

Altered Consciousness: Near-death Episodes and Mystical Experiences

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INTRODUCTION

From a biblical perspective, death represents the body's decay and the cessation of activity by the mind and all consciousness. If so, then what are we to make of the claims of altered consciousness, near-death episodes, and after-death experiences? From the evidence presented by a current survey and a biblical critique, we can conclude that the mind, consciousness, and body are interwoven and inseparable. Conscious decision-making and objectivity are vital to the Christian experience, meaning the avenues to the mind must be closely guarded.

SEEKING ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Since time immemorial, humans have sought pain relief and sometimes induced states of altered consciousness. There are well-known methods of achieving such states, which yogis and mystics have used for millennia, such as hypnosis and psychedelic substances such as magic mushrooms.

INFLUENCE OF HALLUCINOGENS

Mystical Consciousness

- An experience of unity
- A loss of objectivity
- Feelings of transcendence
- A sense of sacredness
- Changes in attitude and behavior.

Non-mystical Consciousness

- Spatial perceptual distortions
- Intensified color perceptions
- Perceptions change with music
- Visions and encounters with angels, dragons, and beings
- Paranoia and panic

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

- Near-death experiences (NDE) refer to episodes associated with resuscitation from heart failure, acute illness, coma, drowning, and other dramatic physical events.
- The relationship among the brain, mind, soul, and consciousness is at the center of some understandings of NDEs.

CONCLUSION

From a biblical perspective, death represents the decay of the body and the cessation of activity by the mind and all consciousness. Achieving an altered state of consciousness frequently is associated with a reduction in sensory inputs or their alteration. Normal control processes in the brain have been disrupted. We can conclude that mind, consciousness, and body are interwoven and inseparable. Conscious decision-making and objectivity are vital to the Christian experience, meaning the avenues to the mind must be closely guarded.

LINK TO REFERENCES

[Altered Consciousness: Near-Death Episodes, and Mystical Experiences – Dialogue \(adventist.org\)](#)



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