

Life and Death in the Big City!

The geometrical structure of dying

By James E. Beichler

Physics has long been considered the most fundamental and basic of all sciences because it represents human attempts to explain the common reality of our physical existence. No other science deals with our physical reality in either this or any similar manner. However, there are still questions about our existence that fall outside of the scope of physics, so physics cannot be said to offer a complete explanation of our total being. Perhaps the most important of the questions, which have traditionally existed outside the realm of physics, have been the question of death itself that is, of course, dependent upon an ultimate explanation of life. In the scientific search for objectivity, life has been deemed separate from non-living matter in the discourses and theories of physics, so physicists would have had no reason to explain the death of living beings. Yet recent questions regarding the essential role of consciousness in physics have raised the level of theoretical inquiry to the point that scientists in the physics community can no longer ignore life and death.

For all intents and purposes, consciousness is a quality associated solely with living beings and yet it seems to have a fundamental connection to all forms of matter regardless of their state of living or non-living as well as their states of motion, both of which are studied by physicists when explaining our material reality. On the other hand, the recent discovery (or rediscovery) of 'near death experiences' (NDEs) has raised serious questions regarding the common reality that we experience. While the reports of NDEs are totally subjective and there are mixed feelings whether they have been experimentally verified as anything other than products of imagination, the breadth and depth of the common experiences attributed to ND events in both time and across cultural boundaries comes as near as possible to confirming the reality of the experiences independent of direct experimental verification. The universality of the experiences is the best evidence for their validation as real events describing a portion of our physical being and this universality has allowed scientists to determine the common properties of the experiences

When accepted as real events, the NDEs imply that our normal conceptions of physical reality are both lacking and inadequate, so it is the duty of those who study physical reality, the physicists, to account for this new extension of our reality. Quite simply, the NDEs seem to give those who experience them a picture or sample of an afterlife, or more appropriately, the survival of some form of consciousness after the death of the living material body. Our present paradigm of physics cannot incorporate this new realm of reality as it is experienced, so ultimately it falls to the paraphysicist to account for NDEs within the context of our natural world.

The NDE

NDEs were 'discovered' by Dr. Raymond Moody and first introduced to the public in his 1975 book *Life after Life*. It was Dr. Moody who gave the events the name NDEs and first recognized the experiences as valid scientific observations of our common reality. But similar events had been known for more than two millennia and were documented to some extent in the Tibetan *Book of the Dead* and the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. Throughout recorded history, mystics and others have also told tales of similar events. So, while NDEs are a recent discovery by modern scientists they are also very old and well documented phenomena outside of the scientific community. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that scientists only 'recognized' the existence of NDEs rather recently, rather than state that they were 'discovered' recently. Whatever the case may be, the growing amount of research into the phenomena since 1975 has resulted in the identification, classification and enumeration of several specific characteristics that seem common to the various reports of the experiences.

In *Transformed by the Light*, Dr. Melvin Morse and Paul Perry list the properties as (1) a sense of being dead, (2) peace and painlessness, (3) an out-of-body experience, (4) a tunnel experience, (5) meeting people of light, (6) meeting a being of light, (7) a life review, (8) a reluctance to return, and (9) a personality transformation. (Morse and Perry, vii-xi) While the list of exact properties may vary slightly from researcher to researcher, depending upon each scientist's personal emphasis, it can certainly be agreed that the most common properties are the review of past lives, the blackness or tunnel, the white light, and meeting with deceased loved ones and/or a religious figure. Recognizing these characteristics does not mean that everyone experiences each and all of them during any one NDE. Different people experience different combinations of these characteristics although it seems that the events usually end with a sense of being pulled back to the experiencer's material body or sometimes sent back with the warning that the experiencer's time to die had not yet come. These various characteristics give experiencers the impression that they are dead as well as the feeling that they are out-of-body. Many experiencers also report floating above their bodies and witnessing events outside of their normal range of perception while in this state.

Normal time and space seem irrelevant within this phase of reality. Experiencers sometimes witness normal events in our normal reality during the NDE. Unfortunately, reports of normal real events witnessed during the out-of-body portion of the NDE and the accuracy of such reports have been controversial and plagued by discrepancies, so the scientific community at large has not accepted this particular form of evidence. After the event has occurred and the experiencer recovered from the state of near death, specific psychological/emotional changes have been noted. These include enhanced compassion, a greater ecological awareness and many times a complete change in life style. Enhanced psychic abilities have also been associated with the NDEs.

These events fit neither the present paradigms of science nor our commonly perceived concept of physical reality. There are clearly no provisions for these occurrences in modern science. Biologists, physicists, chemists, medical researchers,

neuroscientists or psychologists cannot explain them. In the past, such phenomena were either categorized as religious experiences or ignored altogether by scientists and the common populace lest the experiencer be branded insane, but the events are still very real to those who experience them and serious discussions of the events should be encouraged. Some scientists even try to explain away the events as oxygen starvation of the brain during the period of clinical death or some other natural chemical interaction in the brain, which occurs 'after' all brain function, has supposedly ceased. Yet these explanations cannot account for the experiencers' observations and memories of the event. But even more to the point, they cannot explain the profound changes in personality that occur after the NDE. The single greatest piece of evidence for the reality of the NDE comes in the form of the unprecedented psychological and emotional changes that experiencers display after the events.

In spite of the problems that have been encountered in dealing with NDEs and their implications, science has taken an interest in NDEs and their properties. But theories and even speculations regarding the physical nature of this new reality have been few and far between. Quite simply, these events seem to offer a window on an afterlife and thus offer evidence that consciousness survives physical death of the body through some unknown and unsuspected mechanism. According to Dr. Kenneth Ring, one of the foremost experts on NDEs,

Indeed, everyone, critics included, understands that many moderns have become fascinated NDEs not simply because they suggest that the moment of death is one of stupendous splendor and joy beyond reckoning. No - it is rather the unmistakable implication that this kind of experience continues, that there is a life after death and that, furthermore, it will be wonderful. (Ring and Valarino, 278)

This comes in spite of the fact that even the mention of 'life after death' is considered grossly counter-productive to the purpose of scientific inquiry for many scientists and raises questions of superstition and the supernatural corrupting good science. Previous accounts of 'life after death' have only been considered a fringe area for scientific inquiry at best and in many cases an altogether taboo subject in science, so earlier data (prior to the 1960s) on the subject is tainted by the lack of scientific scrutiny and offers little to guide science toward an understanding of the phenomenon let alone any intuitive feel for the form of reality being sensed.

Nowhere in science has this been more evident than in physics to which falls the task of describing 'reality.' The only serious and noteworthy attempt by well-known and respected physicists to account for death came more than a century ago. In 1875, a book entitled *The Unseen Universe: or Physical Speculations on a Future State* appeared in England. The first publication of the book was anonymous, reflecting the authors' fear of ridicule due to the taboo on the subject within scientific circles. But the book proved so popular that Peter G. Tait and Balfour Stewart revealed their authorship in later printings of the book. Tait and Stewart combined then current concepts in science to argue their case for a logical and scientific explanation of the survival of death. They drew their arguments from the conservation of energy and related thermodynamical principles as well as the much older and widely used Principle of Continuity. Their line of reasoning

resulted in the demand by nature itself that something human survives physical death. While their book was highly regarded by scientists at the time, it had no long lasting effect on science. Today, their book rates no more than a footnote in some historical studies of Victorian science.

Although modern physics and the present paradigms of science can offer neither an explanation of NDEs nor shed any light on the physical reality that they imply, the earlier work of Tait and Stewart demonstrates that scientific concepts can be used to offer some insight into the possibility of an afterlife. More directly, new theories in physics, which may portend a paradigm shift in science can possibly, explain NDEs and the reality that they imply. In particular, 'single field theory' (SOFT) can account for the detected properties of NDEs within the context of a far greater reality than normal physics or science can presently describe.

The SOFT Universe

SOFT is a 'unified field theory' of the type sought by Albert Einstein during the last three decades of his life. In fact, it is based upon Einstein and his colleagues' efforts during the late 1930s to further develop Theodor Kaluza's electromagnetic extension of general relativity. SOFT posits that physical reality, at its most fundamental level, is continuous rather than discrete as required by the quantum and quantum field theories. Although it is fundamentally a different approach to unification than has been popular in the last three decades, SOFT successfully unifies quantum theory and relativity.

According to SOFT, our four-dimensional space-time continuum, as described by general relativity, acts as if it is a 'sheet' embedded within a five-dimensional space-time continuum. The 'single field' is a strictly continuous five-dimensional entity that manifests itself as gravity, electromagnetism and other fields (fundamental physical interactions) as well as particles at the four-dimensional level of physical reality. Although the 'sheet' has no measurable thickness since it is continuous in the fifth direction, or rather it is not a separate 'thing' with boundaries within the continuous five-dimensional single field, we can hypothesize an 'effective width' of the 'sheet' for practical and physical purposes which gives our four-dimensional continuum its quantum and thus particulate characteristics. (Beichler, 1999a) Protons and other elementary particles can be described as folds, bends, burbles and blips in the 'sheet.' Just as our four-dimensional space-time can be represented by a closed Riemannian curved surface, the fifth dimension can be represented as a closed Riemannian surface. Five-dimensional physical 'reality' is the continuity of the field marked by density variations within the field. These density variations form the 'sheet' and particles from the four-dimensional perspective while the 'sheet' itself and the 'effective width' of the 'sheet' are just mathematical objects and scientific metaphors used to 'reduce' the single field for the purposes of scientific analysis.

In keeping with Kaluza's five-dimensional model of a combined field, each mathematical point in our normal four-dimensional space-time corresponds to a line perpendicular to the 'sheet' called an 'A-line.' The 'A-line' extends throughout the fifth

dimension closing on the same point in four dimensions on the opposite side of the 'sheet.' The 'A-lines' could be considered virtual photons from the quantum perspective. They cut across the 'effective width' of the 'sheet' and thus give the photon its particulate characteristics while the remainder of the photon, which extends through the fifth dimension and external to the sheet, accounts for the wave nature of the photon. Moving further beyond Kaluza's original model, fundamental particles such as protons are folds which are themselves perpendicular to the 'sheet,' so the 'A-lines' extending through the fifth dimension from the internal points of a particle are now parallel to the overall 'sheet.' These 'A-lines' are called 'lateral A-lines' and they extend throughout the fifth dimension returning to the particle from its opposite side. However, they would also touch all other particles in the universe forming a special and unsuspected extra-dimensional connection between all particles of matter in the universe that parallels, literally, their four-dimensional connection via gravity. The 'A-lines' and their counterparts are not physically real. They are just mathematical devices that represent the extended continuous field and can thus be used to model changes in density and their extended influences within the single field.

When particles move within the 'sheet,' relative to the other particles that constitute our four-dimensional material universe, their five-dimensional form is altered by the extension of their five-dimensional center of field density further into the fifth direction. This alteration is governed by the formulas of special relativity and the conservation of matter and energy. These changes in five-dimensional field density, or changes in the 'aspect' of the four-dimensional particle relative to a stationary position within the 'sheet,' can be modeled mathematically as variations in the density of 'lateral A-lines' extending between all of the material particles in the universe. So changes in three-dimensional or spatial position which material particles undergo are communicated extra-dimensionally throughout the universe via the 'system' of 'lateral A-lines.' Such communication of single field density variations does not respect the known limits to physical communication in four-dimensional space-time, such as the constant speed of light and the attenuation of waves. So five-dimensional field density variations are communicated throughout the universe in excess of the speed of light.

This model can be applied to explain rather simple chemical reactions. To a physicist, chemical reactions are characterized as exchanges of energy via shared or exchanged outer shell atomic electrons. These energy variations would represent single field density variations in the fifth dimension which would, in turn, be communicated to surrounding particles via their 'lateral A-line' systems. Contiguous atoms and molecules that are chemically reacting would thus couple together extra-dimensionally and form a concerted pattern of change or action. In a sense, the single field densities corresponding to the different molecules involved in the chemical reaction would 'resonate' together according to their extra-dimensional connections. Such a 'resonance' would be far more effective in equilibrium reactions. Although this 'resonance' occurs completely within the five-dimensional extension of the particles involved, it would directly affect the quality of chemical reactions in four-dimensional space-time.

In the case of equilibrium reactions, this extra-dimensional coupling of energies, corresponding to field density variations from the five-dimensional perspective, would become an important component of the reaction characteristics. Since an equilibrium reaction can move either forward or backward, depending on the physical characteristics or conditions of the reaction, the individual atoms and molecules which are reacting form a specific identifiable 'resonance' pattern in the fifth dimension which is subject to the physical environmental conditions of the reaction. Life, even in its simplest form, depends upon the exchange of energies in such equilibrium reactions. So the special quality called 'life' which we associate with a unique group of material particles constituting a physical body that we call 'living matter' is directly associated with the five-dimensional components of fundamental material particles. Within this context, the chemical reactions which characterize life take on a whole new look which serves to define not only life, but also mind and consciousness, (Beichler, 1999b) offering an explanation of NDEs and the 'survival of consciousness' after death.

The SOFT life

When specific chemical reactants of different equilibrium reactions are mixed under appropriate physical conditions, interlocking and interdependent equilibrium reactions can occur. Individual equilibrium reactions within this 'primordial chemical soup' establish what could be called a mathematically chaotic mechanism of interacting atoms and molecules. Under the proper environmental conditions, the different equilibrium reactions progressing independently within the soup eventually come to depend upon the progress or state of the other equilibrium reactions. At this point, the different chaotic motions at the atomic and molecular levels of the chemical interactions form a mathematical complexity. This complexity is really a coupling or pattern that develops among the single field density variations characteristic of the different but interdependent equilibrium reactions. So this pattern is again a completely five-dimensional physical entity. The complexity that is established, a unique pattern of chemical 'resonances,' is like a melody, which evolves from the separate musical notes, played by different instruments.

This first level complexity is what we call 'life.' It is the special and unique quality that marks the whole being of a living body and renders the living body greater than the sum of its parts, the individual chemical interactions. Historically, many scientists and philosophers have thought that there was more to 'life' than just the mechanical parts of a living body, and they have called that extra something 'elan vital' or the 'life force.' However, it has never been identified nor its existence even confirmed. It is now identified within SOFT as a first level complexity of resonance patterns associating the single field density variations of specific and well defined chemical reactions.

The simplest living being would continue to evolve as more elements in its immediate physical environment come under chemical contact and interaction within its body. In other words, other chemical reactions are absorbed into the complexity pattern as necessary for the successful survival of the living body. The 'resonance' pattern of 'life' at the five-dimensional level thus becomes even more 'complex.' At some point in its

evolution, the living being becomes so complex that it differentiates functions for the control of its 'life' processes. This necessitates, on the four-dimensional level, an organizational structure with one organ specializing in directing and coordinating the efforts of the other remaining organs in the body. In other words, a rudimentary brain evolves for coordinating and controlling the functions of the various specialized organs that make up the more complex living body. From the five-dimensional perspective, this step in evolution, particular to the various species of animals, corresponds to the evolution of a still higher mathematical complexity pattern that develops from among the complexity patterns of life representing the individual specialized organs. This higher-level complexity is commonly called 'mind.' So, while 'mind' is associated with and acts through the physical four-dimensional brain, it actually corresponds to the whole living body and the point-by-point extension of the living body into the fifth dimension. 'Mind' is a specialized pattern of field densities or a 'resonance' within the 'life' pattern.

Brain and 'mind' are primarily concerned with the body and its interaction with the immediate physical environment in which it survives. Yet the 'mind' learns and builds up a storehouse of memories of events and interactions even while they continue to exist outside of the body's immediate environmental envelope. Eventually, these memories and their chemical traces within the brain extend the awareness of the 'mind' to incorporate a knowledge of places, things and events outside of the body's immediate physical environment. The 'mind' therefore develops an awareness of the greater expanse of four-dimensional space and time, which is not within its immediate range of perception at any given moment. These memories would be a chaotic assemblage of chemical reactions and traces within the brain if 'mind' was not present to organize them into a coherent whole, a logical model or picture of the whole existence of the body within its total physical environment.

At this point, a new and still higher level of mathematical complexity evolves among the memories and bits of knowledge within the 'mind.' The expanding role of 'mind' within its environmental envelope evolves 'consciousness,' an awareness of its own being, self, and the conditions in which the body functions within its more complete surrounding four-dimensional environment. 'Consciousness' is the result of an evolutionary process toward a still higher or third level 'resonance' pattern between memories, knowledge patterns, 'mind' and the living body. 'Consciousness' exists completely in the fifth dimension as an extension of the living body. Since it incorporates 'mind' and the knowledge of a distant external environment, 'consciousness' exists as the direct product of an individual's knowledge of the complete physical four-dimensional world in which we exist. But 'consciousness' also marks the barest beginning of an awareness of the five-dimensional connections of the material body to other material bodies within the universe, even though this may not be a completely conscious awareness of the five-dimensionality of our physical existence and being. 'Consciousness' depends upon 'mind' for its initial knowledge of the universe; so all knowledge is filtered by the four-dimensional experiences of 'mind.' The difference between the 'mind's' view of the world and what 'consciousness' senses directly within its own environment is commonly called intuition. Our five-dimensional awareness first manifests itself in the subtlest of qualitative mental abilities, the most common of which is known as 'intuition,'

but it also includes the physical qualities of emotion and psi function. Even though it evolved as a four-dimensional awareness, we also gain an extremely subtle subconscious or intuitive sense of our five-dimensional connections with the rest of the world with the first onslaught of 'consciousness.'

Altogether, four levels of organization characterize a 'conscious' or 'sentient' being. The first, simple chemistry is purely four-dimensional within a mathematically chaotic physical environment, ruled by entropy. The second, 'life,' is a complexity of the level one chemistry. While 'life' has evolved from specific chemical reactions, 'life' comes to organize and control chemical reactions in the living body at the lower level. The physical reality of 'life' presents a two-way interaction with level one body forming the material basis of level two 'life' and level two 'life' being the organizational principle for level one body. Every chemical and physical action in four-dimensional space-time has an unsuspected five-dimensional component, not just living matter, just as every five-dimensional action would have a corresponding four-dimensional equivalent. But only 'life' or more explicitly the 'resonance' pattern at the five-dimensional level that distinguishes the specific group of chemical reactions that we call 'life' has an organizational relationship with the lower level of four-dimensional chemical and physical interactions.

By the same token, level three 'mind' has evolved from level two 'life,' but 'mind' is the organizational principle for level two 'life.' Continuing to the next higher level, level four 'consciousness' has evolved from level three 'mind' even as 'consciousness' has become the organizational principle for the lower level of 'mind.' So, there is a bi-directional action-reaction correspondence or relationship between each lower level and the next higher level of complexity. In physics, this means that each level acts as a coherence principle for the levels both immediately above it and below it. This special relationship is significant in the explanation of the conscious survival of death.

Dying in a SOFT Universe

Upon death, the chemical reactions that sustain 'life' are irreparably disrupted and normal energy interactions within the body cease over a period of time. Chemical equilibrium in organs as well as individual cells is disrupted. The loss of this underlying chemical basis of 'life' initiates a ripple of decoherence, which propagates throughout the 'life' pattern of resonance in the fifth dimension. In other words, 'life' ends when the primary complexity pattern of resonances between five-dimensional field variations corresponding to chemical energy exchanges in four-dimensional space-time is disrupted. But 'life' itself is quite stable and durable under normal conditions and can withstand small disruptions, so the resonance patterns of field density variations that are 'life' cannot be so easily derailed. Minor chemical disruptions due to disease and some forms of physical impairment within the body are not enough to disrupt the primary resonance pattern of 'life' in the fifth dimension. All diseases disrupt the chemical balances within the body to some degree, but only the most serious lead to death and among those only a few cause a rapid and irrevocable march toward death or disruption of the primary 'life' pattern. In fact, it should be theoretically possible for 'mind' and 'consciousness' to help

cure diseases from their superior vantage point since they are organizational principles and diseases are disruptions to the organization or resonance pattern of 'life.' The diseases and physical conditions that lead to immediate death are those that harm the internal organs or the brain directly, because the brain and the body's organs are either chemical processing plants absolutely necessary to 'life' or regulatory agents within the body complex and thus contribute significantly to the resonance pattern of 'life.'

No matter how the body dies, the cessation of brain activity or function represents the final act of the living body just as the medical community and legal systems have concluded. The cessation of brain function not only disrupts 'life' directly, but also cuts off the most direct and primary connection between the body and 'mind.' Normal sensory input to the 'mind' ceases because the electro-chemical interactions in the brain stop processing incoming sensory data from the immediate physical environment of the body.

But only the four-dimensional body actually dies, or rather disrupts the resonance pattern of 'life' in the fifth dimension due to the discontinuance of chemical processes at the four-dimensional level. 'Mind' and 'consciousness,' both of which are completely five-dimensional entities, are shielded or insulated from the body by 'life' itself which is also five-dimensional but directly connected to the four-dimensional body. When 'life' is disrupted to the extent that death occurs, 'life' goes through a process of decoherence by detachment from the chemical interactions from which it originally evolved. But the same cannot be said for 'mind' and 'consciousness' because they still share their own interdependent existence without direct connections to the four-dimensional body. 'Mind' and 'consciousness' are mutually cohering principles relative to each other, so they remain intact even as 'life' decoheres during the dying process.

Some of the most basic five-dimensional structures or resonances that contributed to the 'life' pattern before the body died also remain intact, but disconnected from the other patterns as the 'mind/consciousness' complex is freed to exist independently within the fifth dimension. The 'mind/consciousness' complex retains its identity after a manner in the fifth dimension, in so far as identity is not a material but still a physical quantity or quality. However, the extent to which the complex is 'conscious' of its own existence or being would depend upon the extent to which it was 'conscious' or aware of its five-dimensional connections before the death of the four-dimensional body and what is perceived by the 'mind' as 'self' while the body still lived and functioned.

At the lowest possible level of pre-death 'consciousness,' where awareness of the five-dimensional connection is minimal, the surviving resonance complex, an echo of the field density variations that existed in the past, would be subject to other field density variations emanating from elsewhere in the five-dimensional portion of the universe. A higher degree of consciousness could, in principle and theory, utilize those connections to its own benefit. Whether one cares to call this 'mind/consciousness' complex a ghost, spirit or soul, it remains the same, a resonance complex consisting of the 'mind,' 'consciousness' and a few disconnected fragments of 'life' remaining after the death of the four-dimensional material body. It would perhaps be accurate to say that this complex is not a ghost unless or until it interacts in a detectable manner with the four-dimensional

material universe via its remaining partial and segmented 'life' resonances. At present, NDEs are the best indicators to what happens to the 'mind/consciousness' complex after material death.

What happens to this surviving 'mind/consciousness' resonance complex is also open to question since its own awareness of its being within the fifth dimension is subject to the state or degree of 'consciousness' at the time of material death. A living person who has developed a higher degree or state of 'consciousness' during his or her life stands a far better chance of becoming a free agent, so to speak, in his or her five-dimensional existence after material death.

NDEs within the SOFT model

In the most extreme NDEs, the patient actually dies and is revived. NDEs associated with these extreme events are the most reliable for death studies, but do not supply all of the needed data on death. With death, the lack of sensory input from our normal world of four-dimensional sources induces a never before experienced state of quiet and peace in which 'mind' and 'consciousness' can function together and independent of life and body. Freed from the background chatter of stimuli from the four-dimensional material world, the 'mind' can more easily 'hear,' 'see' or otherwise 'sense' the input of data from its five-dimensional connections with the rest of the world. The words 'hear,' 'see' and 'sense' are actually inadequate to describe the way of learning and knowing that the 'mind/consciousness' complex now experiences, but no other words are available to describe this state of being. Input of data from connections of the 'consciousness' to the rest of the universe via the 'lateral A-line' system is constant even during 'life,' but extremely subtle. So, it could not normally be detected and brought into the conscious thought of the living person without specialized training or through some unique and usually random situation. The effect is similar to the inability to see stars in the sky during the bright sunlight of the daytime, but the difference is even more extreme than this simple analogy might imply.

Immediately after death, the surviving 'mind/consciousness' complex is isolated from contact with the four-dimensional material world by the disruption of 'life.' With the loss of the normal sensory input which has dominated all of the previous living physical existence of the individual's 'mind/consciousness' complex, the 'mind' searches for new connections to orient and stabilize its new 'self.' The 'mind' will, of course, first search for input that it is the most familiar with, such as the normal sensory inputs from the brain that are the most recognizable within its own patterns of memories and knowledge. Even an unrecognizable input would be interpreted in light of the already existing knowledge patterns which correspond to the dominant four-dimensional reality of the person's previous living experience, his or her worldview, philosophy of life or religious belief system. This search and the 'mind/consciousness' complex's need to reestablish its contact with the surrounding material environment explains the common characteristics of the NDEs.

The 'mind' first seizes upon its own inherent memories - its past - to stabilize its new 'self' after the field variation disruptions caused by death. From the simple physics of the five-dimensional perspective, there is no qualitative difference between three-dimensional space and single-dimensional time as explained by special relativity. Both are linear measurements within four-dimensional space-time. All of four-dimensional space-time is laid out 'below' the 'mind.' No spatial or temporal position is favored relativistically over another. However, what we regard as normal time and space are irrelevant to the 'mind' once it is separated from its inferior four-dimensional material existence because 'mind' resides in the fifth dimension outside of linear time and space. So, the 'mind' grasps for something to stabilize its 'self' by searching for reference points in its new physical reality and reverts to what it knows the best, its own past time-line of memories relative to the overall four-dimensional universe. This is the past life review that many experiencers report. However, it is more than just the momentary realization of the memory patterns from which the 'mind' itself was formed because the 'mind' actually has the ability to 're' view the events of the past within normal space and time. In a sense, the 'mind' actually becomes its own past experiences.

Those who experience the past-life review report that it happens in an instant, which is in strict keeping with a physics and geometry of a 'superior' position in five-dimensional space-time outside of the normal four-dimensional space-time 'sheet.' However, not all experiencers undergo the past-life review. This review is neither an absolute nor even a necessary event since some people have a greater experience with the five-dimensional extension of physical reality before they die and thus their 'minds' do not need the orientation provided upon death through a past-life review. In other words, people's 'minds' seize upon the most familiar surroundings when they enter the new environment of the five-dimensional universe. In some cases, this is the past portion of their own individual time-lines unless they have some previous experience and familiarity with their own natural five-dimensional connections.

Those people who witness the past-life review have died, if only for a moment or two, without ever having developed their 'consciousness' very far past the minimum degree which does not allow for more than a minimal knowledge of the greater natural connection with the rest of the universe afforded by their own five-dimensional existence. People with a more extensive knowledge of their five-dimensional connections, and this supposition does not require that they have any 'conscious' awareness or specific knowledge of the existence of the fifth dimension only that they have some experience of (or belief in) the connections themselves, i.e., a more highly developed 'consciousness,' could conceivably skip the past-life review. The surviving 'mind' would rely on previous knowledge of the five-dimensional connections (resonances) to establish a new framework, a non-material non-four-dimensional reality, upon which to focus its new existence or being. 'Consciousness' begins to absorb input directly from its greater five-dimensional extensions of the universe without a great period of disruption upon the loss of four-dimensional sensory and data input to the 'mind.' 'Consciousness' itself reacts via its extraneous connections immediately after death rather than 'mind' through its inherent memories and resonance patterns. People with a more developed 'consciousness' immediately utilize the resonance connections of their 'consciousness' to orient and

prioritize the 'mind' rather than using the 'mind' to expand 'consciousness' within their new five-dimensional habitat.

Other characteristics and properties of NDEs are just as easily explained within the new SOFT model of physical reality. One of the more common features of the NDE is the apparent movement through a blackness or tunnel at the end of which one has the experience of entering a region of bright white light. There are different variations upon this theme, but in general those variations are inconsequential relative to the geometric structure and physics of the fifth dimension. In fact, the white light is quite easy to explain. At some point, 'consciousness' becomes the dominant and primary element of the complex in the survival of death, if not immediately then soon after death. 'Consciousness' emanates from the 'mind's' interaction with the field connections to the rest of the universe. After death, 'consciousness' becomes completely aware of those connections, whether or not it had any awareness of those connections before death. So, 'consciousness' begins to absorb information input directly from the rest of the universe in the absence of sensory input from the brain and filtered by the 'mind.'

In a sense, 'consciousness' spreads out over the universe via its five-dimensional connections, even while remaining an intact entity in complex with 'mind.' As 'consciousness' follows this course of action, it encounters all of the 'A-lines' representing all of the mathematical points in the four-dimensional 'sheet' corresponding to the vastness of normal empty space. These 'A-lines' are either virtual photons or correspond to real photons. It is well known in physics that white light is merely the sum total of all colors or wavelengths of visible light. So 'consciousness' quite literally experiences all wavelengths of both visible and non-visible light simultaneously. It 'senses' its entrance into the white light as it realizes its connection to all points and particles in the universe via its system of 'lateral A-lines.' The white light that is experienced is diffuse and complete beyond anything ever experienced during life because it represents the sensation of all wavelengths in the electromagnetic spectrum, something with which a person is not normally familiar.

Even when a person recollects sensing or entering the white light, it is many times associated with loved ones who have already passed away or even religious figures. It would stand to reason that loved ones who had already died would have undergone a similar dissipation of thought and being into the fifth dimension and become one with this white light, so they would appear to come out of the white light when greeting the newly departed during the NDE. The surviving 'mind/consciousness' complex of the ND experiencer would literally pick out external resonance patterns with which it was already familiar, such as family members, loved ones or friends. On the other hand, when an ND experiencer is revived, that patient must 'fit' the experience into his or her mental pattern of knowledge or the worldview that represents their living 'mind.' This fact explains why the ND experiencer describes the person that they met as they remember that person, not as that person was at the time of death.

Having entered into the white light and thus having experienced the universe as a whole in an instant, an experience which has no living four-dimensional counterpart

(although mystical enlightenment comes very close), the 'mind' would interpret this event as having experienced God or the particular representative of God depending upon the person's world and religious views. This explanation does not mean that God has been incorporated into a scientific model of the universe. Everyone is free to determine what God is or is not from his or her own perspective. Nor does this explanation mean that one view of God is better than any other. Whatever God is, God is 'not' a concept that is amenable to scientific analysis of this type. The ND experiencer may have actually encountered the religious figure that they report, by the same manner in which they met relatives or loved ones, but that fact neither supports nor denies the reality of their religious beliefs. In fact, many ND experiencers have later explained that they do not consider their NDE as a confirmation of their own religious beliefs, but a rather a confirmation of their own spirituality. (Morse, 78; Sutherland, 49-50, 72, 80, 89)

The dark tunnel and similar experiences are just as easily explained. In physics, black is a total lack of color, which results from the absence of any waves of visible light. When a person dies, the surviving complex might not recognize or understand its connections to the rest of the universe through its own 'conscious' effort. The person would be cut off from the white light. Being cut-off, momentarily, from the white light would be interpreted by the 'mind' as a vast and consuming darkness or the blackness due to a lack of light. 'Consciousness' could literally 'encapsulate' and isolate itself as separate from anything and everything else. The experience of 'mind' and 'consciousness' in the pre-death material world was one of motion or change from position to position in space and time. The 'mind' and the material brain could only cognize change within their previous four-dimensional existence. In the material world, that particular 'change' would constitute change in spatial position. That is why normal physics is based upon 'matter in motion' as the lowest common denominator for all physical phenomena. So, for the complex to realize its five-dimensional connections as opposed to the 'encapsulated' isolated self would be interpreted by the 'mind' (which is still primed for four-dimensional input) as a change in spatial position, movement through the black tunnel or a similar dark void into the white light representing the new existence and environment of the complex. The various forms of experiencing the blackness are not required for all experiencers. Indeed, each person's NDE is unique and consists of different representations of the common characteristics colored by individual variations to the theme.

But NDEs are not symptoms of a final and irrevocable death. The experiencer is brought back to 'life' by the efforts of a medical team or by chance. The reanimation of 'life' occurs in spite of the momentary brain death of the person. When a patient is revived, he or she is materially yanked back into the normal four-dimensional linear reality by a medical team or by some active four-dimensional stimulus. On the other hand, the ND experiencer could also be 'told' that his or her time has not yet come and they are forced back to the normal reality of four-dimensional space-time (within the 'sheet') by the 'consciousness' itself. Just as people can 'view' the past portion of their time-line as a whole during the NDE, they would also become cognizant of the future portion of their time-line from their new five-dimensional vantage point. During the initial exploration of connections in the fifth dimension, the ND experiencer would

become 'conscious' of the continuity of their time-line into the future as well as the past. Their 'consciousness,' upon learning that their time-line had not ended in death but continues into the future, would be forced to return to the material body and the continuity of 'life.' The 'consciousness' realizes that the patterns or resonances in the fifth dimension, which are 'life', were not completely disrupted and it is able to reorganize or reconstitute, from the top down, the fundamental chemical reactions of the body that jump-starts the living process.

The whole experience gives the 'mind' a 'sense' of being dead as well as the feeling of being out-of-body. These last aspects of the NDE also follow from the SOFT model and seem to be related. Since the 'mind/consciousness' complex separates from the physical body at death, as a physical entity of its own devices, it would realize the death of the body as a result of that separation. The failure to receive sensory input from the brain would be a sure sign that the physical body had died, hence the 'sense' of being dead. The separation of the 'mind/consciousness' complex would be interpreted as an out-of-body experience when the body/brain complex is revived because, quite simply, it had actually separated within the fifth dimension from the material body for a moment. Traveling to different places in three-dimensional space and time while 'out-of-body' would merely refer to a conscious awareness or logical interpretation of how the 'consciousness' realized its five-dimensional connections. Once again, the 'mind/consciousness' complex would first seek to interpret its new surroundings in the five-dimensional realm in terms with which it is familiar, i.e., in terms of its immediate four-dimensional pre-death existence. So 'consciousness' could follow a specific but random linear and familiar path in three-dimensional space before it realized its connections with the same known and recognizable four-dimensional objects, but before it came to terms with the totality of its five-dimensional connections. When the complex realizes the totality of its connections, it would experience the white light which normally comes after the out-of-body experience, if at all.

Again, all who have reported NDEs have not experienced these or exactly the same aspects. Whether or not any particular individual experiences one aspect of the NDE, as opposed to another aspect, would depend upon the quality and degree of 'consciousness' that the person reached during life. The individual aspects of any given NDE are a matter of a person's psyche or psychology rather than space-time geometry and physics. Geometry and physics only offer an explanation of the physical background or arena in which the NDE can take place. In spite of the individual details of any reported NDE, the experiencer must remember the details when revived to communicate that information to the investigator. This begs the question "What would the person remember of the experience?" The experiencer's memories of the NDE would have to fit the organizational pattern of memories and knowledge existent before death in the 'mind,' the person's living worldview, which is controlled by specific memories except for the common characteristics of all NDEs. So the remembered details of the NDE would be biased by the person's preexistent belief system. Scientists have been careful to isolate those properties that are constant across cultural, educational and societal boundaries so that they might gain an understanding of the NDE. The only problem remaining is how to

describe something which is inherently indescribable in terminology that can be understood.

The aftermath

After the NDE, a person generally undergoes clear and specific changes in personality, literally a transformation of the self. These changes usually include a loss of fear of death, increased compassion, an increased ecological awareness, and an increase in paranormal abilities, but are not limited to these characteristics alone. Dr. Kenneth Ring describes the situation far more eloquently and completely:

To give some indication of these changes, it is necessary to recall here that the NDE is not only a revelation of the most profound and soul-shattering beauty, but, as I have said, it is also something that has the power to drastically alter and improve the lives of those who are visited by one. For example, we now know that the NDE tends to bring about lasting changes in personal values and beliefs -- NDErs appreciate life more fully, experience increased feelings of self-worth, have a more compassionate regard for others and indeed for all life, develop a heightened ecological sensitivity, and report a decrease in purely materialistic and self-seeking values. Their religious orientation tends to change, too, and becomes more universalistic, inclusive and spiritual in its expression. In most instances, moreover, the fear of death is completely extinguished and a deep-rooted conviction, based on their direct experience, that some form of life after death awaits us becomes unshakable and a source of enormous comfort. In addition, many NDErs say they come to develop powers of higher sense perception, increased psychic ability and intuitive awareness and even the gift of healing. In short, the NDE seems to unleash normally dormant aspects of the human potential for higher consciousness and to increase ones capacity to relate more sensitively to other persons and the world at large.

The NDE, then, appears to promote the emergence of a type of functioning suggestive of the full human potential that is presumably the birthright of all of us. In a phrase, whenever the blessings of the NDE are fused properly into one's life, the individual comes to exemplify what a highly developed person would be and act like. (Ring and Valarino, Introduction)

Dr. Ring proposes and defends the view that these personality changes are the result of having attained a higher level of consciousness during the NDE. He has also determined that these qualities are inherent abilities in humans that normally lie "dormant." His research indicates that whatever portion of the NDE causes the changes it is only acquainting the experiencer to an ability that already exists. The NDE awakens sleeping abilities of the 'consciousness,' or in terms of SOFT, the NDE merely renders the person aware of the inherent field resonance connections with the rest of the universe. Each and every living being is, and has always been, connected to the rest of the universe by way of its five-dimensional extensions, but they normally will not have become aware of these connections prior to death or the NDE. Therefore, these inherent abilities (stemming from the awareness of the connections) normally lie dormant in the 'mind' and 'consciousness' of each and every human and 'sentient' being. However, it is the precise nature of the NDE that causes an awakening of an individual's 'consciousness' to the connections within the five-dimensional single field.

Dr. Morse has concluded through his own researches that it is the experience of the 'light' alone, among all of the aspects of the NDEs, that induces these changes in the individual consciousness of the experiencer which contributes to the transformation of the psyche.

The transformative part of the experience is seeing the light. If a person has a paranormal experience such as leaving their body but it is not accompanied by the light, then the experience is not usually transformative. If the light is experienced then there is a transformation. The transformative powers are in the light. That is what our research tells us. (Morse, 175)

And,

I have found the experience of the light to be the keynote event of the near-death experience, the element that always leads to transformation. I do believe that the light seen by NDEers comes from a source outside the body (Morse, 212)

Personality transformations by the 'light' are indicative of a person's having experienced an acute awareness of a far greater and more comprehensive physical universe than is currently suspected by scientists, theologians or scholars. Both science and our common perceptions generally limit our physical reality to the four-dimensional space-time continuum, but only the existence of a fifth additional extended dimension of our common space-time, as specified by SOFT, can account for these transformations. Dr. Morse has further stated that "the transformative part of the near-death experience, the portion that leads to positive changes in personality, is somehow contained in the light" and cited one small girl's statement that "all of the good things are in the light" (Morse, 70-71) to support his statement.

If it is assumed that the 'light' represents a direct conscious connection of the 'mind/consciousness' complex with the rest of the universe, as has been hypothesized within the context of SOFT, then all of these transformative changes are easy to understand. After death, whether it is permanent death or the momentary death of an NDE, the surviving 'mind/consciousness' complex learns of its connection to the whole of the universe via its 'lateral A-lines.' This process is interpreted by the 'mind' as entering the 'light.' The new form of knowledge gained by the experience is internalized, as are normal memories and information, by a corresponding alteration within the 'mind' and 'consciousness' resonance patterns themselves. After the experiencer is revived, returned to a living state, he or she will retain what was learned of the experience in their 'mind' because the 'mind' has physically changed. Since the 'mind' is a complex pattern combining the thoughts, memories and knowledge of the individual, the experience of the 'light' will have transformed the 'mind' as well as the 'consciousness' of the person. The person will have a new "zest for life," as Dr. Morse would say, (Morse, 8) because he or she would have a better innate understanding of the relationship between "life,' 'mind' and material body due to the internal pattern alterations.

The alterations in the complexity pattern of 'mind' would filter downward to the individual level of 'life' as well as the physical body since each higher level of complexity is an organizational principle for the next lower level of being. The amount and overall

effect of such a process of downward reorganization would depend, of course, on the quality and duration of the NDE, although even the simplest NDE would affect such a reorganization as long as the experiencer sensed the 'light'. This top down process could easily affect the physical health of the experiencer as well as give the experiencer a new "zest for life." The new knowledge of what awaits one in death, connecting with and becoming one with a complex universe which could also be described as resonating in tune with all of the varying single field patterns in the universe, would tend to ease anyone's fears and anxieties of dying. Not only would death lose its mystique, but it would become a friendly and pleasant state of being, to say the least.

The subsequent increase in compassion is also a result of the direct connection made with the 'light' as well as other living beings connected through the 'light.' Whether or not there is a conscious awareness and mental acknowledgment of the mechanics of these connections, they would still alter the 'mind' and 'consciousness' patterns sufficiently to cause the increase in compassion and other effects. The experience itself alters the 'mind' and 'consciousness' patterns by subtly realigning the patterns to the tune of the universe regardless of a person's awareness of the change. A person would simply become more compassionate and respectful of other people and living beings due to the structural changes in 'mind' and 'consciousness.' Harming another living being would alter that being's resonances, which would be communicated back to the individual by the five-dimensional connection. In a sense, as 'mind/consciousness' patterns alter in the 'light,' a little of the other person becomes a part of each and every one of us.

Many experiencers have associated the 'light' with love as well as compassion. Within this five-dimensional model, love can now be defined as an intimate and purposeful, direct five-dimensional connection with another being or beings. Love is essentially tuning one's own personal resonance patterns to the corresponding resonance patterns of the object of one's love. To a psychiatrist, neuro-biologist, neuro-physiologist, biochemist, endocrinologist, or other scientist, love may be no more than a specialized chemical interaction in the brain or body, but that chemical interaction has a five-dimensional extension and thus forms an alteration in the complexity patterns of one's 'mind' and 'consciousness' in the fifth dimension. But this new form of love is directed down to the chemical level of brain and body through 'consciousness,' 'mind' and 'life,' so it differs in context from normal material based love. Compassion, on the other hand, is similar but more of a blanket effect that is not directed toward a specific individual, but generally toward all other living beings. So it would represent an alignment of one's 'mind/consciousness' complexity patterns to resonate with other being's patterns. Yet this process is exactly what occurs during an NDE in what is called entering the 'light.' When entering or experiencing the 'light' as 'love,' we become more compassionate as a result of the intimate five-dimensional connection which is established between all beings and ourselves, an action which permanently alters the 'mind/consciousness' complex in the individual. By the same token, 'hate' would result from the purposeful 'encapsulation' or isolation of one's 'mind/consciousness' complex, effectively insulating a person's 'consciousness' from the direct five-dimensional connections that are associated with 'love.' 'Hate' could also entail a loss of compassion by blocking the general five-dimensional connections with other beings.

The same is true for the increased ecological sense that ND experiencers have reported. While experiencing the 'light,' connections are made between all material objects in the universe, inanimate as well as animate. We gain compassion for other humans, even for all sentient beings and animals, but the connections also extend to the plant life in an ecosystem as well as weather and geological systems. Humans evolved on this earth in a special chemical and physical balance with the complete ecosystem. That balance is enhanced by the five-dimensional connections. When the ND experiencer realizes this special connection, he or she becomes more ecologically sensitive. Just as it can be argued that a part of each person exists in every other person, it can also be argued that we are in tune or resonating with the entire ecological system in which we live. Cherie Sutherland reports Michael's interpretation of his NDE during a surfing accident that exactly explains this aspect of the phenomenon. "I was looking around and I sort of got this feeling, it's hard to explain, as though I was part of it all. I felt as though I was part of everything around me. I just felt as if everything was in me and I was in everything." Without knowing it, Michael was describing the mutual connections that he shared with other material objects in the universe as sympathetic resonances in the single field. The ecological system is part of our 'consciousness' just as we are part of the ecological system.

If a particular person develops a special sensitivity to the connections with another person after their NDE, so sensitive that their 'minds' become momentarily linked, transfer of thought can occur. The same is true for clairvoyance, precognition, telekinesis and other paranormal phenomena, the only difference being the object with which the momentary contact is established. The ND experiencer has had a unique and wonderful experience and it becomes possible for the experiencer to later utilize the newly acknowledged connections in a manner that increases the experiencers 'paranormal' abilities. In cases where information is passively communicated between an ND experiencer and another person or material object, we have extrasensory perception. In other cases, a five-dimensional signal could initiate an active change in the normal 'state of matter' or 'motion of an object' in some way that could be interpreted as psychokinesis. In either case, the person who has become aware of their five-dimensional connections with the rest of the world should, theoretically, undergo an increase in psychic abilities, as has been the case according to Dr. Morse (Morse, 8), Dr. Ring and other researchers.

It is quite evident, from this discussion, why experiencing the 'light' is essential to the transformations that occur after the NDE, as Dr. Morse has concluded. Without experiencing the 'light,' a person otherwise undergoing an NDE may not have become aware of his or her inherent (but dormant) extra-dimensional connections and would thus not undergo the corresponding pattern alterations in 'mind' and 'consciousness' that cause personality changes. However, this explanation should not be interpreted to imply that an NDE is absolutely necessary to expand human consciousness resulting in these transformations. There are other methods by which human consciousness can expand to the point of developing these same characteristics.

Related phenomena

On the one hand, mystics, psychics and others claim to have experienced out-of-body events (OBEs) without the corresponding NDEs. On the other, some people have had fear-death experiences (FDEs). The FDE is "a dissociative reaction to a life-threatening situation" (Morse, 214) and shares many characteristics with its close cousin, the NDE. But the FDE seems to lack the experience of entering the 'light.' In both cases, there seems to be a subsequent expansion of 'consciousness,' but not to the same extent as when the full NDE occurs.

An OBE could occur under several different conditions. Perhaps the most common would proceed from intentionally minimizing the four-dimensional chatter of sensory stimuli through meditation or similar self-initiated techniques. The same is true for the process of 'enlightenment' as sought by certain mystical, philosophical and religious practices, i.e., Chan or Zen Buddhism. In such instances, a state mimicking some of the physical and biological characteristics of 'dying' are reached by blocking sensory input to the 'mind,' a stilling of the 'mind,' which simulates the NDE. This induced state is characterized by an awareness of the specialized connections with the rest of the universe without the final step of actually entering (or becoming one with) the 'light' as occurs in real 'death.' These techniques and practices do not utilize any special knowledge of five-dimensional mechanics or physical models of death. Instead, they utilize an individual's innate intuition as a method of exploring physical reality rather than reason or logic as reflected in scientific inquiry and its models. So, OBEs do not have the same quality as NDEs because 'life' is left wholly intact during the process.

In some ways, FDEs are similar. When the 'mind' is completely convinced that death is imminent, it can elicit a defense mechanism by which it spontaneously enters a low level NDE. The mind starts to shut 'life' down in preparation for what it believes is an inevitable death. The FDE is a purely protective mechanism of the 'mind' and is probably part of the 'flight or fight' mechanism which animals of all types display under conditions of extreme danger. Under threat of death, certain chemical reactions in the brain 'prepare' animals for their impending death. In beings with 'consciousness,' such as humans, this chemical process can spontaneously initiate a chemical cascade in the brain resulting in an abridged NDE or FDE. However, the FDE differs from a full NDE in that 'life' is not disrupted or terminated and the connection between body and 'mind' is not broken. In a very real sense, an NDE occurs from the bottom up, from chemical disruption in the material body to pattern disruption of 'life' and the subsequent freeing of 'mind' from brain and body. The FDE is an anticipatory top-down reaction in which the 'mind' is fooled into believing that the 'life' resonance pattern is about to be disrupted. So 'mind' prepares itself for the expected separation of the 'mind/consciousness' complex from the physical body. This process may involve some of the primary aspects of the NDE, even to the point of an awareness of the five-dimensional connections, but it does not allow 'consciousness' to enter the light.

It is the goal of some religious practices to attain a state of 'enlightenment,' which is similar in many respects to the NDE. These lofty goals are usually associated with the

Buddhist, Taoist or Hindu religions, although mystics in Christianity, Judaism and Islam also attempt to reach similar states of consciousness. Shamans and others have also reported similar accomplishments. In most cases, the preferred method of attaining states of 'mind', which alter 'consciousness' and produce enlightenment, requires lengthy and repeated periods of intense meditation. During meditation, the 'mind' is stilled as much as possible as sensory input from the four-dimensional world is minimized. The objective of the meditation exercise is not an OBE as described above, but rather a state which is often referred to as 'satori' or 'nirvana,' depending upon the practice being used. Once reached, there comes an understanding of the intimate connection of a person to all things, not a logical understanding as reached through normal contemplation and reason as in science. There is a subsequent loss of ego and self with increased compassion and love for other beings. In other words, the results are quite similar to the transformation of the 'mind' and 'consciousness' resulting from an NDE. It is from just such religious practices that the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* came into existence. This book describes the state of death from the Tibetan Buddhist point-of-view and is meant to serve as a spiritual guide for those who are about to die.

Even scientists have tried to duplicate the conditions of isolating the 'mind' from its natural sensory pathways through such techniques as sensory deprivation. There have been some limited but intriguing results from these studies, but nothing even approaching the quality of an NDE has been achieved. More recently, 'remote viewing' and other paranormal events have been induced using the 'Ganzfeld effect.' A patient will lay quietly in a sound proof room with ping-pong ball halves placed over his or her eyes to disperse the light. Sometimes special monotonic sounds are used to induce altered states of consciousness, as is diffuse red light. Rather than stilling the constant input of normal sensory data from the four-dimensional world, constant unchanging sensory input is used to anesthetize the 'mind' to the four-dimensional environment, thus isolating the 'mind' and 'consciousness' levels of being from the sensory chatter of the four-dimensional world. The 'mind' normally depends upon its awareness of change in isolating and interpreting sensory data, so, when sensory input is constant and unvarying the 'mind' tends to ignore it or black it out. In this manner, 'consciousness' can be opened to the far more subtle five-dimensional signals which are received by the normally 'dormant' channels of 'consciousness.'

Strangely enough, there is still another class of extremely controversial phenomena that seem related to NDEs and the state of 'consciousness' induced by the experience of dying, the 'abduction' phenomena that are usually associated with UFO activity. Whatever the root cause of 'abduction' events, regardless of whether they represent the actual physical kidnapping of humans by aliens, some 'abductees' have experienced the same transformative changes that are experienced by people reporting NDEs. In one case, investigated by Dr. John Mack, Carlos described his own abduction experience as if it were an NDE.

At their core Carlos's encounters have brought about a profound spiritual opening, bringing him in contact with a divine light or energy, which he calls "Home," which is the source of his healing and transformational powers. In our sessions, when he comes close to this light he becomes overwhelmed with emotions of awe and a

longing to merge with the energy/light being. Space and time dissolve, and he experiences himself as pure energy and light or consciousness in an endlessness of eternity, "a pure soul experience ... I go back to the source because I am not *just* human. I need to go back to the source to continue."

Carlos, like so many abductees, has developed an acute ecological consciousness. He is deeply concerned with the earth and its fate. (Mack, 362)

ND experiencers have reported both the "profound spiritual opening" and the new ecological awareness. If the word "abductees" had been left out of the second paragraph, the whole episode could have been mistaken for an NDE. In fact, Carlos has experienced both phenomena and compares them favorably, regarding the abduction phenomena as "having far more transformative power." He also noted that "through the alien encounter there is 'access to the bliss, and the near death experience is ... a momentary place in between. It is a soul place, to gather up.'" (Mack, 363-364)

Dr. Mack has reported many more encounters which sound vaguely like NDEs. However, this fact does not mean that the alien encounters are real physical abductions. Nor is it an endorsement of the validity of an alien presence on earth or the physical reality of extra-terrestrial spacecraft. The primary similarity between the two seemingly different types of phenomena actually resides in their power to expand 'consciousness.' The 'abductions' certainly seem more material and physical than the NDEs, just as the NDEs seem more mental and spiritual by their characteristics, but both expand 'consciousness.' It would seem likely, given the SOFT explanation of chemistry and the naturally occurring evolution of 'life, that sentient beings would already have evolved elsewhere in the universe. It would also seem likely that such sentient beings would have attained a higher degree of consciousness than humans and should thus have realized at some time in their own past that 'consciousness' supports extra-dimensional connections as described by SOFT. It would seem logical that under these circumstances they would have evolved the ability to communicate with humans and other 'conscious' beings by utilizing their knowledge of the field density variations and resonances in the fifth dimension as described by Dr. Mack. This scenario is highly conjectural, but it does have a certain logic given the characteristics of a five-dimensional universe described by SOFT. So, SOFT implies that sentient beings elsewhere in the universe could presently be capable of communicating with humans extra-dimensionally.

Supporting evidence

The SOFT view of death is further supported by reports that experiencers sense or feel the material effects of the NDE at the cellular level, many times as vibrations. These are not true vibrations in the material sense, but are instead identified as physical field resonances by SOFT. From the four-dimensional material point-of-view, the lowest common element of living beings would be the cell, but the cell is also a product of the most fundamental pattern of 'life' in five dimensions according to the SOFT model. When energy changes occur in the cell, they affect the five-dimensional extensions of the individual elementary particles that constitute the cell by increasing or decreasing their extension into the fifth dimension. These changes couple together to determine the

resonant pattern that is 'life' itself. However, these changes are actually variations in the field density of the single field as a complete continuous whole. As such, they act like antennas to pick up changes of field density from other sources in the five-dimensional environment. They resonate in tune with other elements and objects in the universe at large, at least in so far as those compatible resonances do not disrupt the pattern of 'life.' So, the 'light' portion of the NDE would conceivably be felt at the cellular level of 'life.' Some ND experiencers have described this very action at the cellular level.

Everything was suddenly light and vibrating. I was vibrating. It was like a rocket, like I was ready for takeoff. I was in this incredible light, and then I found myself in this place, just of love. It's like every cell either was love, or is love, or is loved. It was a vibrancy, you know, like when the New Age people say 'I am light. I am love.' They don't have a clue what that means. There were these beings in front of me. One predominant one told me that it was not my time to cross over. Then the being said: 'Your spirit wishes to give you this unfolding of information for the mission which you are here to do.' That was telepathic, cellularly. It was like, everything became a part of me. (Rommer, 69)

This description by Tara came from the investigations of Dr. Barbara Rommer. The references to "light," "incredible light," "every cell," "vibrancy" and "cellularly" certainly imply that the experience of 'light' in the NDE was both overwhelming and affected every cell of Tara's body as well as 'life' directly. Janet, another experiencer stated this obvious fact even more clearly. "I became aware of every cell in my body. I could see every cell in my body." (Morse, 150)

Other experiencers have described a real physical place as the setting for the NDE. Patients' own descriptions of the experiences lend support to an extended awareness of our common space-time continuum. Mr. Spencer has described his experience as a "passage ... a transition into another realm." (Morse, 74) His statement would seem to indicate that he came to be located, in one form or another, in a real physical place other than our common space-time. Olaf described this place in even more detail.

Olaf felt as though he were 'floating in a universe with no boundaries.' He saw the universe as a system of shrinking soap bubbles, one in which the bubbles appeared in spherical, concentric trains that moved in intricate patterns that he completely comprehended. ...

On the verge of death, this fourteen-year-old boy with a mediocre school record felt as though he had been handed the keys to the universe. "I felt I had a total comprehension which made everything understandable," he wrote. In his near-death experience, Olaf stood at a "bright orange light." He called this light "the point of annihilation," a frightening place to be but one that gave him universal understanding. (Morse, 11)

Olaf described the 'location' of his NDE as a "universe without boundaries," a phrase which certainly would not seem to fit our four-dimensional reality. The "floating" reference would just as certainly imply some physical reality to this place and certainly he was either beyond the gravity of our space-time or his new 'body' had no mass to interact with gravity. Dr. Raymond Moody also came to the conclusion that the new

'body' was 'weightless' because of the descriptions that experiencers "find themselves floating right up to the ceiling of the room, or into the air." (Moody, 45) Since gravitational attraction is due primarily to the curvature of space-time, or rather curvature of the 'sheet' into the fifth dimension in the case of SOFT, this "weightlessness" or lack of interaction with the gravitational field would merely result from being located outside of the curved 'sheet.'

The fact that Olaf saw the universe as a system of "shrinking soap bubbles" could easily refer to the fact that physical fields spread out spherically from their sources implying that the basis of physical reality is the field rather than the discrete particles of quantum theory. This assumption is further confirmed by Olaf's insight that "the bubbles appeared in spherical, concentric trains," a description which fits a picture of successive wave fronts of light passing away from a light source. A "tunnel of concentric circles" was also described by one of the patients in Dr. Moody's original study of NDEs. (Moody, 33) And finally, Olaf's description of "total comprehension" could refer to the intuitive sense of 'consciousness' upon realization of the continuity and connection of all things within the single field. In his case, Olaf seems to have progressed toward and witnessed an even deeper level of reality than living cells, all the way down to the waveforms of matter themselves.

Individual cells exist as the basic material units of life while a corresponding five-dimensional extension of cells is the basic unit of the resonance patterns that are 'life.' This duality of life and being is reflected throughout the universe. On one level, normal light displays the duality by acting as a waveform in one instance and as a photon particle in another. Normal light corresponds to an unbroken continuous 'A-line' that has substance but is not material and stretches completely around the fifth dimension, perpendicular to the four-dimensional 'sheet.' It cuts across the 'sheet' in its circuit of the fifth dimension. When normal light interacts with a material body, the interaction occurs within the 'sheet' or rather across the portion of the 'A-line', which exists as a cut across the 'sheet', and thus it interacts as if it was a three-dimensional material particle even though it has no mass. When normal light interacts with another wave it interacts across its five-dimensional extension external to the 'sheet,' and thus acts as a wave. In this manner, we have the wave/particle duality, as it is called, relative to four-dimensional space-time. However, this basic separation into five-dimensional space-time internal to the 'sheet' and that portion external to the 'sheet' progresses still further, going straight to the heart of the 'mind/consciousness' complex.

We, as humans, explore our world and understand its innermost workings through reason and logical analysis. In so doing, we come to understand how our world works, in so far as science is concerned, within the four-dimensional 'sheet' where gravity, electromagnetic waves and material particles are real to us and have substance. To understand or explore the universe outside of the 'sheet,' the five-dimensional portion of the universe, we have only our natural intuition. So the extra-dimensional realm of physical reality is normally beyond our perception and worldview. Both our four-dimensional existence in the 'sheet' and the rest of five-dimensional space-time are physical, but only that part within the 'sheet' could be termed material and thus subject to

logical analysis and reason with respect to our common experiences of our material lives. Yet reason and intuition are both ways of knowing and coping with our world, universe and environment.

'Mind' is based upon reason, the cumulative result of real experiences of the material four-dimensional world placed within a specific mental framework or worldview, while 'consciousness' is based upon intuition, our innate feelings and subconscious understanding of the larger five-dimensional framework of physical reality. 'Consciousness' knows and understands the universe within the context of its own environment via its 'lateral A-line' system of connections in the fifth dimension even though we are neither normally nor directly aware of either these connections or the new realm of physical reality in which they exist. However, this statement is misleading because the 'lateral A-line' system does not exist physically. It is a mathematical framework or artifice imposed upon the single field density variations to render them logically understandable and mathematically analyzable. This dichotomy exemplifies the "catch 22" situation which emerges from trying to realize something that is purely intuitional by utilizing reason and logic. NDEs follow this same dualistic pattern of knowing since the NDE represents the evolving conscious awareness of connections in the five-dimensional realm when we die based upon the four-dimensional interpretations of our 'mind's' pre-death knowledge of reality.

Peter Novak has studied NDEs and come to the conclusion that there is also a duality to the NDEs themselves. He associates one part of the duality with the unconscious mind and the other with the conscious mind. Dr. Novak writes that

According to Dr. Peter Fenwick, President of the British Branch of IANDES, NDEs tend to occur in two very different stages of experience, a Dark Phase and a Light Phase, and these two stages seem to be mirror opposites of one another in many respects. The Dark Phase typically finds subjects floating alone within a black void or tunnel, and seem to be characterized by (five) conditions:

- (1) Decreased sense of distress and anxiety**
- (2) Decreased emotional investment in one's earthly life**
- (3) Decreased form, pattern, and meaning recognition**
- (4) Increased sense of being separated from everything of being absolutely alone and distinct,**
- (5) Increased, hyperalert awareness with sharply enhanced logic and reason**

NDErs often report that they couldn't see anything, including themselves, in this Dark Phase. But despite this disconcerting situation, an inappropriate emotional indifference often predominated. Subjects report strong feelings of peacefulness, often using words like "detached", "calm", "serene", "dispassionate", and "divorced from what was happening" to describe this stage (Fenwick). Sometimes subjects seem to be in a state of absolute objectivity during this phase, unable to feel their own feelings, relate to their own lives, or even see themselves at all - a complete

absence of the subjective. NDErs also often report increased clarity and swiftness of thought, a heightened sense of objective intellect, heightened alertness, increased curiosity, and improved logical analysis during this phase (Boldman). While describing her Dark Phase experience, Audrey Organ insisted

"I... had great mental awareness. I had been given the magic key to understanding pure logic." (Fenwick, p.74)

Although subjects often seem to find themselves very interested in observing what is taking place during this phase, this seems to be an emotionless, almost scientific sort of curiosity, devoid of any personal meaning (Fenwick). (Novak, 86)

The 'dark phase' described by Dr. Novak represents a complete dependence of the 'mind/consciousness' complex upon 'mind' alone while in the NDE state. The complex survives death as an individual entity or being, but either portion of the complex can become aware and dominant over the other. The 'mind' represents the collective memories, thoughts and knowledge about the four-dimensional material world that a person accumulated during his or her lifetime. The thoughts and memories are pieced together within a logical pattern called a worldview, through which all sensory input for the four-dimensional world passes. Since 'mind' dominates the complex in this phase, all new information input to the complex is filtered by the 'mind' rather than the 'consciousness.' The person is literally stuck within their 'mind' during the 'dark phase.'

Being 'stuck' in their 'mind' in this phase of the NDE, there is no recognition of the special five-dimensional connections afforded by the existence of 'consciousness.' The 'mind' literally ignores signals and other forms of information from 'consciousness' related sources. This does not mean that input via 'consciousness' stops. The 'consciousness' is always part of the single field and, as such, it is constantly and continuously interacting within the field. However, the 'mind' can just refuse to recognize that information input is coming from the world by way of 'consciousness' rather than directly from the four-dimensional sources with which it has always dealt. Since the sensory signals from the brain have also ceased with physical death of the body, the 'mind' enters a state of physical isolation, thus the 'dark phase.' The 'mind' can still sense the four-dimensional portion of the universe and is mentally aware, but isolated. Since the 'mind's' patterns are based on logical principles and reason predetermines the 'mind's' worldview, the ND experiencer would tend to think that he or she had been given "the magic key to understanding pure logic."

This phase is also non-emotional because of the lack of connectivity via 'consciousness.' Emotion follows from either a chemical interaction in the body which is now cut off from the 'mind' or from the connections via the 'consciousness' which are ignored in the 'dark phase.' The experiencer is in a state of 'complete objectivity.'" The ND experiencer has, in a sense, become pure logic and 'objectivity' itself since he or she now exists within his or her own 'mind' without the subjectivity of 'consciousness.' They cannot even "feel their own feelings." Emotion and feelings are dependent upon and related to the special connections between external objects and beings and the individual. Love and compassion are the directed and general awareness of five-dimensional connections with other beings, respectively, while hate is the purposeful isolation from

these connections. The 'dark phase' corresponds to 'hate' except that it is a non-emotional hate since it is not supported by chemical interactions in the body. The 'dark phase' is not a necessary part of the NDE, but has still been experienced by many people.

The 'dark phase' is opposite in characteristics to the 'light phase' toward which the experiencers normally progress. This 'light phase' reflects the domination of 'consciousness' over 'mind' with a new emphasis on the realization and awareness of the five-dimensional connections with the rest of the universe. When attention is paid to the particular connections with another being or group of beings, we have love and compassion. So this state is dominated by positive emotional responses when the experiencer is revived and remembers the NDE. But again, these are not the chemically related love and compassion of a living being since 'consciousness' has been separated from the body. Instead, these emotions are closer to the state of mental love or bliss usually associated with religious ecstasy. Again, according to Peter Novak

Many NDE subjects then move on to the Light Phase, which seems to have diametrically opposite conditions:

- (1) Increased emotional intensity**
- (2) Increased sense of connections and relationships**
- (3) Increased form, pattern, and meaning recognition**
- (4) Diminished sense of separateness and distinctness**
- (5) Diminished tendency to employ logic or analytical reasoning.**

Instead of a lack of emotion, subjects now feel powerful emotions. The Light Phase seems to have two faces - the heavenly 'Realm of Light', and the Hellish 'Realm of Bewildered Spirits' (Moody). Both are places of extreme, intense, profound emotions - love and joy on one side, despair and angst on the other. In a number of respects, these two experiences seem to have more in common with one another than with the Black Void that preceded them. Instead of being alone in an empty blackness, subjects are now in a universe full of all sorts of fabulous forms and patterns. Instead of being dispassionate and objective, they now feel extremely subjective, affected by everything around them. Instead of seeming to be the only thing that exists in the entire universe, subjects now find themselves interacting with many others like themselves. Instead of feeling unconnected, subjects now experience a heightened sense of connectedness and community.(Novak, 86)

The increase in "form, pattern and meaning recognition" is a result of succumbing to the five-dimensional connections. Form and pattern, in the sense of a physical body, disappear as 'consciousness' dominates 'mind,' just as meaning recognition loses its function as the four-dimensional worldview of 'mind' becomes irrelevant in the new five-dimensional reality in which the 'mind' is subordinated to the 'consciousness.' 'Consciousness' now filters data before it is received by the 'mind' for processing. Subjectivity increases proportional to the awareness of the external connections to the universe. The 'consciousness' is physically "affected by everything around it" because it

becomes tuned to other resonances. Its own resonance pattern harmonizes with other resonance patterns in the single field density shifts because it is no longer rigidly attached to the 'life' from which it evolved. But a new sense of "form, pattern and meaning recognition" within the context of the greater five-dimensional world results when the experiencer loses a bit of his or her 'self' and personal identity within the fifth dimension. With the recognition and acceptance of the five-dimensional connections "separateness and distinctness" suffer, as do logic and reasoning abilities that are functions of the four-dimensional originated 'mind.'

From this point in progress of the 'mind/consciousness' complex, 'consciousness' grows. Since all information of the death state of being comes from ND experiencers, it is not known how far this process can progress. For lack of pertinent information and reasonable observation, any knowledge of what lies next is purely speculative. However, the possibility that there is a still higher state of 'consciousness' that could be reached, even after death, could be assumed. Just as increasing knowledge of the world and new memories evolved 'consciousness' out of the raw 'stuff' of the 'mind,' increases in knowledge and understanding of the greater five-dimensional realm should precipitate a new and even higher level complexity corresponding to a sixth dimension of space-time. Buddhist and other mystical traditions do tell of even higher states of consciousness, but these realms are not completely pertinent to this particular physical model of death.

Conclusion

Death refers only to the material body and physical 'life.' Upon death of the body, 'life' absorbs the death causing physical disruptions allowing 'mind' and 'consciousness' to attain a separate extra-dimensional existence. Evidence of this new existence or level of being comes from observations made by people who have had NDEs. The physical realm that the ND experiencers report visiting is perfectly compatible with a fifth dimension of our space-time continuum. SOFT can be used to explain the physics (or paraphysics) of this new extra-dimensional extension of reality.

The actual existence of this extended reality cannot be demonstrated by NDEs and proof of the existence of a fifth dimension must be left to purely physical experiments. However, there are various bits of circumstantial evidence that render the existence of a fifth dimension quite likely. Perhaps the greatest evidence can be found within the testimony of a single patient, as reported by Dr. Moody.

Now, there is a real problem for me as I'm trying to tell you this, because all the words I know are three-dimensional. As I was going through this, I kept thinking, Well, when I was taking geometry, they always told me there were only three dimensions, and I always accepted that. But they were wrong. There are more." And of course, our world - the one we're living in now - is three-dimensional, but the next one definitely isn't. And that's why it's so hard to tell you this. I have to describe it to you in words that are three-dimensional. That's as close as I can get to it, but it's not really adequate. I can't really give you a complete picture. (Moody, 26)

If this woman's observations are correct, then the fifth dimension does indeed exist and it harbors surprises for science and culture. In this and a few similar cases, science has direct observational evidence that space-time is not limited to the normally accepted four dimensions of our common experience. It would seem that death ends nothing but actually represents a new beginning. Experiencing the 'light' is a 'consciousness' altering event, a subtle realignment of the field variation patterns in five space which trickle down to 'mind' and 'life,' permanently and irrevocably affecting the whole being of the ND experiencers. The effect of the 'light' can only be explained within the context of SOFT.

Albert Einstein ended his own attempts to develop a five-dimensional unified field theory in the early 1940s. Several years later, he gave his final verdict on the possibility that a fifth physical dimension actually exists. He stated that no such theory could be considered unless it was demonstrated why the fifth dimension was not experienced. Given the statements of ND experiencers that have described their memories of the events as other dimensional experiences, it should be assumed that Einstein spoke too soon. It would seem that some people have in fact experienced a higher dimensional space-time in the form of NDEs.

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