

The Nature of Experiencing of Returning to Life Near-Death (NDE) and Its Explanation based on Religious Foundations

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Abstract

SUBJECT AND OBJECTIVES: Those individuals who temporarily experience death, for some reasons, merely experience clinical death that is different from biological death. In the latter one it is not possible for their spirits to return to life while in the clinical death there is a possibility to return to the bodies and the material world. Thus, the present research attempts to explore clinical death incidents as a qualitative phenomenological study.

METHOD AND FINDING: Among those who participated in producing the “Life After Life TV Series” of the 2020-2022 seasons, 41 participants were selected and interviewed using the purposeful sampling method. In addition to television interviews, the complementary data were gathered using conducting semi-structured interviews. Implementing Colaizzi’s seven analysis steps, the data were analyzed using MAXQDA, the 2021 version.

CONCLUSION: Findings show 14 extracted codes identified as the “the nature of returning to life”. The codes were categorized into four main themes: 1) Negotiation and being convinced, 2) having a choice and a discretion to return to the body, 3) asking to return to compensate indemnifications in the world, and 4) pleading for intercessions. Overall, it is concluded that in comparison to the other world’s

experiencers, Iranian experiencers' cultural factor and their religious beliefs are different from their counterparts in the world.

Key Words: Near-death Experiences (NED), Returning to Life, Religious Foundations

Introduction

In the Glorious Qur'an, God says, "Indeed, we have dignified the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures (Quran, 17: 70)". On the issues of the humans' physical and spiritual nature God says that "Who perfected everything which He¹ created and began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his descendants from an extract of a humble fluid, then He fashioned them and had a spirit of His Own 'creation' breathed into them (Quran, 32:7-9)".

In an Islamic worldview, man pertains much deeper and more secretive entity than any other creatures; this is not describable in words. In nature, man has a material dimension similar to the ones in solids, vegetables, and animals; he also has a kingdom and a divine dimension similar to God. Thus, man is a mixture of nature and meta-nature, meaning that the material and the spirit are unified. In other words, the body and the soul are integrated with each other and, of course, the social surroundings contribute to form and evolve the spiritual and moral characteristics (Mottaharri, 2013).

The soul has its own spiritual phases to grow and similar to a vegetable seed that takes a trip from being planted in the soil, growing and sprouting, turning into a stem and a trunk, developing branches and leaves, having blossoms and eventually fruits; in a spiritual trip, man's soul also has to take a similar trip starting from being conceived until reaching the death phase; meaning that the soul passes some phases in order to return and meet his God. Man's soul is his spiritual dimension ruling the body while the animal soul is the same as the vegetal spirit ruling body movements and physical growths. Eventually, both souls contribute to man's spirit ruling all man's spiritual and physical dimensions. On the other hand, God is the only absolute ruler who is above all possible rulers controlling the whole world (Kalhor, 2013).

It is quoted that Imam Ali (PBUH) at the time of returning from the Battle of Siffin, when he passed by a cemetery stopped and addressed the deaths: "O residents of the houses which give a sense of loneliness, of depopulated areas and gloomy graves, O people of the dust, O victims of strangeness, O people of loneliness, and O people of desolateness! You have gone ahead and preceded us while we are following you and will meet you (Nahjolbalaghe, Hekmat 130).

The aforementioned subjects are merely small details of what humans know about the life without them. As in the Glorious Qur'an, God has mentioned that "They ask you 'O Prophet' about the spirit. Say, "Its nature is known only by my Lord, and you 'O humans' have been given but little knowledge" (al-Isra'-85)". What is clear is the fact that God has mentioned that after death all humans would return to him. It is said that at the determined and promised specific time of death, humans would disconnect their touch with all their surroundings and friends; they would not be able to describe their observations and status; vice versa, their friends are not able to communicate with them either and they know that they are in the status of death; this status is similar to a situation in which a person has found a way into the other invisible world and he/she is in a deep sleep. He/she is separated from the material world but his/her heart and brain are still alive and working but he/she has no control over his/her surroundings. It is quoted that Imam Sadegh (PBUH) said, "There is no one whose death emerges unless he/she would see Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and all innocent Imams (PBUT). If the dying person is one of the pious ones, at the time of visit, he/she becomes happy and loves seeing them. And if the dying person happens not to be one of those pious ones, at the time of visit, he would think that are his/her enemies and he/she will not enjoy seeing them (Tasnim Press, 2018).

To this end, the present study aimed to answer these questions: What is the nature of the experience of returning to the body in Iranian NDErs, and are there differences and similarities in these components in samples of different nations and cultures?

Theoretical Foundations and Research Literature

1- Near-death Experiences

There are many people who shared their secretive and spiritual experiences on the verge of death. They usually returned to life by the aid of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and experienced cognitive transcendental incidents. These incidents are defined as the Near-death experience (NDE) (Greyson, 2007; Irwin, 1975). Those people died temporarily and for many reasons they experienced clinical deaths. In a clinical death, there is this possibility to return to the material life while in biological death the person will not come back to life at all (Moody, 1975: Translated by Anoshirvani, 1994).

2- Returning to Life

The NDErs pointed out that they have reached an irreversible point. They have described this point with words such as door, window, portal, luminous transparent wall, or passage, and they believed that by crossing this point, they could not return to the world, and crossing this point was equal to their irrevocable death. Besides,

some spirits met them at this point and told them if they crossed this point, they would not have a way back to the world. (Greyson & Stevenson, 1980; King, 2022; Moody, 1975; Morse, 1994).

3- Religious Foundations

From the point of view of Islamic philosophy, death causes material veils to be gradually removed from human vision, and the near-death experience has a similar situation. In this situation, the soul enjoys wide perceptions and awareness, which shows the survival of the soul in the stage after death. This is a strong proof of the survival of human knowledge and understanding after leaving the body, and even this understanding is at a much higher level than when the soul is in the physical body. (Salariyan, Afsharpour & Salehi, 2022).

All over the world, on the NDE issue, many phenomenological researches were conducted. The findings showed that people had reached a stage when they had to return to their bodies voluntarily or with an obligation (Greyson, 1983, 1990; Greyson & Stevenson, 1980; Holden, Greyson, & James, 2009; Perera, Padmasekara, & Belanti, 2005; Rodabough & Cole, 2003; Tassell-Matamua, 2013; Wilde & Murray, 2009; Young, 2016). In some cases, orders to return to life were induced to Near-Death Experiences (NDErs) by individuals who were construed as luminous entities (Long & Perry, 2011; Ring, 2000; Rodabough & Cole, 2003; Sai & Ghasemian Nejad, 2014). In some cases, the relatives asked the dying person to return (Greyson, 2000). In some research findings, it has been concluded that in spite of NDErs decision to stay and being reluctant to return, there were obligatory decisions and some of NDErs eventually returned reluctantly (Greyson & Stevenson, 1980; King, 2022; Pederzoli, De Stefano, & Tressoldi, 2021). In these researches the NDErs explained that after experiencing leaving the body, they saw that they passed through a tunnel, visited luminous individuals, saw friends and relatives, reviewed life events, immersed in an immaterial time and unusual location. At the end of the journey, the NDErs were confronted with a non-returnable boarder line, and as a result of not passing that line they were returned to their physical bodies (Ghasemiannejad, Long, Nouri, & Krahnakian, 2014; Holden et al., 2009; Long & Perry, 2011; Moody, 1975; Morse, 1994; Pederzoli, et al., 2021).

A review of the literature shows that most of the studies on NDE elements and their consequences on NDErs have been conducted in Western countries, especially in North America (Sleutjes, Moreira-Almeida, & Greyson, 2014), While Kellehear (2009) showed that only about 300 NDErs from countries other than the West had been studied, none of these studies have been conducted in Islamic countries and on Muslim samples. Furthermore, Luciano et al. (2021) showed that NDErs from Islamic countries have a very low frequency. Given Muslims' beliefs about death

and the afterlife, research on NDEs from Islamic countries helps researchers to understand the differences and similarities of NDEs. For example, Gerami (2012) reviewed NDE studies from the Islamic perspective and tried to account for NDEs based on the Islamic doctrine of resurrection and in line with the verses of the Holy Quran and Islamic teachings. Exploring NDE research helps a lot to understand the NDEs because according to Kellehear (2009), a comprehensive understanding of NDEs can be reached by examining larger samples from diverse societies and cultures. Moreover, NDE studies can provide more insights and scientific explanations about this challenging phenomenon.

Research Method

The research is a phenomenological one. The statistical population included all Iranian NDEs who participated in producing three seasons of a television documentary called “Life After Life TV Series” produced by Mowzoun (2020-2022) in 33 episodes. Using convenience sampling method, 41 NDEs (18 females and 23 males: 5 from the 2020 season, 21 from the 2021 season, and 15 from the 2022 season) were selected. The criteria for selecting NDEs were receiving consents for participation in the research; the NDEs’ clinical death had to be justified by clinicians and hospital staff; NDEs had to be returned to life using cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) procedures or any other means; NDEs had to be able to speak and to describe their experiences; and at the time of conducting the research NDEs had to have full consciousness. Using Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) guidelines, the sample size selection was continued until it reached its saturation level (here 41). The main data gathering method was recorded interviews, with semi-structured questions. Using seven steps Colaizzi’s (1978) analyses method; all texts were transcribed word by word, coded, and analyzed. In addition to Colaizzi’s validation method, Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four additional validation criteria (e.g., credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability) were used.

Credibility: means a conscious effort to ensure the accurate interpretation of the meaning of the data. (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). To ensure the credibility of the data in this study, efforts were made to select NDEs with the greatest variety in terms of experiences. Sampling continued until the data were saturated and the most suitable semantic unit was identified. The internal validity of the content analysis was evaluated through face validity. The content validity was assessed and confirmed by a panel of experts (Table 1) to support the construction of the themes or coding themes.

Dependability: To ensure the dependability of the data in the present study, the researchers tried to avoid the elongation of the data collection process as much as possible, and all NDEs were asked the same questions. In other words, to increase

the accuracy of the research, an outsider mentor was asked to monitor the data gathering process (Associate Prof of Educational Psychology).

Confirmability: This criterion shows that the research results are not the outcome of the researcher’s hypotheses and preconceptions. The research procedure, including data collection, analysis, and extraction of themes was described in detail to enable the audience and readers to assess the research procedure. Moreover, the research process was reviewed and confirmed by several subject-matter experts.

Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of the study can be transferred or applied to other groups or places (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The transferability of the findings also increases by presenting rich and detailed findings along with related quotations. The participants in the present study were selected with the maximum age difference and gender diversity. The collected data were codified and analyzed with MAXQDA software (version 2021).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the panel of experts

Row	Field	Scientific Rank	Expert Panel	Number
1	Philosophy of Education	PhD	Professor	2
2	Philosophy of Education	PhD	Associate Professor	2
3	Educational Psychology	PhD	Associate Professor	1
4	Theology	PhD	Associate Professor	2
5	Philosophy of Education	PhD. Candidate	-	1
6	Media Management	PhD. Candidate	-	1
7	Psychometrics, and Educational Research	PhD. Candidate	-	1

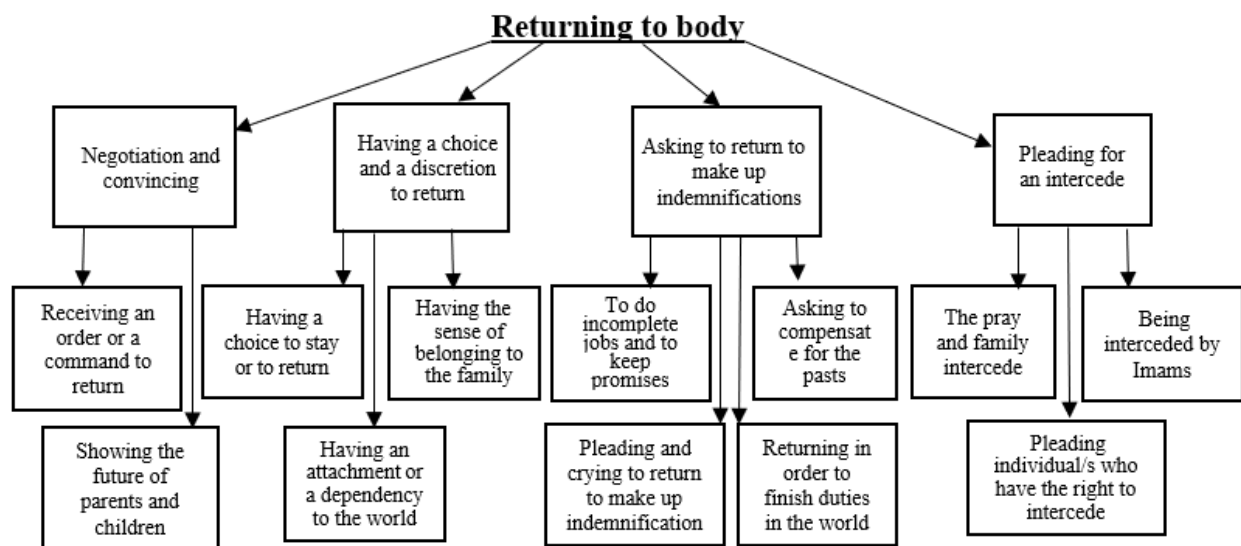
Research Findings

Table 2. The extracted themes regarding the concept of returning to the body

Categorized meanings (codes)	Themes (cluster)
Receiving an order or a command to return to the physical body. In order to convince the NDEr to return, showing the future of parents and children	Negotiation and convincing
Having a choice to stay or to return Returning because of having the sense of belonging to the family Having an attachment to the world as the cause of the return Dependency as the secret of returning	Having a choice and a discretion to return to the physical body
Asking to return to do incomplete jobs and to keep promises Asking to compensate for the pasts Pleading and crying to return to make up indemnifications Returning in order to finish duties in the world	Asking to return to make up indemnifications in the world
Returning due to the pray and family intercede Being interceded by innocent Imams (PBUT) Pleading individual/s who have the right to intercede	Pleading for an intercede

Table 2, presents a sample of a developed cluster and its inferences of the construed categorized concepts.

Tree chart 1 shows the nature of NDEr.



Tree chart 1. The nature of experiences of NDErs

In the process of NDE and Returning to the body experience, the person reaches a phase that is called non-returnable point. NDErs construed this point as a door, window, line, boarder, and or a translucent gelatin-made wall and they knew if they passed this point, they would not be able to return to the world for ever (Greyson, 1983, 1990; Martial et al., 2021). Here the NDErs (codes 2, 6, 9, and 38) have referred to this point. It seems that the “passed away” terminology that is used for the dead people is associated with this return point. In the Glorious Qur'an God says “When death approaches any of them, they cry, “My Lord! Let me go back. so, I may do good with what I left behind.” “Never! It is only a ‘useless’ appeal they make. And there is a barrier behind them until the Day they are resurrected” (23: 99-100). On this path, no one is allowed to return to life after death but by God’s Mercy and at His will this has become possible for some people.

In the Glorious Qur'an, God says, ““It is Allah Who calls back the souls of people upon their death as well as the souls of the living during their sleep. Then He keeps those for whom He has ordained death, and releases the others until their appointed time. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect” (39: 42). It seems that this verse is a document to prove that the NDErs’s temporarily experience death and at God’s will they return to their bodies and God’s discretion makes spirits to return to their bodies. Some of the NDErs stated that their return to the world was a God’s sign and it was for a clear reason.

God takes away some spirits while his/her owners are in sleep. These spirits are categorized into two divisions: 1) Those who has reached the dying time and 2) those who were not supposed to die. In the second case they would be kept alive and

at God's will those spirits had to return to their bodies until their determined time of death would arrive (Tabatabai, 1987).

Exploring Iranian NDErs statements on the nature of returning to the body are presented. They have stated different reasons for their returns (also refer to Table 2) that are explained below:

1- Negotiation and being convinced

Most of the NDErs talked about passing through a gate way or a window or a non-returnable point. In case of not passing through that point, returning to the body has happened and the NDEr was convinced by different means to return to the body. One of these instances is negotiation (and being convinced). According to the statements, this phase has happened by one of the following ways:

1-1- Receiving an order or a command to return

Sometimes the person has returned to the world by receiving a command or by implementation of force. It is even possible that order is along with punishment and or the deceased relatives have ordered that person to return to the world (NDEr code 4). NDEr Code 1 stated that "in that one moment I learned that I had come to that place much earlier than the moment I was supposed to". The NDEr code 16 stated that I was ordered to return to my body. This order might be through kindness and or with anger and force. NDErs codes 8 and 9 have stated that many of their relative threw them out towards their bodies and NDErs were told that it was not yet the time to die and they had to go back. NDErs codes 1 and 24 have noted that sometimes a luminous character, figure/s who accompanied them made them understand that it was not yet their time to die and they had to return to the world. NDEr code 41 who had survived from a bombing incident said that Imam Hossain (PBUH) was pulling up some individuals and took them away with him. I yelled and said "oh Aba Abdullah let me come with you, too, but He did not accept my request and told me that the time of your death has not come yet. Cassol et al. (2018), in their research, also referred to a similar experience in which NDErs were obliged to have that experience.

1-2- Showing the future of parents and children

One of the reasons for returning back to the body is families' circumstances. For instance, the NDEr code 24 stated that he/she was shown his/her father who was on a wheelchair for years and he/she was told, "you have to return for the sake of your father." The NDErs codes 3, 9, and 27 also stated that they were shown two different alternative ways and they had to choose one or the other: Our children's lives with us or our children's lives after their death. The NDEr code 27 was shown that his/her son became depressed and addicted and he/she was also shown if he/she

returned to life the son would make progress in his life and would become a doctor. The NDER code 27 also said, “I saw my mother; after hearing my death news she had a heart attack and became paralyzed.” Under these circumstances, this NDER chose to return to his/her body immediately.

2- Having a choice and a discretion to return to the physical body

Some NDERs had the right to choose between staying and or returning. Cassol et al. (2018) have referred to this choice: “I had a choice between staying or returning and I returned because I could not leave them alone.

2-1- Having a choice to stay or to return

In some cases, the NDERs were given the right to choose. The NDERs code 20 stated, “In that place, I was given the right to stay or to return to my body.” The NDER emphasized that choosing one or the other way was very a difficult decision to make because in that place I felt tranquility and security and I had no disposition to return.

2-2- Returning because of having the sense of belonging to the family

The NDER code 15 stated, “suddenly, in one moment, I looked at my spouse’s face and I realized that he/she was turbulent and had an anxiety.” The NDER code 20 said, “when I saw my spouse’s anxiety, I realized that it was selfish to leave him/her alone; therefore, I returned to my body immediately.” The NDER code 22 also expressed his return to his body, “It crossed my mind that my wife was alone. When this thought crossed my mind, I returned to my body. It was my attachment to my wife that caused my return.”

2- 3- Having an attachment and a dependency to the world

The NDERs codes 3, 15, 17, 22, 24, and 26 stated that they were annoyed because they preferred the tranquility of that world but they clearly stated that their return to the material world was because of their attachment to the world’s dependencies.

3- Asking to return to compensate for indemnifications in the world

In the process of having NDE, the person has reached to the feedback phase. At the time of exploring the deeds, the person is confronted with his/her good and evil deeds. The deeds might be in such a way that the person would wish to return to life and would compensate for his wrongs (NDER code 7). It is even possible to return to the body to continue good deeds (NDER code 10).

3-1- Asking to return to do incomplete jobs and to keep promises

The NDEr code 21 stated that he/she was annoyed and asked God to be returned because he/she felt that he/she was too young and could still do many things. The NDEr mentioned many unfinished tasks that were to be finished and he/she pleaded with God to return him/her to the world, "I had a good task to do that is unfinished and this worried me". He/she mentioned that he/she wanted to recite the whole holy Qur'an. The other NDEr 2 stated that he/she had promised a person to prepare him/her a thing and he/she asked God to intercede him/her to return to the world and keep his/her promise.

3-2- Asking to compensate for the pasts

Some of the NDErs had committed suicides and because of their wrong and bad deeds experienced negative and horrible incidence. When confronted with non-returnable phase, by pleading and crying they asked to return and compensate for their bad deeds. The NDEr code 17 stated, "I was saying I wish I would be given another chance to return to compensate for my sins."

3-3- Pleading and crying to return to make up indemnifications

The NDEr code 7 stated, "I cried and pleaded to return and I am very glad that God gave me this chance to return and gave me another opportunity to compensate for my wrong deeds."

3-4- Returning in order to finish duties in the world

Some of the NDEr declared that their returns were for the reason to finish their duties in the material world. They even stated that they were shown their future and they were made to understand that they had to return and complete their tasks (NDErs codes 9, 18, and 20). The NDEr code 9 said that it seemed, "I had a mission and a burden on my shoulders, and I promised there to tell others that there was another world too." Also, the NDEr code 18 said, "I was told that I had a mission to finish on earth and after finishing that mission I could comeback." That person considered that mission to be raising a child that God had given him/her a short time before then and he/she had the parenting mission.

Van Lommel (2011) reported that his/her patients experienced that their time had not arrived then. They had a duty and because of that they had to return and they considered the return as a cruel act because they had to be imprisoned in their bodies again. The NDErs codes 39 and 40 experienced the NDE at the time of child delivery. Both stated that they had to leave the tranquility and enlightening environments of that place and because of having the new born infants they had to return to the world.

4- Returning due to the pray and family intercessions

In the lived experience of NDE of Iranian samples or other countries, intercessions are considered as the most important aspects of returning to the bodies. In the Islamic foundations, intercessions only happen in the Day After, but in some cases the intercession in the purgatory (Barzakhi) status has also been mentioned. Alinezhad and Oveisi (2018) and Asgharinezhad (2019) investigated the purgatory intercessions in the Glorious Qur'an, Hadiths, Allameh Tabataba'I's Interpretive Thoughts, and the returns due to the intercessions of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and innocent Imams (PBUT). In spite of all these, God's discretion is above all. In the holy Qur'an God says, "Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission?" (Qur'an, 2: 255).

There are other verses that mention angels or other individuals' intercessions. For instance, the verses of the holy Qur'an, including (34: 23), (20: 109), (53: 28), (21: 28), and (43: 86), God has emphasized that intercessions are possible only by His discretion and permission. In the case of Iranians who experienced the NDE, in comparison to global samples, returning to the body has some significant and deep beliefs and spiritual differences. Some Iranian NDErs with deep religious beliefs, and sincere and deep beliefs in Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and innocent Imams (PBUT) have mentioned the unique and specific beliefs on intercessions that were not shown in any of the NDEs in different cultures.

Iranians' lived experiences on the intercession issues are elaborated On below:

4-1- Returning due to families' prayers and intercessions

Sometimes the reason for returning is families' prayers and their intercessions from Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and innocent Imams (PBUT). The lived experiences of NDErs have shown that the request of family members and specifically that of the mother is the cause of receiving intercession and the returning of the individuals. For instance, the NDEr code 6 expressed, "a holy man with a green clothing stopped me and put his hand on my chest and told me that "Oh Amir return, your mother is praying a lot"." The NDEr code 25 talked about Hazrat Abolfazl's (PBUH) intercession and his/her returning to the world. He/she said that I had a fabric around my wrists. I got this fabric on the Day of Ashura Mourning. Hazrat told me that you mourned for me for 10 days, how can I reject your intercession? You have to go back because of your mother's prayers.

4-2- Intercessions by innocent Imams (PBUT)

The NDEr code 17 met an unknown person and knew that he was one of the innocent Imams (PBUH). He said he had a discretion to intercede and he was the

only one who could do that. The NDEr code 16 said, “I can only remember saying “Oh Hossain” from the bottom of my heart.” The NDEr code 25 expressed, “a prestigious man was standing by my right side. He told me that my mission had not finished and I had to return.” When Hazrat Abolfazlell Abbas (PBUH) told me that I had to go back, I immediately said good bye to deceased families and returned to the world immediately”.

4-3- Pleading relatives and other individuals to intercede

The NDEr code 30 said, “when I was unconscious and in coma, I saw my friend's brother spirit who was a martyr of Defending Haram. I remembered when he was a child, he slapped me unjustly. He asked for my forgiveness and in return Hazrat Abolfazlell Abbas (PBUH) interceded on my behalf to return to the world. Then, I felt that He was standing by my side and he told me that He was Bobolhavaej and He had come to make me return to my body. Then He put my spirit in my body.” One of the other NDErs (code 38) said, “I saw my mother and my martyred brother who both showed me a door and they told me if I passed a certain door, I would not be able to return for ever. When I wanted to pass the door, my martyred brother patted me on the back and they sent me back to my body”.

Conclusion

Clinical death is different from biological death or physiological death. In clinical death, after the clinicians’ verifications of death and after implementing specific aids the person may return to life. In physiological death, the death signs would be permanent and non-returnable; so, the death can be claimed as definite. NDE is one of those kinds of deaths that does not happen completely and the experiencer (after passing through some stages) returns to life. People, of course, experience different things yet similar in nature. In the present research the statements of the Iranian NDErs showed that in NDE they eventually reached to a point that where had to pass a line that is called a non-returnable point. They described this point as a door, a gate way, a window, a line, or a wall. This finding is in concordance with the findings of Moody (1975), Morse (1994), Holden et al. (2009), Long and Perry (2011), Ghasemiannejad et al. (2014), and Pederzoli et al. (2021).

Some of the NDErs claimed that they had no disposition to return but they stated that in a variety of ways they had been confronted with different problems and

issues and they decided to return to the material world. Greyson and Stevenson (1980), Pederzoli et al. (2021), and King (2022) have also mentioned this matter.

Some of the NDErs stated that they returned to the world by receiving a command. The order was from one of the deceased parents that the NDErs had met during experiencing NDE, and they were even violently obliged to return. In the research findings of Greyson and Stevenson (1980), Rodabough and Cole (2003), and Holden et al. (2009), this point was mentioned. In some of the experiences of those who did not wish to return to the material world, their futures were shown to them by close relatives. Then, in order not to diminish the futures of their dear ones, and in spite of their unwillingness and in order to avoid ruining their futures, they were convinced to accept to return. Van Lommel's (2011) findings also confirmed the same issue.

Also, some of the NDErs mentioned that they had the discretion to return to their bodies and or pass through the non-returnable gate way. Only their attachment and dependency to their children, spouses, parents, and even to materialistic matters have caused them to return to the world. In other words, these were the secrets of their return. Some others also pleaded to return to finish some tasks and to complete an owe. One of the NDErs said that one of his incomplete tasks was finishing the job of reciting the holy Qur'an. The other experiencer had a promise to buy a radio for an old Christian who was residing in a nursing home.

In some cases, pleading and begging are the reasons for returning to compensate the indemnifications and to make up small and big mistakes that people had committed. Specifically, those with negative NDErs believed that because of committing suicide they were confronted with their wrong deeds. They believed that a life full of sins and mistakes and seeing ugly deeds at the time of being confronted with the non-returnable point had caused them to become very anxious and by begging and pleading with God to compensate their sinful deeds; so they asked to return to their bodies. In some other cases, also, some NDErs believed that the reason for their return was to finish an unfinished mission and this mission could be the child raising that existed at that time of life or it could be a child that was supposed to be born. Ring (2000) and Van Lommel's (2011) research findings confirmed and reported similar incidents. Even some NDErs expressed that their mission was to send the message that the immaterial world was real. The world after death, the Day of Counting and Doomsday (the Day of Resurrection) are real and true for all people. Also, many NDErs referred to the intercession as the most important factor in returning to their bodies. One of the important differences as the nature of returning to their bodies is the intercession theme that distinguishes Iranians from other nationalities. Although in samples of other countries, intercessions have been

referred to, among Iranian NDErs, the qualities and spiritual beliefs were inferred from Shi'a religion, and believing in innocent Imams (PBUT), Iranian NDEs pertain different nature in comparison to other world's NDEs. Iranian NDErs had magnificent and unique observations of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and innocent Imams' (PBUT) intercessions.

Even in the negative NDErs, in order to compensate for some losses and harms (due to committing some sins), some Iranians reported that the intercession was the only factor that caused their returns. They mentioned these points: When I saw my ugly deeds in figures of horrible and terrifying creatures, the only factor that could have freed me from all these indescribable sufferings, hardships, apprehensions, and fears was the intercession of one of the innocent Imams (PBUT). Research findings showed that the culture as a factor and religious beliefs have distinguished the quality of the nature of returning to the material world. Iranian NDErs' respect for the spiritual issues, pleading to innocent Imams (PBUT), participating in mourning ceremonies for Imam Hossain (PBUH), believing in Hazrat Abolfazlell Abbas (PBUH) as a Bobolhavaej, their sincerity towards Imam Reza (PBUH), and other Innocents (PBUT) caused them to return. Such unique experiences are not seen in any other samples of any other countries' NDErs.

Being confronted with negative and unpleasant experiences such as being humiliated, prejudged, and being blamed were some of the limitations that may have caused some of the NDErs not to report their experiences completely. In some cases, recalling some of the memories caused some of the NDErs to become stressed; therefore, they may have avoided to explain their experiences completely. The other limitation was the relative time lapses between the NDErs' real incidents, the TV interview times, and conducting of the research. These may have caused some of the NDErs to have forgotten the details of their experiences. Thus, it is suggested to conduct other research with much closer time lapses between what happened before and participating in the research interviews. Meeting this demand could give more accurate results and would fill the gaps that may exist in the present research.

Acknowledgment:

The authors would like to thank all those who contributed to conducting this research including those who participated in the Life After Life TV series and gave permission to use their interviews; also, Dr. Afsaneh Towhidi, Associate Prof. in Department of Psychology, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, who edited the manuscript, and Hamid Balochi, PhD student in philosophy of education, Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman who conducted qualitative data analysis.

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