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**Characteristics of Near-Death Experiences (NDE) according to the Transcendent Wisdom and its Function in giving Meaning to Human Life**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT	
<p><b>Article History:</b>  <i>Received: 16 October 2021</i>  <i>Revised: 27 January 2022</i>  <i>Accepted: 09 February 2022</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Key Words:</b>  <i>Near-Death Experiences (NDE)</i>   <i>Transcendent Wisdom</i>   <i>Human Life</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>DOI:</b>  <a href="https://doi.org/10.22034/IMJPL.2022.6993">10.22034/IMJPL.2022.6993</a></p> <hr/> <p><b>DOR:</b>  <a href="https://doi.org/20.1001.1.26767619.2022.9.30.5.8">20.1001.1.26767619.2022.9.30.5.8</a></p> <hr/> <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> <hr/> <p><b>* Corresponding Author:</b>  <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:rsalarian@chmail.ir">rsalarian@chmail.ir</a>  <b>ORCID:</b> <a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5899-6723">0000-0002-5899-6723</a></p>	<p><b>SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES:</b> philosophical rational analysis of Muslim philosophers about death now with reports from revived people or pre-death experiences which especially in the last century has attracted the attention of branches of psychology, has created this issue that What is the relationship between experimental findings and rational explanations in Islamic philosophy? This question was a starting point to investigate the descriptions of the nature and characteristics of near-death experiences according to the rational philosophical viewpoint particularly the Transcendent wisdom.</p> <p><b>METHOD AND FINDING:</b> The present study was conducted according to the analytical-descriptive methodology, and the data were collected using the library research approach. The findings showed that near-death experiences arise when the bonds of the soul to the body get weakened, and this pushes any material veils aside and guides them to the imaginal world. As the rupture gets more profound, humans sense more in-depth experiences with added features in their lives. The experiencers become free from the constraints of place and time as the two elements are absent in the imaginal world. The unity that such people sense arises due to achieving higher levels of understanding when their bonds to their bodies get more weakened. Experiencing heaven and hell in such experiences can be attributed to being exposed to the truth of actions.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION:</b> Sadr ul-Din Shirazi viewed love as the result of insight and existential unity. Being united with divine beloveds leads to happiness, while unity with sensual beloveds brings about agony in the imaginal world. Simultaneously experiencing love and unity with the light occurs due to the increased existential vastness and the achievement of a more in-depth understanding of love.</p>	
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## **Introduction**

Near-death experience (NDE) is known as a spiritual and immaterial journey to a world beyond matter. Published reports of these experiences have received much attention in the present century, and especially in recent years.

The presence of transcendental and immaterial elements and perceptions in these experiences, in addition to being attractive and surprising to the audience, also raises many questions in the minds of readers. Readers of these experiences, regardless of their religion, try to answer the questions and ambiguities they have about death and the afterlife in their minds by reading published reports of near-death experiences.

In recent years, different views have been proposed in relation to these experiences and their characteristics, and

each of these views tries to explain and analyze this phenomenon.

The first scientific work on near-death experience was published by Raymond Modi in 1975, *Life after Life*. Most of the works that have been written so far about near-death experiences have empirical approaches and have been presented mainly by Western scientists.

In these works, using new experimental sciences, various explanations of physiology and biology about near-death experiences have been presented and several works have been published in this regard.

In contrast, less research has been done on rational and philosophical approaches to near-death experiences, and there is no comprehensive Work on this.

In this article, an attempt has been made to examine the possibility of achieving a rational approach to the phenomenon of near-death experience and its role in human life and to extract and present it from the words of Islamic philosophers, in particular Mulla Sadra and the school of transcendent wisdom.

### **Near Death Experience**

Near-death experience is the experience of a death-like condition that occurs to some people in certain situations, such as accidents, serious illnesses, and the like.

Bruce Greyson defines near-death experiences as:

*Deep psychological events with mystical, spiritual, and transcendent components that occur for people who are on the verge of death or in severe states of physical injury.*

*(Ref: Cardena et al, 2004: 320)*

Janice Holden, a researcher on near-death experiences, considers this phenomenon to be a parapsychological and spiritual memory reported by people on the verge of death. *(Nouri, 2008: 15)*

Examining the states and characteristics that the NDE Experiencer have found in their personal experiences and which they have narrated to others after returning to the world, it becomes clear that the near-death experience is not a definite death and is merely a state similar to the situation of the moribund.

### **Characteristics of NDE**

Although near-death experiences seem to be quite different in detail, by examining and studying near-death experiences reports, a number of general

and common features and characteristics can be achieved among all these experiences. Perception and awareness, Exodus from the dimension of time and place.

Feelings of existential unity, encounter with the truth of deeds, observation of heaven and hell, indescribable pleasures, and observation of light and holy existence are among these characteristics.

### **NDE from the Perspective of Transcendent Wisdom**

Since near-death experiences take place in the realm of the purgatory and the Imaginal world, all the features that the experiencer have reported from their experience are consistent with the structure and features of the Imaginal world. In the following, each of these features will be introduced and explained.

#### **1. Perception and Awareness**

Perception and awareness as a common element are present in all the features of near-death experiences.

All of these characteristics indicate the perception of a feeling -positive or negative- that is fully perceived by the NDE experiencer. Indeed, every thing that is seen in the reports of near-death experiences are the experiencers attempts to describe these perceptions and awareness.

These perceptions belong either to external and perceptible things, such as observing the body and the environment, or to things that are not normally felt and observed, such as observing light and sacred existence. Thus, near-death experience can be considered a set of consciousnesses.

## **2. The Soul is the Place of Knowledge and Perception**

Perception and awareness of the effects of the human soul and does not stop with death. After death, the material body loses its function and it is the human soul and spirit that remains and continues its new life. Therefore, the perceptions of the soul will not stop and will continue after death.

Mulla Sadra considers the soul as an abstract and immaterial thing, (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 8: 260*) and believes in the survival of the human soul and spirit. He has proved the immaterial of knowledge by using various arguments such as “non-extension of science” and “The Impression of the Big Things in Small Places” and believes that the place of knowledge and perception

and awareness in man is his soul and spirit; Because human material body they can not be the home of immaterial human perceptions.

In addition to rational arguments, Mulla Sadra also refers to narrated evidences in this regard. He writes about this in the book “Shawahid ul-Rububiyah”:

*Conclusive rational evidences and proofs indicate that the place of wisdom and the place of knowledge will never be destroyed. A prophetic hadith “You were created for survival and not for perishment” and a noble hadith “The earth does not eat the place of faith” and an honorable verse: “They are alive with their Lord, provided with*

*sustenance, rejoicing in what God has given them” indicate this. (Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 2004: 398)*

### **3. Exodus from the Dimension of Time and Place**

One of the common features in near-death experiences is Exodus from the dimension of time and place. Usually leaving the dimension of place begins with the start of experience of death. The experiencer leaves his body and observes his corpse. He feels that he is out of his body and can look at his body and the environment from other angles.

In some NDE reports, even the most accurate details of the environment are reported. Interestingly, in this case, the experiencer usually does not show biotic signs and doctors confirm his natural death, but

at the same time the experiencer sees and knows all the events around him even in the most precise detail. Even some Experiencer Observe their own cardiac resuscitation by medical staff.

The following are two examples of these experiences:

- *I could look down at my body, which was on the hospital bed. I could clearly see people that rushing and forcing a device on its wheels to get to the bottom of the bed. I knew very well in those moments that this device is an electric shock. At this time a priest entered the room and performed the last rites, which are usually performed on the beds of the deceased. At this point I moved down to the*

*bed so I could better observe what they were doing on my body. I was like an observer watching a ceremony with care and interest. (Morse, 1996: 24)*

- *I found myself in my parents' house. They were sitting in the smallest room of the house. It was a three-by-four room... (Sadeghi, 2018: 114)*

Also exodus from the dimension of time is seen in many reports of NDE. According to the experiencers, the time component has no place in their perceptions. They considered time as an earthly concept that was meaningless in their experience. The following are some of these experiences:

- *There is no time in the world of death. If I*

*mention a specific time, I mean earthly time. That is, I am describing events in terms of the time of the material world. A few seconds in the material world is a short time. In the world of death, these earthly seconds can be very long. (Ibid: 45)*

- *In my experience, I have come to understand that time is just an illusion. There is no past and no future, and time is the eternity of this moment, which is in unity. All our lives are happening at the same time. (Ref: Taylor, 1994)*

#### **4. Lack of Time and Place in the Imaginal World (Purgatory World)**

Exodus from the dimension of time and place in NDE is

due to the nature of the the imaginal world and is one of the effects of reducing the attachment of the soul to the body. In the view of Muslim philosophers and transcendent wisdom, matter and body cause time and space limitations of man in this world. Therefore, in the NDE, with the gradual reduction of the soul belonging to the body and entering the purgatory and the imaginal world, the spatial and temporal limitations of man are also gradually removed.

According to most Muslim philosophers, the concept of time is “the amount of motion”. (*Mesbah Yazdi, 1986, Vol. 2: 142; Motahari, 1997, Vol. 6: 140*)

Movement is also defined by philosophers as the gradual departure of the object from force to action. (*Tabatabai, 1982: 254*)

Therefore, since the imaginal universe has no matter, there is no motion and consequently no time in this universe.

Exodus from time and space does not happen all at once in near-death experiences, but gradually. The reason for this, is the gradual reduction of the soul's belonging to the body. Thus, as the attachment of the soul to the body diminishes, so does the departure from place and time for the experiencer.

### **5. Feeling of Existential Unity (Oneness)**

The feeling of existential unity is another feature of near-death experiences that has been attributed to various phenomena in the expression of the experiencers. These include a sense of oneness with light, a sense of oneness with the sacred, a sense of oneness with action, a sense



of oneness with objects, and a sense of oneness with heaven or hell.

NDE Reports shows that the quality and intensity of the sense of unity varies from experience to experience:

- *I have seen in my experience that indeed we are all one, and that everything is a manifestation of the Creator. We are all sparks trying to find a way back to the light [and our source]. (Ref: Taylor, 1994, Betty Eadie Experience)*
- *The feeling of unity and oneness with the whole universe and what was around me prevailed. Everything in turn was a part of me. (Ref: Ibid, Mariana Experience)*
- *Every part of the universe was a part of*

*me, and every part of me was a part of the universe. (Ref: Ibid, Doug Experience)*

- *I became one with the light I was so filled with a feeling of gratitude and love that I cried because I felt that I was the light and it was my light. I heard the voice again, We are all from the light and we will return to the light. My happiness was indescribable, my emotions did not control me and I was one with everything. (Ref: Ibid, Josiane Antonette Experience)*

### **Perception Levels**

The feeling of existential unity in near-death experiences can be considered as another effect of reducing the attachment of the soul to the body. The process of perception

and awareness in human beings has stages and levels that gradually change with the decrease of the soul's belonging to the body. Therefore Understanding the levels of perception is necessary to clarify why experiencers feel united.

Islamic philosophers consider four level for perception:

1. Sensory Perception
2. Imaginary Perception
3. Illusory Perception
4. Intellectual Perception.

*(Ibn Sina, 1996: 81; Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 360)*

Suhrawardi, by including illusory perception in imaginary perception, considers the stages of perception as three times as sense, imagination and intellect. *(Sobhani Fakhr, 2011: 98)*

Sensory perception is the perception of something material that is present to the perceiver

with the same perceptible characteristics as time, place, position, quality, quantity. At this level, only a form of the perceptible object is perceived for the perceiver, not itself. *(Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 360)*

This level begins with sensory connection and ends with disconnection. *(Araki, 2004: 76)*

Imaginary perception is the imagery of what is perceived in sensory perception. Imagination power imagines the same material object that came into sensory perception with all its features. *(Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 361)*

This mental image that remains in the mind is called the “imaginary form”. This form has all the sensible properties except matter *(Araki, 2004: 76)*.

Illusory Perception (illusion) is the perception of intangible

meaning. Or the perception of rational meaning but not in a general way, but in a partial and tangible way. Hence, fantastic Perception is specific to the personal and partial meaning to which imagination belong. (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 361*)

In illusory perception, the human mind cuts off the tangible form from its properties, without, of course, cutting off the relation of the tangible instance to the abstract form.

Like the vague image that is reflected in our mind of something we see from afar. Illusory perception, although abstracted from the characteristics of tangible, does not go beyond detail and can only be applied to the same object (*Araki, 2004: 76*).

The fourth level of perception, called intellect, is the perception of an object in terms of its

truth, without considering anything else. (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 362*)

At this level of perception, the mind abstracts the perceptual form from all its features and even its partiality. The perceptual form here is coincident not only to the perceptible, but also to other objects which have in common with the perceptible in this general form. In fact, this level is the level of complete abstraction of the perceptual form. (*Ibid*)

Sadr ul-Din Shirazi stated that the difference between the intellectual and illusory perceptions is not innate and did not view the difference between the two types in terms of a difference in actual levels. Thus, he considered three main levels of perception including sense, illusion, and reason. Then he coincident the three level of perception

to the thriple levels of the world. He equaled sensory perception with the world of matter, illusory perception with the imaginal world, and rational perception with the world of reason (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3: 363*).

Thus, differences in the perceptions of near-death experiences can be attributed to differences in humans' perceptions that vary according to the degree of weakened bonds to the body. As such people move away from the world of matter and approach the imaginal world, their sensory perceptions give way to illusory ones.

Moreover, when they continue toward the world of reason, their rational perception gets strengthened. To the same degree that their bonds to their bodies get weakened, their illusory

perception becomes strengthened and approach ration perception.

Indeed, more detachment from the world of matter and the subsequent detachment from the sensory perception gradually make such people understand and perceive the sense of unity. Thus as they get closer to rational perception, they perceive such a sense of unity stronger.

### **The Sense of Unity according to the Theory of Union between the Intelligent and Intelligible**

The reason for the intensity of the sense of unity as experiencers approach rational perception should be sought in the truth of perception and the theory of the union of intelligent and intelligible. Sadr ul-Din Shirazi believe that the concept of perception so clear and obvious that could not be defined in a

clearer manner. (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1989, Vol. 3, 278*)

He considers the truth of perception to be the existence of the perceived for the perceiver. and proposed the theory of the union of intelligent and intelligible.

According to the theory, intelligence, intelligent, and intelligible have a unitary truth, and distinguishing them is a subjective and conventional process. Sadr ul-Din Shirazi's claim in the theory of union is that each intelligible entity is itself an intelligent one, and any form that created in the human's soul -whether intelligible or sensible- is one with its Perceptiver. (*Salari, 2017: 53*)

According to Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, if the intelligent and intelligible are not united, the perception is impossible; because perception means that the

intelligible form is exist for the intelligent. Thus, if the intelligible form has a separate existence from the intelligent, it is not exist for the intelligent, so is not intelligible. (*Araki, 2004: 72*)

On the basis of the theory of "the union of intelligence, intelligent, and intelligible", he believed that in terms of gnostic knowledge, the perceptual faculty, perceiver, and perceived are not three distinct entities and cannot be so.

What happen in any perceptual action is that existence is created, which performed by the soul. Such an existence while being the existence of the perceived object, is also existence for the perceiving soul. The perceiving soul creates this existence -its own action- using its perceptual faculty. The faculty is indeed nothing

but the soul itself in the state of action and effect. (*Araki, 2004: 71*)

In philosophical terms, the union has multiple forms and refers to various meanings. The only accurate assumption that can be considered the intention of the scholars who believe in the union of intelligent and intelligible is the union of the existence of the intelligent with the existence of the intelligible. (*Salari, 2017: 55*)

Thus, Sadr ul-Din Shirazi considers the union of the knower with the known an existential union or the union of an existence-giving cause with its effect (i.e., the union of the real with the delicate) where the effect is the same as the cause. He argued that “the soul was imperfect in the beginning, then it becomes actualized and perfected in

the presence of knowing forms; thus, any form that is united with it becomes “it”.

It is not the case that the soul adopts that form or becomes known. It is like semen that turns into a human, not that the semen contained a human. In other words, the semen gets perfected and actualized through substantial motion and the human form. (*Ibid*)

Thus, people with near-death experiences get more conscious about existential union with the sensual perceptions as they get more and more detached from sensory perceptions and approach intellectual ones.

The reports and descriptions made by such people confirm this. Nevertheless, it should be noted that people with such experiences never achieve ultimate intellectual perception.

That is because getting to the world of intellect means leaving the purgatory and the imaginal world, and this is only possible when definite death comes.

### **Facing the Truth of Deeds and Observing Heaven and Hell**

Another characteristic that can be seen in the reports of near-death experiences is facing the truth of deeds and observing heaven and hell. Facing with actions usually begins at the beginning of the experience and only in the form of observation and overview of actions. In this moment, the experiencer reviews all the actions of his life from the beginning of birth to this moment quickly and at the same time with all the details

During this time, they observe all their memories, actions and behaviors. The

experiencers not only acknowledged the observation of the form of their actions, but also mention to the deep feeling and understanding of their actions in such a way that they fully understood the effect and result of their action from within and from the depths of their being.

At this stage, the experiencers feels torment or joy to the extent of the correctness or incorrectness of these actions.

*This luminous being that stood beside me showed me the whole flow of my life. Everything you did was in front of your eyes to evaluate and judge. Although it was very unpleasant for me to see some parts of it, but I generally enjoyed watching it all. I felt sorry and*

*upset when I dealt with people I had hurt. And the moment I saw the people I helped, I was happy with what I did. (Morse, 1996: 26)*

### **The Influence of Beliefs and Morals on the Human Soul**

The exposure of the near-death experiencers to the truth of their actions and the observation of what is typically called heaven and hell can be attributed to the emergence and the manifestation of the human soul perceived when one's attachment to the soul decreases (in the moribund or during near-death experiences).

Actions, intentions, beliefs, characteristics, and moral values directly influence the human soul and become united with it to the extent they are ingrained in human existence.

Taherzadeh argued that:

*When the attachment of the body to the soul was disconnected, whether voluntary or involuntary, the soul undoubtedly experience affairs that fit its actions, intentions, and beliefs.*

This is similar to the Quranic verse

*“Certainly you were heedless of it, but now We have removed from you your veil, so your sight today is sharp”. (Quran, 50: 22)*

If the earthly actions are good deeds and the intentions behind them were truthful ones, the human will enjoy the peace and the gardens of delight. On the other hand, if the human's acts and beliefs are reprobates, they will be served by fire and boiling water. (Taherzadeh, 1996: 24)



In addition, Imam Khomeini says:

*Human beings observe the effects and forms of their actions during the moribund and hear the annunciation of heaven and hell from the death angel; moreover, the effects of their actions and deeds-from luminosity, comfort, ease to their opposites including turbidity, discomfort, and uneasiness. (Imam Khomeini, 2009: 41)*

### **The Union of Action with Reward and Punishment**

This viewpoint is confirmed according to the Islamic philosophy; particularly transcendent wisdom where reward and punishment are the developmental contingents of the humans' actions.

In his interpretation of the Holy Quran, Sadr ul-Din Shirazi wrote that:

*There is no doubt that the reward and punishment of the Day of Judgment are related to the nature of the good and bad deed and nothing else. (Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 1987, Vol. 5: 187)*

Moreover, Suhrawardi considered the punishment of the doomsday the result of moral vices, and argued that:

*The punishment of the doomsday arises from the vices and darkness of the soul and has no relationship to an external vindictive. (Suhrawardi, 1996: 473)*

In addition, concerning the relationship with objectivity and the union of action and

punishment, Martyr Motahari argued that:

*The forms of punishment in the hereafter have stronger developmental relationships with sins. The relationship between an action and its punishment in the hereafter is neither type one (conventional) nor type two (causal); rather, it is a level above them and is objectivity and union relationships. (Motahari, 1997, Vol 1: 230)*

Mulla Hadi Sabzevari in his preface to “Asfar”, (Ref: Sabzevari, 1997: 328) Ghazali in “Forty Principles of Religion”, (Ref: Ghazali, 1965: 206) and Muhammad Abdu (Ref: Rashid Rida, 1990) supported the theory and stipulated it in their works.

The phrase “*and people’s actions are placed like collars on their necks*”, (Sahifa Sajjadiyya) in the forty-second supplication of “Sahifa Sajjadiyya” and verses like “...Then be on your guard against the fire of which men and stones are the fuel...”, (Quran, 2: 24) “And as to the deviators, they are fuel of hell”, (Quran, 72: 15) “Then if he is one of those drawn nigh (to Allah)\*Then happiness and bounty and a garden of bliss.” (Quran, 56: 88-89), and “...it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time...” (Quran, 3: 30) can be counted as the traditional evidence concerning the unity of action with its reward and punishment.

Thus, what has been reported in near-death experiences concerning the observation of one’s actions and their

effects arises from exposure to the truth of actions and their reward and punishment.

### **The Levels of Heaven and Hell**

The truth of heaven and hell is indeed the truth of the forms and the effects of one's actions. The manifestation and emergence of human behavior and characteristics have levels including action, attribute, and essence. Thus, three levels can be identified for heaven and hell. The heavens and hells of actions, attributes, and essence.

The heaven of actions is the innate and celestial manifestation of one's good deeds and contains the bodily purgatory and heaven. Human beings have a physical sort of heaven related to their actions and attain eschatological levels by performing good deeds and quitting the sinful ones. (*Imam Khomeini, 2009: 360*)

The heaven of actions is the lowest level of heaven and is also known as the 'bodily heaven' or the 'folk heaven.'

The heaven of attributes is placed higher than the 'heaven of actions and is indeed the manifestation of humans' good deeds and characteristics ingrained in them. In the heaven of attributes, all gifts and bodily pleasers exist abundantly and perfectly. Thus, it cannot be compared to the heaven of actions. (*Ibid: 364*)

The heaven of attributes and names is also called the 'the intermediate heaven' or the 'heaven of ethics'.

The highest and most supreme level of heaven is the heaven of the essence, which refers to the transition from the heavens of actions and attributes, and fully concentrating on the Divine

Beauty. This is a level that cannot be attained by any creature other than the human being. The heaven of essence is among the most significant goals of Gnostics, though most people cannot attain it. *(Imam Khomeini, 2009: 364)*

The heaven of essence is also called ‘the heaven of meeting’ and ‘the heaven of mystics’.

### **Explain the Levels of Heaven and Hell**

The intensity of the union of action with the human soul is directly related to the levels of heaven and hell. The order of actions is the lowest order of heaven and hell. At this level, the experiencer has the least unity with his action.

To the extent that the soul, through love of that action and its repetition, can become more belong with this action, it finds more unity with the truth of this action, until it

reaches the level of attributes. In the attributes level, more unity is understood, and as a result, the understanding of heaven and hell of attributes will be much deeper and more intense.

At this stage, the person perceives the union with the good qualities more deeply than the action stage, and also feels the union with the ugly qualities, the torment and the more severe hardship in himself. In case of persistence and intensity of unity with the mentioned action, this attribute is fixed in the human soul and finally penetrates to the level of essence.

The penetration of good attributes in the human soul manifests itself in the form of the paradise of essence (essence heaven), but as mentioned in the words of Imam Khomeini, few people reach this stage.

Therefore, part of the difference between near-death experiences in the perception of union with action, as well as differences in the intensity of pleasures and even torments can be due to differences in the intensity of the influence of the action in the soul experiencer.

### **Indescribable Love and Pleasures, and Severe Torments**

Other characteristics of near-death experiences are indescribable pleasures and severe torments. This feature has been reported in most NDE. The feeling of love and pleasure is often associated with seeing light and increases as you approach the light.

Examination of experiences shows that the intensity of perception of pleasure or pain is directly related to the intensity of existential unity. This means that the more people understand the intensity

of the union, the deeper and more intense their perception of pleasure or pain.

Most experiencers admit that the closer they get to the light and the more they unite with it, the more and deeper they feel a sense of love and pleasure in themselves.

- *I looked to my right and saw A silvery ghostly form through the fog. As he approached me, a feeling of love formed in me that had all the meanings of the word love. As this luminous being got closer to me, these feelings of love became so intense that the pleasure was almost too much to bear. (Ref: Taylor, 1994, Dannon Brinkley Experience)*
- *I was getting closer to the light, and the point of light was getting*

*bigger and brighter, and it was becoming more beautiful and full of love. The light was pulling me towards him. The feelings of love, peace, and happiness intensified in me so much that they became the purest feeling of absolute ecstasy and joy. The intensity of the love I felt could not be described in words. The only word that comes to my mind to describe it is the word infinity. (Ref: Ibid, Raymond Kinman Experience)*

- *Some people in black entered the cemetery. They were carrying a coffin. The deceased was a woman. I saw her soul on top of the coffin. It had a long, horse-shaped face. She*

*tried to enter the coffin (her body) with great distress and with terrible screams. she kept going back. Then she runs quickly to her body and dives on it. Her efforts were in vain. At the same time, she did not give up. She would get up again and go back, run forward screaming and dive like crazy. (Sadeghi, 2018: 132)*

### **Love according to Sadr ul-Din Shirazi**

The feelings of love and pleasure and severe agonies described by people with NDE can be sought in attaining a more accurate understanding of the concept of love.

Sadr ul-Din Shirazi defined love as jubilation about agreeable entities. He argued that “kindness and its synonyms like love

include one's jubilation concerning an agreeable entity whether rational or sensory, actual or illusory. The Necessary Being (God) is more than anything agreeable to everything due to being the most beautiful of all. Thus, all creatures love Him. (*Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, 2011: 292*)

Sadr ul-Din Shirazi believed that the Divine Essence was the real beloved and that all creatures were enthusiastic to achieve perfection. (*Ibid, 1989: 148*)

Sadr ul-Din Shirazi divided love into the love of oneself and the love of God. He considered any form of sensual love a sort of polytheism and believed that human perfection depends on benefiting from Divine love. According to him, all humans achieve a degree of perfection proportionate to the love they receive. (*Farzi, 2017: 113*)

Thus, according to Sadr ul-Din Shirazi, the perfection of all humans is directly related to the level of Divine love they receive.

### **The Effect of Sensual Beloves on the Difficulty of Death**

According to whether human beloved are of the divine or sensual type, their perfection or imperfection is determined. If it is sensual, it is polytheism, and if it is divine, it is perfection. At the time of death, everything that is imperfect must be separated from man.

Therefore, since the sensual and non-divine loved ones are all mortal, they are all taken from man at death, while love for them remains. There is the love but it is not beloved, that is, the existence of love and the lack beloved of to it, imposes pressure on the lover which is very hard and painful.

Like an addicted person who is addicted and interested in drugs but does not have access to them. The man's addiction to this world and forgetting his truth and the Hereafter is such that when he leaves, 'beloveds' is taken away from him; but 'belonging' remains. (*Javadi Amoli, 2018: 217*)

These interests and loves are the voluntary attachments of human beings that their gradual separation at the moment of death is from the intoxication of death and part of the torment of purgatory that purifies the human soul.

According to what was mentioned, the importance of love and hatred and the special attention of Islam to them becomes clear.

Some traditions in this regard:

- *“The religion is nothing but love and hatred”.* (*Kuleini, 2008, Vol. 2: 125*)

- *“You are with the one you love most”.* (*Ibid: 79*)

- *“One will be with those whom he loves”.* (*Ibid: 126*)

### **The Effect of Divine Beloves on the Pleasure of Death**

The divine loves, unlike the sensual loves, all remain. These are divine perfections and accompany man after death. Here, both love and belove remain. Therefore, after death and by reducing the belonging of the soul, these affections are perceived as pleasure and love at a higher level.

As these loves and affections intensify in the world, they will be accompanied by greater and deeper joy at the time of death and near-death experience; Because the level of unity will be more intense. The confession of the experiencers that love and pleasure increase with closeness and



greater union with light is a confirmation of this.

### **The Relationship between Pleasure and a Sense of Unity**

The direct relationship between the feeling of unity with the perception of love and pleasure can be sought in the relationship between the two concepts of knowledge and love. Love is the result of knowledge and is obtained only after perception and knowledge. (*Suhrawardi, 1996, Vol. 3: 286*)

In a hadith of Imam Sadiq, *“love is considered as an implications of knowledge”*. (*Majlisi, 1983, Vol. 67: 22*)

So love is not possible without perception and knowledge. On the other hand, as mentioned, the feeling of unity is indeed the truth of knowledge and perception in purgatory, which is manifested in the near-death experience

by reducing the attachment of the soul to the body.

In this moment, people find themselves united with their perceptions. This union reflects a person's love, interest, and belonging to those perceptions. In NDE, as the extent to which the soul belongs to the body decreases, the existential vastness increases accordingly. As a result, it leads to a greater and deeper understanding of the feeling of love and pleasure.

The interpretations of empiricists such as 'approaching the light', 'enlarging the light' and 'being drawn into the arms of light' can indicate a decrease in belonging soul to body and thus increase the feeling of love and pleasure.

Therefore, love is the Result of knowledge and existential unity and has a direct relationship with it. In contrast, the feeling of hatred

is directly related to the concept of enmity and separation.

Accordingly, love is the result of existential unity, and hatred is the result of existential separation. Man finds existential unity with what he loves, and his loves are part of his being. Throughout life, human beings shape their existence with their loves and enmities.

Throughout life, man is constantly forming alliances with the people and objects around him, and unites with them to the extent that he loves people, objects, and even behaviors. So we are united with what we love and our interests are part of our being. This is also interpreted as the union of love and lover and beloved.

## **Conclusion**

From the point of view of Islamic philosophy and transcendent wisdom, near-death experiences result from a decrease in the attachment of the soul to the body. Decreasing the attachment of the soul to the body causes the material veils to gradually be removed from the human view and enter the world of purgatory or imaginal world.

Therefore, the NDE can be considered as a situation of the moribund. The Resurrection positions are the stages of cutting off the soul from belonging to the body.

From the point of view of transcendent wisdom, the soul is an abstract thing and the place of perception and consciousness. All human perceptions, including the perceptions of near-death experiences and even the perceptions after death, are all

perceived by the soul. Therefore, the survival of the soul is a reason for the power of survival of human cognition and perception even after death.

Exodus from the dimension of time and place in near-death experiences can be considered as due to the Lack of 'time' and 'place' in the imaginal world and Purgatory world.

The sense of unity of the experiencers is due to the approach to a higher level of perception due to the reduction of the attachment of the soul to the body. Mulla Sadra states four levels for perception. Sensory, imaginary, illusory, and intellectual, that Rational perception is the highest level of perception. At this level the perceiver and the perceived coincide according to the theory of union of intelligent and intelligible.

In the view of transcendent wisdom, heaven and hell are the truth of human actions and beliefs, which are perceived to some extent at the time of death and by the reduction of the soul's belonging to the body.

Mulla Sadra considers reward and punishment as the result of human action. According to philosophers, there are three levels of heaven and hell. Actions, attributes and essence, which are realized according to the degree of voluntary severance of human beings.

Indescribable pleasures in NDE can be attributed to union with divine beloveds, and severe torments can be attributed to union with sensual beloveds in the imaginal world.

Mulla Sadra divides love into two categories: love of God and love of oneself, and knows the perfection of each person to the extent of divine

love in him. If these loves are divine, they are considered perfection and are accompanied by love and pleasure, and if are non-divine, they will cause pain, torment and hardship for him.

The feeling of both love and union with light in the near-death experience, as well as the direct relationship between the intensity of union and the intensity of love, is due to the increase in existential vastness and consequently a deeper perception of this love.

Man creates effects and forms in his soul through his actions and behavior. As long as man is attached to material belongings, he is oblivious to the understanding of these truths; But at the moribund, as well as in the NDE, due to reduce the voluntary attachment of the soul to the material world, man can become somewhat aware of these facts.

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