ‘grass’ – also constructed of light – and love came from the ‘birds,’ and every other conceivable location and entity within the light realm.⁹⁶

Brad Barrows had many similar descriptions of the light from his near death experience. Brad Barrows was also blind from birth, but he was able to see for the first time during his NDE. He described the light of heaven as seemingly all-encompassing: The light seemed to comprise everything. The grass and trees were somehow made of light, and everything was both bright and colorful, and yet translucent. Buildings were also made of light. They even gave off light, and yet light could penetrate everything as well. There was no shade under the trees but neither was there need for shade.⁹⁷

As previously noted, everyone has a different experience during an NDE, possibly because their attention is drawn towards that which is most amazing to them during the unusual experience. For Brad Barrows, this was the feeling of peace he experienced during the NDE. He felt heaven was so unbelievably peaceful it would be impossible to describe the peace, calm and tranquility he found in the light.⁹⁸

Reports of Vision in NDEs and OBEs in the Blind

Of course, not everyone who is blind and experiences a near death experience or out-of-body experience (not associated with death) reports being able to see during their experience. There are many reasons that could account for this discrepancy.

First, Dr. Ring noted it was not clear whether the respondents blind from birth, who claimed not to have seen, were actually unable to see or whether they simply failed to recognize what seeing was.⁹⁹ For people who have never known what it means to see they have become so accustomed to living without the aid of sight that they do not feel encumbered without the ability. By extension, moving about freely as a ‘free-spirit,’ with clarity of senses may thus seem to them that their other senses, and possibly even the concept of total knowledge, have made up for what they presume to be a continuation of their lack of sight.

Second, some reports of the near death experience note that sight, communication, and other physical concepts do not operate with a large degree of equivalence in the spirit world. Sight, for example, is often described not as sight, but as total awareness, including awareness of one’s surroundings. They are in a state of ‘all-knowing’ though this phenomenon is not necessarily via direct visual perception. Further, other NDE accounts provide that the human body’s concept of sight in an almost 180-degree field-of-view is exceeded in the non-physical realm to perfect, panoramic 360-degree and even spherical vision. This has significant overlap with the concept of total awareness, and thus is not necessarily surprising that some blind NDErs do not realize they are seeing because the awareness they are experiencing in the out-of-body state matches no concept of physical sight familiar to humans.

One of the blind men interviewed by Dr. Ring was perplexed by the concept of sight during his NDE because he did not know what the researchers meant by the word, ‘seeing.’¹⁰⁰ This reaction matches closely to the second point, provided above.

Not all cases can be explained, however. One blind woman reported not having visual perception in her NDE but did claim visual perception during multiple out-of-body experiences not otherwise associated with death.¹⁰¹

Dr. Ring's study of NDEs and OBEs in the blind included 14 participants who were blind from birth, 11 who were adventitiously blind (became blind due to disease or traumatic event), and 6 who were legally blind; that is eyesight so poor or impaired as to have no effective ability to see.¹⁰²

The following chart provides those participants' responses for whether they did or did not experience sight during their near death- and/or out-of-body experiences.

Type of experience	Ability to see during the experience		
	Yes	Not Sure	No
NDE	15	3	3
OBE	9	1	0

It is rather easy to account for the blind persons who were not sure about whether or not they experienced sight in the non-physical state, as previously discussed in items one and two, above. For the three people who experienced no sight in their NDE, one could be reminded of the experience of Dr. Rodonaia in our first example at the beginning of this chapter.

Upon first realizing he was dead and no longer in his physical body, Dr. Rodonaia felt surround by absolute darkness. This did not change until he asserted to himself that he should be in and experience light or order to be happy. The simple act of asserting clarity of thought concerning light created the experience he intended; a theme that is repeated elsewhere in this book, and throughout the literature concerning near death experiences, out-of-body experiences, and the period of life between life.

Thus, the three blind NDErs did not experience light almost assuredly because they did not realize they were living without any crucial sensory input for which they were accustomed. Without a perceived need, there was no reason to seek the light, ask for light, or even consider a

need for light. And thus they experienced sensory input that was closer to their preconceived notions of what was right and not necessarily what was possible or available to them. (Of interest: Some literature of life between life experiences note that spirit guides will eventually intervene on behalf of these previously blind souls to help them find the light and realize their full capabilities at sensory perception while in the spirit realm.)

In general, Dr. Ring noted blind people report experiences that conform to the prototype NDE model developed and outlined by Dr. Raymond Moody, which again adds further validity to the research results concerning near death experiences.¹⁰³

Scientific and Anecdotal Support

Certainly there are opponents to the validity of the near death experience. English parapsychologist Susan Blackmore is a chief proponent of the retrospective reconstruction hypothesis, which contends that from a combination of prior experiences or expectations, overheard conversations or other sensory cues, plus information gleaned afterward or even simply by lucky guesses, it might be possible for an NDEr to imaginatively reconstruct a pictorial representation of events that occurred during an NDE.¹⁰⁴

However, this idea has no support among those who actually experience an NDE, and is limited in its inability to account for instances where unusual objects can be described by those who are both unconscious and physically handicapped, whether deaf, blind, or otherwise, thus limiting opportunities to obtain such second-hand information. The retrospective reconstruction hypothesis is also unable to account for the clarity and universal commonality of the otherworldly segment descriptions common to NDEs.¹⁰⁵

Verifiable out-of-body experiences that occur during an NDE lend some credence to the validity of the near death experience. These are often descriptions of the resuscitation process or identifying physical items present in the room where the resuscitation process occurs. There is

generally no explanation that could satisfactorily explain an NDErs' knowledge of these observations made while they were unconscious or "dead" except that a person's conscious was somehow out of their body at the time.

People whose bodies have recently expired and are in the process of being resuscitated may find themselves in the out-of-body state and from a vantage point in the near proximity of the resuscitation process that affords them the ability to observe, and later describe the equipment, procedures, surroundings, and personnel working on their physical body. If the person being resuscitated has the added physical trait of being deaf, blind, or even dead then their claim of witnessing, seeing or hearing things that would have been impossible from the physical body's own vantage point tends to add particular credibility to their first-hand account.¹⁰⁶

These types of incidents where a person is out of their body during a near death experience and can then observe events or gather information that can be verified by others upon the NDErs' return to a conscious state are known as veridical near-death experiences. Thankfully, the research case histories of NDEs are full of such accounts. The following are just a few example cases of veridical NDE evidence:

A Report from a Dutch Nurse

A Dutch nurse reported a 44-year old, cyanotic, comatose man was delivered to the coronary care unit by ambulance one evening. When the staff tried to intubate the man they initially had difficulties because he used dentures. A nurse removed the patient's upper dentures and placed them on a nearby crash cart. A week later that same nurse met the patient again during routine rounds to distribute medication. The moment the patient saw the nurse he exclaimed to those with him that she knew where his dentures were. The nurse was surprised by this declaration so the patient explained he remembered being brought into the hospital and watching the staff perform CPR to resuscitate him. The patient continued that the nurse removed

his dentures from his mouth during this process and put them on a cart, described as having many bottles on top and a sliding drawer underneath. The nurse was intrigued by this story and inquired further, quickly learning the man claimed also to have observed himself from above, and saw his own body lying on the bed where the staff were working to revive it. The patient was even able to describe correctly and in detail the room in which he had been resuscitated as well as provide descriptions of those persons who had been present. The patient added the experience was impressive and caused him to no longer fear death.¹⁰⁷

Maria's Shoe

In 1977, a migrant worker, Maria, was taken to Harborview Hospital in Seattle, WA, in an unconscious state, having suffered a cardiac arrest. A social worker visited her the following day in her hospital room, at which point Maria described leaving her body and floating above the hospital. Desperate to prove that she was not delusional, Maria described seeing a worn, dark-blue tennis shoe on the ledge outside a window on the far side of the hospital. Not believing Maria but wanting to help, the social worker went room to room, checking the ledges from each by pressing her face against the sealed windows. The social worker eventually found a shoe that perfectly matched the details Maria had related. The vantage point on the ledge was such that it would have been impossible for Maria to have seen the shoe either from ground level outside the hospital, or from where she had been at any point in time while inside the hospital.¹⁰⁸

NDERF

Out of the more than 2,500 self-reported NDEs on the NDERF website, there are more than a dozen reports that include remarkable verification of OBE observations, or visual observations made by blind persons during the NDE event. Each of the reports represents anecdotal evidence of the validity of the NDE due to verification of observations made while in the out-of-body state.

A typical example from NDERF is “George C.,” NDERF case 2624, who posted his near death experience to the NDERF website on 2 March 2011.¹⁰⁹ George suffered a heart attack and a series of heart failures during which a stream of nurses and doctors worked on him while he was unconscious, lying flat on his back with his physical eyes closed. After recovering in the ICU, George described his experience to a doctor and a nurse who both verified the persons present by description. The events George described witnessing were also from a vantage point above the heads of the doctors and nurses working on his unconscious body, providing him a view of events his body could not have otherwise seen.

Pattern of Aftereffects of NDEs

Further evidencing the unique power of NDEs is the transformative properties of the experience on people who return from the brink of death. The transformative property of the experience is nearly universal, attesting to the intense influence the experiences carry over to the person’s continuing life in the physical world.¹¹⁰ Aftereffects cannot be faked. They affect not only the NDEr, but by connection everyone in the experiencer’s life as well.

Around eighty percent of the people who have had near death experiences noted that their lives were forever changed by what had happened to them. NDErs do not return with just a renewed zest for life and a more spiritual outlook. They also tend to experience specific, often severe psychological and physiological differences on a dramatic scale, and these changes are enduring, generally affecting the NDEr for the remainder of their life. Further, this was true whether the near death experience occurred as a child or adult.¹¹¹

Whether their NDE was beautiful or terrifying, NDErs commonly report the experience was unlike a dream, more real than real; clearly the most powerful event in their lives.¹¹² The aftereffects are one testament to the validity of the experience given the wide-ranging occurrence

of these aftereffects across cultures and age groups, and – again – the fact that these aftereffects cannot be faked.

Major Characteristics of Psychological Changes:

Experiencers may struggle to find words to describe their NDE, but insist they now know something new about reality; that there is more to reality than what is here in the physical world. As such, most are deeply changed in their attitudes toward life, work, religion, and relationships.¹¹³

In several studies, nearly all near-death experiencers reported a strong decrease or even complete loss of fear of death as a result of their NDEs.¹¹⁴ They had experienced what happens after death on ‘the other side,’ and they now knew their conscious self would not end with physical death.¹¹⁵ Many experiencers also noted there was not a single moment of loss of consciousness at the point of bodily expiration; their spirit simply moved from a physical to nonphysical state, but their personality, awareness, and consciousness all remained intact and fully alert at all times.

At least 98% of surveyed NDErs came to believe that there is life after death following their experience.¹¹⁶ From their experience, over 80% of NDErs also learned that life has a meaning or purpose and that revelation directly affected the way they conducted their life ever after on Earth.¹¹⁷ The average NDEr also came to regard him/herself as an immortal soul who currently resides in a physical form so that lessons could be learned while they experienced life on earth.¹¹⁸ After the NDE they knew they were not just their body, and they no longer needed to identify their self with their human body. Their body came to be viewed simply a vessel that allowed them to complete their work in this life to gain important life lessons for specific purposes that had been arranged prior to this incarnation. Indeed, many go on after their near death experience to embrace the theory of reincarnation. Eventually, the returning NDEr will

assimilate these experiences and lessons into their physical life, and consider their present life and body to be important and special again.

During the NDE, experiencers are usually struck by the cosmic importance placed on love of neighbor; finding that we are all connected – indeed that everything in the universe is connected – and because of these experiences, learn the most important thing in life is to love everyone around them unconditionally and without judgment.¹¹⁹ As such, NDErs come to love and accept others without the usual attachments and conditions that society expects. Instead of judging, criticizing, and condemning, they perceive themselves as equally and fully loving of each and all, openly generous, and excited about the potential and wonder of each person they see. Their desire is to fulfill a prime directive during the NDE to be a conduit of universal love.¹²⁰

Confused family members tend to regard this sudden change in behavior as oddly threatening, as if their loved one had become aloof, unresponsive, even uncaring and unloving to them in particular. A sad paradox from this experience is that to love one's enemies unconditionally may seem cold and callous towards the feelings of one's closest friends and family, especially when they have suffered injury at the hands of others. In this case the NDEr seemingly fails to perform a duty expected of society, which is to protect, lash out, or connect emotionally with the victim's injury or sense of injustice. Spouses may mistake this unconditional way of expressing joy and affection -- i.e. heart-centered rather than person-centered -- towards persons other than themselves as flirtatious disloyalty; divorce often results.¹²¹ In one study, 65% of NDErs' marriages resulted in divorce as opposed to about 50% in the general population.¹²² Major changes in values, careers, and religious views also contributed to stress in a returning NDEr's relationships.¹²³

Near-death experiences almost always lead to spiritual curiosity. People who are not overtly religious before an NDE report that they both believe in God and have an appreciation for spiritualism after their experience. However, they also tend to abandon religious doctrine that is followed solely for the sake of doctrine.¹²⁴ NDErs come to realize through their experience that religion is not a matter of one ‘right’ religious group or belief versus all other ‘wrong’ groups or beliefs. People who experience an NDE often come out of it saying that ‘religion’ basically concerns one’s ability to love others – not doctrines or religious denominations.¹²⁵

Experiencers generally have a newfound respect for the attainment of knowledge and learning. They may leave successful businesses and employment in the spontaneous pursuit of new knowledge or life direction. NDErs also feel more responsible for the direction they take in their lives. They are also sensitive to how their actions affect and impact others both immediately and long-term.¹²⁶ Hard-driving achievers and materialists can transform into easy-going philosophers; but, by the same token, those more relaxed or uncommitted before can become energetic movers and shakers, determined to make a difference in the world. Although initially bewildered, families can be so impressed by what they witness that they, too, change, making the experience a shared event.¹²⁷

NDErs often experience problems reentering and readjusting to the mundane ‘real’ world. As previously noted, they often have marital difficulties because the spouse feels they are married to a different person who is much changed following the NDE experience.¹²⁸ Most NDErs also develop a sense of timelessness. They tend to ‘flow’ with the day’s events, and display a more heightened awareness of the present moment, claiming an importance of being ‘in the now.’ Making future preparations can seem irrelevant to them. Others often label this

behavior ‘spaciness.’ NDErs refer to their episode as if it were a type of divider separating their ‘former’ life from the present.¹²⁹

An estimated 89% of NDErs report an increase in intuition, psychic phenomena, or healing abilities following their unique experience, and psychic displays can become commonplace.¹³⁰ This behavior may not only be worrisome to relatives and friends it can be frightening to them as well. A person’s religious beliefs (pre- or post-NDE) do not seem to alter or prevent this amplification of psychic faculties and stimuli. Yet, NDErs willing to learn how to control and refine these abilities tend to consider them to be beneficial.¹³¹

Major Characteristics of Physiological Changes:

While psychological changes affect an NDErs’ relationships with others, their post-NDE physiological changes affect their relationship with their own body, which generally forces them to accept major lifestyle changes or suffer massive ill effects, including allergic reactions, nausea, and chronic illness. These physical differences eventually lead NDErs to alter their approach to health and healing, employment, finances, and lifestyle issues. Many say that it is almost as if they have to relearn how to use their own body and brain.¹³²

NDErs may experience unusual sensitivity to light and sound, which can be a serious issue and may well necessitate some lifestyle changes. While most NDErs must limit sunshine exposure, others may feel that they can’t get enough. Almost all NDErs though have similar difficulties with loud or discordant sounds. Many report they can no longer tolerate hard rock music. Instead, the vast majority reports a preference for classical, melodic-style music, and/or natural sounds, and many become passionate about the potential for using music to heal.¹³³

Most NDErs must change their diet and health practices to accommodate their physiological changes. NDErs generally exhibit accelerated metabolic and substance absorption rates, along with a decreased tolerance of pharmaceuticals and chemically treated products and

food. They often report an imperative command received during their NDE to return to the land, interpreted as a need to eat organic food and utilize homeopathic and alternative medical procedures. Failure to follow this injunction may lead to increased allergies or food sensitivities, and nausea if one does not accept their body's newfound preference for more organic vegetables and grains, and less of meat.¹³⁴

Other physiological changes include substantially more or less energy, lower blood pressure, electrical sensitivity, and altered thought processing.¹³⁵ Interestingly, most of the physiological effects can be physically measured, and are quite noticeable to both the NDEr and the people with whom they routinely interacted before and after the NDE. Not all people who experience an NDE feel comfortable discussing the experience with others, and many take years to fully assimilate and understand their NDE.¹³⁶ However, whether the experience is discussed or even understood, these aftereffects are an immediate component of the NDEr's lives for which they will have to deal for the rest of their lives.

Comparison to Findings from Quantum Physics

Some components of the composite NDE model have obvious similarities to some of the scientific findings of quantum physics, as discussed in the previous chapter. In particular, this includes the Light Phenomenon, Being One with Reality, and Altered Concepts of Time and Space.

Light Phenomenon.

In the last chapter we discussed some of the implications of Einstein's famous equation, $E=MC^2$. Einstein's equation shows a direct proportionality between mass and energy; as one increases so too must the other. We also discussed Max Planck's finding, known as Planck's Constant, which equated each photon of light with a specific amount of energy. Thus, we return

to the conclusion reached through the mathematical transitive property that all matter is simply a mass of stabilized light.¹³⁷

This scientific conclusion matches very well with anecdotal observations made by millions of NDErs during their brief sojourns into heaven. Everything the NDErs observe while in the other dimension is seemingly made of light. Indeed the substance of the universe – of all that is seen and unseen – is comprised of light. They learn that atoms and matter in the physical realm, described as the lowest level, is merely dense light, stabilized at a very low frequency.

A unique extension of the Light Phenomenon observed by NDErs is that the Light itself is Conscious. Put another way, the Light is the Consciousness of the universe, and the Consciousness is the Light. Even more so, the NDErs experience that all of the light of the universe – i.e. all of the Consciousness – is connected and really one-and-the-same Entity. This leads in well with the next NDE trait, Being One with Reality.

Being One with Reality.

J. S. Bell, *et. al.* proved mathematically that everything in the universe is connected at the subatomic level. A simple extension of this mathematical theorem, known as Bell's theorem, is that everything in the universe is simply a part, an extension, or manifestation of that One Entity. This idea corresponds well with the knowledge gained by NDErs during their near death experience. NDErs report a literal connection to everything around them, and learn there is a reason why humans are implored to learn to love one another, and to love their neighbor as their self: their neighbor literally is their self – simply a different manifestation of the Unity – of All That Is.

This leads to an interesting conundrum. Human consciousness, through the psychological ego, experiences life as an independent entity, not as part of a collective consciousness.¹³⁸ And yet humanity is expected to trust in this assertion as fact, as part of their

evolutionary – and educational – process in life. It should come as no surprise then that this knowledge is difficult to conceive or implement, and the effects of its assimilation lead to the drastic NDE aftereffects described in this chapter. Humans cannot normally live by this spiritual commandment without drastically changing in ways that stand out at odds with society and loved ones in their life. This is not to say that the challenge is impossible, but merely at odds with current society and thusly not an easy task to undertake.

A related phenomenon to The Unity of All Things is the concept of superluminal thought; an idea supported again by both science and input from NDErs. As previously discussed, the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen effect proved that connections can occur instantaneously between two entities regardless of the distance separating them.

This can be more easily understood, perhaps, if one considers the Space-Time and/or Unity results as valid and thus there is no actual distance separating any two entities because either space/distance is an illusion, or the seemingly illusory separation between two objects is actually a continuity within the Unity, since there is no void within All That Is. All That Is comprises everything in the universe, both seen and unseen, so by definition there is no place that could exist outside of All That Is. It is a smaller leap then to consider communication within the self to be instantaneous, so if the self is considered to be part of All That Is, then that which the self communicates with is also a part of the same Entity.

Within the NDE literature further support can be found for the concept of instantaneous communication because all NDErs who experienced communication with other entities in the out-of-body state noted that such was conducted via telepathy where mental images served in the absence of vocal communication and was passed instantaneously directly into one's mind.¹³⁹

Altered Concepts of Space and Time.

This is another area that is very difficult for humans to accept as valid, but has both been proven mathematically through the efforts of many renowned physicists and experienced as truth by NDErs. The difficulty in acceptance is that humans live in a three-dimensional world and the altered concept of time and space insists on a four-dimensional reality, Space-Time, where past, present and future all meet in a singularity, *Now*.

These two NDE traits coalesce within the life review. In regards to the altered concept of space and time, NDErs report the life review is instantaneous despite the fact that every intimate detail of a person's life is reviewed *in toto* to help the soul gain a deeper level of understanding of the events from their life. Imagine reliving an entire lifetime in an instant without losing any of the detail or emotions, on top of engaging in an academic discussion of each life event to determine the lessons learned therein! That is the implication of the Life Review.

In regards to being one-with-reality, life reviews are remarkable in that the consciousness experiences full, omniscient knowledge of the consequences and repercussions of their actions on others in that life. They not only relive life events from a first-person perspective, but also feel and understand how their actions affected others from their alternate point of view.¹⁴⁰ Researchers Ring and Cooper noted that the emphasis in the life review was generally focused on feelings and emotions, as well as how one's motives played into their actions.¹⁴¹ Anger and self-defense is quite justifiable, for example, but deliberate cruelty would be frowned upon.

This idea corresponds well with the previous imperative to love one's neighbors as one's self. If the most important commandment of life is to love others unconditionally then it stands to reason that a life review would be most rewarding when one's effects on others had been loving, helpful, and positive. Still, as previously seen, the aftereffects of NDEs are not always positive on the NDErs' own marital relationships given their higher precedence of divorce.

Thus, one might conclude the viability of the commandment to love one's neighbors as oneself, without also causing undue pain to one's family and friends in the process, can only be accomplished when society as a whole advances to a point where such unconditional love can be understood without damaging intimate interpersonal relationships.

Chapter 4

Out of Body Experiences

Introduction

An out of body experience (OBE) is one where a person feels their mind, their awareness, their perceiving, thinking consciousness is separated from their physical body at a location in perceptual space other than the body's head and brain, and yet they still perceive events with a vivid and real sensory perception characteristic. Further, during an OBE there is no clouding of consciousness or perception as would occur during a dream state, but rather perception is considered to be near perfect and distinct; sometimes even described as more conscious or more aware than during normal waking conscious.¹⁴² During an OBE, the ego may see its physical body from a separate vantage point, or realize that it is observing events from a location other than would be possible from the body's physical position.

The term "out of body experience" was coined by C. T. Tart in 1960 to avoid alternative names that were present in the literature at the time, and implied a negative judgmental connotation concerning some nonexistent knowledge of etiology of the experience; for example, such terms as astral projection, astral travel, ESP projection, doubling, etc.¹⁴³

To a person experiencing an OBE, the experience is real – beyond a dream or hallucination – and, again, may be described as more real than waking reality. In an OBE, an

individual is totally conscious, as we would typically define the state. Much of a person's physical sensory perception is also replicated. They can see, hear, and touch, though the senses of smell and taste are generally muted or nonexistent. The person's perspective will be from a position outside of their physical body, either near or distant. If near the body, it will usually be from a vantage point that would be impossible to observe from within the physical body, such as floating against the ceiling. The starkest difference is the extreme reality of the OBE that sets it apart from dreams.¹⁴⁴

An OBE can be a life-changing event because it can affect a person's perceptions of reality both through the effects of the experience as well as experiences or knowledge gained during the OBE.¹⁴⁵

Most OBEs are once-in-a-lifetime events, usually triggered by accidents, illnesses, stress, or other physically and psychologically traumatic events that take a human to the brink of death. Many OBEs may occur during sleep, or more commonly during the hypnogogic state: the natural transition point between full wakefulness and sleep.¹⁴⁶ The hypnogogic state is often associated with a state of increased susceptibility to inspiration, occurring at a point of complete relaxation as the consciousness slips through the threshold between conscious awareness and the dream state.¹⁴⁷ Many contend the hypnogogic state is more susceptible to spiritual encounters, experiences, and inspiration because the ego is quieted as it slips into sleep, allowing the subconscious to commune more directly as a bridge between the super-conscious and the ego-based waking-conscious.

More rarely, OBEs may be experienced through conscious, deliberate efforts.¹⁴⁸ Many training programs and some technological inventions have been designed in the hopes of being able to increase a person's chances at successfully achieving a deliberate attempt to enter the out-of-body state. The pretext of these training programs and technological inventions is often to

help the person achieve the hypnogogic state while maintaining a heightened state of awareness. Robert Monroe labeled this state as mind awake/ body asleep.¹⁴⁹

A 1954 study by H. Hart found 27% of his survey respondents had experienced an OBE in their lifetime.¹⁵⁰ Celia Green's 1968 study similarly found 34% of her survey respondents had experienced an OBE.¹⁵¹ J. Palmer and M. Dennis' 1975 study found as many as 25% of their survey respondents had experienced an OBE, with experiential data highly dependent on the age of the survey respondent where younger persons were more likely to respond in the affirmative.¹⁵² Buhlman's book, *The Secret of the Soul*, described his own out-of-body experiences as well as those of more than 16,000 other survey respondents from around the world.¹⁵³ From the wide body of available data, OBE experiences will be described throughout this chapter.

The inevitable conclusion of these findings is that OBEs are natural experiences that have been experienced and recorded since the beginning of historical records.¹⁵⁴ Some OBE researchers even contend that every night all humans separate from their bodies during sleep to learn, experience, and recharge energetically and spiritually.¹⁵⁵ However, the nature of the sleeping state of consciousness almost always prevents one from remembering this everyday experience.

Hospice caretakers have long known that those approaching death may begin to have spontaneous OBEs, or deathbed visions as a natural prelude to their 'permanent' transition of consciousness from the physical to the spiritual.¹⁵⁶ Some on the cusp of death may experience an OBE quite like a near death experience, and many have provided a statement or description of their vision of the afterlife. Daniel Webster noted on his deathbed, "I still live...pretty." Momentarily emerging from a coma at the end of his life, Thomas A. Edison stated definitively, "It's very beautiful over there." Similarly, King Louis XVII provided during his final moments

of life, “I suffer much less. The music is so beautiful... Listen, listen. In the midst of all those voices I recognize my mother’s!”¹⁵⁷

Out of Body Experience Description and Common Traits

Providing definitive proof of OBEs is not an easy matter, and indeed there is more support for the validity of NDEs than OBEs. However, the sheer number of OBEs tends to normalize the experience, thus lending it some weight as a credible body of anecdotal evidence. Unfortunately, an out-of-body experience does not necessarily correspond with an ability to relate accurately events or descriptions of seemingly observed locations in the physical world in the time period of Here-Now. Still, this negative proof neither supports nor detracts from the perceived reality of the out-of-body experience for those who have had an OBE.¹⁵⁸ Robert Monroe described aptly the difficulties of proving the validity of the OBE, though he himself experienced thousands of OBEs in his lifetime. He noted most knowledge about OBEs stems from reports of once-in-a-lifetime experiences, which places the possible extent of that knowledge at a serious disadvantage. First, most people cannot reproduce an OBE at will, which limits the ability to study OBEs under precise laboratory conditions. Second, when a person suddenly experiences a brief OBE, the thrill of being in a novel environment quite different from their normal experience does not help them serve as a reliable or deliberate observer. That person will typically be too excited and too busy just trying to cope with the strangeness of the experience.¹⁵⁹

In the out-of-body state, time, by the standards of the physical world, may seem to be non-existent, or simply cannot correlate with events that occurred in the physical world while the consciousness was incorporeal. The human awareness may perceive a sequence of events; a past and a future, but no cyclical separation. Both continue to exist co-terminously with *Now*.¹⁶⁰

I once interviewed a person who experienced a spiritually induced OBE during an intense prayer session. The interviewee was holding hands and praying with a disturbed young woman who was having difficulties in life due to drugs and negative influences from her peer group, and they intensely sought intervention through prayer to help the young woman. The interviewee described feeling a jolt of electricity that seemingly knocked both of them physically unconscious though the interviewee's sense of awareness seemed to suddenly be above and separated from the physical body. The interviewee could see the body while in this state of awareness, but there was no positive correlation with any other physical items that had been in the room where they had been praying. For example, the young woman's physical body was unseen, and the only remarkable item was an intense blue-white light shining in the distance.

The interviewee described the experience in the out-of-body state: Time seemed not to exist. All of the past, present, and future was resident in one moment, the "Here-Now." The interviewee felt as if all the knowledge of the universe was accessible and life suddenly made perfect sense. Unfortunately, this knowledge was not brought back once the veil of amnesia returned upon regaining consciousness; merely the impression of having had access to that knowledge for a brief period of time, and how wondrous it had been. Humanity's purpose was clearly understood for that brief moment, as well as an enduring feeling of connection with all reality as if we were all part of "One" entity. While in the out-of-body state, the interviewee could see with perfect 360-degree panoramic vision. However, though the interviewee did not detect any other conscious presences in the out-of-body state, an intensely bright bluish-white light was observed that seemed to captivate one's attention. There was no telling how much time elapsed because one moment felt equivalent to an eternity. The interviewee described the experience as more real than life, and quite unlike a dream – one could sense, think, feel, and experience with perfect mental acuity; a feat no dream could rival.

Once back in the physical state, the interviewee learned 20 minutes had lapsed and the church group had found the praying pair lying unconscious on the floor so they called an ambulance. The girl shortly returned to consciousness just before the interviewee, and she described a similar, though even more intense spiritual experience bordering on a near-death experience with a life review and engagement with “beings of light.” The girl cried from joy of the experience and remorse at her past life habits, and thanked the interviewee for helping to cause that experience through their prayer. She noted the experience had affected her deeply and she intended to change her life permanently for the better.

Dr. Twemlow’s study of OBEs found that many experiencers shared similar traits with the interviewee’s case, above. Comparing common traits of OBEs with their precedence, Dr. Twemlow found:¹⁶¹

Common OBE Traits	% of experiencers who shared that trait
More real than a dream	94%
Initial environment same as physical body	62%
Saw physical body from distance	51%
Passed through objects	50%
Felt vibrations in body preceding event	38%
Heard noises in early stages of separation	37%
Aware of presence of nonphysical beings	37%
Change in sense of time	33%
Saw brilliant white light	30%
Tunnel experience	26%
Felt attached to the physical body	21%

Dr. Twemlow similarly found people generally felt calm and reassured during their OBE, mimicking descriptive experiences of people who reported near death experiences. Comparing common emotions during OBEs with their precedence, Dr. Twemlow found:¹⁶²

Common OBE Feelings	% of experiencers who shared those feelings
Sense of calm, peace, quiet	72%
Freedom	68%
Sense of life purpose	63%
Joy	55%
No special feelings	36%
Sense of power	29%

Similarities to the Near Death Experience

Reported experiences between NDEs and OBEs share many similarities. Monroe opined the difference might lie only in the perception of the events and situations encountered.¹⁶³ Dr. Moody's assessment that the depth of experience during an NDE was likely attributed to the manner of death and amount of time a person was clinically dead, could almost certainly carry over to the depth of experience within an OBE as well.¹⁶⁴ Out of body experiences that last seconds or a few minutes are probably unlikely to proceed beyond momentary visual impressions of observing one's body from a vantage point other than normal, as typified by the interviewee's out of body experience, above.

Indeed, traumatically induced OBEs may share the closest approximations to the NDE simply because they may be preludes to an actual near death experience, albeit the experiencer did not actually die. Traumatically induced OBEs may occur during violent accidents, physical

attacks – such as rape or physical altercations –severe illness, highly painful experiences, stress, or sleep deprivation.¹⁶⁵ The scientific- and descriptive-literature are full of accounts of these traumatically induced out of body experiences.

Military fighter pilots and astronauts may experience induced out-of-body experiences if they are rendered unconscious during flight due to excessive G-forces, known as G-LOC (Loss of consciousness). NASA conducted experiments on US military pilots, utilizing a powerful centrifuge to render the pilots unconscious from excessive G-forces. Each of the experimental subjects reported he had passed out and then described a detailed out-of-body state of awareness during the time they were otherwise physically unconscious.¹⁶⁶

American author Ernest Hemingway described his own traumatically induced OBE after being injured in combat as a member of the Ambulance Corps in World War I. Injured, he tried to breathe but could not and suddenly felt himself rush bodily out of his injured physical form. The process was swift, and he suddenly realized he was dead. He realized as well the concept that one's experience ended at death was in error. He floated around the WWI battlefield for a time, but suddenly felt an impossible tug pull his spirit back into his body. Inexplicably, his body breathed and he had been instantaneously called back to the pain of mortal wounds.¹⁶⁷

Buhlman described the story of Sam P. of Maryland who related his own traumatically induced OBE. When Sam was about twelve he had an OBE that occurred when he was being severely beaten by a gang. When the pain seemed unbearable, Sam suddenly found himself floating outside his body from a vantage point that allowed him to observe his body being beaten. From this external vantage point, Sam realized he no longer experienced pain, and realized as well that at that point he had no sense of fear about what would happen to him or his body. At that point, he felt an overpowering sense of peace. When the gang eventually lost

interest and stopped beating Sam's body, he was shortly pulled back into his body and the pain immediately returned.¹⁶⁸

For those experiencers who have been able to purposely recreate the out of body experience a number of times, and potentially extend the experience through conscious effort, they have been able to achieve experiences incredibly similar to those of extended near death experiences. Robert Monroe was one such gifted OBE traveler who documented hundreds of his own OBEs, most achieved through conscious effort, including attempts to validate the experience under laboratory conditions. During some of his longer OBEs, he intentionally journeyed to an area of the spiritual world one might liken to a description of Heaven and an encounter with the Creator. He described his experience as thus (paraphrased from the original): You are Home; you are aware of the Source of the entire span of your experience and of your true nature, as well as the vastness beyond your ability to perceive and/or imagine; the Father, the Creator of all that is or was. You are one of His countless creations. How or why, you do not know. You are one with and integrated as a part of the whole. At our core, there are no differences in sex; everyone is both male and female, positive and negative.¹⁶⁹ Each of the three times Monroe visited this locale in the spirit world he did not return voluntarily but was forcibly guided back. After each experience, he suffered intense nostalgia, loneliness, and homesickness for days. Back in his physical body, he felt as an alien among strangers in a land where things were not right when compared to his 'real home' with the Creator.¹⁷⁰

Such in-depth out of body experiences are exceptionally rare, but the experiences show similarities to near death experiences, which may help normalize the anecdotal experiences in the concept of their validity, especially for our discussion herein.

NDE-Like Transformative Qualities

Similar to NDEs, out of body experiences often have life-changing transformative qualities. An OBE is usually one of the most profound experiences of a person's life, and therefore may radically alter a person's beliefs about the nature of reality and their own relationship with the world around them. Monroe summarized this type of transformation as the difference from no longer simply *believing* in survival after death to *knowing* one will survive death.¹⁷¹ Because the person will have directly experienced continued waking conscious without need of a physical body the person is assured of their continued survival after bodily death.

Dr. Twemlow quantified these post-OBE transformative qualities through his study of the experience. He found the following precedence of common aftereffects and transformative qualities of OBEs:¹⁷²

Transformative Qualities of OBEs	% of experiencers with those qualities
Became interested in psychic phenomenon	85%
Felt their life had changed	60%
Felt a spiritual experience from the OBE	55%
Felt they possessed psychic abilities	43%
Felt confused following the OBE	27%
Kept the experience secret	25%

Longer term impacts of OBEs	% of experiencers who shared those impacts
Wanted to experience an OBE again	89%
Developed a greater awareness of reality	86%
Felt the experience had a lasting benefit	78%
Changed belief in life after death	66%
Felt the OBE was the greatest thing that had ever happened in their life	43%

The qualitative character of the aftereffects of OBEs is very similar to those of NDEs, as listed in the previous chapter. Buhlman's study of more than 16,000 respondents found persons who experience an OBE will likely develop:¹⁷³

- An increased respect for life
- An increased spiritual connection
- Reduced feelings of hostility and violence
- An increased interest in the search for knowledge and wisdom
- An increased self-respect and sense of responsibility
- Personal verification of immortality
- Expanded awareness of our interconnection with others

The point of the above descriptions of the nature of the out-of-body experience and its aftereffects on the human conscious has been to normalize the experience so that the reader may consider a temporary incorporeal state of experience to be a legitimate, if unique aspect of the human experience. If one accepts the validity of the out-of-body experience, then there are many lessons learned from the experience that can be applied to the discussion presented in this book concerning the nature of reality.

Comparison to quantum physics: Energy Principles

Arguably, the most important lessons learned from the collective body of OBE literature are the principles of energy, which define the ‘rules’ by which reality is created and experienced, both in the incorporeal and physical states of reality. In order to understand this conjecture, energy principles must first be considered from the incorporeal state, and then comparisons can then be drawn to the physical state.

Robert Monroe’s decades of experience in out-of-body research determined the power of thought, i.e. the focus of one’s intentions, provided the energy inputs required to accomplish any perceived need or desire while in the out-of-body state.¹⁷⁴ He noted one only had to *think* movement, and the thought became a fact.¹⁷⁵ If one intends or expects – perhaps subconsciously – his surroundings to appear as the physical environment in which his physical body is still resident, then that is what he will perceive. This explains why experiences in the out-of-body state may not correspond exactly with the physical realm: they are totally separate locations and any perceived similarity is a falsehood imposed by one’s own expectations that a similarity needs to exist. In other words, our thoughts *intending* the area around our dissociated spirit to appear as the physical realm near our body creates a visual impression of the same.

If one believes they have died and have a preconceived notion of heaven and hell, and feels (even subconsciously) they were sinful during that life and thereby deserving of a harsh judgment, then their experience in the astral realm will likely not be pleasant.¹⁷⁶ Conversely, if one projects feelings of love, or asserts that they deserve only pleasant experiences, then their experience in the astral realm will match their preconceived notions of the experience.¹⁷⁷ In the out-of-body state, like attracts like, or in other words, one’s thought projects and expectations becomes one’s perceived reality.¹⁷⁸

Buhlman summarized these findings as the laws of Basic Energy Mechanics:¹⁷⁹

Basic Energy Mechanics

1. The nonphysical universe is progressively less dense in substance and increasingly thought-responsive as we explore further toward the spiritual source of energy.
2. Our thoughts are a form of creative energy and have a natural tendency to interact with and affect the nonphysical environments we encounter. The farther within the multidimensional universe we explore the more rapid and pronounced this thought reaction becomes; i.e. we think change and change happens ever faster.
3. Our thoughts, both conscious and subconscious, will influence the nonphysical energy that we observe. The degree of influence we experience is in direct proportion to the intensity of our thoughts and the density of our surroundings.

It is important to understand that the unseen, incorporeal world that surrounds us has direct applicability to our experiences in physical reality. Thus the direction of our thoughts in everyday life can affect our physical reality and experiences. Following the lessons of quantum physics, this can be attributed to the fact that all matter, form, and substance is derived from energy that originates from the unseen dimensions of the universe. Pure consciousness is highly thought-responsive and takes shape first in incorporeal form. As we direct our focus and attention towards an intended outcome, we help that consciousness attain permanency of form in the physical world. In the same way, we can manipulate and change outcomes in the physical realm through deliberate, focused intention, though solidified energy transforms more slowly to meet our intentions than would occur in the spirit world.¹⁸⁰ Significant patience may therefore be necessary to observe changes in the physical world as a result of focused thought-intentions.

This idea supplements our other findings in quantum physics. If consciousness is the base of all reality, both seen and unseen, and the light of the Creator is both conscious and a part of everything in existence, then the conclusion of Physicist David Bohm must be valid; i.e. That

all matter is but frozen light.¹⁸¹ Therefore, an intense effort at directed, conscious thought concerning our desired intentions should have the capability to mold consciousness' experiences within physical reality. Indeed, Magnus concluded the physical realm can respond to one's thoughts and intentions though the slow speed at which changes may occur in physical reality might not always seem directly attributable to one's own efforts.¹⁸²

This idea carries forward as well into subconscious thoughts and groupthink. One does not have to realize their thoughts have impact in order for it to be so. Indeed, the very idea may seem ludicrous, but many would contend it is time for humanity to realize the power of positive and progressive thinking so that the human species may move forward peaceably.¹⁸³ Further, the more people who think the same way, the greater the chances for the focus of their attention to actually occur. Still, proving this contention is as likely as being able to 'prove a negative.' Some efforts and progressive towards this proof has been conducted utilizing random number generators and then monitoring those generators for anomalies during mass societal events, such as the attacks that occurred on September 11th, 2001. However, a further examination of this effort and its merits and potential successes will not be discussed here.

Returning to Buhlman's findings, we find important lessons as well in some basic energy principles.¹⁸⁴

Basic Energy Principles

1. Everything seen and unseen is a form of energy; that energy is derived of consciousness.
2. Focused thought (i.e. directed consciousness) possesses the innate ability to influence, restructure, and ultimately mold energy, matter, outcomes, and the experiences that consciousness will perceive.
3. The less dense the energy structure or environment, the faster the pace at which the restructuring may occur. Changes in the physical realm take time to occur.

4. The effectiveness and speed by which consciousness restructures an energy-based environment is determined by the intensity of the thought impacting the environment and the density of the energy-environment being acting upon.

These energy principles are important because humans inherently possess the ability to shape and mold their individual reality. However, we must first recognize this ability in order to consciously take advantage of it to shape our perceived reality as desired. The process of energy restructuring occurs much faster in the non-physical state where the environment is extremely thought-responsive, but one should not become discouraged if desired changes in the physical realm take time.¹⁸⁵

If one were to contend life is but an educational process in the long continuum of eternity then life in the physical world would be an ideal training ground to learn to control one's thoughts and focused energy by trial and error through a series of successive lives, overcoming energy-controlling issues such as negative emotions, psychological issues, fear, jealousy, trust issues, pride, etc., in an effort to prepare one's higher self for elevated planes of consciousness where energy is immediately responsive to one's thoughts.¹⁸⁶

Robert Monroe learned through his decades of experience and experimental results that physical inputs can help focus one's conscious awareness to aid in this lifetime learning process. Pain or pleasure will turn attention to the event causing the experience, and the experience is effectively stored in memory because of that attention. Further, if emotion is involved, the storage process will be enhanced even further.¹⁸⁷ Physical experience thus deepens the energy-manipulation learning process. For an experiencing human consciousness, the depth and effectiveness of learning life-based experiences is in direct proportion to the intensity of the experience. This concept is quite difficult to grasp and insufficiently covered here, but will be considered again from a different perspective later in this book.

Other Lessons Learned

There are many other lessons learned from the body of literature on OBE research, though they are less definitive than the discussion on thought-based energy manipulation, above. Still, as a body of work many of these lessons support well the conclusions reached in other researched fields within this book, and therefore deserve mention as supplementary evidence.

OBE travelers have concluded from their personal experiences that the soul is the core of human consciousness. Buhlman argued the soul exists beyond the human concepts of space and time; thereby, humanly concepts of shape, form, and substance cannot apply.¹⁸⁸ The soul might be more aptly described as ‘conscious light’ that uses various forms of energy, including the physical form of the human body, for its means of expression, communication, growth, evolution, and exploration in order to achieve the lessons and life experiences that it desires (not all of which will be pleasant – *purposely!*).

Similar to conclusions reached by NDE researchers and experiencers, OBE travelers have also concluded consciousness is not lost at death. The conscious soul merely sheds the physical shell it had worn to complete the purposes of its life lessons, and then returns to its permanent soul form. Buhlman opined death was a grand illusion: At death our consciousness simply transitioned from one dimension to another to continue its evolutionary process.¹⁸⁹ Monroe agreed in that human consciousness is inherently nonphysical, and as such is not time-space dependent.¹⁹⁰ Human consciousness thus is not lost or destroyed at the moment of death; it merely changes form from physical to nonphysical and continues to exist, think, and *be* as it was while still in the physical.

This assertion would seem to agree with the First Law of Thermodynamics: Energy can be neither created nor destroyed, but can only change from one form to another. If one accepts that the soul is simply a form of dynamic energy, then it stands to reason that the energy form of

the human soul cannot be destroyed, lost, or even reduced at the moment of physical death – it must continue to exist in some form, somewhere.

Monroe's experiences in the OBE state convinced him the dynamic form of energy that comprises the human soul is also resident in all carbon-based organic life on Earth. That essence enters the human body at some point prior to birth and then departs again at death, presumably more educated from the experience. However, the difference between the energy resident in humans vice other, less advanced life forms was only the degree of complexity of the organization of that energy-consciousness.¹⁹¹

Monroe continued his finding by citing human consciousness is but a manifestation of that dynamic, organized energy originating from the Creator. As an energy form, human consciousness may be likened to a vibrational pattern – multilayered and of many interacting and resonating frequencies – that responds to and acts upon like-patterns from other external sources. This vibrating energy field, while seemingly distinct, is actually part of a whole that expands throughout the entire universe, comprising the entirety of existence: i.e. the entirety of that energy form is all One Unity.¹⁹² Buhlman took this assertion a step farther by concluding the physical universe itself is conscious; albeit at a level that cannot be understood by the human mind.¹⁹³

Adding to this idea while returning to our earlier discussion on energy, if we accept that the universe is conscious and we are part of that consciousness that comprises All That Is, then it stands to reason we have within our collective conscious the means to create our own perceived reality by the way we direct and focus our thoughts. Buhlman felt we were the producers, directors, and actors that created the play of our own lives.¹⁹⁴ Within the physical experience we thus learn of our creative abilities and personal responsibility.

So if we can theoretically be in charge of our lives, why can we not halt ‘bad’ things from happening in our lives? This important query will be continued later in this book, but let us recall a discussion already mentioned in this chapter in that one of the important purposes of life is to experience life lessons and the manipulation of energy, through which physical inputs and emotions play an important role in those lessons’ effectiveness. Hypothetically speaking, what good would an experience be for imparting lessons if there were never hardships? How could one understand what is good if there were no ‘bad’ by which it could be compared? How could one understand love and happiness without pain and loneliness as a comparison? Further, though this may seem to be a harsh statement, what is ‘bad’ to one person is simply a perspective; it is not an absolute. We will see later in this book how ‘bad’ scenarios may actually be important life lessons for which the soul specifically sought to experience in this life to help it progress as a learning entity.

Of course it would do no good if the soul realized it would experience a specific bad occurrence at a specific location, date, and time in the future, or the event would not have the emotional effect required to impart the important life lesson; thus, potentially wasting the opportunity to learn a sought-after lesson in this life. Therefore, the acceptance of human life requires the immortal soul-consciousness to abide by certain rules inherent to physical reality. For example, the concept that space and time truly does exist is reportedly one such rule. Without this particular agreement, it would be impossible to have a primary human conscious experience in physical life on Earth.

The soul must further agree that consciousness expressed as a human has certain characteristics and limitations. Monroe termed this as a blanking, sublimation, or veil of amnesia that blocks the conscious’ ability to recall previous experiences, i.e. those before the current human life, as a part of the process.¹⁹⁵ This is to assure there will be minimal

interference in the performance of a human life's decision-making processes caused by input from previous life patterns, actions, and experiences, or disruptive influence from the ever-present Over Soul.

To the human consciousness, life may purposely seem to be both lonely and all that there is, with no hope of life after death or reincarnation, simply as a means to force the consciousness to focus exclusively on solving the tasks and trials that will be set before it. After all, one who does not fear death may approach life-or-death decisions quite differently than one who wants to hold onto the life experience as long as possible for fear of a permanent end with humanly death.

Finally, the OBE travelers' experiences provide an insight to a trivial point of curiosity that may interest some readers; i.e. the form of one's consciousness outside of the human body. Buhlman answered simply the soul possesses no inherent shape or form.¹⁹⁶ Monroe was a little more descriptive. He described the nonphysical body as being similar to gelatin when it was removed from the 'mold' of one's body. The consciousness will remember its human form and be nearly identical. However, the longer one remained separated from their body, the weaker that memory, connection and dependence would become. Distance also seemed to be a factor. The farther one moved away from earth/the physical realm, the memory, or perhaps more accurately the need for the memory of the previous human shape, seemed to become less distinct. Eventually, unless specifically intended to remain in human shape, one's consciousness may appear as a ball, teardrop, small cloud, or blob of glowing light-energy.¹⁹⁷

Researchers later in this book will add to this point of curiosity utilizing vantage points gained from different means of insight, though in general agree with both of these OBE travelers' observations.

Conclusion

Evidence gained from the out-of-body experience tends to conclude human consciousness purposely incarnates in a physical life experience because of what it is – an intense learning process; a school of a very unusual sort. Respected OBE traveler Robert Monroe concluded that one singular experience in physical life could not possibly be enough to experience *all* that life has to offer.¹⁹⁸ Indeed, for a complete human experience, a soul-consciousness would need to incarnate as both male and female, rich and poor, talented and handicapped, black and white, etc. so as to be able to have a first-hand account of the vast richness of human life's abundant experiences on Earth.

Indeed it would seem our discussion of the nature of reality and meaning of life has only just begun because the more snippets we glean about what lies beneath the surface of human existence, the more we realize we simply could not previously conceive of the truth as humans trapped within the physical limitations of that existence.

Chapter 5

Reincarnation

Introduction

A belief in reincarnation is common amongst Eastern religions and cultures, but many Western religions also have historical traditions and sects that incorporated reincarnation in their canon. Mainstream Islam, for example, does not accept the precept of reincarnation but certain Shiite sects do; pointing towards passages in the Koran that imply the validity of reincarnation such as the Koran's Sura 71:17-18, "And Allah hath caused you to spring forth; from the earth like a plant; Hereafter will He turn you back into it; again, and will bring you forth anew."

Judaism also has minority sects that believe in reincarnation, such as Kabala. *The Zohar*, a central text of Kabala from the mystic tradition of Judaism provides,

The souls must reenter the absolute whence they have emerged. But to accomplish this end they must develop all the perfections, the germ of which is planted in them; and if they have not fulfilled this condition during one life, they must commence another, a third, and so forth, until they have acquired the condition, which fits them for reunion with God.

Ancient Judaism, dating before the first century AD, had a much wider acceptance of reincarnation, which influenced early Christians to accept that the cycle of rebirth could only be transcended by following the teachings and inspiration of Jesus of Nazareth.

Judaism's Torah and Christianity's Old Testament asserted Elijah would reappear before the coming of the Messiah. In the Christian Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 11, Jesus identified John the Baptist as being Elijah reborn. Thus, Jesus asserted the passage from the Jewish holy book had been fulfilled through Elijah's rebirth as John. Failure to accept the validity of Elijah having been reborn as John would also undermine the claim Jesus was the Messiah, thus showing both early Christians and Jews – since Jesus was a Jew – believed in reincarnation.

Indeed a belief in reincarnation continued in the theology of Christianity for centuries. One of the most prolific writers about Christian theology, the Catholic Priest Origen, who lived around 200 AD, was an ardent proponent of reincarnation. Origen could not believe a just and loving God could create humans and then summarily condemn them to eternal damnation if they had not lived righteously. Origen believed in the precept of universal salvation, and reincarnation as the primary tool for humans to work through spiritual evolutionary issues from one life to the next. In *De Principiis*, Origen's major work and the first systematic theology of Christianity, he wrote, "Every soul...comes into this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the defeats of its previous life. Its place in this world as a vessel appointed to honor or dishonor, is determined by its previous merits or demerits. Its work in this world determines its place in the world which is to follow this."

However, believers in reincarnation stood as impediments to the Catholic Church's absolute authority. Those early Christians who believed in reincarnation were neither induced by promises of heavenly bliss nor intimidated by threats of hellfire in the afterlife. By implication,

they did not need ordained Catholic priests to administer sacramental rites such as Confession and the forgiveness of sins in order to ‘earn’ eternal rewards in the hereafter. Their spiritual self-reliance was anathema to Catholic leaders, as their subservience could not be guaranteed.¹⁹⁹

In 553 AD, Roman Emperor Justinian called the Fifth Ecumenical Council to rectify early Christian Church teachings into a single, universally accepted theology. Fifteen teachings were thereby declared anathema and heresy, including the concept of the preexistence of souls and reincarnation. However, belief in reincarnation did not merely die because of Justinian’s Council. Rather, the belief had to be forcibly rooted out and purged, as was accomplished through the Inquisition’s use of organized torture and state-sanctioned terror. Through such, the Inquisition sought to frighten people into following approved Catholic orthodoxy as non-conformers were systematically tortured and killed by the hundreds of thousands in order to achieve this state- and church-sanctioned goal. Still, it took another three hundred years before the Inquisition *almost* successfully rooted out the connection to and belief in reincarnation from Christianity, the primary Western religion, and Western culture by extension.

Since then, reincarnation has been relegated to the fringes of Western society; a concept understood but generally discarded from plausible acceptance in Western scientific, cultural, and religious bodies. However, evidence for reincarnation is continually being experienced and expressed throughout the world, which has caused some scientists to reevaluate and explore the validity of this body of evidence. Examples include spontaneous past-life recall, as well as biological connections between successive lives, reported cases of xenoglossy (speaking foreign languages for which one has no prior experience), and hypnotic past-life recall. The evidence has attracted a growing cadre of scientists with medical and advanced research degrees, including amongst many others, Ernest Pecci, M.D.; Chet Snow, Ph.D.; Ian Stevenson, M.D.; Helen Wambach, Ph.D.; Brian Weiss, M.D.; and Roger Woolger, Ph.D.

These scientists and many others have sought to find proof to support or terminally disprove the concept of reincarnation. One might even consider all that would be required to prove reincarnation existed would be to find a *single* case of definitive evidence. This mimics Dr. William James' famous observation one does not need to show that no crows are black to defeat the law that all crows are black; rather it is enough to merely find one crow that was not.²⁰⁰

The late Dr. Ian Stevenson, former professor of psychiatry and director of the Division of Personality Studies at the Health Sciences Center, University of Virginia, was one of the premier scientists in this regard. Dr. Stevenson researched children worldwide who had and talked about spontaneously recalled past lives. During his career, Dr. Stevenson assembled more than 2,600 case studies, many of which were published in exhaustive tomes that included in-depth discussions of his research methodologies to aid academic peer reviews of his research and conclusions. One of Dr. Stevenson's harshest critics was ironically, himself. Despite spending an entire career focused on researching a phenomenon that continually pointed towards the validity of reincarnation, Dr. Stevenson never accepted the precept of reincarnation, but rather allowed some of his case studies seemed to indicate the evidence was merely suggestive of reincarnation. Dr. Stevenson claimed some type of flaw existed in every case he had ever investigated, which prevented him from being willing to declare any of the work over his entire career could *prove* reincarnation. However, he did admit the body of evidence was growing in quantity and quality over time, thus increasing the plausibility of the concept of reincarnation.²⁰¹ I would suggest Dr. Stevenson was overly humble at the quality and implications of his work and findings. Indeed, much of his casework is widely quoted by many authors on the subject of reincarnation and many cases in this genre seem stronger than merely suggestive. However, only a tiny fraction of those cases could be considered in the limited space provided herein.

Case Studies of Spontaneous Past-Life Recall

Dr. Stevenson felt it was particularly appropriate to research children in regards to spontaneous past-life recall because children were too young to have acquired any preconceived notions of the validity of reincarnation, or substantive information about a deceased person who had lived in another location for which their memories might correlate. Additionally, the occurrence of delusions and psychotic conditions in children is rare thus virtually eliminating the possibility of hysterical dissociation or split personality disorder on the child's part.²⁰² Also, in many cases in which a child in Western Society remembered living a previous life the family often found such claims to be a baffling and unwelcome event that was not condoned by their Christian-based culture. Thereby, a child's verbal recollections were often met with active dissuasion, reprimand, and even scolding by parents who did not wish to take the child's statements seriously, or have neighbors, friends or other family members know about and potentially ostracize the family because of the child's culturally unacceptable claims.²⁰³

Dr. Stevenson found if a child was going to speak about memories from a spontaneously recalled past life, the child nearly always began doing so between the ages of two and four. In most cases that Dr. Stevenson researched, the child continued to talk about the previous life until somewhere between ages five and eight, at which time the memories gradually began to fade and the child began to focus on their current life instead of the past life.²⁰⁴ Many times, these children would recall the manner in which the previous personality had died, particularly if the death had occurred following violent circumstances.²⁰⁵ This memory in particular could aid Dr. Stevenson's research to identify the previous personality, and then verify the manner and circumstances of death, and other aspects of the recalled personality's life against the child's proclaimed memories. In the next section, we will explore some of Dr. Stevenson's research in which the manner and circumstances of death impacted the newly born personality through the

location and appearance of unique birthmarks and birth defects that eerily corresponded with wounds received at or near the time of death by the previous personality. More frequently, however, the child could recall a number of proper names, places and other specific details from the deceased person's life that were then researched by Dr. Stevenson's team to determine not only the correlation of those statements but also how obscure such information was; the objective being to determine how plausible it was for the child to have acquired the information through normal means.²⁰⁶ In those cases where the information recalled was specific, accurate and truly obscure, little could account for how the child might have acquired such information or memories from a previous life other than through the concept of reincarnation.

Though Dr. Stevenson researched and assembled thousands of case files on instances of spontaneous past-life recall, he never obtained enough information to convince himself, definitively, of the validity of reincarnation despite the fact he could not account for how such memories, emotions, and other phenomenon he researched might have occurred. Hemendra Banerjee, an "extracerebral memory" investigator similar to Dr. Stevenson but without the medical credentials, noted he was personally convinced of an investigated case's validity when he witnessed spontaneous *emotional* recognition.²⁰⁷ Spontaneous emotional recognition occurred when a child claiming to be reborn visited an area or people meaningful to the previous life and then expressed an intense emotional reaction in their presence.

The following are a few of the thousands of cases Dr. Stevenson, Hemendra Banerjee, and others have investigated that highlight this unique body of evidence.

*The case of Jagdish Chandra of India*²⁰⁸

Jagdish Chandra was born in Uttar Pradesh, northern India, in 1923. When Jagdish was three years old, he began speaking of a previous life he had lived in Benares, another Indian state. Intrigued by these stories, which were culturally acceptable to most people in India,

Jagdish's father began keeping written notes on the boy's memories. Jagdish claimed his 'real' father was named Babuji Pandey, had two sons and a deceased wife, and had owned an automobile, a rarity for Indians at that time. Jagdish further described his mother and some family relatives, and provided explicit details of his former home, including the location of a safe hidden in a wall in an underground room at their residence.

Jagdish Chandra's present father located Babuji Pandey and took Jagdish to Benares to meet him. Babuji Pandey tested Jagdish's proclaimed memories by asking the boy to direct them to his former home as they walked through the maze-like streets of Benares. Jagdish did so despite having never been there in his current lifetime. Jagdish also recognized some relatives he had known in his previous life, and displayed a detailed knowledge of the religious and dietary customs of his former family.

Dr. Stevenson noted these recalled memories were from a very young child who lived far from the location of the recalled past life and in a separate caste so that his current family, neighbors and associates would also have had no natural exposure to information about the previous life. Most of Jagdish's claims proved true upon investigation, and the child also exhibited behavioral traits appropriate for the previous life. As with all of Dr. Stevenson's cases, however, the professor was reluctant to claim sufficient evidence was present to serve as definitive proof Jagdish was Babuji's deceased child reincarnated.

*The case of Kumkum Verma of India*²⁰⁹

Kumkum Verma also began speaking about a past life in India at age three. Kumkum recalled living as 'Sunnary' in a neighboring town. She also recalled being married to a man in the blacksmith caste, having a son named Misri Lal, a grandson named Gouri Shankar, and two daughters-in-law; one of whom had caused her death by poisoning her food. Kumkum described Sunnary's home as having a pond near the house and an iron safe hidden inside for which she

kept secured by harboring a pet cobra near the safe. Interestingly, Kumkum also exhibited no fear of snakes as a child and had once even stroked a cobra that had fallen from a tree near her. Kumkum further described an orchard of mango trees near Sunnary's home and stated Sunnary's father had lived in the town of Bajitpur.

Kumkum's aunt carefully recorded Kumkum's memories as Sunnary though her parents dismissed the stories for some time. Kumkum repeatedly asked to return to Sunnary's home in Urbu Bazar but her parents refused. At age four, a friend of Kumkum's father had occasion to follow up on the story's details and located Sunnary's son, Misri Lal, in the city of Urdu Bazar, as well as Sunnary's grandson, Gouri Shankar. Misri confirmed most of the claims made by Kumkum about his mother's life, including her death following a sudden, unidentified illness, though at the time he had suspected his mother had been poisoned. Unfortunately, relatives had dissuaded him from performing an autopsy so there was no confirmation concerning Kumkum's claim Sunnary had died of poisoning. Much of the other confirmed information, however, was obscure, personal information, that would only have been known by immediate family members so there was no logical explanation for how a three-year old in another town, who had never had contact with their family, could have known such information.

*The case of Corliss Chotkin of Alaska*²¹⁰

Before he died in 1946, Victor Vincent, a Tlingit Eskimo in Alaska told his niece, Corliss Chotkin, he would be reborn. Victor asserted Corliss would recognize him because the baby with Victor's reborn soul would have the same two scars Victor possessed: one on his back and one at the base of his nose. Eighteen months after Victor's death, Mrs. Chotkin had a baby with two birthmarks that matched the scars Victor Vincent had borne. Because birthmarks are generally not inherited, the presence of two identical birthmarks at identical locations is of some note.²¹¹ As the child grew older he spontaneously recognized people and places known

previously to Victor Vincent, and he told his parents of incidents in Victor's life that the child would not have otherwise known or heard. The child also displayed personality traits and mechanical skills previously exhibited by Victor Vincent. At one point as a small child, he asked his mother if she did not recognize him, and then asserted he was the re-born spirit of Victor Vincent.

*The case of Shanti Devi of India*²¹²

Shanti Devi was born in Delhi, India, in 1926 and began describing memories at age four of her previous life as 'Lugdi,' a woman who had lived in Mathura, a town some 80 miles away. Lugdi had died the year before Devi was born of complications during childbirth. Devi's memories of the birthing process seemed quite unnatural for a child of such a young age to conceive, and caused her parents to take particular attention of further descriptions of Lugdi's recalled life. For example, Devi also described various benign aspects of Lugdi's life, commenting on her home, garden, husband, children, food, etc. By the time Devi was eight, people were taking her story seriously.

Upon request, Devi provided the name and address of Lugdi's husband and an inquiry found the man did indeed live where Devi had claimed and his previous wife, Lugdi had died in 1925, a few days after the birth of their son. When they met, Devi's recollections of her previous life as Lugdi and the emotional reaction she had with meeting Lugdi's son, only one year older than Devi, his reborn mother, convinced all present Devi was Lugdi reincarnated. When Devi later visited Mathura, she directed the driver to Lugdi's home, pointed out several landmarks on the way, recognized and identified Lugdi's parents and other members of her family, and described how Lugdi had hidden 150 rupees under the floor of the home. Lugdi's husband admitted he had found the hidden rupees and removed them after Lugdi's death. Altogether, Devi made at least 24 correct statements about Lugdi's life and apparently gave no incorrect

information. Quite uniquely in this case, Devi retained her memories of Lugdi's life and maintained a personal conviction she had lived this past life throughout her own life. Devi died at age 61 in 1987.

*The case of Romy Crees of the USA*²¹³

“Extracerebral memory” investigator, Hemendra Banerjee, investigated more than 1,100 spontaneous past-life recall cases in his career, including the case of Romy Crees, a toddler in Des Moines, IA, born in 1977, who claimed she was Joe Williams, a husband of Sheila Williams and father of three. Romy described in graphic detail her death as Joe via motorcycle accident and exhibited a phobia of motorcycles. Dr. Stevenson found that phobias almost always corresponded with the manner of death in the previous life, and might occur in about one-third of the case studies.²¹⁴ If the phobia were to manifest, such would occur before the child had begun to speak and would tend to diminish as the child grew older.

Romy recalled attending school as Joe in Charles City, a small city approximately 140 miles from Des Moines. Romy asserted Joe had lived in a red brick house, and provided descriptions of Joe's mother, including the fact that she had leg pains, had burned her hand following a fire caused by Joe, and liked blue flowers.

When Banerjee and Romy visited Joe Williams' seventy six-year old mother the woman disavowed knowing anyone in Des Moines and was quite disbelieving of the little girl's story until the girl correctly identified everyone in a family portrait taken in December 1974. Joe Williams and his wife had died in a motorcycle accident in 1975, and his last present to his mother had been a bouquet of blue posies. Joe's mother also confirmed she had leg pains, had burned her hand from a fire caused by Joe, and many other details Romy had provided, which convinced her personally that Romy was not lying about being her deceased son, Joe.

*The case of Mahavir Singh of India*²¹⁵

Mahavir Singh (pseudonym) was born in 1982 in the Agra district of Uttar Pradesh, India. At age two, Mahavir told his mother he had seen the son of his brother, Pathi Ram, from his previous life as ‘Khem Raj,’ passing by outside. Mahavir later expounded he personally had five children and a wife; an odd assertion for a toddler to make. But Mahavir made many other statements about *his* family, business and financial situation, and dying near the Ganges River.

Though unrelated, living in separate communities and castes, and previously unfamiliar with the other family, Pathi Ram eventually heard of the story of the boy who claimed to be his brother and came to investigate. Pathi Ram revealed he had a brother, Khem Raj, who did have five children and had indeed died near the Ganges. Mahavir further recognized the businessman, Teja, who had owed Khem money. Mahavir made at least 15 other statements about Khem’s family that were confirmed to be true by Pathi Ram, which convinced Pathi that Mahavir was Pathi’s brother, Khem, reincarnated.

*The case of Dilukshi Nissanka of Sri Lanka*²¹⁶

Professor Erlendur Haraldsson of the University of Iceland investigated the case of Dilukshi Geevanie Nissanka who was born in Sri Lanka in 1984. At less than two years of age, Diluksi started talking and began describing a previous life she had lived near Dambulla, some 80 miles from her own village. She made about 30 statements concerning this previous life including the circumstances of her ‘death.’ By age five, Dilukshi had finally impressed upon her family the need to check the validity of her facts and visit the area where she had remembered living previously.

Dilukshi led her family to her former home at Dambulla, some four miles from the town proper. Dilukshi’s definitive statements of her previous life as Shiromi and her emotional reaction at recognizing former family members and objects in the family’s home caused her

former family to recognize her as Shiromi, their former daughter who had died from drowning. Professor Haraldsson concluded at least 12 of Dilukshi's statements about Shiromi's life were proven while some others may have been near hits or near misses with variances attributed to the inexact quality of language translation or changes to area scenery that may have occurred over time, thus hindering the process of proving statements referring to historical descriptions that could no longer be confirmed.

Biological Indications of Reincarnation

Amongst the more than 2,600 case studies Dr. Ian Stevenson researched of spontaneous past-life recall were at least 225 case studies of possible correlations between a child's birthmarks or birth defects with the child's memories of past-life events of physical trauma. Dr. Stevenson's book, *Where Reincarnation and Biology Intersect*, summarized 112 of those cases. The birthmarks in these cases were not similar to normal moles – areas of increased pigmentation, or 'nevi' in medical terminology. Instead, they were usually hairless areas comprising a mass of puckered, scar-like tissue, generally raised above or depressed below the surrounding tissues. Some were even bleeding or oozing as open wounds when the baby was born.²¹⁷ Dr. Stevenson was particularly interested in the potential correlation between these types of birthmarks or birth defects because they might be able to provide an objective type of evidence to prove the validity of reincarnation.²¹⁸

Birth defects, for example, may be caused by genetic disorders, toxic chemicals ingested during pregnancy, uterine conditions, and/or certain infectious diseases. However, a large number of birth defects still have an unknown cause, ranging in frequency from 43% to 70% of all birth defects that cannot be otherwise explained.²¹⁹ Thus, birthmarks and birth defects that correspond with the location for which a child specifically recalls being critically wounded in a past life might be able to suggest a deceased personality either influenced or was associated with

the later-born baby. This could potentially help researchers understand why, at least in some cases, people may exhibit unique birth defects at certain locations.²²⁰

Typical of the evidence Dr. Stevenson collected in this regard were more than two hundred birthmarks on children who claimed to have been killed by bullets or bladed weapons that pierced the corresponding parts of their bodies in the recalled, previous life. Of particular import were seventeen such cases, in which Dr. Stevenson was able to review the medical documents, such as hospital records or autopsy reports, which established the past-life individual had indeed died in the manner recalled by the child, and the mortal wounds corresponded with the location, size and shape of the birthmarks or birth defects of the child being studied.²²¹

The following are a few extremely brief summaries of the more than two hundred cases Dr. Stevenson investigated that highlight this particularly important body of evidence.

*The case of Tali Sowaid of Lebanon*²²²

Tali Sowaid was born in the tiny village of Btebyat in the mountains east of Beirut, Lebanon, in August 1965. Tali had prominent, circular-shaped birthmarks with increased pigmentation on each cheek on his face. Soon after Tali began to speak as a young toddler, he started referring to a life he had lived as a man in the nearby village of Btechney, approximately four kilometers from Btebyat. Tali further described his death as having occurred while he was drinking a cup of coffee before leaving for work: A man had stealthily approached him from behind and shot him in the face at point-blank range. Tali's description of his 'death' corresponded exactly with the murder of Said Abul-Hisn, who had lived in Btechney, though there was no normal way to account for how the child Tali might have known so many intimate details of Said's life or the circumstances of his death. The assailant had indeed approached Said stealthily from behind and shot him in the face at close range. The bullet had entered Said's face at one cheek and exited at the other, traversing his tongue on the way. Tali also had notable

difficulty articulating words properly, including ‘S’ sounds, which require the tongue to be elevated. One could extrapolate this may have been a residual effect of Said’s injury to his tongue where the bullet had passed through it.

In addition to his normal investigation of the child and circumstances surrounding the possible validity of the spontaneously recalled past life, Dr. Stevenson was also able to study Said’s medical records and autopsy report. He found the birthmark on Tali’s left cheek, which was the smaller of the two, corresponded to the wound of entry on Said’s left cheek, and the larger birthmark on Tali’s right cheek corresponded to the wound of exit on Said’s right cheek, as would be expected of gunshot wounds.

*The case of Nasruddin Shah of India*²²³

Nasruddin Shah was born in a Muslim family in a small village in Uttar Pradesh, India, in April 1962. Nasruddin’s father was a poor day laborer. Nasruddin had several birthmarks, the most prominent of which was a lens-shaped birthmark on his left chest. When Nasruddin began to speak as a small child, he described a former life he recalled living and even seemed to have difficulties differentiating between his current and seemingly recalled past life. Nasruddin claimed definitively he was a Thakur, the second highest-ranking caste of Hindus in India. He also asserted he lived in Phargana, a nearby village. Nasruddin stated his name was actually Hardev Baksh Singh, and recalled experiencing death when a spear was thrust through the ribs on the left side of his chest during a fight over cattle. Nasruddin’s statements, including those above and many others, corresponded exactly with the life of a man called Hardev Baksh Singh, a Thakur landowner in Phargana, India. Hardev had indeed become involved in a quarrel over some cattle. The fight soon became violent, and his adversary drove a spear through Hardev’s left upper chest, killing him. The autopsy report provided Dr. Stevenson confirmation of the

correlation between Nasruddin's birthmark and the location of the fatal spear wound in Hardev Baksh Singh.

Further remarkable in this case was Nasruddin's Thakur-like behavior. Even though Nasruddin was born and raised as a Muslim, he always considered himself to be Hindu. He also thought of himself as one of particular distinction, as might be expected of one in the high-ranking Thakur-caste. For example, Nasruddin refused to participate in menial labor activities, such as collecting cow dung for fuel, which most village boys in India undertook to support their families without question. He also resisted acceptance of the Islamic religion, and would not say Islamic prayers or go to the mosque with his family.

*The case of Necip Unlutaskiran*²²⁴

Necip Unlutaskiran was born in Adana, Turkey in 1951. As a young child, Necip Unlutaskiran claimed his real name was actually Necip Budak, and he stated he lived in the city of Mersin, about 80 kilometers from Adana. Necip recalled his death from his previous life being attributed to stabbing, and each of his prominent birthmarks corresponded with locations he recalled being stabbed in his former life. Necip also recalled leaving children behind in his former life and begged his mother to take him to see them.

Necip's grandfather eventually took the boy to Mersin where Necip accurately identified several members of Necip Budak's family. They further confirmed the accuracy of Necip's statements about the life of Necip Budak. Necip Budak had been repeatedly stabbed with a knife and died of his wounds at a hospital where the wounds were noted in an autopsy report. Dr. Stevenson compared the autopsy report with Necip's birthmarks and remarked of his findings that Necip's case exceeded all other spontaneous past-life recall cases where biological indications of reincarnation were present and for which supporting medical documentation was

available to study and make comparisons between the wounds of the deceased and the birthmarks of the living.

Further remarkable in this case was Necip's admission his previous personality had stabbed his wife in the leg, leaving her with a scar. Necip Budak's widow admitted the truth of this statement and provided visual confirmation to some of Dr. Stevenson's escorting females in a private backroom during their investigation.

*The case of Hanumant Saxena of India*²²⁵

Hanumant Saxena was born in Uttar Pradesh, India, in 1955. Hanumant was born with a large birthmark on the lower part of his chest near the midline. The birthmark was irregular in shape and included a pattern of several similar birthmarks situated close to one another. When Hanumant was about three years old, he began talking about a past life he had recalled living in which his name was Maha Ram. Hanumant recalled being shot in the chest as Maha Ram, and pointed to the location on his chest where his birthmarks were prominently located.

Dr. Stevenson and his team of researchers discovered Maha Ram was born and lived in the same village as Hanumant, and had lived from approximately 1905 to 28 September 1954, when he was fatally shot in the chest by a shotgun at close range. The autopsy report showed nearly exact correspondence between Hanumant's birthmarks and the shotgun pellet-wounds that had killed Maha Ram.

Hanumant Saxena made further statements that proved to be correct about the life of Maha Ram, and when he visited Maha Ram's home, he recognized family, friends and places that had been familiar to Maha Ram. Hanumant continued talking about his previous life as Maha Ram until he was approximately six years old; however, he also liked visiting Maha Ram's house and mother, who still lived there, and continued doing so until he was ten years old.

*The case of Dellal Beyaz of Turkey*²²⁶

Dellal Beyaz was born in Samandag, Turkey, in July 1970. Dellal had a substantial birthmark on the crown of her head that oozed for days after her birth like an unhealed wound. As a young girl, Dellal described having lived a previous life in Kavash, about 30 kilometers from Samandag. Dellal recalled her death in that life as having occurred while she was hanging clothes out to dry along a clothesline on the roof of her house, when she stepped backwards and inadvertently fell through a hole in the roof.

Dellal's statements closely matched the life and death of a woman named Zehide Kose who had died as described by Dellal. Zehide fell through an unprotected stairwell while hanging out clothes, landed on her head on the concrete floor below, and died of her wounds. Dr. Stevenson confirmed the fatal injury and location through a review of Zehide's medical records, which corresponded closely with Dellal's birthmark and location.

*The case of Mehmet Karaytu of Turkey*²²⁷

Mehmet Karaytu was born in the village of Kavakli, near Adana, Turkey, in 1931. Mehmet was born with a triangular-shaped birthmark located on his lower back. At age three, Mehmet began describing a previous life he had lived as 'Haydar Karadol.' A friend had killed Haydar after an altercation attributed to alcohol consumption. Haydar's friend stabbed Haydar in the lower back with a kitchen knife. The shape of Mehmet's birthmark corresponded with the triangular profile such a knife wound would cause, and the location of Mehmet's birthmark corresponded with that of Haydar's fatal wound.

*The case of Ma Win Tar of Burma*²²⁸

In 1962, Ma Win Tar who was born in Burma with severe defects of both hands. Several of Ma's fingers were missing while others were only loosely attached to her hands at birth and had to be amputated. In addition to these birth defects, there were also three depressions around

her left wrist, which appeared as though a rope had been tightly wound around her arm. At less than two years of age, Ma started talking and shortly began describing a previous life as a Japanese soldier assigned to Burma. As she grew older she insisted she was Japanese, not Burmese, and complained that Burmese food was too spicy. Ma also exhibited mannerisms that were appropriate for Japanese but highly inappropriate for Burmese, such as slapping. Ma's spontaneous memories of her previous life as a Japanese soldier included being captured by Burmese villagers, tied to a tree and burned alive. One might associate the seeming rope marks on Ma's wrists as a birth defect attributable to being tied to a tree at the point of death in her last life; however, Ma's recollections of the Japanese soldier's manner of death did not necessarily account for the birth defects on both of her hands.

*The case of Maung Aung Htoo of Burma*²²⁹

Maung Aung Htoo was born with deformed hands and feet in Burma shortly after World War II. Maung began speaking of his past life as a Japanese soldier at age three, and displayed mannerisms, preferences, and characteristics typical of Japanese people vice Burmese, such as food preferences, high work ethic, and insensitivity to pain. Maung recalled his death as a Japanese soldier; claiming mutinous soldiers in his own unit had tied him to a tree and chopped off his fingers and toes.

*The case of Maung Hla Hsaung of Burma*²³⁰

Maung Hla Hsaung was also born with deformed hands and feet in Burma following World War II. When Maung first began speaking, he did so in an unknown strange language, as reported by his Burmese parents, though later he began to speak Burmese. When Maung was almost three years old he started describing a former life he recalled living in Japan, and he frequently asked to be allowed to return to Japan. Maung also displayed mannerisms, preferences, and characteristics that were typical of Japanese but not so for Burmese, such as a

preference for long trousers instead of the Burmese Longyi, a preference for sweet vice spicy foods, insensitivity to pain, a tendency to be cruel, and role playing as a soldier – an oddity for his family and culture.

Hypnotic Past-Life Therapy

Hypnotic states are normal, everyday states of consciousness, typified by concentrating on one sensory input, such as a hypnotherapist's instructions, to the exclusion of other sensory inputs. Examples of everyday hypnotic states of mind include daydreaming and even watching television. During these periods our attention is concentrated or transfixed on one item specifically and thereby our awareness is turned inwards; the same as occurs during hypnosis. Being a normal state of mind, hypnosis is not dangerous and indeed is often used for therapeutic purposes. Hypnotherapists noted therapeutic effects could be realized by seemingly regressing people to recall memories of earlier times in their life where they had experienced a trauma. Thereby, in a safe, benign environment, under the guidance of a therapist, a subject could again face troubling issues, usually from their point of origin, and often achieve satisfactory resolutions and overcome issues, phobias, and other concerns that may have plagued them for years.

Using conventional hypnosis to regress clients back into childhood to work on long-term issues, many hypnotherapists in the 1960s (and earlier) experimentally stumbled upon what appeared to be memories of their clients' past lives. During a past-life regression, a subject only needs to be in the lightest, alpha brain-wave-state of altered awareness, the same as a normal hypnosis session. This can be achieved through a light hypnosis induction, which normally takes 10 to 15 minutes, although meditation or other personal techniques of inwardly focusing one's thoughts on past-life memories can also be used to similar effect.²³¹ Whether or not the memories recalled during these sessions were legitimate, clients often achieved amazing therapeutic effects from these past life recall sessions, which further encouraged hypnotherapists

to incorporate the procedure into their regular program. Indeed some researchers found that some of their clients who had failed to respond to conventional treatment therapies lasting many years time often made dramatic improvements following only a few sessions of past-life therapy.²³² From these successes, pioneering therapists, many of whom had medical credentials, began assembling a large case file from which to begin drawing conclusions regarding the possibly validity of past-life recall through hypnosis.

The late Dr. Helen Wambach noted of the unique character of past life hypnotherapy sessions, clients experiencing a past life during hypnosis tended to experience deeper and more intense levels of emotion than mere visual imagery.²³³ For many hypnotic subjects the emotional level of the experience imparted more meaning to them than the intellectual component. These experiences seemed to be more real than mere dreams; they were intense and, at least for the client, had meaning. This meaning may be expressed through emotive statements, crying or tears, and subjects under hypnosis tended to have an increased feeling of certainty about the accuracy of their reporting; thus, when they reported they experienced death by drowning, for example, they re-experienced the death and its unique pain as if for real.²³⁴ However, after re-experiencing the death event under hypnosis, most patients were able to overcome their fear of drowning, for example, seemingly because they were able to recall from whence the fear had originated and the mere act of doing so had allowed the fear to resolve itself.

In contrast to spontaneous past-life recall, during past-life hypnotic regression clients may show striking changes of speech, behavior, mood, and emotion. They may claim a convincing sense of vividness and proclaim certainty as they express memories of being in other locations and periods of history. They may speak with foreign accents or even foreign languages, or alternately, be able to write a foreign, previously unknown script. They will assert they have different names and identities, and may even claim to belong to the opposite sex.

Most often, they display a trove of information that is surprisingly appropriate for the personalities they claim to be.²³⁵

After helping hundreds or even thousands of patients to experience a past-life during a hypnotherapy session, many hypnotherapists have wondered whether there was any truth or validity to the hypnosis-induced ‘recall’ of these past lives. Indeed, many stories would seem plausible for reasons that shall be further discussed shortly. Of note, hypnosis allows a subject to experience enhanced recall (i.e. hypermnesia) perhaps through their focused effort of concentration and the power of suggestion while in the hypnotic state. However, researchers have found this enhanced recall increases both the client’s level of certainty of accuracy in their reporting as well as the amount of information provided, but does *not* necessarily increase the accuracy of provided information: an increased precedence of accurate recall is generally counterweighted by an increased number of errors as well.²³⁶ Thus, hypnosis is not a truth serum so past life accounts obtained during hypnotic regression should not be accepted at face value, or as 100 percent accurate.

Still, there have been many hypnotic past-life regression sessions that have produced unique information, which has proven both impossibly accurate and completely obscure such that it would have been impossible for the client to know the provided information via any normal means.²³⁷ A number of these cases have been independently investigated to ensure no fraud was involved and the information was indeed both obscure and accurate. Of past-life hypnotherapy cases, hypnotherapist Joe Keeton, who has conducted hundreds of past-life regressions, believes that only about two in every hundred regressions may not be the product of imagination and fantasy, and thereby deserve special consideration.²³⁸ Special note will be applied to a few of those well-documented cases, below.

However, as a genre of information to consider, here are a few more reasons to take the idea and genre of past-life hypnotic recall seriously:

1) Few people are aware of Dr. Raymond Moody's ground breaking research on Near Death Experiences so it should be expected that a good number of hypnotherapy clients would also be unaware of the NDE phenomenon. When a client is hypnotically regressed back to a previous life and then taken through their death and departure scene again, the descriptions of those clients' experiences at death match, on par with, the reported statements of people who have experienced an NDE.²³⁹ For those persons without prior knowledge of NDEs, this limits the normal opportunities a person under hypnosis would be able to recall a piece of information acquired via normal means – such as reading, television, hearing a similar account from others, etc. – and then projecting it as their own recalled experience. One must wonder then, how a person would acquire this information unless they were actually recalling, through the aid of hypnosis, what had occurred to them immediately following death in a past life. Significantly more will be discussed on this topic in the next chapter.

2) As will be noted in a later section in this chapter, pure fantasy has little part to play in hypnotic past-life recall. Subjects under hypnosis do not tend to recall past lives as kings or other famous persons. Indeed most lives are boring, unglamorous lives, typified of the lowest class of society; i.e. the highest percentage of the population throughout the history of mankind. Dr. Helen Wambach specifically studied this phenomenon, and reported on the statistical significance of past-life recall as being preferential to investigating the merits of any singular case. In particular, she was troubled by the idea one could plausibly fantasize under hypnosis about being born and dying as an infant or young child. Surely a more reasonable fantasy should include riches and fame. However, Dr. Wambach knew the incidence of infant mortality approached 50 percent in both primitive societies and during past centuries before modern

medicine increased the odds of survival for both children and childbearing mothers. Therefore, statistics insisted if past-life recall under hypnosis had any basis in fact, people must indeed recall instances of living as a child who died before the age of five, which was indeed born out in her research.²⁴⁰

3) Additionally, the subject of xenoglossy will also be discussed later in this chapter. Briefly, xenoglossy refers to an ability to speak a foreign language, usually while under hypnosis during a past-life recall session, for which the person has had no prior exposure. This is a powerful level of evidence that may lend special credence to the phenomenon of past-life recall under hypnosis, though the incidence rate is exceptionally low. Still, in the words of William James, these ‘white crows’ need not be numerous; they merely need to exist to lend exceptional validity to the idea of reincarnation.

4) Finally, there is the repetitive and ‘common-sensical’ character of past-life reviews that emotes its own influence on the reader and researcher. In 1950, English psychologist Dr. Alexander Cannon, who had used hypnotic past life regression on more than 1,300 clients in his practice, admitted that for years the theory of reincarnation had been an anathema to him, and resultantly he tried his best to disprove the idea at every opportunity. He even argued with his clients while they were under hypnosis in an attempt to make them admit they were speaking nonsense about their recalled experience. Over the years, however, he eventually realized these stories remained consistent no matter the client’s personal or religious beliefs on the topic prior to the hypnosis experience, and after investigating more than a thousand cases of past-life recall, he admitted to himself there must be such a thing as reincarnation.²⁴¹

Case Studies of Hypnotically-Recalled Past Lives

*The case of Laurel Dilman of the USA*²⁴²

Past-life psychotherapist Dr. Linda Tarazi conducted exhaustive research on one of the so-called ‘white crows,’ hypnotically regressed client Laurel Dilman (pseudonym). Dilman volunteered as a member of a group to be the subject of eight past life sessions between June 1977 and January 1978, during which she recalled a former life as Antonia Michaela Maria Ruiz de Prado, born November 1555 on the island of Hispaniola as the daughter of a Spanish officer, Antonio and his German wife, Erika. During these initial sessions, Dilman, an American who did not speak Spanish and had never visited Spain, provided significant and highly specific information about this past life memory, which upon initial review by Dr. Tarazi proved entirely true.

Seeking to gain better fidelity of the possible validity of this hypnotically recalled past life, Dr. Tarazi convinced Dilman to undergo a further 36 past life regression sessions between June 1981 and March 1983. The purpose of those later sessions was to seek even more, highly specific details that could help prove or disprove whether this past life memory was based on fact or fantasy. With Dilman’s memories of these facts in hand, Dr. Tarazi embarked on an exhaustive search for errors and inconsistencies in Laurel’s memory that involved hundreds of hours of research in two dozen libraries and universities, as well as consultations with historians, archivists and university professors who specialized in Spanish history for that period, and even a personal visit to Cuenca, Spain, where Dr. Tarazi was able to examine the town’s archives and historical Spanish Inquisition records.

Based on this research, Dr. Tarazi verified more than 100 facts from Antonia’s story, many of which were quite obscure. Dr. Tarazi concluded at least 50 of Dilman’s reported facts concerning the life of Antonio could have been easily discernable through consultations with

history books or encyclopedias. Another 30 facts, however, were only discovered with significant difficulty in rare books found in specialized research libraries. Further, over a dozen facts were only published in Spanish, and a few facts were not even published at all, but could be confirmed from the Municipal and Diocesan Archive records in Cuenca, Spain. Of the more than one hundred reported facts of Antonia's life, none had proven to be false!

Some examples of Dilman's reported facts from the life of Antonia included:

- The date of the first publication of the Edict of Faith on the Island of Hispaniola;
- Spanish laws for shipping to the Indies;
- Types and details of ships used in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic during the time period of Antonia's life;
- Dates and contents of the Spanish Indexes of prohibited books and how those indexes differed from the Roman Index;
- Names of priests executed in England between 1581 and 1582, and their method of execution.

Of significant interest, two of the facts were initially *not* supported by archival authorities in Spain, but upon further research eventually proved to be correct. The first was the location of the tribunal of the Inquisition in Cuenca, Spain. Dilman described it as a castle standing above the city of Cuenca. However, the government tourist office in Cuenca provided a photograph of the Inquisition's building that differed from Laurel's description. However, Dr. Tarazi found an obscure history book on Cuenca, published only in Spanish, which revealed the Inquisition had moved to the castle in Cuenca in December 1583, five months before Antonia's arrival in Cuenca, which fit her description exactly. The second was a reference to a college at Cuenca for which no reference was seemingly available to confirm. After much difficulty, however, Dr. Tarazi found a century-old reference, again only in Spanish, which quoted yet other obscure

Spanish sources from the Sixteenth century that described a college that was founded in Cuenca in the mid-Sixteenth century.

A third oddity that stood out from the history books was that although there were normally three Inquisitors at a tribunal, Dilman had mentioned only two having been present. Dr. Tarazi found the Episcopal archives in Cuenca noted during the period 1584-1588 – the entire period Antonia lived in Cuenca – there had indeed been only two Inquisitors at Cuenca.

Dr. Tarazi concluded that considering the number of sources and their sheer obscurity combined with the inherent difficulty of extracting the pertinent information from those sources, it seemed improbable that Dilman could have acquired all of the information through some duplicitous means. When the fact that some of these sources were in a foreign language Dilman could not speak and only located in a foreign country where Dilman had never traveled, then the chances dropped to the realm of impossibility.²⁴³

*The case of G.M. of Australia*²⁴⁴

Past-life psychotherapist Peter Ramster conducted exhaustive research on another one of those ‘white crows,’ hypnotically regressed client “G. M.,” an Australian woman who had never traveled outside of Australia. Under hypnosis, G. M. recalled living as Rose Duncan, a young woman who was born in Somerset, England, in 1765 and died of pneumonia in 1782. Under hypnosis, G. M. provided many facts that could be checked concerning Rose’s life and her recalled historical period in England, including descriptions of the area, buildings, towns and villages, daily life and clothing, and certain verifiable personalities in 18th century England. After researching as many of these facts as possible in research libraries in Australia and some other resources that were available via phone call, such as historians and archivists, Ramster conducted a fact-finding mission to England, accompanied by G.M. and Dr. Basil Cottle of

Bristol University, UK. As with the case of Antonia, Rose Duncan's case produced facts that proved to be both amazingly obscure and accurate.

Ramster found that some of the villages that G. M. recalled no longer even existed, but could be confirmed on older maps of England. Other details of G.M.'s hypnotically recalled life were confirmed in England in museums, historical libraries, and in the unpublished parish records of Somerset, England.

For example, G. M. had repeatedly referred to a "tallet" from her previous life, a word not referenced in any modern dictionaries. However, in the library of Taunton, Somerset, England, a dictionary of obsolete, West Country English words noted the word was used specifically during the time period and location of Rose's life and meant a room under a roof, such as a loft. The word was no longer used, and indeed had never been used anywhere except in the West Country of England. This information showed G. M. had used the otherwise unknown word correctly while under hypnosis and referring to Rose's recalled life.

G. M. made frequent mention of a particular abbey near Rose's home in England and its surroundings. The abbey was described as surrounded by marshy ground, and even G. M.'s descriptions that were no longer evident later proved true, including certain prominent paving stones, pyramids and hills and other features that were used by historical Druids. For those items that were no longer present for verification, Ramster found pertinent evidence in a historical manuscript on the subject, printed in England around 1794.

Further, G. M.'s description of the clothes worn by the Druids that frequented the area between 1775-1780, and the way they filed up a nearby hill in a spiral line was confirmed by Geoffrey Ashe, a local historian, though the mere fact Druids had assembled in the local area of Glastonbury had been unknown to the university historian from Bristol, England.

G.M. also described an establishment known as The Pilgrim's Inn, situated near a humpbacked-shape hill she had called Wearyall Hill. Ramster eventually found an inn of equivalent description that was now known as "The George and Pilgrim," and ascertained it had been known as The Pilgrim's Inn in the 18th century.

While visiting the location described as Rose Duncan's former home, G.M. pointed to the spot where she claimed five houses used to stand, one of which had sold cider. An area homeowner confirmed five houses had stood on the site but were torn down 25 years prior, including one that had been a cider house some 150 years prior. Subsequent to this discussion, Ramster consulted an 18th century survey map of the area and found five houses were indeed annotated at the location G. M. had identified.

Finally, G.M. also recalled a neighbor of Rose Duncan's who had stolen some paving stones from the local abbey and then used them as flooring material in his cottage. G.M. located the neighbor's cottage, which had since been turned into a chicken shed. During an inspection of the chicken shed, Ramster found hidden beneath a thick layer of dirt and bird droppings stones that matched those at the abbey. Under hypnosis in Australia prior to their trip, G.M. had even described and drawn the stone mason's markings for the stolen, blue-grey abbey stones, which were indeed found in the chicken coop located on the other side of the earth from G.M.'s home. The markings were described as three vertical lines on the top left hand corner and a large spiral on the right hand side of the stones. Again, personal inspection had proved G. M.'s hypnotic recollection of Rose's memories were accurate. Ramster concluded that G.M.'s ability to find a specific stone, previously drawn months prior in Sydney, found in a location and country she had never visited was a feat far beyond the element of chance.²⁴⁵

*The case of Doris Williams of the USA*²⁴⁶

Past life Therapist D. Scott Rogo uncovered at least six cases through past life regression that exhibited enough unique proof to justify a belief in reincarnation, including the case of Doris Williams who had a life-long fear of deep water, ocean travel and small boats.

Under hypnotic regression, Doris recalled a former life she had lived as Stephen Weart Blackwell, a clerk with the Brown Shipping Co. located at 167 West State Street in Trenton, New Jersey. Doris recalled Stephan had wanted to go to medical school but his mother had denied the request, forcing him into his current line of work, which involved frequent trips to England for business. During one fateful trip, Doris recalled Stephan was a 43-year old passenger on the Titanic on its maiden voyage, and she recalled the events that occurred in Stephan's memory on April 14, 1912, the night the Titanic hit an iceberg and subsequently sank. Doris provided in great detail the clothes Stephan had worn, the exact place where he had stood on the deck of the Titanic as passengers waited for lifeboats, and the sounds he had heard, including hysterical crying and oddly complacent music as the ship went down.

Most of the details Doris provided were later verified by Rogo's investigation. As might be expected, some of the details were relatively common knowledge. Further, the presence of a certain Stephen Blackwell on the Titanic could have been discerned by anyone with access to a library since it was found in Walter Lord's bestseller, *A Night to Remember*. However, other details Doris provided were quite obscure. For instance, Stephan Blackwell's employment was only listed in a half-century old US Senate investigative report on the Titanic's sinking, which confirmed he had indeed been employed by a Brown Shipley Company, once located at the address Doris had recalled.

*The case of Jenny Cockell of the USA*²⁴⁷

Jenny Cockell was born in 1953, and while still a child began spontaneously recalling a previous life she had lived as ‘Mary’ in the small village of Malahide near Dublin, Ireland, from about 1898 until the 1930s. In 1987, Jenny began seeing a past-life hypnotic therapist who helped her explore these memories of living as Mary over a series of sessions. Jenny thereby recalled the location and physical description of the small cottage Mary had lived in, as well as the names of her husband and four children. In 1989, Jenny took a trip to Malahide, Ireland, and found the location where Mary’s cottage had been and soon found neighbors who recalled the woman, Mary Sutton, who had lived in the cottage and died during childbirth in 1932. One of Mary’s children, who Jenny was able to meet during this trip, was convinced Jenny was his mother reincarnated because of memories Jenny described of his life as a child that he felt no one could have known except for his own mother.

Xenoglossy²⁴⁸

The term xenoglossy was originally coined by Charles Richet and means an occurrence of speaking a language without having prior knowledge of that language. There are two subcategories of xenoglossy, including recitative and responsive xenoglossy. As with the more familiar term, “speaking in tongues,” recitative xenoglossy involves the use of spontaneous phrases or passages of a language but an inability to understand what has been said or understand questions in the foreign language to be able to respond with answers in the same language. Responsive xenoglossy refers to the more important subcategory that will be considered here, which is an ability to converse intelligently in the otherwise unknown foreign language, and implies an understanding between the subject and questioner during the period of responsiveness.

Because native fluency and command of a language requires practice, repetition, and generally some period of immersion, an authentic case of responsive xenoglossy would provide important evidence of the survival of human consciousness after death and the transmittal of that consciousness into a new life as a logical means to explain how such command of an otherwise unknown foreign language could have been passed from one life to another.²⁴⁹

Past life researchers rarely obtain even cursory evidence of xenoglossy, however. The late Dr. Wambach noted only a very small percentage of people are able to respond well enough to hypnotism to write or speak in a foreign language from one of their past lives.²⁵⁰ Dr. Paul Cunningham further discerned subjects under hypnosis have a slower rate of speech, use fewer words and have longer periods of latency than comparable subjects in the normal waking state, which may further explain the complaints many naysayers propose concerning xenoglossy; i.e. even if a person speaks in an unknown language, they tend to use few words, and may have a slow, disjointed pattern of speech.²⁵¹ This phenomenon is noted in many of the cases studies, below, and is used as a common example by naysayers as to why the few hypnotically induced xenoglossy cases that have been published do not seem overly credible. Therefore I will reserve judgment at this point and allow the reader to come to his/her own conclusion as to the validity of this piece of evidence in its applicability for reincarnation.

Case Studies of Xenoglossy

*The case of Uttara Huddar of India*²⁵²

Uttara Huddar was born in Nagpu, India in 1941. Between 1974-1979, a split-based female personality that called herself Sharada Chattopadhaya, spontaneously manifested and took over Uttara's body for periods between two and forty-three days at a time.

When Sharada first manifested, she did not realize she had died and returned in another person's body. She also did not recognize Uttara's family and friends, and provided details of the names and places in Bengal with which she had been familiar as Sharada.

Uttara, who spoke only Marathi, suddenly spoke fluent Bengali with a native accent during the periods that Sharada assumed control of Uttara's body. Dr. Stevenson and his team of investigators found that Sharada's Bengali was free of all English-loan words and had more Sanskrit words than did modern Bengali. Bengali of that description would typify the language, as it existed between the 18th and 19th centuries. Sharada was also unfamiliar with electrical appliances, gas stoves, fountain pens, or modern vehicles, which had all been developed after the industrial revolution, signifying Sharada likely lived between 1810-1830.

Dr. Stevenson lent this case of xenoglossy extra credibility as a possible case of reincarnation because if Uttara had fraudulently learned Bengali, then she would have acquired a modern version of Bengali and not the language as it had existed 150 years prior.

*The case of Jensen Jacoby of the USA*²⁵³

Jensen Jacoby was a male personality manifested by a 37-year old American housewife under hypnosis during eight sessions conducted between 1955-56. Jensen spoke Swedish, which the American housewife could not. Indeed she had never even been exposed to the Swedish language. Dr. Stevenson's investigation concluded there was no mundane way to explain the woman's ability to speak and respond in the unfamiliar foreign language while hypnotized and speaking as Jensen. Jensen would generally respond in English to English-initiated questions and in Swedish to Swedish- initiated questions.

A transcript of these sessions showed Jensen used approximately 60 Swedish words in conversation before Swedish-speaking interlocutors introduced the words, and about 100 Swedish words altogether. While Jensen's Swedish grammar was not perfectly fluent, the

pronunciation was judged by some authorities to have displayed a native Swedish accent. This seems important because in order to adopt a perfect accent, one must be exposed to the language for an extended period of immersion, generally from a very young age. Dr. Stevenson added in order to converse in a language one must practice it, which also implied the Jensen personality had used Swedish during its prior lifetime. However, Dr. Stevenson was still hesitant to definitively connect Jensen's possible prior life to the American housewife's current life as a definitive case of reincarnation.

*The case of Rosemary of England*²⁵⁴

In 1931, Rosemary, a young girl from Blackpool, England, began to speak in an ancient Egyptian dialect. While speaking ancient Egyptian, she claimed to be the personality of Telika-Ventiu, a Babylonian princess and Pharaoh Amenhotep III's wife, who had lived about 3,300 years prior. During more than a thousand language tests, the girl spoke about 5,000 phrases and short sentences in the old Egyptian language. They were recorded phonetically and the first 800 of them were later identified and translated by an Egyptologist. He claimed Rosemary's speech substantially and consistently conformed to what Egyptologists knew of the ancient Egyptian tongue, though the language itself had long since gone extinct. Three books on the Rosemary case have been published and two gramophone discs of the xenoglossy case were recorded.

*The case of 'Gretchen'*²⁵⁵

'Gretchen,' was a female personality manifested by an American housewife under hypnosis during multiple hypnotic sessions conducted between 1970-74. Gretchen spoke only German and used an estimated 206 German words in conversation before German-speaking interlocutors introduced the words. However, Dr. Stevenson found most of Gretchen's responses to posed questions were short utterances or affirmations to an interviewer's questions; basically a simple repetition, using the questioner's own words in declarative response format. Gretchen's

German accent was also imperfect and some words were incorrect Anglicized versions of German words, such as “schicken” for chicken.

*A case in Japan*²⁵⁶

On August 5, 2010, the Japanese TV show, *Kiseki-taiken Unbelievable* [Unbelievable miracle experience], showed a video of a hypnotized Japanese housewife who spoke Nepalese, a language she did not consciously know. The Japanese woman was even able to respond accurately to questions posed to her in the Nepalese language. The Japanese woman asserted she had never learnt Nepalese, never been to Nepal, and did not have Nepalese friends or any other explicable exposure to the Nepalese language.

The video had been shot under the supervision of *Dr. Masayuki Ohkado* of Chubu University, Japan. The television show’s staff then flew to Nepal where they confirmed by independent sources the Japanese woman had indeed spoken in fluent Nepalese.

*The case of the ‘infant of Lubeck’*²⁵⁷

While not a normal case of xenoglossy, Christian Friedrich Heineken, known as the ‘infant of Lubeck’ reportedly talked within a few hours of his birth in 1721. The King of Denmark was intrigued by the young child’s feats and had him brought to Copenhagen for inspection in 1724. Shortly thereafter, the child fell ill and predicted his own death within the year. He died at age four.

An ability to speak at birth implies far more than mere genius talent, but rather a pre-existing ability to speak as the ability must have originated from somewhere. Such might be possible through the manifestation of a prior personality and that personality’s itinerant language capability manifesting unduly early in the newly incarnated baby. A similar phenomenon was also suggested in the case of Maung Hla Hsaung, the child in Burma (previously described) who

initially spoke in an unknown foreign language [implied Japanese] but later learned to speak Burmese.

Statistical Analysis of Hypnotically-Recalled Past Lives

Rather than choose a single past life subject to study in depth, and determine whether the revealed facts corresponded with the historical record, the late Dr. Helen Wambach chose to study a large group of hypnotically-regressed subjects and then examine various common phenomenon from their past life experiences, and compare the incidence of the group's reported phenomenon to known statistics from the historical periods in question.²⁵⁸ As previously noted, Dr. Wambach did not trust subjects under hypnosis to produce minute details that would stand up to intense scrutiny, but felt there was unique validity in the emotions and, more importantly, the meta-data, or general impressions of her clients' and test subjects' experiences.

For example, even though 78 percent of her first group of hypnotically regressed subjects was female, the group as a whole recalled past lives with a sexual distribution that was roughly divided fifty-fifty between male and female. Indeed, throughout all of her study groups, Dr. Wambach found that regardless of the sex her clients had in their current lifetime, they split perfectly into 50.3 percent male and 49.7 percent female lives when regressed to their past lives.²⁵⁹ This was almost exactly what the historical record would demand, regardless of the time period, and showed there was little influence by fantasy, which would have tended to provide past life memories of the same-sex as the subject recalling the life. Dr. Wambach felt this finding was the strongest objective evidence she had discovered during her extended experiment, and led her to conclude her subjects were actually tapping into some real knowledge of the past.²⁶⁰

In addition to sex distribution, Dr. Wambach also compared her subjects' recollections of their wealth/status, race, clothes, foot wear, food and eating utensils, money and supplies,

population, and death experiences. In regards to the former, Dr. Wambach found less than ten percent of the population of past life recall subjects recalled a past life as a member of the upper class, whereas 59-77 percent tended to recall past lives as members of the lowest class. Dr. Wambach wondered if past life recall were merely fantasy, then why would a person choose to fantasize about such mundane and harsh lives. Dr. Wambach found of the average seven percent who remembered upper class past lives that these lives were not usually considered to be particularly pleasant experiences. The stressors and drama unique to the upper crust, political leaders, and wealthy were quite unpleasant memories for most, whereas some of the happiest lives were ironically lived by those of peasants and primitives.²⁶¹

Five of Dr. Wambach's subjects described themselves wearing pants in the Caucasus Mountains around 2,000 BC, and having white skin and light colored hair; none of which they accepted as plausible according to their own view of history. However, Dr. Wambach's later research showed their subconscious had actually presented them with a more accurate picture of life in the Caucasus Mountains around 2,000 BC than their conscious awareness would accept as valid. Dr. Wambach concluded that when our hypnotic experiences of the past life contrast with preconceived notions of the truth, and yet hold up under close scrutiny then we should reconsider the idea that past-life recall is only fantasy.²⁶²

The mode of death recalled by Dr. Wambach's subjects also matched closely with the expected mode of death for each of the time periods measured. As a median, 55-73 percent of recalled deaths were due to natural causes, 12-17 percent were due to accidents and 13-24 percent were due to violence.²⁶³

The death experience Dr. Wambach's subjects recalled also matched closely with the template identified by Dr. Raymond Moody's research on the Near Death Experience. Dr. Wambach further concluded of this that the universality of the recalled death experience

suggested that prior knowledge, such as through NDE research, could not account for the level of unanimity in reporting between all of her subjects. While some may have read Dr. Moody's books, certainly all had not and yet they *all* reported a uniform death experience similar to that found by NDE researchers.²⁶⁴ Further, Dr. Wambach found to her surprise that her clients consistently reported that death had been the best part of the past-life hypnotic recall experience. Not only did her clients report the process of death was pleasant, but they realized an intense relief when their spirit was released from the body and gained complete freedom once again.²⁶⁵ Her clients were no longer afraid of death, having experienced this phenomenon.

Conclusion

I find the philosophy of James Dillet Freeman to be exactly in line with my original concern about organized Western religion, and certainly applicable to the topic of reincarnation. Freeman's argument was thus,

Consider two children. One of them is born into a rich family, a happy family, a harmonious family. He's brought up in a secure world. He gets a good education. He marries. He has happy children of his own. He has good health all his life, or most of it, and at sixty, seventy, or eighty, he dies peacefully in bed. Another child is born ill, half-starved, maimed in body and mind. Maybe he lives for minutes – or maybe for hours or months or a few years. He's abused all that time, twisted in mind, taught to rob and kill – or maybe he's brought up in a savage world of civil war and trouble and is murdered in his youth. That one of these two turns out to be a moral, law-abiding citizen, and the other turns out to be a thief and a murderer cannot possibly provide a basis for eternal judgment.²⁶⁶

Further still are words in some of the world's most influential religions that could only be interpreted as supporting the concept of reincarnation. Consider in the New Testament St Paul's

letter to the Galatians 6:7, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Unless this warning is interpreted as fallible, then it proclaims strongly of the concept of rebirth because one life is plainly insufficient to prove this assertion correct, and indeed is equivalent to the Eastern Religious idea of Karma. The same could be noted of St. John’s Revelation 13:10, “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.” Given the fact that many soldiers have died quietly in their beds of old age, this statement would be robbed of any meaning if not for the possibility of future retribution in a subsequent life where one who had previously killed, with a sword or otherwise, could then be killed in a similar violent manner. The same argument could be extended to any other violent act humans commit against one another: rape, robbery, murder, or any such injustice; not everyone who rapes will be raped in their lifetime; not everyone who murders will be subsequently murdered. However, the possibility of subsequent lifetimes to experience the consequences of prior sins would certainly allow these passages in the bible to bear out truthfully.

Still, such a cut-and-dry interpretation of karma should not be interpreted as an impossible and never-ending cycle of retribution for one’s past sins. Dr. Michael Newton concluded from his thousands of hours of work studying pre- and post-life examinations of subjects through their inter-life period that the essential purpose of reincarnation was self-improvement.²⁶⁷ Russian past life therapist Varvara Ivanova noted that specific difficulties will crop up continually in successive lifetimes until one learns how to overcome the adversities they are continually facing in life.²⁶⁸ Thus, if one wants to rid oneself of the current difficulties they are facing, the surest answer is to face those difficulties head on and deal with them now in their current life, no matter how (temporarily) painful such a course of action may seem. If one hopes ever to break out of the cycle of reincarnation and having to face the same problems over and over, such action can only be accomplished in the present point of *Now*.²⁶⁹

Dr. Michael Newton found that souls accept a compact with the Universe upon acceptance of a new life on Earth and as such they will not generally remember their previous lives on Earth, or even their true connection to their Oversoul and life in the spirit world. This is because learning from a blank slate is better and more meaningful than knowing in advance what could happen as a consequence of one's actions.²⁷⁰ Similarly, if people were cognizant of their past deeds and mistakes, they might pay too much attention to the past rather than trying out new approaches to similar problem sets to apply to their current life. The new life must be taken seriously, as if it were one's only life, and thus considered by a human to be its only chance to experience all that is and solve those issues that it faces in the current life.

That certainly seems to be the most plausible explanation for the phenomenon of reincarnation to me. When a child spontaneously recalls a past life, invariably because of a traumatic and violent death, the recalled life is due to the emotional residue left with the spirit and carried over between lives. A 'veil of amnesia' is part-and-parcel of the so-called compact with the Universe, and usually prevents souls from recalling their previous lives, but is imperfect in these cases because of the power of the emotional residue from the traumatic experience. The fact that emotional energy could also affect the next life through carried-over birthmarks and birth defects from prior wounds shows the power of that energy. In the cases of Japanese soldiers reborn as Burmese natives, one is given a unique insight into the workings of the Universe to see (limitedly) how a previous karmic debt might be, at least partially, repaid in the next successive life. In these cases Japanese soldiers who had abused Burmese natives during the course of their assignments in the country were given an opportunity to live as the natives they had abused in their prior life: the debt was related to but not exact in that they did not live as the Burmese natives they had abused during the same, overlapping time period.

Beyond emotion-induced cracks in the veil of amnesia, the process of hypnosis can focus conscious attention into its subconscious and even super-conscious states, providing a person unique access to their previous lives, even if those memories are imperfect recollections or possibly even amalgamations of multiple lives thus limiting the exacting nature of the recall process. Dr. Wambach found it was exceptionally rare to be able to recall foreign languages used in those lives well enough to use them in a responsive manner, but the mere fact that a few case studies existed showed that the phenomenon was possible.

To further rectify the findings of this chapter, consider Dr. Wambach's findings to be quite significant: impressions via meta-data and emotions are the most significant, readily accessible and relevant data sets that can normally be gained through research on clients' hypnotically-recalled past lives. While some data may indeed be accurate, perhaps eerily so, the process of hypnosis does not increase the accuracy of reporting so it should not be considered a truth serum for the current life, much less for past lives. Only a few exceptional specimens are able to tap into their subconscious deeply enough to be able to speak or write in a foreign language used in one of those previous lives, and likewise only an exceptional few could tap an unimpeded fountain of true facts from those past lives that could stand up to intense scrutiny. Therefore, it is less reliable to dispel an entire genre of potential evidence simply because every reported 'fact' from a previous life does not prove correct under exhaustive research. Rather, the meta-data from those lives should be explored for applicability and utility in research to determine whether the reported lives are plausible, or could aid scientific research on an issue. It should not be surprising therefore, that spontaneous recall produces likewise fallible results and facts, perhaps even more so given the absence of directed consciousness as is achieved under hypnosis. Still, the genre of research provides its own unique support to the subject of reincarnation, and is likewise supported by the meta-data and emotions experienced and recalled

by the children-subjects who experience spontaneous recall. Like hypnotic recall subjects, one hundred percent correlation between remembered facts and the ground truth is unnecessary for these cases to also have significant merit as already argued.

A take-away from this chapter might be that one should reconsider their former notions of prejudice against those who are not like themselves. Indeed, as authorities later in this book will note, the average soul has lived hundreds, if not thousands, of lives on Earth and likely has lived as every race, sex, nationality, religion, and other discriminator that has ever existed. Therefore hating one who appears different than oneself is akin to hating one's own self since we have all been like that person in another life, for whatever purpose our karmic debt or Oversoul had required at that time, or rather, will in a future lifetime. Further, there is always the karmic concern that to hate another today for who they are may actually incur a karmic debt of living one's next life as the subject of one's current wrath in order to understand better the feeling of being discriminated against. Consider the genre of reincarnation research is full of stories of former Nazi soldiers being reincarnated to live their next life as Jews so that they could better understand the unique issues of the people they had previously mistreated. If one hates something intensely in this lifetime, the chance exists of having to live as the subject of that hate in a future life, perhaps to gain a better perspective of the issue as a developing and experiencing soul.

A final take-away should almost assuredly not only mimic Dr. Wambach's finding that death was pleasant, but that death was most certainly not an end, but rather a continuation of life with a subtle movement from one chapter to the next. Indeed, this knowledge in itself may provide the internal courage one might need to face one's challenges *Now* to make the hard decisions needed to overcome a present fear given the reality that death cannot hurt one's actual existence. Imagine what you could do, for example, if you could put aside fear. Assuredly, all

of life's stressors come from some form of fear and the drive to avoid or overcome it: fear of death and fear of competition, for example, are primary among those. If you can put aside those fears, there may be no limit to what you can achieve in this or the next life. From this higher, soul-based perspective, the nagging fear of death can be put aside and replaced with an acceptance that life holds the opportunity for spiritual transformation.²⁷¹

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This concludes my free five-chapter sample of *The Hidden Truth*. My intention was to expose as many readers as possible through this free sample to my logical thought processes, and writing style in order to encourage as many as possible to continue the journey through the conclusion in chapters 6-10 of the full book version of *The Hidden Truth*. The best is yet to come as I build upon ideas and themes already discussed, and present new ideas and research that should cause the reader to reassess their understanding of “Truth” regarding the nature of reality and the meaning of life.

I hope you will join me again at the conclusion of this important journey.

THE END, Part 1