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Editor-In-Chief
Prof. K.N. Shelke

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A detailed still-life composition featuring a quill pen as the central element. The quill is positioned diagonally, with its tip resting on a scroll of aged parchment. The scroll is secured with a red wax seal and a red ribbon. In the background, a lit candle in a brass holder casts a warm glow. In the foreground, a glass inkwell with a quill inside and a red wax seal are visible. The entire scene is set on a dark wooden surface.

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**A Peer-Reviewed Refereed and Indexed
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With this aim Research Innovator, Multidisciplinary International Research Journal (RIMIRJ) welcomes research articles from the areas like Literatures in English, Hindi and Marathi, literary translations in English from different languages of the world, arts, education, social sciences, cultural studies, pure and applied Sciences, and trade and commerce. The space will also be provided for book reviews, interviews, commentaries, poems and short fiction.

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Coming Back from Death-Near Death Experiences**Dr. Archana Durgesh***Associate Professor, Department of English, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Ekta Sawhney***Research Scholar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Babu Banarasi Das University, Lucknow, (U.P.) India***Abstract**

Life is strange, this is what people say. But stranger are the ways of Death. Humans die, and are sent to Heaven and Hell according to their Karmas or actions. But some people make this Journey, and come back midway. They do not die, even when they appear as being dead. They come back from the brutal hands of death to teach, to preach, to heal or simply to live and love the world. This Paper tries to explain the phenomenon of coming back to life from death and also explains the causes and effects of going through a 'Near Death Experience.'

Key Words: life, death, hell, heaven

A *near-death experience* (NDE) is a profound psychological event that may occur to a person close to death or, if not near death, in a situation of physical or emotional crisis. Because it includes transcendental and mystical elements, an NDE is a powerful event of consciousness; it is not mental illness. An NDE may begin with an out-of-body experience—a very clear perception of being somehow separate from one's physical body, possibly even hovering nearby and watching events going on around the body. An NDE typically includes a sense of moving, often at great speed and usually through a dark space, into a fantastic landscape and encountering beings that may be perceived as sacred figures, deceased family members or friends, or unknown entities. A pinpoint of indescribable light may grow to surround the person in brilliant but not painful radiance; unlike physical light, it is not merely visual

but is sensed as being an all-loving presence that many people define as the Supreme Being of their religious faith.

Popular interest in near-death experiences was initially sparked by Raymond Moody's 1975 book *Life After Life* and the founding of the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS) in 1981. They are chiefly the experiences reported by individuals who have been close to dying or who have been pronounced clinically dead and then resuscitated. It means coming close to death and being clinical dead - vital organs have ceased to function, but still people come back to life. Some come back after minutes and others come back after a much longer time. In one case a person called Mellon-Thomas Benedict came back to life after being clinical dead for an hour and thirty minutes.

The oldest surviving explicit report of a NDE in Western literature comes from the

famed Greek philosopher Plato who, in the year 380 BC, described such an event in the tenth book of his legendary work entitled Republic. Although it's called the "Myth of Er", the word "myth" in this case means "word, speech, account," rather than the modern meaning. The story begins as a man named Er dies in battle. Ten days later, when the bodies of those who died in the battle are collected, Er's body has not decomposed. Two days later he revives on his funeral-pyre and tells others of his journey into the afterlife, including an account of reincarnation and the celestial spheres of the astral plane. The tale introduces the idea that moral people are rewarded and immoral people are punished after death. The story includes an account of the cosmos and the afterlife that greatly influenced religious, philosophical, and scientific thought for many centuries.

Some people with Near Death Experience report having seen themselves suspended over their body after dying. They talk of a sense of freedom and lightness. They report seeing a bright shimmering light which they are drawn to and they are met by angels, helpers and spirits of long gone relatives.

They also talk about a feeling of complete contentment - being at total peace and harmony with themselves. They experience total relaxation and once again the feeling of being at home.

Across thousands of years and in cultures around the world, people have described powerful experiences that follow this general pattern with its common features. At its broadest, the experiences involve perceptions of movement through space, of light and darkness, a landscape, presences,

intense emotion, and a conviction of having a new understanding of the nature of the universe.

A near-death experience may include few or several of the common features. Many accounts of experiences include only one or two of the common features, but those were so powerful they created permanent changes in people's lives.

The emotions of an NDE are intense and most commonly include peace, love and bliss, although a substantial minority is marked by terror, anxiety, or despair. Most people come away from the experience with an unshakable belief that they have learned something of immeasurable importance about the purpose of life. Overall, the entire experience is ineffable—that is, it is beyond describing; even art and metaphor cannot capture it. The effects of an NDE are often life-changing, and its details will typically be remembered clearly for decades.

What causes a near-death experience?

In a scientific age, it is only natural that people want to understand the biological or psychological origins of experience, and a variety of neurological and chemical explanations have been proposed as the cause of NDEs: lack of oxygen, excess of carbon dioxide, seizure activity in the temporal lobe, the effect of drugs such as DMT or ketamine, hallucination, psychological avoidance of death, normal shutting down of brain activity, and a dozen or more other possibilities.

No scientific explanation so far has satisfactorily accounted for all aspects of NDEs or their effects. For example, numerous patients who were being clinically

monitored and were known to be well oxygenated have later reported having an NDE during that time; drugs are not a factor in all NDEs; the characteristics of sleep disorders and NDEs are not identical. Hallucinations are highly individual and produce confusion and hazy memories, exactly the opposite characteristics of near-death experiences, which tend to share characteristics and be remembered vividly for decades as being "realer than real." For every medical cause that has been put forward, there are reasons the NDE researchers say, "Not quite right."

Further, despite reports that scientists have been able to induce NDEs through the use of drugs or electrical stimulation to the brain, none of the reports has been altogether convincing. The reports have been based on a partial similarity to a limited aspect of NDE, or they have involved very few people—sometimes only a single individual—in an experiment that does not really replicate a full NDE, or the aftereffects do not coincide with those of a true NDE. After decades of investigation, researcher and psychiatrist Bruce Greyson, MD, has reported, "*No one physiological or psychological model by itself explains all the common features of NDE.*"*

Most NDEs are felt as peaceful and loving, but some are disturbing. Each near-death experience is unique, but as a group NDEs display common features.

- Intense emotions: commonly of profound peace, well-being, love; others marked by fear, horror, loss
- A perception of seeing one's body from above (called an out-of-body experience, or OBE), sometimes

watching medical resuscitation efforts or moving instantaneously to other places

- Rapid movement through darkness, often toward an indescribable light
- A sense of being "somewhere else," in a landscape that may seem like a spiritual realm or world
- Incredibly rapid, sharp thinking and observations
- Encounter with deceased loved ones, possibly sacred figures (the Judges, Jesus, a saint) or unrecognized beings, with whom communication is mind-to-mind; these figures may seem consoling, loving, or terrifying
- A life review, reliving actions and feeling their emotional impact on others
- In some cases, a flood of knowledge about life and the nature of the universe
- Sometimes a decision to return to the body

The same elements appear in both pleasant and disturbing near-death experiences, but with different emotional tones. PMH Atwater, one of the most prolific NDE researchers, in her book *Coming Back to Life*, described a peaceful experience this way:

- A sensation of floating out of one's body. Often followed by an out-of-body experience where all that goes on around the "vacated" body is both seen and heard accurately.
- Passing through a dark tunnel. Or black hole or encountering some kind of darkness. This is often accompanied by a feeling or

sensation of movement or acceleration. "Wind" may be heard or felt.

- Ascending toward a light at the end of the darkness. A light of incredible brilliance, with the possibility of seeing people, animals, plants, lush outdoors, and even cities within the light.
- Greeted by friendly voices, people or beings who may be strangers, loved ones, or religious figures. Conversation can ensue, information or a message may be given.
- Seeing a panoramic review of the life just lived, from birth to death or in reverse order, sometimes becoming a reliving of the life rather than a dispassionate viewing. The person's life can be reviewed in its entirety or in segments. This is usually accompanied by a feeling or need to assess loss or gains during the life to determine what was learned or not learned. Other beings can take part in this judgment like process or offer advice.
- A reluctance to return to the earthplane, but invariably realizing either their job on earth is not finished or a mission must yet be accomplished before they can return to stay.
- Warped sense of time and space. Discovering time and space do not exist, losing the need to recognize measurements of life either as valid or necessary.
- Disappointment at being revived. Often feeling a need to shrink or somehow squeeze to fit back in to

the physical body. There can be unpleasantness, even anger or tears at the realization they are now back in their bodies and no longer on "The Other Side."

Whether the NDE was beautiful or terrifying, near-death experiencers commonly say it was unlike a dream, "more real than real," the most powerful event in their lives. They struggle to find words to describe it, but insist they now know something new about reality, that "there's more than what's here" (in the physical world). Most feel deeply changed in their attitudes toward life, work, and relationships.

After a wonderful NDE, people almost always report losing their fear of death and believing that the essential purpose of human life is to develop our capacity to love. After a disturbing NDE, a person will almost always look for an explanation for having had the experience; because many interpret it as a threat or warning, they may try to change habits or behaviors, or to take up a new religious practice, hoping to avoid a recurrence. However experiencers adjust to these personal transformations, they often have difficulty finding someone they trust to tell about the event. They usually feel in great need of information and support.

Nearly identical experiences may also occur when people are nowhere near death, or not in any health crisis at all—perhaps during prayer or meditation, under deep emotional stress, or at the bedside of a dying person. Rarely, they seem to happen spontaneously. The general elements and aftereffects are the same as in the true "near death" experiences.

After Effects of an NDE:

Unconditional Love - NDErs perceive themselves as equally and fully loving of each and all, openly generous, excited about the potential and wonder of each person they see. Confused family members tend to regard this sudden switch in behavior as oddly threatening, as if their loved one had become aloof, un-responsive, even uncaring or unloving.

Lack of Boundaries - Familiar codes of conduct can lose relevance or disappear altogether as unlimited avenues of interest and inquiry take priority. This new frame of reference can infuse NDErs with such an accepting nature that they can and do display childlike naivety. With the The Psychic - Extrasensory perception and various types of psychic phenomena become normal and ordinary in the lives of NDErs. A person's religious beliefs do not prevent this expansion of faculties or enlargements of perceptual range. This can frighten the unprepared and be misconstrued as "the devil's work" when it is actually more akin to "gifts of the spirit."

Reality Switches - Hard-driving achievers and materialists can transform into easy-going philosophers; but, by the same token, those once more relaxed or uncommitted can become energetic "movers and shakers," determined to make a difference in the world. Switches seem to depend more on what is "needed" to round out the individual's growth than on any uniform result.

The Soul as Self - Most come to recognize themselves as an immortal soul currently resident within material form so lessons can

be learned while sojourning in the Earth realm. They know they are not their body; it is a "jacket" they wear. The majority develops an interest in reincarnation, some accept it as valid.

The Psychic - Extrasensory perception and various types of psychic phenomena become normal and ordinary in the lives of NDErs. A person's religious beliefs do not prevent this expansion of faculties or enlargements of perceptual range. This can frighten the unprepared and be misconstrued as "the devil's work" when it is actually more akin to "gifts of the spirit."

Modes of Communications - What was once foreign becomes familiar, what was once familiar becomes foreign. Rationale of any kind tends to lose its logic as NDErs begin to think more abstractly and in grandiose terms. New ways of using language, even whole new vocabularies, emerge.

Within some households, relatives are so impressed by what they witness with their loved one that they too change, making the NDE a "shared" event.

Kenneth Ring, one of the most prolific researchers and authors of NDE studies, suggests "that the NDE can be viewed as an *evolutionary device* to bring about a transformation" and that NDEs and similar mystical experiences may point the way toward unlocking humankind's dormant spiritual potential.

Kenneth Ring, reports a large number of subjects who gain self-confidence and become more extroverted after an experience. One of Ring's studies quantified changes in subjects' attitudes toward life. These generally include:

- a sense of purpose in life,
- an appreciation of life,
- increase in compassion, patience and understanding and
- an overall feeling of personal strength.

Finally, people who go through NDEs often find that they do not fear death, and feel that a positive experience will be awaiting them when they actually die.

“There is one common element in all near-death experiences: they transform the people who have them.

In my twenty years of intense exposure to NDEs, I have yet to find one who hasn't had a very deep and positive transformation as a result of his experience.” - Raymond. A. Moody, M.D.

NDEs and similar mystical experiences may point the way toward unlocking humankind's dormant spiritual potential. They should foster spiritual growth by leading us to question some of our basic assumptions about mind and brain, about our relationship to the divine, and about the universe and our role in it.

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