

Glimpses of Eternity: Sharing a Loved One's Passage from This Life to the Next by Raymond Moody with Paul Perry. New York: Guideposts, 2010. 183 pp. \$19.95 (hardcover). ISBN 978824948139.

Glimpses of Eternity is a highly interesting book on a fascinating topic. It contains dozens of accounts of what the authors call shared-death experiences. These accounts were related to Moody over the years, often at conferences and book signings, or told by colleagues, friends, or hospital staff. The book is not describing the results of a systematic scientific research project, but it brings to light many interesting rare cases of the kind that little attention has been paid to, in part perhaps because of how exceptional they are. One wonders whether many of these cases are a residue of deathbed-vision cases and near-death experiences that the authors were until now hesitant to publish because they appeared so incredible. Or, could the features of some of these experiences have been somewhat exaggeratedly reported to the authors? Or, were these accounts jotted down after lectures and book-signings without getting back to the persons who reported them to check their correctness? These are methodological limitations and questions to which some readers will want answers. There is much room for further studies of deathbed-visions and end-of-life experiences, among them to corroborate some of the more exceptional experiences found in this book.

In shared-death experiences, as the authors define them, the observer of a dying person suddenly finds himself seeing the deceased persons that are generally visible only to the dying, namely, he shares the deathbed visions of the dying person. Or the observer, usually a relative, finds himself outside his body and observes how the dying person leaves the body or is hovering over the dead body, both of them looking down at the dead body. Or, the dying person suddenly appears to a relative elsewhere in the same house who then rushes to the deathbed to learn that the person has just died. There are experiences at the deathbed where the relative sees a light, presumably as the dying person also sees it. Sometimes more than one relative perceives the light.

The last kind of case reminds me of the experience that my colleague Karlis Osis told me about that happened to him at his home in Latvia in his youth. An aunt was very sick in bed as he was resting in a nearby room. His room then became filled with "living light." Then the door opened and a relative announced, "Auntie just died." "My experience and her death were surely simultaneous" (Osis 1987). This was the underlying reason for his interest and later research into deathbed visions.

Other instances involve hearing music, sometimes described as "the most beautiful and intricate music I have ever heard." There are also cases of shared life-reviews, distortions of the surrounding space ("change of geometry"), and

“encountering unworldly or ‘heavenly’ realms.” In one place the authors describe shared-death experiences as a “picture window into the afterlife.”

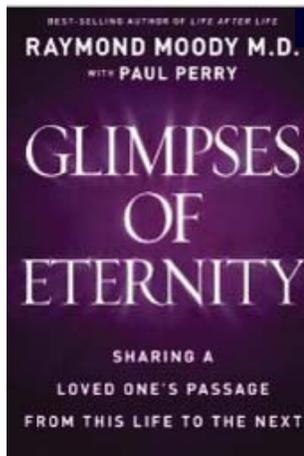
All these accounts are anecdotal, the reviewer does not recall mention of attempts to validate a case by interviewing a second witness. One misses here the thoroughness that we find in the classic *Phantasms of the Living* by Gurney, Myers, and Podmore (1886). While the actual investigation of cases of this kind has been neglected, they have been discussed here and there over the years, such as recently by Alvarado (2006) and Nahm (2011).

Moody and Perry do not bother readers with many numbers or statistics. Nor are there references, footnotes, or citations, not even for quotations from well-known sources. This is a popular mass-market book written for the general reader, and indeed very well written. The text is highly edited and easy to read, the book is light in the hand and has large letters comfortable for the eyes. Ideal for bedtime reading, and very thought-provoking.

One wonders why Moody does not write up some of his cases for peer-reviewed journals. One also wonders what “with Paul Perry” really means. How do Moody and Perry work together? Who writes what? Some readers would like to know this, especially when a book is published in the U.S. where ghostwriting is so common.

For this reviewer the book was a highly interesting read. It brought back memories of cases from Karlis Osis and my survey of deathbed-visions (Osis & Haraldsson 1977), also of cases that have since been reported to me by various people, as well as of similarities to some cases in my study of apparitions of the dead, or ADC as it is sometimes referred to nowadays (Haraldsson 1988–1989, 2009). It also brought to mind parallels I have found in reports of mediumistic phenomena, in particular of Indridi Indridason (Gissurarson & Haraldsson 1989, Haraldsson 2011).

This book is more personal than previous books by Moody. He describes his experience at the deathbed of his mother where the room seemed to change shape and “four of six of us felt as though we were being lifted off the ground.” His sister saw that their deceased father had “come back to get her” (p. 49). At one place he writes “death opens a portal to the ‘other side’. By now I had faith that such a portal exists” (p. 44).



Moody also writes:

Rather than try to explain how a phenomenon so great as shared death experience takes place, I most often like to observe the sense of wonder and serenity on the face of a person who is telling what it is like to accompany a loved one into a heavenly realm. It is then, when I see the total joy in their face, that I relax about trying to explain these experiences and accept them for the wonderful experiences that they are. In short, I drop my scientific skepticism, quit asking, 'Are we there yet' and just enjoy the view that is provided for me by the people that offer their case studies. (pp. 178–179)

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