

# I deeper than I

Mehmet Akşit

With her husband, the pregnant woman is brought to the maternity room on a wheelchair. The midwife firmly presses her horn towards the abdomen of the pregnant woman. Everything looks normal. Suddenly everyone becomes silent. Then, the nurses start to run in panic. The prospective mother and father look around in astonishment. A specialist rushes into the room and bends over the woman. The husband cannot bear anymore, and falls on his feet. They drag him out of the room.

“What happened to the woman down over there? Am I this woman? The doctor behaves in panic, hastily picking up one tool after the other. Everywhere there is blood. The baby is born but she is dead. Is this my baby? The nurses shake their heads with disappointment. Oh, the women’s head just fell back. Is she dead?”

What is happening to me? Like an arrow I accelerate through a dark tunnel. At the end, a very nice music comes to my ears. I see lights with wonderful colors. I see everywhere beautiful flowers. A bright pleasant light in a distance attracts me. A creature tangled with light reaches out her arms to welcome me. An indescribable love covers me. I feel the ultimate happiness.

Then, suddenly I feel that I am pulled back. I struggle against it but no use. Unwillingly I am forced to go back and join my body again”.

Cardiologist Dr. Pim van Lommel in his book [1] “Endless consciousness: a scientific opinion on almost death experience<sup>1</sup>” presents a study which was carried out on 344 patients who told their experiences after

they had been in almost death condition. The book makes clear that the patients that have such experiences tell more or less similar stories: separation from the body, passing through a dark tunnel, getting to know all the truth that they did not know, seeing a very pleasant light in a distance, being welcomed by an indescribable love and feeling the ultimate happiness, and then unwillingly returning back to the body and disappointment.

Through a detailed analysis, the author argues that up to now, the scientific explanations of the “nearly-death experience” stories are far from being satisfactory. In particular, the experiences which refer to justifiable truths, such as actually seeing and hearing the happenings around the nearly dead body cannot be explained fully in terms of the “physical truth” especially when the body shows no measurable physical activity.

After reading this book I find myself in confusion. What is the relation between life and dead, soul and body? With curiosity I look at the mirror. The man that I see on the mirror does not look like me at all. The people who see my face can by no means feel the turbulence that takes hold of me from inside, right now.

*And they ask you about the soul. Say: The soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given aught of knowledge but a little. (Koran, Isra, 85)*

These holy words confirm the conclusions of the book that I read. But this fact does not comfort my inner unrest. God’s sake, who am I? What makes me who I am? What makes my soul prevail my body?

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<sup>1</sup> The original title is: “Eindeloos bewustzijn: een wetenschappelijke visie op bijna-dood ervaring”.

The more we share the happier we become. Our eyes share all the beautiful things that are around us; with violet, jasmine and rose, with nightingale, with our loved ones and with all other beautiful creatures. This turns gradually into enjoyment.

While listening to a song, sometimes our soul gets in resonance with the soul of the composer. This turns gradually into pleasure.

Sometimes we meet a person who complements our soul; by talking, by explaining, by joyful conversation, and by feeling the growing mutual respect and admiration. This turns gradually into devotion.

We feel safe by sharing the ideal of having a family with our parents, brothers and sisters, partner and children, and also by supporting each other in good and bad moments. This turns gradually into finding peace.

And, we fall in love with our partner and we share our passion, possession, family and sexuality together. This turns gradually into a happy life.

But, not everybody in this world has a family. How can we expect that every person in this world has a perfect partner? Besides, what should a person do if there is no partner to share life? Moreover, millions of people are suffering due to poverty and wars, and due to all kinds of health problems.

But even in the best case, with whom are we going to share our ultimate secret, our inner self, whom nobody exactly knows, but in fact, it is the one who makes us who we are? If we cannot share our inner self, aren't we eventually subject to loneliness and sadness no matter how far we share all our other values?

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis, 1-27)*

*And then, He forms him in accordance with what he is meant to be, and breathes into him of His spirit: and He endows you with hearing, and sight, and feelings as well as minds: how seldom are you grateful! (Koran, Sejdah, 9)*

If indeed what makes me what I am is the breath of the Creator, how will this help me to discover my inner self? How can this fact help to overcome every soul's unsolvable problem of loneliness?

Karen Armstrong in her book "The history of God" [2], has presented a detailed comparative study over the relation between humans and God from a historical perspective of three religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam. I am going through the pages of this book. Beyazit Bestani's words pull my attention: "The more I get closer to my own personality, the more I realize that increasingly less people get in between me and the Creator". These words somehow affect me deeply. Dr. Michaela Özelsen in her book reports over similar personal experiences [3].

My inner self or the Creator? Which one I should try to reach first? Or, as they claim, are these two inseparable?

*And certainly it is We who have created man, and We know what his innermost self whispers within him, for We are closer to him than his life-vein. (Koran, Qaf 16)*

But, what about the methods that have been proposed to search and discover the inner self outside the context of the traditional religions? In fact, the relation between mind and body has been searched by many people since thousands of years. For example, within the context psychology various people have tried to give explanation to the so-called *body-mind* problem [4]. Honestly speaking, I am personally not willing to debate on this discussion. My question is; which one of these explanations has brought hope to the hopeless loneliness of the soul? What is the secret of the method which puts

Sufi's first in a hopeless desperation and later in an indescribable happiness?

*Jesus replied: Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. (Bible, Mathew 22, 37)*

*They who are close (friend) to God - no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve. (Koran, Jonas, 62)*

All these beauties around us, violet, jasmine and rose, nightingale, our loved ones, the music that we listen and enjoy, friendship, our parents, brothers and sisters, children, partner, our sexuality, all these and many more, and most importantly our inner self. The indescribable happiness that we feel by observing and understanding the wonderful harmony among these; the inexhaustible energy that we obtain through sharing all these. This must be what Sufi's mean by getting closer to the Creator.

*To God belongs the east and the west; wherever you go there will be the presence of God. God is Omnipresent, Omniscient. (Koran, Baqara, 115)*

It surprises me to notice that something which appears to be so difficult can be at the same time so simple.

*Don't ask me who am I, I am not I,  
There is an I deeper in me than I. (Yunus Emre)*

A peaceful feeling now spreads though all the particles of my body. I will have no more sorrow. It looks like that like Yunus, I have already discovered the path that will bring me eventually to the ultimate happiness.

## References

1. Pim van Bommel, *Eindeloos Bewustzijn: een Wetenschappelijke Visie op de Bijna Dood Ervaring*, Ten Have, 2007.
2. Karen Armstrong, "Een geschiedenis van God: Vierduizend jaar Jodendom, Christendom en Islam", Anthos, (18de druk) 1999. (Originally: Karen Armstrong, "A History of God: The 4,000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam", William Heinemann Ltd. London, 1995)
3. Michaela Özelsel, "Forty days: The diary of a traditional solitary Sufi retreat", Threshold books, 1996.
4. See for example:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy\\_of\\_mind](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy_of_mind)

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