

## Echoes of Eternity: Near-Death Experiences and the Soul's Resonance.

03/01/2024

This article delves into a topic that spans the realms of science, spirituality, and the mysterious dimensions of the soul. Central to our exploration is "Echoes of Eternity: Near-Death Experiences and the Soul's Resonance."

Despite its inevitability, death often occupies only the fringes of our daily contemplations, with a mere 11 percent of individuals actively engaging with thoughts of mortality. Yet, nearly half (45%) ponder death monthly, and 23% do so daily.

The teachings of Imam Al-Sadiq offer a reflection on the uncertainty of death, for the majority of human beings, likening it to a dubious certainty. Many grapple with death's enigmatic nature, seeking explanation in religious texts, yet remain skeptical due their attachment to affairs of this world.

Near-death experiences (NDEs) emerge as a response to skepticism, offering glimpses into the veiled realms beyond physical existence and corroborating religious doctrines regarding the afterlife.

NDEs serve as a conduit to understanding existence beyond the physical body and provide a glimpse into the essence of mortality. The transformative nature of these experiences is profound, leading individuals to exhibit heightened compassion, reduced material attachments, and sometimes even career changes.

Historically, seminal works by scholars such as Raymond Moody, Sam Parnia, Bruce Greyson, and Peter Fenwick have laid the groundwork for scientific inquiry into NDEs, highlighting their universality and challenging conventional paradigms of consciousness and cognition.

The first known scientific work about near-death experience was by Raymond Moody, an American Psychiatrist and philosopher. He published a book named "Life After Death" in 1975. Some other notable research in the domain of clinical resuscitation was conducted by Sam Parnia at Stony Brook University Hospital of New York, Bruce Greyson, a psychiatrist from Virginia who wrote a book about NDE called "After," and Peter Fenwick, an English neuropsychologist who has written "The Art of Dying."

The essence of NDEs revolves around recurring motifs such as tunnels of light, life reviews, and encounters with celestial beings. Despite cultural diversity, these shared elements evoke a sense of cosmic unity.

The kernel of the aforementioned works revolves around that near-death experiences are universal and ubiquitous, and the details of the near-death experiences help look behind the veil,

suggesting that there are other realms beside the physical realm and that consciousness/mind and brain are two independent entities.

Now, let's delve into the understanding of near-death experiences. What are they, and why do they captivate our imagination? Near-death experiences often involve a tunnel of light, a life review, and encounters with beings that emanate a profound sense of wisdom and love.

These near-death experiences, as shared by people from different cultures and beliefs, create echoes across time and space. People who experience near-death say that words cannot explain what happened to them during NDE. The consistency of these accounts suggests a universal thread that transcends individual perspectives and backgrounds.

Illustrating the transformative nature of NDEs is the story of Santosh Acharjee, whose brush with mortality unveiled profound insights into the afterlife. His journey through darkness and light culminated in a profound encounter with divine wisdom.

In October 2006 Santosh, a Hindu engineer, fell very sick and was in the ICU. His family was around him when he collapsed. He couldn't see anything but still could hear. His family was sent out; doctors hectically took over, and the last he heard was, "we just lost him." He came back to consciousness after 3 days. Later he came to know that they had induced an artificial coma when they "lost him."

Once out of the body, all was dark said Santosh. He couldn't see anything, but suddenly realized that his "physical death did not finish" him. He was still alive. He could still think. Then a bright light came near him. He knew this light had 'superior authority.' He could see his body on the hospital bed. Also, he could zoom like a powerful camera. The light engulfed him, and he knew it was there to protect him. He actually fell in love with this divine light. Together they "traveled for quite some time," and once in a while, they "went through some dark tunnels." At the end, the light stopped over a beautiful compound with beautiful mansions. He realized it was the kingdom of heaven and wanted to go inside, but the gates were closed. He was standing on the left side of a huge high platform. Looking down, he saw a burning lake of fire. He was afraid to fall down. In the center of the huge platform, there were 3 steps, and on the last step, a throne. A giant figure sat there. He felt shame and guilt because he had committed so many sins that were flashed before his eyes. "Lord, please forgive me," he kept pleading. He was afraid to fall into the lake of fire, as "this would be the end of me." Then the Lord spoke to him, with so much love, tenderness, and mercy and he "could understand him through all the languages he knew." He said, "What are you doing here? I will send you back to the earth." Santosh saw a narrow gate near the feet of the giant figure and wanted to go through it, but knew that he needed his permission. And then Santosh asked him, "Lord, please tell me, when I am back, which church, temple, or mosque I should join?" The giant did not respond. Then Santosh kept pleading. "Please tell me, otherwise I commit the same sins over and over. Next time I want to go through this narrow gate." After much pleading, Santosh heard the answer: "Those things are not important." Santosh was shocked because he "thought that one needs to be a religious person to enter the kingdom of heaven." Instead, he was told, "I want to see an honest relationship. I want

to see how sincere, how honest you are with me. Not just once a week, every day.” Santosh didn’t understand what he meant. “Lord, I am a simple human being, please tell me what I need to do,” he pleaded again. One directive and five instructions: Then the Giant figure/angel gave “one directive and five instructions.” The directive was: you must love your family and children when you are back. The five instructions were:

Always tell the truth. Don’t lie and search for the truth.

Commit no more sins.

Surrender yourself completely unto me in your daily life. Let me be the driver in your life.

Walk with me.

Always be kind and generous to the poor.

We see, all this description lines up with high moral religious teachings that set the purpose of human creation and their test. Part of the interesting facts about his description is that the last sense that he lost is the hearing, which is conforming to religious and scientific premises. Santosh's statement about the fact that he was able to see during his NDE experience better than in this world reminds me of the verse: ﴿قَدْ﴾ [٣: 19] ﴿وَ﴾ And the stupor of death will come in truth: "This is what you have been avoiding!" So we removed your cover from you, and today your sight is sharp.

In another NDE story, When Jim Woodford died, he spent 11 hours in Heaven. When he came back, he was changed forever. A successful airline pilot and Canadian businessman, Jim had it all—a loving family, substantial wealth, and all of the good things that come with it. But none of this was enough to satisfy the emptiness he felt in his heart.

Jim was never a religious man. When it came to matters of God and faith, he was ambivalent. But as he lay in the hospital bed, clinically dead for more than 11 hours, his consciousness was transported to the wonders of Heaven and the horrors of hell. When he returned to this world, he brought back the missing peace his soul had been longing for. Jim Woodford on this unforgettable journey into the afterlife! After a cardiac arrest, he saw his body on the wheel while driving. Then He was awakened to the vivid sights, sounds, and sensations that you can enjoy in Heaven forever, stating that you would never see that. “Therein is something that no eye has seen and no human mind has ever thought of”. At the opposite of what might the evangelical interviewers of Daystar TV believe, Jim confirmed the catholic belief of purgatory and Islamic belief in the existence of the hell fire. ﴿٢٧﴾ Surah Muhammad verse 27 Then how [will it be] when the angels take them in death, striking their faces and their backs? Jim encountered the chilling realities of hell and the sharp claws of destruction that threatened to pull Jim into eternal darkness. Alike specified in the Barzakh/after death accounts and Quranic verses.

Another NDE story by Jose Hernandez, an electrical engineer and self-described atheist, had a near-death experience in January 2000 after a malpractice accident at work that damaged his lungs. His NDE took him on a trip to the "other side," where he was shown amazing truths that shattered his materialist perspective. This powerful experience changed his life path dramatically!

In this remarkable account, the narrator recounts a near-death experience (NDE) marked by a profound encounter with the ethereal. After initially expressing anger at the possibility of death and dismissing the divine, the narrator describes a vivid journey during the NDE. The experience involves a shadowy figure providing comfort and a transformative touch, leading to a heightened state of well-being. As the narrative unfolds, Jose finds himself in a vibrant, colorful realm where a newfound sense of oneness permeates his interactions with the environment. This culminates in a meeting with his deceased father, bringing unexpected revelations, forgiveness, and a deep understanding of the importance of self-forgiveness. The aforementioned meet the accounts of Barzakh/after death, where they refer to the reunion of family and kinship in the Barzakh/purgatory. The request to return to life is met with initial resistance, but a mysterious force prompts the narrator's return to consciousness in the physical realm. This journey leaves Jose forever changed, emphasizing themes of interconnectedness, gratitude, and the transformative power of forgiveness. Looking at his dead body, Jose wondered if that was me and I was dead, then Who Was I? (That proved Nafs or soul exists beyond the physical body). His sight was so acute as stated by Jim Woodford. Another alignment with Barzakh hadith when Jose in his journey wondered that he was flying; then he said, "It is normal in here." Jose in his NDE felt like falling forever where things were ripping off of him. (31) Surah Al-Hajj: He who associates others with Allah is like he who falls from heaven and is snatched away by the birds or carried by the wind to some far-off place.

Finally, his description about seeing the sun matching the interpretation of the 46th verse of Surah Ghafir in Qur'aan: In front of the Fire will they be brought, morning and evening: And (the sentence will be) on the Day that Judgment will be established: "Cast ye the People of Pharaoh into the severest Penalty."

The last NDE story is for the late Palestinian academician and politician Saeb Erakat.

Saeb Erekat underwent lung transplant surgery last year. He confirmed his belief "in (life) after death" and that he came to this conclusion after experiencing a near-death experience while undergoing lung transplant surgery in the fall of last year. Saeb Erekat said that doctors told him that his heart stopped unexpectedly during the operation and that he "died" for three minutes and twenty seconds.

Regarding the details of what happened during this period, Erekat contented himself with saying that he "saw himself (not his body) walking at the speed of the wind... but not in the sky, but rather in a void... a huge void... which may have been a tunnel, but he did not see the dimensions of this tunnel."

He also stated that he "met people he had helped in the past and that they referred him to him before he returned."

He added that: "He was not thinking about anyone or anything of the many matters of the world, and that his thoughts were focused only on his unfamiliar situation and the state of extreme fear in those moments.

Similarly, individuals like Jim Woodford and Jose Hernandez offer poignant insights into the multifaceted dimensions of NDEs, bridging the gap between science and spirituality through their accounts.

The story of Saeb Erekat's near-death experience further underscores the profound impact of these encounters, highlighting themes of timelessness, transcendent beings, and existential clarity.

Common features of NDEs include a sense of timelessness, life reviews, encounters with transcendent beings, and a feeling of existence beyond earthly constraints. Scientific studies support these experiences, suggesting a deeper spiritual dimension beyond materialistic explanations.

NDEs can be seen as echoes across time and space by sharing instances where individuals report similar experiences despite having no prior knowledge of others' NDEs. This suggests a shared, archetypal dimension to these encounters.

Individuals during an NDE describe a feeling of timelessness, where the conventional flow of time seems to dissolve. This could be illustrated by the person experiencing a life review that spans decades but feeling as if it happens in an instant. Individuals describe being in an "eternal now" state, free from the constraints of past, present, or future. They may also express a profound sense of clarity and understanding that goes beyond earthly notions of time.

When someone undergoes a life review during an NDE, witnessing not just actions but also feeling the emotional impact of their choices on others. This experience may convey the idea that each moment holds eternal significance and contributes to the soul's growth.

Individuals report encountering transcendent beings or a divine presence. These beings might impart timeless wisdom or communicate in a way that goes beyond language, reinforcing the notion that the soul connects with something eternal during these experiences.

Individuals who experienced an NDE, experienced a sense of existence that extends beyond the linear progression of life on Earth. This suggests that the soul's journey is not bound by temporal limitations.

Scientific studies that explore the physiological aspects of NDEs, such as altered brain function during cardiac arrest. However, emphasize that while science provides valuable insights, the profound and transformative nature of these experiences transcends purely materialistic explanations, pointing towards a deeper spiritual dimension.

NDE phenomenon, in addition to terminal lucidity in Dementia, and neuroimaging in psychedelic medicines' research suggest a high consciousness in absence of substantial brain

activity. That leads to the conclusion that the mind and conscience exist independently and that the brain does not create the mind. As the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates stipulated that the brain is the interpreter of mind. The mind/conscience/soul is beyond the physical realm that we understand throughout the neurophysiology of the brain.

In conclusion, the exploration of near-death experiences invites us to question and transcend our conventional understanding of life, death, and consciousness/mind. It prompts us to consider the possibility that our existence extends beyond the physical realm, resonating with eternal echoes that bind us all.