

Article

Spiritual Consciousness

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Abstract

We explore the spirit, its relation to the body and soul, and its relation to consciousness. We posit that the spirit descends from transcendent primordial consciousness, preexists its human vessel, and emanates from that vessel. Although spiritual consciousness may emerge neurologically, primordial consciousness engenders the process that generates, shapes, and evolves the spirit. We suggest that spirit resides in the mesostratum as a signal reception, processing, transmission, and storage modality. Concurrently, we argue that primordial consciousness generates the life cycles and interacting spiritual networks from which shared spiritual consciousness emerges. We attempt to demystify the nature of spirit, perceiving spiritual messages and apparitions, visiting spiritual worlds, and accessing transcendent realities - with illustrative examples.

Keywords: Resident spirit, spiritual networks, subjective signal, objective signal, apparitions, auras, fantasies, sensory deprivation, astral projection, mathematical illusions.

Introduction

We are patently spiritual beings consisting of a body~spirit~soul triad encompassed by a mind-loop, as illustrated in Figure 1, where soul/atman is defined as the focus of transcendent higher consciousness while body/brain is defined as the focus of a material individual self-aware sentient consciousness [1]. The DNA macromolecule which pervades every cell of our body is metaphorically the physical scaffold of spirit which mediates between body and soul via the mind-loop [2].

The spirit which resides in the mesostratum receives subjective signals from the transcendent realm of the superstratum and objective signals from the material realm of the physiostratum. Subjective and objective signals are perceived by the spirit as representing realities albeit *significantly different kinds of realities*. Objective signals emanate from objects that reside in the physiostratum and therefore attest to the reality of the body and its surroundings which include the entire observable cosmos. Subjective signals emanate from a nonmaterial transcendent realm which includes the superstratum and universal primordial consciousness.

Subjective signals are often projected onto objective reality and therefore are interpreted as representing enshrouded aspects of the objective reality surrounding us. They are typically perceived as transcendent presentments, for example as auras, apparitions, fantasies, hallucinations, and mathematical illusions.

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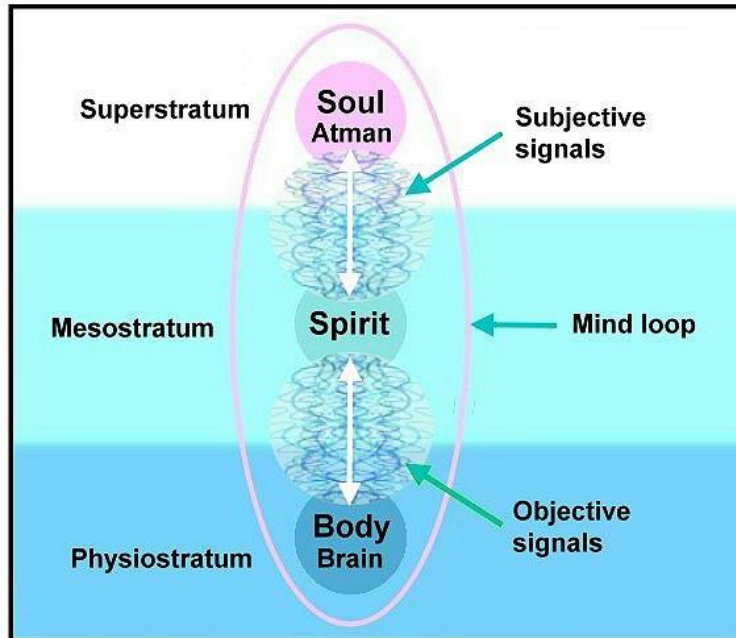


Figure 1 - Soul~Spirit~Body triad Subjective-Objective signals.

We attempt to demystify the nature of spirit, its access to transcendent and objective realities, and its presentment via the mind-loop download/upload signal cycles. The best instrument for exploring spiritual access to subjective signals and informational fields is the human mind - specifically of exceptional individuals possessing unique abilities to access and employ mesostratum signals. Examples of such individuals are cited. The examples illustrate instances of spiritual consciousness which can access, retrieve, analyze and employ the content of the spiritual field - the Akashic field - residing in the mesostratum [3].

The mind loop is essential to integrate the spiritual wholeness of one's being, but is evasive when the body is awash in worldly distractions and physical sensations. This may be overcome by quiet meditation, accompanied by an appreciable degree of sensory deprivation, which engages the mind loop, recombines the body and soul, and helps realize the full potential of one's being through enlightenment and insight.

Bypassing Sensory Filtering

Arguably, most human brains filter out about 99 percent of available spiritual information. Edgar Cayce may have been able to tap into the power of his mind by overcoming the filters that block out spiritual sensory information that would cause an overload for most people. Cayce the 'sleeping prophet' closed his eyes, entered into an altered state of consciousness, and gained access to subjective signals related to spiritual/physical health, healing, dreams, prophecy, and reincarnation [4]. He could apparently travel in time and space to treat the ill and dispense information that led to innumerable cures where traditional medicine was useless. Cayce putatively drew on a universal (Akashic) field of information about the past and future.

Emanuel Swedenborg, a Swedish scientist and statesman, underwent an extraordinary psychic experience at age fifty-five and spent his last twenty-seven years producing thirty volumes that detailed his visionary experiences [5]. Swedenborg reported speaking to spirits of the deceased and to angelic beings while in self-induced trances. According to his dialogues with such entities, the spirit world consisted of a number of concentric spheres, each with its own density and inhabitants. Swedenborg observed an aura which he termed a spiritual sphere around the spiritual and astral beings in the superstratum.

There is anecdotal evidence that all mortal beings possess an aura - a field of energy around them that extends a certain distance from their body. Reports of this are ancient, persisting all the way to modern times, beginning with the halos often depicted surrounding the heads of holy people. Some shamans report the ability to see auras surrounding ordinary people. Others can see it after deep meditation and those who do see it for the first time are often surprised. The colors and changes in the aura are said to change according to one's emotional state and overall well-being. A shaman is a healer who assumes an altered state of consciousness to access a hidden reality in the spirit world for purposes of retrieving healing power and information. Although there is no scientific evidence for it, some shamans are seemingly able to correctly diagnosis illnesses based upon their ability to see changes and colors in the aura.

Astral Projection, OBE/NDE

Although it is widely acknowledged that there is no scientific evidence that consciousness, soul, or spirit exist separately from normal neural brain activity, there is a compelling literature attesting that one can spiritually leave one's body and observe it and its environment as an external objective reality. The simplest example of astral projection is the out-of-body experience. Heinz Pagels [6] writes of physicist Richard Feynman's perpetual curiosity and his willingness to try almost anything to explore alternate reality. He tells the following story: "He was in a sensory-deprivation tank and . . . felt that he came 'out of his body' and saw the body lying before him. To test the reality of his experience he tried moving his arm, and indeed he saw his arm on his body move. As he described this, he said he then became concerned that he might remain out of his body and decided to return to it." When Pagels asked what he made of his experience, Feynman said, "I didn't see *no* laws of physics getting violated." Pagels concludes, "Indeed, the reliable accounts of such experiences that I have read, as well as my own experience, confirm his perception: 'out of the body' experiences no more violate physical laws than does the experience of dreaming." Out-of-body (OBE) experiences connote the transcendent nature of consciousness and spirit as an 'outside' observer.

Michael Talbot in *The Holographic Universe* reverentially reports that: "Emanuel Swedenborg, born in 1688, was the Leonardo da Vinci of his era. In his early years he studied science. He was the leading mathematician in Sweden, spoke nine languages, was an engraver, an astronomer, and a businessman, built watches and microscopes as a hobby, wrote books on metallurgy, color theory, commerce, economics, physics, chemistry, mining, and anatomy, and invented prototypes for the airplane and the submarine."

When he reached middle age, Swedenborg developed the ability to enter deep trances. He escribed out-of body experiences during the trances in which he visited what appeared to him to be heaven where he conversed with angels and spirits. Swedenborg experienced things profound and inspiring in his transcendent journeys. Swedenborg in his insightful work *Heaven and Hell* describes spiritual visits, indeed astral projections, to the afterlife realm. Swedenborg writes, "It can never be said that heaven is outside anyone. It is within . . ." He became so famous for his accounts that Immanuel Kant wrote an entire book on Swedenborg entitled *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer*.

Swedenborg anticipated the notion of interplay of signals between the superstratum and mesostratum by his description of "two wavelike flows, one from heaven and one coming from our own soul or spirit." Swedenborg also believed that heaven is actually a more fundamental level of reality than our own physical world and is the source from which all earthly forms originate and to which all forms return.

On his deathbed, Swedenborg was asked if there was anything he wanted to recant. He earnestly replied: "Everything that I have written is as true as you now behold me. I might have said much more had it been permitted to me. After death you will see all, and then we shall have much to say to each other on the subject." Swedenborg, according to his accounts, was privileged to visit vast and celestially beautiful cities in a transcendental realm. He is one among many individuals who have experienced out-of-body journeys to supernal levels of reality. Swedenborg and the others all describe similar celestial metropolises with remarkable consistency - ethereal vistas with architectures brilliant, luminous, magnificent and sublimely beautiful. Swedenborg declared he experienced places "of staggering architectural design, so beautiful that you would say this is the home and the source of the art itself."

In addition to architectural wonders, Swedenborg and others who wander about the ethereal realms also encounter supernal beings. Michael Talbot in *The Holographic Universe* collected accounts of these encounters [7]. Given the vague descriptions of their appearance, Talbot remains uncertain concerning what the beings really are - beings of light or clouds of pure knowledge or allegorical phantasms: "Such are the dilemmas one faces in a universe that appears to us in explicate form but always has its source in something ineffable, in the implicate. . . . As for the ultimate identity of these beings, we can deduce from their behavior that they are older, wiser and possess some deep and loving connection to the human species, but beyond this the question remains unanswered as to whether they are gods, angels, the souls of human beings who have finished reincarnating, or something that is altogether beyond human comprehension."

Michael Talbot provides some illumination based on people who have had a near-death-experience (NDE). Having passed through the ethereal 'tunnel' on their way to and returning from the NDE they invariably say they had encountered 'beings of light'. They agree that ". . . they are never judged by the beings of light, but feel only love and acceptance . . . The only judgment that ever takes place is self-judgment and arises solely out of [their] own feelings of guilt and repentance." . . . "the beings emphasize knowledge - that learning is a continuous process and that knowledge is among the few things you bring with you."

A man who studied his hands while in the NDE state said they were "composed of light with tiny

structures in them” and when he looked closely he could even see “the delicate whorls of his fingerprints and tubes of light up his arms.” . . . Several NDE people said they didn't even have a body unless they were thinking of it. “One man described it by saying that if he stopped thinking he was merely a cloud in an endless cloud, undifferentiated,” . . . “But as soon as he started to think, he became himself” . . . others too, didn't have hands unless they *thought* them into existence . . . “Many say that they were not aware of any form and were simply 'themselves' or 'their mind'. Others have more specific impressions and describe themselves as 'a cloud of colors', 'a mist', 'an energy pattern' or 'an energy field'.”

Kenneth Ring, In *Lessons from the Light*, tells of a survey where “. . . 80 percent of our thirty-one blind respondents claimed to be able to see during their NDE or OBE, and . . . often told us that they could see objects and persons in the physical world, as well as features of otherworldly settings. . . the visual perceptions . . . were extremely clear and detailed, especially when they found themselves in the otherworldly portions of their near-death journeys.” . . . “I know I could see and I was supposed to be blind . . . I could see details.” [8] This reinforces the notion that ‘seeing’ is a construct not only of the of the brain and its neural network but also of spiritual signals resolved as meaningful images. But it leaves open the question of the origins of those signals if OBE and NDE do not involve actual eyes and retinas. Can the mesostratum provide and guide photon imaging patterns to the resident spirit?

Musical and Poetic Spiritual Communion

Rosemary Brown caused a small media sensation in the 1970s by presenting works dictated to her by spirits. When she was only seven, she reported that a spirit with long white hair appeared and told her he would make her a famous musician one day. Brown did not know who he was until, about ten years later, she saw a picture of Franz Liszt. A recording titled *The Rosemary Brown Piano Album* presents performances of some of the music Brown transcribed after being instructed by the spirits of renowned composers. Requested to compose spontaneously before an audience, she produced a piece, ostensibly dictated by Liszt. Brown claimed the piece was too difficult for her to play so another pianist was engaged to play it. Though Rosemary Brown was musically unsophisticated and untrained, she received and transcribed music that experts agreed where attributable to Liszt, Bach, Chopin and others [9].

Rosemary Brown was apparently an ‘instrument’ of Franz Liszt’s spirit, from whom she received original musical compositions. In Liszt’s own living words, given in an introduction to Robert Schumann’s *Twelve Cameos*, “We in spirit hope to help people to realize that they are evolving souls destined to pass into the realms of non-matter where they will continue to evolve. This realization should give them a whole new dimension of thinking, and raise their self-image above its earthbound limits.” Other spirits working through Rosemary were Frederic Chopin, Ludwig van Beethoven, Sergei Rachmaninov, Franz Schubert, Edvard Grieg, Johannes Brahms, Robert and Clara Schumann, Claude Debussy, Hector Berlioz, and J. S. Bach.

There is a mystery that lies in the sensory perceptions of music. Deepak Chopra in *Quantum Healing* gives an example of the mystery. He writes, consider “. . . a pianist playing a Chopin etude. Where is the music? You can find it at many levels - in the vibrating strings, the trip of the

hammers, the fingers striking the keys, the black marks on the paper, or the nerve impulses produced in the player's brain. But all of these are just codes; the reality of music is the shimmering, beautiful, invisible form that haunts our memories without ever being present in the physical world." Our spirit assembles sensory perceptions into a coherent reality by organizing patterns that mingle chaotically in the brain. These patterns seemingly attest to an interplay of the transcendent mesostratum spirit and physiostratum signals and sensations.

Watch virtuoso musicians as they perform. Close scrutiny of their eyes, face and body movements indicates that they may have succumbed to an altered state of consciousness. They are playing ecstatically, ignoring most of their conscious senses. Witness a world-renowned musician surrender to something intensely spiritual. The musicianship leaps beyond practiced technical skill and results in an electrifying performance.

Poetry like music seems to involve spirit and spiritual exaltation, it rises above the imperfections of ordinary language because it uses words and phrases in a remarkably self-defining context, it projects universality even in translation. In *Fireflies* Rabindranath Tagore captures this:

Idea seeks its body in form,
Form its freedom in the idea.
The infinite seeks the touch of the finite,
The finite its release in the infinite.

Spirit uses the body to experience the world and physical form, its pleasures and pains, its rewards and penalties. Spirit is in this sense a captive of the body even as it seeks freedom, to be restored to the transcendent domain for release and resplendence as atman/soul. As spirit mediates between body and soul, spirit releases us from perishable incarnate internment by widening our sphere of consciousness and perception. Spirit brings us into communion with other living creatures; ultimately and beneficently making us aware of our role in a transcendent realm. No incarnate being is able to achieve this awareness completely, but the striving for it is imperative for enlightenment, intellectual liberation, and spiritual completeness. The striving and achievement is often enabled by music and poetry. Basho Matsuo, the first great poet of the haiku in the sixteen hundreds wrote:

Lightning flash -
what I thought were faces
are plumes of pampas grass.
Matsuo's haiku suggests a hallucinatory experience.

Hallucinations, Apparitions, Illusions

Hallucinations are vivid, substantial, and typically involuntary experiences with qualities of reality that are perceived to be located in external objective space in the absence of an external stimulus. Hallucinations can occur in any sensory modality: visual, auditory, olfactory, etc. A complex visual hallucination may be a lifelike image of faces or bodies that may be interpreted as ghosts, apparitions, illusions but which are always perceived as an objective reality. We argue that it

originates as a spiritual transcendent signal that is projected onto the objective reality of the physiostratum, of one's immediate environment.

To many people, hallucinations imply madness, but in fact they are a common part of the human experience. These sensory distortions range from the shimmering zigzags of a visual migraine to powerful visions brought on by fever, injuries, drugs, sensory deprivation, exhaustion, or even grief. Hallucinations doubtless lie behind many mythological traditions, literary inventions, and religious epiphanies.

Drawing on his own experiences, a wealth of clinical cases from among his patients, and famous historical examples ranging from Dostoevsky to Lewis Carroll, the legendary neurologist Oliver Sacks investigates the mystery of these sensory deceptions: what they say about the working of our brains, how they have influenced our folklore and culture, and why the potential for hallucination is present in us all [10].

Sacks examines hallucinations from a number of vantage points, indeed Sacks shows that hallucinations are actually quite commonplace, rather than being the sign of some kind of perceptual defect or side-effect of drugs of differing kinds. Many have at some time or another hallucinated. Sacks explains that hallucinations are far more common than one might think, rather than being a marginal phenomena of interest only to neurologists, psychologist, anthropologists amongst other academic disciplines and of course thrill seekers and drug users. Hallucinations have been taken as attesting to contact with Gods or demons, symptoms of mental breakdowns, or inspiration for works of art. Sacks specifically delineates circumstances in which hallucinations are experienced outside of psychosis, dreaming, fantasizing. He gives credence to the concept that hallucinations are spiritual experiences extending beyond neural disorder or cognitive malfunction.

Sacks cites cases where functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) is used to measure brain activity by detecting changes associated with blood flow. This technique relies on the fact that cerebral blood flow and neuronal activation are coupled. When an area of the brain is in use, blood flow to that region also increases. In one such case the subject was blindfolded for twenty-two days and was subjected to fMRI scanning when experiencing hallucinations. The fMRI showed activations in the occipital cortex and the inferotemporal cortex in precise coordination with the hallucinations. These activations differ from those that occur in the prefrontal cortex during voluntary imaging as opposed to the physiology of hallucinations which are invariably involuntary. This indicates that, unlike the physiological process of voluntary visual imagery, hallucination is the result of direct activation of regions in the visual pathway (occipital and inferotemporal cortices) which have been rendered hyper-excitabile by a lack of normal sensory input. Deprivation of normal sensory input due to blindness or purblindness apparently opens a pathway to hallucinatory signals.

Of particular interest in the above context are 'visual release hallucinations' known as the Charles Bonnet syndrome (CBS). These are complex visual hallucinations which appear to persons with partial or severe blindness. People suffering from CBS may experience a wide variety of hallucinations: images of complex colored patterns and images of people are most common, followed by animals, plants or trees and inanimate objects. The hallucinations often fit perfectly

well into the person's surroundings. A characteristic of these hallucinations is that they may present elaborately-dressed groups of people or fanciful objects and people much smaller than normal. A common hallucination is that of faces or grotesque detailed caricatures. CBS sufferers understand that the hallucinations are not real and are perhaps compensatory.

Sacks recalls the case of an elderly woman with glaucoma damage obstructing the lower half of her vision. She started to see music, lines, spaces, notes, clefs - written music on everything she looked at, but only where the blindness existed. When visiting an art museum one day she saw the lines of the explanatory notes as music, and knew she was having some kind of hallucination. She had been playing the piano, concentrating on the music prior to the musical hallucinations. She was told that the brain refuses to accept the fact that there is visual loss and fills in-with musical notations.

Another case cited by Sacks involves a surgeon, a fine amateur pianist, losing his vision from macular degeneration. When he hallucinated musical notation for the first time, its appearance was extremely realistic, the staves and clefs boldly printed on a white background, like a sheet of real music. When he looked more closely, he realized that the score was unreadable and seemingly unplayable. It was inordinately complicated, with four or six staves, impossibly complex chords with six or more notes on a single stem, and horizontal rows of multiple flats and sharps. It was a potpourri of musical notation without any apparent meaning. He would see a page of this pseudo-music for a few seconds, and then it would disappear suddenly, replaced by another, equally nonsensical page. These hallucinations were sometimes intrusive, and might cover a page he was trying to read or a letter he was trying to write.

In both these cases one wonders, whether a lifelong immersion in music and musical scores might have determined the form of the hallucinations. We are obliged to compare these music hallucination to the music received by Rosemary Brown who was not afflicted with CBS but was apparently spiritually guided to actually produce playable musical scores. This hints at Liszt's spirit hoping "to help people to realize that they are evolving souls destined to pass into the realms of non-matter where they will continue to evolve." We argue that certain kinds of hallucinations surpass physiological and psychological maladies and by their nature provide evidence of subjective signals emanating from a pervasive spiritual realm.

Mathematical Objects, Illusions, and Fantasies

Mathematical objects exist as *a priori* essences. What the eye sees is not a mathematical object, such as a circle or sphere, but an illusion. Attempt to draw a circle on paper using a compass. Have you produced a circle? Of course not! It is infinitely less than perfect: it isn't a circle! Magnify the image and at each successive stage of magnification you find small fragments of matter - never the circle nor a portion of it. This suggests that mathematical objects such as Schrödinger wave functions used to describe the transit of photons and electrons in space are but illusions - or fantastic metaphors derived from a spiritual perception of unobservable subatomic 'particles' or phenomena. The notion of wave function has been employed to describe the entire cosmos - indeed, the wave function of the universe. In *The Grand Design* Stephen Hawking explains how “.

. . . understanding of the [mathematical] laws governing us and our universe [may] lead to a unique theory that predicts and describes a vast universe full of the amazing variety that we see.” Hawking’s laws of the universe are putatively so exquisitely formulated that they govern the assembly of the cosmos down to the minutest details of quantum particles, forces, and fields [11].

The essence of mathematical objects exists in Plato’s world of perfect forms which we contend is but an aspect of the Akashic field [3]. Plato held that all that exists in his world of forms is perfect, unchanging, and utterly independent of our awareness of them. Plato’s world of forms, the Akasha, may well include nonmathematical ideals such as beauty, love and other esoteric and aesthetic ideations and concepts. Do Platonic forms and concepts originate *a posteriori*? Are they deduced from empirical observations, spheroidal objects, love experienced? According to Roger Penrose, Plato’s world of perfect forms is the very source, indeed the *a priori* fountainhead, of mathematical objects/illusions and mathematics itself.

As a physics theoretician Penrose prefers to limit his interest to Plato’s world of mathematical concepts. In *The Emperor's New Mind* [12], he writes, "I imagine that whenever the mind perceives a mathematical idea it makes contact with Plato's world of mathematical concepts. . . . When one 'sees' a mathematical truth, one's consciousness breaks through into this world of ideas, and makes direct contact with it. . . . When mathematicians communicate, this is made possible by each one having a *direct route to truth*, the consciousness of each being in a position to perceive mathematical truths directly, through this process of 'seeing.' . . . Since each can make contact with Plato's world directly, they can more readily communicate with each other than one might have expected. The mental images that each one has, when making this Platonic contact, might be rather different in each case, but communication is possible because each is directly in contact with the same eternally existing Platonic world!"

Plato’s world of perfect forms does indeed exist conceptually because, for example, the perfect circle and similar geometric forms *exist but can only exist* in the Platonic realm. Our minds, certainly mathematician’s minds, have access to the Platonic realm. Even exceptional minds may not always access its content but whenever they do, they confirm its reality. We suspect that scientists and mathematicians may somehow place things into Plato’s world only to ‘discover’ them there later. Heinrich Hertz said, "One cannot escape the feeling that these mathematical formulas have an independent existence of their own, and they are wiser than even their discoverers, that we get more out of them than was originally put into them."

Roger Penrose contemplates the fashion, faith, and fantasy which have entrapped most theoreticians in their pursuit of truths about objective physical realities and their mathematical theoretical representation [13]. He cautions that discovering mathematical truths is not the same as discovering physical truths: “. . . as regards what is really going on in the physical world, there is something profoundly missing. To get a proper solution . . . we need a change in the physics, not just some clever mathematics, brought in to cover the ontological cracks.” Penrose reexamines the uncanny enfolding of mathematical truths with the minutest and largest properties and phenomena of the physical world and the remarkable effectiveness of mathematics in describing and predicting those properties and phenomena [14].

The spiritual self is cognizant of uncanny relations between perfect mathematical objects and material objects and even quantum particles. As an example, we note that the Fibonacci sequence and golden ratio are so prominent everywhere that one is tempted to conclude that sunflower seed patterns to spiral galaxies are governed by the sequence and ratio. Of course, they are simply mathematical illusions having observable manifestations. Other mathematical fantasies, such as the de Broglie-Bohm ‘pilot-wave’ are conjured to describe unobservable quantum phenomena. They are intellectual constructs without empirical content.

There are mathematical objects which provide a rational for accepting spiritual communication: one among these objects is Euler's identity which is often cited as an example of deep mathematical beauty. It also holds a profound mathematical truth which links three basic arithmetic operations: addition, multiplication, and exponentiation and five fundamental mathematical constants [15]. Because the essence of Euler's identity resides in the realm of the mesostratum and Akashic field, we argue its spiritual nature.

Mathematical illusions and fantasies do of course anticipate aspects of empirical reality discovered by empirical observations and measurements [15]. Carl Hempel observes that “. . . mathematical as well as logical reasoning make explicit what is implicitly contained in a set of premises while contributing to the content of our knowledge of empirical matters . . . mathematics is entirely indispensable as an instrument for the validation and even for the linguistic expression of such knowledge” [16].

Conclusion

Our exploration of spirit, its relation to the body and soul, and its relation to consciousness, suggests that spirituality and spiritual communication are manifested in a variety of ways which include astral projection, hallucination, apparitions, auras, fantasies, musical and poetic communion, and psychical perceptions of mathematical objects and illusions. Other manifestations include lucid dreaming, telepathy, clairvoyance, epiphany, and insight/revelation such as are given in the Vedas, Brahmanas, and Upanishads. The evidence for spiritual intrusions onto objective reality relies largely on subjective reportage, anecdotal accounts, transient perceptions and their interpretation. We contend axiomatically that primordial consciousness generates spiritual networks from which spiritual messages emerge and impinge upon our neural networks.

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