

{sample section from the book: “The Afterlife and the True Nature of Reality” by John T. Mennella}

Introduction

An important theme that arises repeatedly throughout the latter part of this book is a cornerstone principle of the Hermetic tradition: "As above, so below." One common interpretation of this phrase is the notion that the earth plane is patterned after the heavenly realms, and I personally believe there is some degree of truth to that idea. But there is another interpretation that harbors a much more profound implication: namely, that the structure of reality at any given level bears a correspondence to its structure at every other level. This ancient Hermetic concept has cropped up, quite unexpectedly, in the modern-day discoveries of holography and fractal geometry.

A hologram is a virtual 3D image created by shining a laser through a holographic plate. A fascinating property of holograms is that, if you break up the holographic plate into pieces, then each piece contains all the information necessary to produce the entire holographic image; that is, the whole is contained within each of its parts – "as above, so below." A Fractal is a geometric figure that exhibits the same repeating pattern at every level of scale; this property, wherein an object's overall structure is similar to that of its parts, is called self-similarity – again, "as above, so below." Holograms, fractals, and self-similarity play important roles in topics covered later in this book.

In keeping with these themes, this book's title is in self-similar correspondence with the book itself, in the sense that the totality of the book's content is encapsulated within that brief title. As such, a deconstruction of the book's title affords an excellent opportunity for presenting an overview of the book's subject matter. Let's begin then by looking more closely at the title ...

The Afterlife and the True Nature of Reality.

Disassembled, the title reveals the two most important topics to be covered: *The Afterlife* and *The Nature of Reality*. Use of these phrases in the title implies that there is something meaningful and, presumably, *new* to be said about them; furthermore, qualifying *The Nature of Reality* with the adjective *True* suggests that commonly held notions about Reality are false. Finally, putting those two phrases together into a single title implies that there is some connection between the two. And there you have the essence of this book. Specifically, what we find beneath the surface of this book's title are three deceptively simple, yet staggering profound, implications. Namely, that:

1. There actually *is* an afterlife, and we actually *know* something concrete and specific about the afterlife.
2. The reality in which we exist is different from that which we experience it to be.
3. The afterlife and our living reality are somehow interrelated.

These are three rather bold assertions, yet I suggest that they are all true. Further, I propose that an awareness of the truth of these assertions, and of the facts and evidence which underlie them, can have a positive transformative effect on our lives, both individually and collectively.

Let me briefly elaborate further on each of these points before we explore them in depth throughout the remainder of this book.

ASSERTION #1: There actually *is* an afterlife, and we actually *know* something concrete and specific about the afterlife.

For most of us, our beliefs and perceptions regarding the afterlife – if we believe in one at all – are an outgrowth of our religious convictions and upbringing. And these convictions, while sharing some basic tenets, can vary dramatically from one religion to the next, as well as among sub-factions within a single religious system. Most importantly, these religions offer no proof whatsoever that the afterlife is what they claim it to be; adherents of these religions are asked to accept the unsubstantiated claims regarding the afterlife on faith alone. Mainstream science, on the other hand, does not acknowledge the existence of an afterlife at all, nor does it acknowledge its necessary precursor, the soul. Yet most people are not aware that there exists a surprisingly voluminous and detailed body of knowledge about the afterlife that derives from sources other than religion, speculation, or myth. These more modern examinations into the hereafter have produced an amazingly elaborate model of the afterlife’s structure, function, and process. Furthermore, the model that emerges from these diverse sources boasts a high level of credibility due to rigorous methods of investigation and analysis, repeated replication of results, corroborative consistency among sources, and, in some cases, verifiable data. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, this model possesses a logical coherency and an elegance which leave one with a powerful, gut-level sense that it simply must be so.

Parts I and II of this book will cover the subject of the afterlife in depth, beginning with a brief discussion of some of the sources of information about the hereafter, followed by a thorough examination of recent findings, and, ultimately, a discussion of the surprisingly elaborate afterlife model that emerges therefrom.

ASSERTION #2: The reality in which we exist is different from that which we experience it to be.

My inclusion of the word “True” in this book’s title – “The Afterlife and the *True* Nature of Reality” – implies that our perceived reality is somehow different from a presumably objective, “genuine” reality. Strange as it may seem, this appears to actually be the case. Findings from the fields of physics, mathematics, and neuroscience, as well as studies of human perception, offer tantalizing evidence that our “reality” is not the concrete, mechanistic system we heretofore thought it to be. Indeed, indications are that the reality which we experience is not a fundamental, objective reality but, rather, the product of our perception of a more complex reality as it is received through our sensory organs and decoded/interpreted by our brains. If the implications of these findings prove true, then a whole flurry of vitally important questions is unleashed; to wit: What is the raw, un-encoded reality that underlies our perceived reality? Why are we programmed to interpret that raw reality into the reality that we experience? Is our programming the result of natural processes (e.g., evolution) or is it artificially imposed? I intend to provide very specific answers to each of these questions.

ASSERTION #3: The afterlife and our living reality are somehow interrelated.

Most religions and ancient belief systems espouse the doctrine that our experiences after we die are a direct result of how we live our lives here on Earth: If we live our lives in accordance with specific moral precepts, then our after-life (or after-death) experiences will be positive; if, however, we succumb to worldly temptations and live amoral lives, then our after-life experiences will be unpleasant. Presuming, for the moment, that this widely held belief is true, it follows logically that the reality we perceive here on Earth has been specifically designed to facilitate a system of evaluating our conduct and then

holding us accountable accordingly. In other words, the question that arises is this: Is our perceived reality a purpose-made construct designed specifically to provide us a setting, with attendant circumstances, to serve as a method of testing and evaluation for determining where we will find ourselves in a consequent afterlife?

The modern-day, secular model of the afterlife that we will explore in this book suggests very strongly that this is precisely the case. Our earthy existences and concomitant experiences appear to be intimately intertwined with, and dictated by, the larger life we live on the spiritual plane. Thus the reality in which we live out our earthly lives seems to have been specifically created and designed to serve as the stage upon which these living dramas are carried out. If this is indeed so, then it is of supreme importance that we develop an understanding of what the afterlife is, how it relates to our earthly lives, and how our experience of reality fits into this overall scheme. That is precisely the purpose of this book. For these reasons, Part III will focus on a discussion of The Nature of Reality.

Part IV of this book proposes an alternative theory of the nature and origin of reality that incorporates points discussed in Part III of this book, while also postulating a possible relationship between this reality model and the model of the afterlife introduced in Part II. Part IV will also introduce a new theory that planet Earth is in the process of undergoing a dimensional shift in conjunction with the human race experiencing a corresponding evolutionary leap. The details of this purported dimensional shift are intimately intertwined with our experience of reality as well as with the modern model of the afterlife.

Each one of us appears to be uniquely different from the billions of other human beings living upon this planet; our physical appearances, attitudes, beliefs, talents, life circumstances, and experiences vary dramatically from one person to another. Yet there are at least three points of commonality that we all indisputably share: we are all born, we all experience an existence in this reality, and we all die. It seems a matter of obvious common sense that we would want to know as much as possible about these three fundamental common denominators of human existence: Where do we come from before we are born? What is the nature and purpose of existence? And where do we go when it ends? These are *huge* questions, pregnant with complexity and mystery. Yet they are of profound and primal importance if we are to truly understand what we are and *why* we are. How can we dare *not* ask these questions?

Theses Overview

While the main title of this book highlights the broad topics to be covered, the book's subtitle – "The Quest for Answers to the Great Questions of Existence" – alludes to the major theses to be presented and the motivating factors that led to their development. The motivating factors – the sources of incentive and inspiration for me – are these "Great Questions of Existence," which I take to be the following:

- Where do we come from before we are born?
- Where do we go after we die?
- Why are we here?
- What is the true nature of the reality in which we exist?
- Where are we headed?

These questions have both intrigued and haunted me since my youth. In my early years I considered them to be unanswerable philosophical mysteries, but as I grew older and acquired more knowledge I began to suspect that the answers to these questions were not inherently elusive but tangible and fath-

omable. The theses that will be set forth herein arose out of discoveries I've made during my own journey of research and personal exploration in pursuit of the answers to these questions. Those theses are as follows:

- There is an afterlife.
- Research has led to the establishment of a detailed model of the afterlife.
- The essential nature of human beings is spiritual and eternal.
- Karma and reincarnation are fundamental features of our spiritual existence.
- Our reality is not a physical reality.
- The true reality is an energy-information construct.
- Our reality is a perceived reality that is decoded by our senses and brain.
- We decode the energy-information construct into a holographic reality.
- The holographic illusion of reality serves as a school for spiritual growth.
- The Earth will soon undergo a dimensional shift.
- This dimensional shift will be accompanied by an evolutionary leap for humanity.

The model of the afterlife I will explore arose primarily out of research in the areas of near-death experiences, past-life and life-between-lives hypnotic regression, and spontaneous past-life recall – most particularly from the life-between-lives research of Michael Newton, PhD. The information regarding the nature of reality derives mostly from quantum physics, chaos theory, mathematics, and the holographic model of reality; most notable in this regard is the work of Michael Talbot.

As for myself, an intense personal interest in all of these areas led to a great deal of reading over many, many years. A diagnosis of prostate cancer in 2003 made the relevancy of these topics even more acutely personal and significant for me, and inspired me to experience hypnotic regression firsthand for the purposes of healing, past-life and life-between-lives exploration, and the discovery of deeper revelations regarding life and reality. This book is the product of the discoveries and insights that resulted from my many years of research and personal exploration.

Truth

So, then, what of the "truth" of the premises presented herein? As to the Model of the Afterlife, I strongly feel that it is an extremely accurate representation of what lies on the other side of the veil: it is logical, it is elegant, and the evidence is compelling. Other than the possibility of minor refinements or additions to the model, I would be shocked to learn that it was seriously flawed. So I, personally, accept this model of the Afterlife as accurate with a high degree of confidence and a modicum of skepticism. The model of Reality presented in these pages, however, is another story. Obviously, I accept it as the best model currently available, or I would not have written a book around it. But the level of confidence I ascribe to it is not as strong as that which I ascribe to the Afterlife Model. This lower level of confidence is not due to any perceived flaw in the Reality Model, but rather is due to the complexity and elusiveness inherent in the very concept of the nature of reality itself. We are, each of us, after all, intricately enmeshed *within* this reality: how can we study and analyze something from within? An eye cannot see itself, and a hand cannot touch itself. As Marshall McLuhan has noted, "Whoever discovered water, it certainly wasn't a fish." Nevertheless, I strongly believe that – via a systems approach incorporating physics, neuroscience, and spirituality – we will someday acquire a very accurate picture of the true nature of reality. I just don't think we're there yet. That being said, I am reservedly confident that the Holographic Model is pointing us in the right direction.

Intent

A word about the *intent* of this book: By no means am I attempting to convince you that the theses presented in this book represent a "true" state of affairs. I, myself, make it a point to always maintain a degree of skepticism about any premise to which I'm exposed, no matter how tempting and convincing it may seem. I do this for two reasons: (1) the premise might be false; (2) if not entirely false, it might merely represent a limiting case of the whole picture... a *quasi-truth*, as it were. One never knows what new discoveries might come along and supersede, or refine, the existing consensus on a particular idea. For centuries Newton's model of physics reigned supreme, only to be supplanted by Einstein's insights, which, in turn, succumbed to quantum physics. Knowledge and understanding are ever-expanding, and one should, I believe, always make allowances for the possibility that a prevailing theory might not, well, "prevail" indefinitely. Therefore, I offer the ideas presented in this book as concepts to be mentally played with – as playthings for the intellect. My hope is that you will approach these concepts with an open mind tempered with skepticism and a sense of reasonableness, as well as with your own personal gut feeling of their plausibility; and also that you will afford them due consideration consistent with the evidence presented. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, I offer them as seeds for the germination of new ideas – rudimentary yet interesting and enticing notions which, after personal contemplation, might evolve into yet more accurate models of reality and the afterlife.

But by far and most importantly, I've written this book with the hope that those who read it will experience the amazing and uplifting transformation that I, and many others, have experienced when exposed to this information. Profound personal changes such as a diminished fear of death, increased feelings of love, empathy, and compassion, reduced concern for material possessions, increased happiness and optimism, and reduced stress and worry – just to highlight a few – routinely result from exposure to, and contemplation of, details about the afterlife. The extraordinarily positive changes I have undergone as a result of my research and hypnosis experiences have improved my life, attitudes, and sense of well-being immeasurably. It is my sincere hope that readers of this book will enjoy a similar transformative experience.