

## Mind-Body Debates in Connection with Resurrection

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Death is a precursor for resurrection thus, the study of resurrection is in tandem with the study of death. More so, the study on near-death experience which is now regarded as an aspect of modern science in parapsychology provides knowledge about the relationship between the body and the mind. The debates regarding the mind/body relations are vital due to the view according to which the mind survives bodily death. Some scholars are beginning to propose that Albert Einstein theory of relativity supports the notion of a possible separation or independent existence of the body from the mind. This research is a study of the debate in connection with the biblical view according to which a new body that is imperishable is created after bodily death. The researchers cited various interpretations from different authors regarding the biblical concepts of resurrection in connection with mind/body debates and concluded that studies in modern science especially on the connection between the mind and body can contribute to the biblical study of resurrection.

**Keywords:** Death, Extraordinary, Mind-Body, Near-Death Experience (NDE), Resurrection, Science.

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**Contribution:** Various professionals have preferred names for the invisible entity that is alleged to rise after bodily death. Scholars in the fields of psychology, anthropology and theology will find this research of great benefit because the authors emphasized the view according to which studies in modern science can help shed light on first, one of the biblical views that death is not the end of life; and second, on the debates regarding the rise of an embodied or a disembodied soul or mind after bodily death.<sup>1</sup>

### **INTRODUCTION**

Some Christians used to think that science is in conflict with the Christian faith. Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), a mathematician and astronomer is among the earliest individuals that had a personal conflict with the Catholic Church because

<sup>1</sup> These researchers are aware that the mind, the spirit and the soul are technically not the same terms. While the soul might be regarded as the principle of life in a human body and the spirit as the immaterial nature of the soul, the mind can be seen as that which brings together the soul and spirit so they can coordinate the psychical activities of the human being (Aletheia, 2021). However, in this research, the use of the terms soul and spirit are not highlighted but the mind. The mind is generally perceived here as that spiritual or soulish entity that controls the unseen, unheard and the unknown personal operations or activities of the human psychic.

of his heliocentric theory of the solar system (cf. Hodgson, 2005). In 1543, Copernicus published *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies (Revolutions)* in which he argued that the sun and not the earth is the center of the universe. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) supported the view upheld by Copernicus and he wrote that the earth revolved around the sun. The Church refuted this theory and regarded it heretical (cf. Lanza and Berman, 2018:2). The Catholic Church at that time believed that the Holy Scriptures made it clear that the Earth is at the center of the Universe<sup>2</sup> and not the sun as postulated by Copernicus and Galileo. Copernicus died moments after publishing his book but Galileo was tried by the Church in 1633 (Leveillee, 2011:1-3 cf. Hodgson, 2005).

The Anglican Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce in 1860 described Darwin's theory of evolution a lie. Wilberforce said "... if Darwin's Thesis [of evolution] is true, then Genesis is a lie..." (Agai, 2017:24) while Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) called the evolution theory a "monstrous error" (Agai, 2017:24). These types of Christian responses to scientific developments contributed to creating an impression among some scientists and Christians according to which science is in conflict with the Bible (Sheldrake, 1984:20). Some early, mid- nineteenth and twentieth century Christians believed that science is needed to enhance evangelism and that science is not in conflict with the Christian faith (Chittick, 1984:11; Orr, 1957:1): "...science is but a mere method of ascertaining and proving truth as it is completely revealed in the Scripture" (Orr 1957:32). Modern Christians are advised to exercise caution while embracing science as a channel that can be used to promote theological thoughts (Hodgson 2005:3).

Generally, science is a knowledge obtained through observation and testing. It requires evidence, interpretation and where theories and hypothesis are formed and investigated. Modern science involves the scientific study of natural phenomenon (biology, chemistry and physics); pure or formal sciences (mathematics, logic, data computing, etc.) and the study of human behavior (psychology, economics and sociology) (Bauer, 2013; cf. Jordaan and Jordaan 1989:92). It is clear that science is relevant in the study of religion especially in the postmodern time. Science provides practical knowledge for understanding the context of religious beliefs. For example, mummification was a vital and sacred religious practice among the ancient Egyptians. Scheffler said that the knowledge and the purpose of the ancient Egyptian mummification would not have been properly comprehended by Egyptologists without the use of modern scientific methods (Scheffler, 2000). This reference is a plus

to the role of science in elucidating knowledge regarding certain religious practices and beliefs. The reference also supports the view according to which rituals and beliefs in the resurrection of the dead occupied the activities of many ancient cultures (cf. 2 Ki 9:30-37; Jr 22:19; Dt 21:23; Smith, 1975; Maynard, 1977; Davies, 1997; Bronner, 2013).

Since the resurrection of the dead had been popular among ancient cultures and is still popular among many contemporary religious groups, it thus becomes pertinent to inquire whether there can be any connection between science and the concepts of the resurrection of the dead. In the postmodern world, where science and reason dominate human thoughts, the question pertaining to the kind of body that will resurrect after death is relevant (Cervantes, 2016). The Scriptures have varied view pertaining the concepts of the resurrection of the body and that of the soul. Many theologians and martyrs also view the resurrection as the hope of all Christians. But, can the dead rise from death? If yes, what form of body or spirit or soul would rise after death? What contribution can modern science make in the biblical study of death and resurrection? This research is a biblical exposition about the concepts of the resurrection of the body. The researchers explained how current scientific studies regarding the mind/body debates is providing more information about the biblical view of resurrection. In particular, the researchers explained that studies on the Near-Death Experience and modern studies in quantum physics contributes to studies on the mind/body debates and its connection to resurrection. The mind/body debate is relevant in the study of the resurrection because the resurrection subject deals with the following:

- i. A body that has to die, yet expected to rise;
- ii. The body that rises from death is thought to exist in the form of either a flesh that is supra in nature or a body that is completely spiritual. The mind/body debates promote the view that humans have a spiritual nature that emanates from the body after physical death;
- iii. While the concepts of the soul, the mind and the spirit may not be technically the same, the mind/body debates promote the view that an ethereal body exist alongside the physical body. The ethereal body might be called soul or mind or spirit depending on the professional context of the observer. The study of the resurrection of the dead enhances the view of an existence of an ethereal body.

The study of the NDE and the theory of relativity have certain aspects that complement the mind/body debates explained by Einstein. To have a proper understanding of the connection between the mind/body debates and the resurrection of the dead, it is pertinent to understanding what the concept of resurrection entails.

<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Church used these biblical passages to support their argument (Genesis 1:14-18; Psalm 104:5; Job 26:7; Isaiah 40:22). However, these passages did not make any clear reference that the earth is in the center of the universe.

### The Meaning of Resurrection

Dead bodies are not scientifically known to rise. Expectedly, after bodily death, the entire human body decomposes into different elements and absorbed into (mostly) soil and the air. Due to human and many other natural processes, sometimes the soil is dug and used for many activities like farming, building construction, arts and many more (cf. Greeff, 2015). The recovering of dead bodies that are buried thousands of years ago is not an easy task. In other words, dead bodies are generally not known to have the ability to rise because there is no life in them. The Egyptians had to mummify to keep the deceased body intact for resurrection (Davies, 1999:27 cf. Jordan 1976:144-145; Partridge, 1994:6).

More so, in the ancient world, particularly among the ancient Egyptians and the Semitic Peoples, the concepts of death and resurrection dominated their interest and activities (cf. Turner, 1993). The interest these ancient people had over the resurrection subject continued to generate concern in modern societies. People have over the years questioned the reality of the resurrection of the dead. Because death is inevitable, it is logical to inquire about the destinies of our loved ones that died. Agai said that many people have terrible and scary experiences after the death of their loved ones. He noted that the behaviour and attitudes of many have changed as a result of the death of their loved ones. Inquiries on the whereabouts of the dead and on the destinies of the bereaved after death have always shaped the attitudes of many that live (Agai, 2017:10-15). There is a need to inquire what would happen to the dead in the world of the dead seeing that it is painful to lose a loved one to death. One of the common words that are used to describe an individual or a group of people that rise or would rise from death is "resurrection."

The word resurrection is a concept that is ambiguous; and instead has diverse meaning or implication. First, the word resurrection could be associated with a form of revival of an individual or a community from an unworthy or poor or a pitied state of life to an honourable or worthy state of life (Loader, 2005). Second, it is important to note that resurrection is different from resuscitation, yet there is a view among some who regard resuscitation as closely related or an equivalent of resurrection (Geisler, 1989:161). The restoration of the dead to life cited in the cases of Elijah, Elisha and Lazarus are relevant examples of resuscitation (1 Ki 17:17; 2 Ki 4:18-37; 13:20ff; Jh 11:1-44) which are sometimes equated with resurrection. There is a difference between resurrection and resuscitation. An individual does not die again after resurrection and those that are resuscitated had to die again before they can be resurrected (Sonderegger, 2013). Thus, it can be said that Lazarus died after he was resuscitated which suggest that he was not resurrected but resuscitated.

The most widely acceptable meaning of resurrection is the one that meant the creation of a new-celestial body after

physical or bodily death. Many Christians are expecting this type of resurrection at the second coming of Christ (Mckenzie, 1965). Therefore, resurrection is generally a term which suggests a revival or a resuscitation of the body and the soul after physical death and that the new supra or supernatural or celestial body cannot be the same as the body that died. Bronner who defined resurrection from an Old Testament perspective said that the term involved the rising of the dead from their graves in an expected future life (Bronner 2002:2). She added that the word resurrection might have originated from the Latin word *resurrectus* which means to *rise again* (Bronner 2002:2). Unlike the type of resuscitation experienced by Lazarus and those who were raised from death and had to die again, the kind of resurrection described by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 does not allow an individual to die again. Dr Katherine Sonderegger phrased the concept "[r]esurrection is when death is no longer in front of us, but behind us" (Sonderegger, 2013:1-3).<sup>3</sup>

The resurrection of the dead is supposedly the primary doctrine of the Christian faith. Paul, one of the disciples of Jesus Christ pointed that without resurrection of Jesus in particular, Christianity would have been futile and useless while Christians would have been the most pitied people (1 Cor. 15:14-19). John Hick described Paul as the "chief biblical expositor of the idea of the resurrection of the body (Hick 1985:278). Paul relied on Christ's resurrection to guarantee the resurrection of all those that follow him/Christ (Geisler, 1989). Jesus Christ resurrected with a physical but glorified body and was seen not only by his disciples but also by more than five hundred other people who were there at that time (1 Cor. 15:5-6; Lk 24:42). The implication of Paul's teaching is that, all those that believe in Christ, will also rise after death with a new body similar to the kind of body that Christ had after he resurrected from death. The body that will rise after death is being described as incorruptible by Paul (1 Cor. 15). The body is different from his pre-death body because Christ began to demonstrate certain features that included disappearances and ascension, yet he showed his crucified hands to his disciples (Kreeft, 2000:12). He added that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50) and this is in order to clarify that the pre-death and post death bodies of Christ are different (cf. Schep, n.d.:21-23).

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<sup>3</sup> The ancient Israelites were inconsistent on their meaning of the final destiny of the dead in Sheol. It was regarded as a place or a grave for all the dead, second, as a place for the punishment of the wicked only and third, a place where all the dead awaited resurrection (cf. Ez 32:17-32; Mckenzie, 1965:801; Harpur, 1991:129; Rensburg and Eck, 2008:1513).

### The Importance of the Resurrection

Christians have high regard for doctrines pertaining to the resurrection of the dead.<sup>4</sup> The Pentecost marked a significant fulfillment of a promise made by Jesus to his followers regarding the outpouring of the Spirit of God. On the day of Pentecost, Peter's sermon was rather centered on the resurrection of Christ.<sup>5</sup> St. Augustine's primary encouragement to Christians that were persecuted by the Alforic Goths around the fourth century AD which led to the writing of his book *The City of God Against the Pagans* is also centered around a resurrection life in heaven (Boer, 1976:76).

Furthermore, the idea according to which the resurrection of the dead is a reward for believers motivated so many apologists and Christian martyrs to suffer for the sake of an expected resurrection life. It might be recalled that the non-dedication of some of the members of the Early Church to the rules of the emperors in Rome led to serious persecution of the Church to the point that Christianity was regarded as an unlawful religion (*religio illicita*). The persecution escalated during the time of Emperor Nero in 64 A.D. (Boer, 1976). The persecution suffered by the Jews during the Inter-testamental Period, the time of Christ and among the early church members contributed to their formation of the doctrine according to which the persecuted ones shall have victory in a resurrection life (Agai, 2015a):

[t]he wide-spread persecutions which took place in the second and first centuries B.C. were influential in bringing about a marked change in the theology and eschatology of the Jewish populace. Surely God would not stand idly by, while his righteous ones were being slaughtered, unless he had plans to reward them after death. Surely God, in his righteous anger, had more than a neutral existence in Sheol in store for those who profaned his name, desecrated his temple, and persecuted his people. God-, if he were God and the righteous Jew knew that he was, would triumph, and all those faithful to him would triumph with him [in a resurrection life] and share in the eternal victory. Thus, hope came to be centered almost entirely in the future, beyond history (Agai, 2011).

Bronner suggested that the resurrection of the dead is one of the primary plans of God and that is why it is not surprising that the ideology of the concept predates the exilic periods.<sup>6</sup> The beliefs in the resurrection of the dead had also

contributed to the ideological unification and in division among some Later Jewish sects. The Sadducees for example refuted the resurrection of the dead and they went as far as denying the existence of any form of spiritual world meant for the dead<sup>7</sup> likewise the Samaritans.<sup>8</sup> The Essenes knew about the resurrection of the dead but it was not a priority for them (Agai, 2011:172). The Pharisees believed that the soul of a deceased is meant to live forever and as a result they believed in the resurrection of the soul but not the resurrection of the body. The Pharisees might have been influenced by Platonist philosophy according to which the soul is divine while the body is unholy or evil (Craffert, 1999).

The background according to which there is no resurrection of the dead and in particular the resurrection of the body after death influenced Paul's responses to the Corinthian church whereby he had to expound the nature of the physical body that is expected to be resurrected "how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"<sup>9</sup> Cervantes explained that the Corinthian Church believed in a possible resurrection but doubted how a physical body could be resurrected as expounded by Paul (Cervantes, 2016).

Considering the importance of the resurrection after bodily death, it becomes pertinent to provide further descriptive information on how a dead body could rise and possess certain qualities that are supernatural or celestial as is the case with the debatable resurrection body of Christ (Schutte, 2000). Although the body perishes on earth after death, certain biblical passages promote the view according to which resurrection involved the rising of the physical body which must be transformed before it can be qualified for resurrection (1 Thes 4:17; 1 Cor 15:35-58). This could be one of the reasons why Christians unlike the ancient Egyptians refused to mummify or preserve the physical body as the Egyptians did (Spronk, 1986; Davies, 1999). They were not concerned about what happened to the physical body after death. They had a view according to which the resurrected body is not the same as the body that died.<sup>10</sup>

### The Debates on the Perception of the Human Body

Various scholars have over the years challenged the view according to which human souls are separated from their bodies and this is vital because there are Christians that think that the body is separate from the soul while others believe that the body and soul is a single entity. The view

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:11-14.

<sup>5</sup> Acts 2:1-31.

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 32:39, 1 Samuel 2:6v; L.L. Bronner, "A Journey to Heaven," 1-2.

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 22:31, Luke 20:37, Mark 12:26, Acts. 23:8.

<sup>8</sup> Matthew 12:18; 22:23, Luke 20:27.

<sup>9</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:12.

<sup>10</sup> Philippians 3:21; M. Perman, 2006. "Will the resurrection of the body be a physical resurrection from thee dead?" from <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/will-the-resurrection-of-the-body-be-a-physical-resurrection-from-the-dead>, pp. 1-2.

that the body and the soul are separate entities can be regarded as the traditional view. This is important because first, the early Church were contemporaries to the reign of this view. Second, the view carries alongside a tradition according to which the body is mortal while the soul is immortal. Both Joshua Mugg and James T. Turner referred to the concept of the separation of the body from the soul as “dualism.” They argued that previous scholars who supported this view had mistaken. They thought that the mistake was due to the idea that only the soul shall rise after death. Mugg and Turner favored animalism which necessitates that God had to resurrect bodies for human existence (Mugg and Turner, 2017). In other words, the body is needed to contain the soul even in a resurrection life.

The traditional view regarding the separation of the body from the soul in the afterlife might have been influenced also by Platonian and Greek philosophical thoughts which regarded as sacred the non-material world (Cooper, 2009). It might be recalled that Plato, in consonance with Greek philosophical thoughts, believed that the best or the ultimate reality for existence pertained to the unseen things or ideas; likewise, Greek philosophical thoughts promoted the view that matter is evil and God might not have created out of matter (Boer, 1976). The body is one of God’s creations created out of matter.<sup>11</sup> Just before and during the time of Plato (427-347 BCE), the idea of separating the body from the soul became paramount. Plato emphasized that the body is evil but the soul good:

Plato to[o] says that mind (or soul) and body are two separate substances, that there is a dichotomy between the *good soul* and the *evil body* which hinders and restricts the influence of the soul for as long as a person lives. After death the soul survives to continue its journey towards divine perfection (Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989:5)

Contrary to the traditional view, many modern theologians have rejected the existence of humans as dualistic beings. John W. Cooper emphasized that: “Modern theologians have advocated more monistic views of human nature and repudiated dualism as residual Greek philosophy that is incompatible with holistic Hebrew thought” (Cooper, 2009:34). It also becomes pertinent to note that not all Greeks after Plato upheld the view of the human body as a dualistic entity. Harry Boer said that Zeno, a stoic and a native of Cyprus at about 300 BCE together with his successors like Socrates taught that everything is one, meaning, there is no soul or body that is evil or good instead all materials including God himself is a matter: “[t]here is no

pure spirit: mind and body are both material[s]. Even God; the universe is his body, and he is its soul” (Boer, 1976:10).

Wilhelm Jordaan and Jackie Jordaan also noted that earliest Greek thoughts particularly in the periods before and during the time of Homer (900 BCE) did not promote the view that the body and the soul are separate entities. Although the Greeks were conscious that the human soul or what they thought as a vital energy needed to leave the body at death, they were not concerned about seeing that the body and the soul are separate entities (Jordaan and Jordaan, 1989:5).

One of the disagreements among Christians over the perception regarding the separation of the body from the soul could be caused due to the notion that Christians do not interpret doctrine and scholarship the same way but differently (Cooper, 2009:34). One of the theologies that reigned during the medieval period is the view according to which a disembodied soul necessarily required a body which had to be conjoined in the resurrection (Mugg and Turner, 2017). This type of perception might have promoted the idea of the separation of the body from the soul. Cooper said that an exegetical and historical study of the Scripture did not suggest that the body is separable from the soul instead the body and soul is a single entity with varied functions. He noted that biblical words that are used to denote humans suggest humans as single beings and not a division of the body and soul:

Genesis 2:7 state that God made Adam as a soul or living being (*nephesh chayah*), forming him from the dust of the ground and giving him the breath of life (*neshamah*). A human does not have a soul but is a soul, a single being consisting of formed earth and breath/spirit (*neshamah*, a synonym of *ruach*). In philosophical terms, a human being is one substance, entity, or thing constituted of two distinct ingredients or components (Cooper, 2009:36).

Agai (2015b) emphasized that in the Old Testament, there are basically three words that denote the human soul: *nephesh*, *ruach* and *neshamah*. They said that these words could refer to ‘living soul,’ ‘what man [woman] has,’ ‘spirit of God,’ and ‘man [woman].’ He added said that there is never a time when these words suggest a separation between the body and soul (Agai 2015b:171-172). Cooper further noted that the New Testament corresponds with the Old Testament view that a human being is a single entity. He said that the New Testament terms like *pneuma*, *psuche*, *kardia*, *sarx* and *soma* promote a monistic view of human body as a single entity (Cooper, 2009).

If the resurrection of Jesus is to be taken as a historical fact, it thus suggests the oneness of the body and soul because Jesus resurrected as a singular being with as physical body. Paul also described the resurrection body as

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 1 & 2.

a physical entity suggesting the oneness of the body and soul (Cooper, 2009). The view of most modern theologians is that the body is a single entity with varied features including a dualistic existence that can be experienced at death and resurrection. Cooper surmised it “although human life is holistic, some kind of dualism is actualized at death” (Cooper, 2009).

### The Contribution of Modern Science

Modern developments in parapsychology in which extra-sensory perceptions like telepathy, hypnosis, hallucinations and the Near-Death Experience (NDE) are studied are contributing to academic convergence of both scientists and religious scholars alike because in it, the relations between the mind and the physical body are studied. This convergence has somewhat contributed to the study of the resurrection in connection with the mind/body debates. For example, the study of the brain-body or the mind-body relation is vital in the study of the debates about how the resurrection of the body or of the soul can either be a reality or a myth (Trueblood, 1963; Small, 1977; Grosso, 1989). John Hick taught that although, the scientific views on resurrection may not be studied as a repeatable and physically observable experiments due to limitations in the capacity of the human brain that may not comprehend all activities within the human psyche; yet, the scientific study of human extraordinary experiences are shedding lights on the concepts of death and resurrection in connection with the mind/body debate (Hick, 1985:278-279 cf. Agrillo, 2011).

Notwithstanding, there are many scientists that do not believe that extraordinary experiences can be studied scientifically. Around the early twentieth century, Crutchfield said that Gardner Murphy, a popular researcher in the field of Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) spoke on how parapsychology had been undermined by scientists and tacked a taboo in the science world during the meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Herman Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz was reported to have said “[n]either the testimony of all the members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, nor my testimony from what my own eyes recorded, could convince me of {for example} telepathy, since it is manifestly impossible” (Crutchfield, 1965).

More so, Trueblood also echoed the need for both religious scholars and scientists to exercise caution in accepting every knowledge: “... But even taking science at the most sensible of its definition, we must acknowledge that it is as imperfect as all other activities of the human mind” (Trueblood, 1963:106). A similar view has been promoted by Morris who noted that no single knowledge is perfect due to the constantly-continued and improved researches and discoveries (Morris, 1967). The aim is to promote the view that no knowledge or field of study should be neglected, instead, there can be interconnectedness between various

fields of study.

### The Near-Death Experience

The near-death experience is one of the aspects of parapsychology that promotes the mind/body debates. Raymond Moody, a philosopher-psychiatrist formed the compound names *Near-Death Experience* to describe sceneries whereby experiencers of NDE claim that the mind departs from the physical body to have some experiences of the otherworld. Moody's preference of using the “mind” and not spirit to describe the ethereal energy that lives alongside the body or allegedly departs from the body during the near-death experience may be in connection with his profession. The near-death experience is an experience which creates a feeling of separation between the body and the mind during which the mind captures, records and stores information regarding certain supernatural activities that the body alone cannot perform (cf. Moody, 1975). During the near-death experience, the unconscious and the sub-conscious dominates the conscious activity of the physical body. Agrillo surmised that the NDE means “... an altered state of consciousness commonly occurring during an episode of unconsciousness, as a result of life-threatening condition (Agrillo, 2011). Percipients of the near-death experience believe that they *leave* their physical bodies behind as their minds travel into another world with another kind of body or personality that is supra or supernaturally sensitive and powerful (cf. Agrillo, 2011). Moody said:

Let us, therefore, hypothesize that death is the separation of the mind from the body, and that the mind does pass into other realms of existence at this point. It would follow that there exists some mechanism whereby the soul or mind is released upon death. One has no basis upon which to assume, though, that this mechanism works exactly in accordance with what we have in our era somewhat arbitrarily taken to be the point of no return (Moody, 1975).

Raymond Moody interviewed 150 people who experienced the near death. He believed that the near-death experience is not evidence for an afterlife instead; his sampled percipients only came *close to death* (Moody, 1975; Ma'Su'mian, 1996). In addition, it is important to note that the NDE is not scientifically regarded as a proof for the resurrection beliefs (Harpur, 1991; Moody, 1975:240). But, studies on NDE provide further knowledge about the argument regarding the dualistic and the monistic relations between the body and the mind. It is important to note that “[r]ecent empirical studies of ‘near death’ experiences not only strengthened the possibility of some sort of life after death, but also indicate the absence of any divine judge-

ment” (MacGregor, 1992) and how is this possible?

The NDE is actually a brain process that is subjective to the interpretations of the experiences of the percipient. The feelings of the separation of the physical body from the ethereal body during the near-death experience is *factual* and not mythical or a fantasy to the percipient (Fox, 2003). The feelings create the view that a new and celestial body can be created out of the physical body at death. While the feelings by the NDE percipients cannot be scientifically proven, yet it can promote the debate for a Christian view of resurrection body that is different from the body that dies. It might be recalled that the Christian view of resurrection pertained to the creation of a new body that is celestial, pure and resistant to the natural laws. Percipients of the NDE have narrated that during their experiences, they believe that their physical bodies are left behind and new celestial bodies that operate irrespective of natural laws created. This view is open for further study.

More so, on the debates regarding the oneness and the separation of the mind from the body, John Hick emphasized that there is an independent entity in humans that makes them feel that the body is separate from the mind (Hick, 1985:131-138). Grosso added that the entity operates irrespective of space and time (Grosso, 1989:237). Ma'Su'mian further related human consciousness to the brain's electro-mechanical processes. He concluded that the mind, though works with the brain yet, it can exist independently from the brain (Ma'Su'mian 1996:138). His view might be so because during some out-of-body experiences like the NDE, the percipient might be declared weak physically or mentally, yet he or she narrates with absolute clarity his/her experiences after recovery from the experience. This view is also echoed by Joe Timothy Green who said that the NDE helps scholars to understand that it is not only the physical body that exist but the spiritual or the ethereal: “of course, the field of near-death studies has played a major part in what I believe to be the next revolution in science the understanding that our true nature is not physical, but spiritual” (Green, n.d.).

Harpur on the other hand thought that the body and the soul are one entity and that extraordinary experiences do not mean the separation of the body from the mind but a produce caused by generational stored memories in the DNA or RNA and released during trances (Harpur, 1991). Small contended that the mind has the responsibility of storing past experiences often released during extra sensory activities (Small, 1977:148-149). By implication, such a monistic view admits that if the brain ceases to function, the mind too will not function as both entities are matter subject to death and decay (Harpur, 1991:96). The study of the NDE and the mind/body debates suggests that scholars have varied views on the relationship between the body and the mind, yet the debate is relevant because resurrection deals with the assumed separation of the body from mind or soul.

Contrary to these views, it is important to note that in resurrection, there is an expectation that the body will rise as it happened during the time Jesus Christ who died and was resurrected with a physical body that is glorified. The NDE on the other hand de-emphasized the rising of the physical body after death. The NDE also is not the same as death but for resurrection, a person has to die. The NDE is simply an experience that could be associated with death simply because the physical body is weak during the experience. NDE percipients may sometimes return to life to narrate their stories while at other times, they die and do no return to life but have shared their death-journeys experiences.

There is yet to be any scientific proof that the mind is separate from the body and debates raised by various scholars above is based on the assumption that the mind can exist independent of the body. The reason for the connection between resurrection and the NDE are in view of the features of the resurrection body which might be compared with the spiritual entity that is assumed to rise and travel through the otherworld otherwise, the NDE and resurrection are two different terms and are not the same. This debate is stuck because the resurrection has physical features like Christ able to eat after rising from death, showing his nailed palms, etc and yet he could ascent to heaven and disappeared to reappear somewhere else. So, Jesus Christ after resurrection had some physical features likewise spiritual features and that is why it is said he resurrected with a physical yet glorified body. NDE on the other hand leave the physical body behind and the mind is what is assumed to *resurrect* yet the mind and the body are not death. This suggest that NDE basically can contribute to the mind/body debates and is not the same as resurrection but can contribute to the future study of resurrection.

### The Contribution of physics

In physical science and during physical experiments, uncertainty in the results of measurements is expected; this is due to the nature of the measuring devices used, the environmental conditions and most importantly the judgement of the observer. The judgment of the observer who is a part of the experiment brings the idea of the mind into play in conducting experiments. This silenced the idea of absolute space and absolute time (Cox, 1989). While Isaac Newton taught that space and time are absolute (Falk, 2018), Albert Einstein posited that time and space are relative or warping depending on the standing point of the observer (Falk, 2018).

Einstein theory of relativity suggest that motion and velocity are relative quantities that are determined in respect to the observer's point of view or stand point or reference point (Arnette, 1992). The relativity of space and time can be illustrated with the force of gravity which is expected to attract objects to itself but the theory of relativity suggest that gravity is not absolute but warping or curving from varied

reference points of view. In other words, where the mass of an object is more, the space around it would also warp or curves more (Falk, 2018). The theory demonstrates that the more distant two people are, the different the reading or the positioning of their time and interpretation of time "... the motion of clocks is influenced by gravity, so that time depends, for example, on the height of the observer above the earth" (Arnette, 1992:12).

This view that the mind and the body play different roles during physical experiments made Harpur to think that scientists believe in the existence of an ethereal nature in humans' reason being that they regard the mind as an independent role player that can influence the results of a research analysis where the body is a part of the experiment (Harpur, 1991:98). The emphasis of both Cox and Harpur is not to say that the mind and the body are separate entities instead, the mind influences the nature and the outcome of an experiment conducted together with the body 'physics in the twentieth century has gradually replaced materialism with the affirmation that mind plays an essential role in the universe' (Harpur, 1991:98).

There are suggestions made according to which the knowledge of the NDE influenced Einstein thoughts toward formulating the theory of relatively. Joe Timothy Green cited an example of an interview by *New York Times* granted to Einstein in which he was asked how he came about the theory of relativity and Einstein responded by narrating about an encounter he had with an NDE percipient who fell from Berlin rooftop and survived with little injury. The NDE percipient told Einstein that he never felt the effects of gravity from the beginning to the end of his NDE experience (Green, n.d.:64, 66).

The scientific gathering of information pertaining to the phenomenon of the NDE might have started sometime around the nineteenth century AD when Albert von St Gallen Heim, a Swiss geologist, wrote about his experiences after falling from a mountain height and went into a state of comma. Heim began to collect information from people who had similar experiences. In 1892, Heim presented his findings to the members of the Swiss Alpine Club (Corazza, 2008). In his lists of NDE percipients are mountain climbers who had fallen in the Alps, accidents victims who nearly died; individuals that were drowned and soldiers that were wounded in wars (Greyson 2006: 394 cf. Ring (2011: 420).

From the people he interviewed, Heim noted that during their experiences, time sometimes gets extended and for other people, there has never been an experience of time during their experiences. Being a scientist and from the experiences of his percipients, Heim taught that "as an object hurtles through space, time becomes relative, depending on motion" (Green, n.d.:65). One of the coherent features of the NDE is the view according to which the physical body is left behind while the mind or the ethereal body flew and passes through a tunnel where time is not counted:

Our sense of time, then, is a result of our being part of the material universe. Thus, if one were to leave this universe for another through a wormhole, it seems one would leave behind this universe's definition of time, space, and gravity as well (Arnette, 1992:14).

This study in quantum physics about time and space supports the view according to which the physical body or space or time is not absolute but relative suggesting that the physical body and mind or any other form of ethereal body that exist in humans may have some features that differs from the operations of the physical body and that it is yet to be fully understood at this stage. It is important to note that while quantum physics support the study of the mind/body debates, yet it does not make it clear that the mind can exist separate from the body.

It is interesting to note the level of interest scientists have over the subject of the afterlife or resurrection. The study of the mind-body relations as presented in this research does not literally contradicts some biblical views that the physical body humans have on earth will be transformed into a spiritually-incorruptible body. Kreeft said that the resurrection body is a continuation of the former but in a changed form (Kreeft, 2000:15) and Badham, noted that the major difference between the resurrection and the pre-resurrection body is the continuity of the personality of the individual (Badham, 1976). John Hick said that the resurrection body is a spiritual body and he referred to it as *soma pneumatikon* (Hick, 1985:279). Ascertaining the kind or the nature of the exact body that is expected to resurrect is still controversial as some authors are of the view that the resurrection body must emerged from the previous body that exist or existed on earth as equally emphasized by Hick. Schep also surmised:

"...men will indeed rise up in their own physical bodies.... This excludes any explanation suggesting that we shall be raised as spirits, or that we shall receive an 'angelic body,' consisting of some heavenly glory-matter,' without any physical connection with our present bodies" (Schep, n.d.:21).

The current capacity of modern humans to understand the exact state of the resurrection body is really difficult. It is not surprising that the greatest expositor of the resurrection-body-theories Apostle Paul described the concepts pertaining to the resurrection body as a mystery (Hick, 1985:278; 1 Cor 15:51a).

## CONCLUSION

The mind/body relations have been debated by many scien-



tists and philosophers. The NDE and quantum physics indeed promotes the debates on the relationships between the mind and the body in life and in the afterlife but both concepts did not provide evidence that the mind can exist independent of the body. The study of NDE and quantum physics are relevant for the resurrection debates and this is so because resurrection is associated with first, the mind/spirit leaving behind the body and second, the body changing into a spiritual body becoming one with the mind that once left the physical body behind. Future study on the subject is relevant as it may shed more light on the connection between resurrection and the mind/body debates.

### Conflict of interests

The author(s) declares no conflict of interest.

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