

# Consciousness: Theories and Applications

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To those exploring human consciousness

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Consciousness is one of the most challenging phenomena in the universe for us to understand. At the same time, consciousness is naturally present all around us like the air we breathe and the sights, sounds, and fragrances that flood our senses. Most people can sense consciousness and a living spirit within their pets and many other animals in nature. And it is a common experience for us to look into our eyes in the mirror and see something there beyond the physical appearance of our faces. Consciousness is everywhere, yet it is highly individualized within ourselves and other parts of life. What, then, is consciousness and how is it best explained?

This book is an exploration of consciousness based on my own experience and the thought and research of many other people. In my lifetime, I have experienced many levels of consciousness. As I infant, I remember my mother watching over me with loving eyes; as a boy, I remember reading books and playing baseball; as a teenager, I remember being enamored by the girls in my classroom and developing an interest in history and foreign policy; as a young adult, I remember being swept up in marriage and family and trying to balance my professional and personal life; as a father, I remember each of my children and the many experiences we shared as a close-knit family; now, as a senior citizen, I am aware of the march of time, how men and civilizations change over the years, and how fast science and technology are pushing back the boundaries of our understanding in so many areas of life. Over the course of my life, I have had experiences of a spiritual nature which uplifted my soul, and experiences with the fundamental instincts of survival linking me with all Earthly creatures. All of these things, and much more, have played across the screen of my consciousness in an ever-changing sequence of events. At the same time, my spirit has remained the same, a constant observer of my evolving consciousness.

In this book, I attempt to understand the many roles that consciousness plays in the interaction between man and God, and between the individual and other parts of life.

Consciousness is like a window through which we perceive reality. Our consciousness is associated with our brain and mind as they try to order and interpret the endless stream of data collected by our bodily senses. At the same time, our consciousness is separate from our body and seems more closely associated with the timeless spirit or soul which inhabits our physical body. Our consciousness includes many layers beyond the parameters of our awakened state. It also appears that consciousness can be shared to some extent between at least some species. It seems probable that life is more plentiful across the universe than we may have initially thought. It is highly possible that there are multiple dimensions beyond time and space, including what many have called spiritual planes of existence.

Since consciousness seems to exist wherever there is life,<sup>1</sup> and life does not necessarily require a physical body as we normally conceive of it, consciousness may reside in multiple dimensions, even within our own self. I am reminded of the Chinese Taoist philosopher Zhuangzi (Chuang-Tzu, 369 BC to 286 BC), who wrote: “I dreamed I was a butterfly, flitting around in the sky; then I awoke. Now I wonder: Am I a man who dreamt of being a butterfly, or am I a butterfly dreaming that I am a man?”<sup>2</sup> The ease with which our consciousness flits

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<sup>1</sup> So argues Arthur S. Reber, in his book *The First Minds: Caterpillars, 'Karyotes, and Consciousness* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), reviewed by Simona Ginsburg and Eva Jablonka, *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 133, No. 1 (Spring 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/amerjpsyc.133.1.0117?seq=1>. Also, see Reber’s article “Sentience and Consciousness in Single Cells: How the First Minds Emerged in Unicellular Species,” February 4, 2019, found in Wiley Online Library Abstract of *BioEssays*, Volume 41, Issue 3 (March 2019), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/bies.201800229#:~:text=laboratory%E2%80%90based%20explorations,-,3%20Consciousness%20is%20an%20Inherent%20Property%20of%20Cellular%20Organisms,essential%20for%20survival%20and%20evolution>. See also the very interesting article “Why Do Many Scientists See Cells as Intelligent?” *Mind Matters News*, October 7, 2020, <https://mindmatters.ai/2020/10/why-do-many-scientists-see-cells-as-intelligent/>.

<sup>2</sup> From “Zhuangzi Quotes,” *Brainy Quote*, [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/zhuangzi\\_393083](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/zhuangzi_393083).

between here and there actually reveals a technique that can be used by people to commune with the heavenly hosts. If we know the name of the master and his or her special quality of goodness and blessings to mankind, then all we have to do is to harmonize our consciousness with the consciousness of that master. This immediately establishes a channel of communications between ourselves and the master, over which can flow some very special spiritual gifts that can benefit us personally as well as others with whom we may come into contact over the years.

Because we can control our consciousness to some degree, it would appear logical that our consciousness is separate from the “doer” or “decision maker” within ourselves. That decision maker within is what many have called the soul or spirit of an individual. The relationship between our sense of selfhood, our free will, and our consciousness has been noted by people for as long as history has been recorded. I like to think it is reflected in the words of Gautama Buddha (563 BC to about 483 BC) as recorded in the *Dhammapada*: “we are what we think, having become what we thought.”<sup>3</sup> If this is true, then our fate – individually and as a species – rests largely in our own hands. If we want a better future, we should strive to improve our consciousness today. The deliberate use of consciousness by human beings is closely related to the freedom of the individual to choose how he or she wishes to use their consciousness. Freedom is key to the creativity of people, and it is the condition that gives humanity the unique ability to explore and develop the potential of their individual and collective consciousness.

In this book, we will begin our exploration of consciousness by noting some of the ideas and theories advanced by scientists and philosophers over the centuries, and then by evaluating those theories in light of reason and personal experience. In the chapter following, we examine the link between life and consciousness by identifying some of the major characteristics

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<sup>3</sup> From the collection of sayings from the Buddha, as found in the *Dhammapada*, trans. P. Lal (Rexdale, Ontario: Ambassador Books, 1967), p. 39.

of living things and the possibility of life beyond Earth. In the next chapter, we consider the possibility of a multidimensional universe, perhaps containing spiritual dimensions, and as well as how consciousness might exist in these various dimensions and be perceived in part by human beings. The role of order and randomness, as well as concepts of levels of consciousness, are also explored in this chapter. Following that discussion, we examine a theoretical relationship between logos and consciousness, and how mankind's higher mind might assist us in understanding the link between God, life, consciousness, and humanity's creative role in the evolution of life on Earth. The concluding chapter summarizes the major findings of the study and offers a few personal observations about the lessons learned from this inquiry into the amazing world of consciousness.

## Chapter 2: Theories of Consciousness

Defining consciousness is considered by scientists as one of the “hard problems” that have yet to be solved.<sup>4</sup> Several theories have been advanced in recent years. One prominent theory is that the human brain is the origin of consciousness; however, the brain is simply incapable of understanding itself so consciousness can never be understood.

This theory appears to be flawed because it assumes consciousness is a product of the human brain.<sup>5</sup> The assumption is wrong since consciousness is present in other species besides humans. In fact, as shown below, consciousness appears to be present in species of life which have no brain at all. There is considerable evidence that where life exists, consciousness also exists – albeit not at a level or type of consciousness experienced by human beings.

For example, scientist are finding that “trees have their own sort of nervous system that is capable of facilitating tree communication, memory and learning.”<sup>6</sup> This is done through a symbiotic relationship between tree roots and fungi known as the mycorrhizal network. Different kinds of fungi work with different kinds of trees, which communicate with each other and even across different kinds of trees to alert one another of various threats and dangers. Another example of consciousness within species without brains can be found in microbes (single-cell

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<sup>4</sup> See, Michael Shermer, “Will Science Ever Solve the Mysteries of Consciousness, Free Will and God?” *Scientific American*, July 1, 2018, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/will-science-ever-solve-the-mysteries-of-consciousness-free-will-and-god/>.

<sup>5</sup> For a very interesting discussion of the relationship of consciousness and various parts of the human brain, see Christof Koch, “What Is Consciousness?” *Scientific American*, June 1, 2018, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/what-is-consciousness/>.

<sup>6</sup> Valentina Lagomarsino, “Exploring The Underground Network of Trees – The Nervous System of the Forest,” Harvard University, The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, blog, May 6, 2019, <http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2019/exploring-the-underground-network-of-trees-the-nervous-system-of-the-forest/>.



organisms with no brains), which can act in seemingly intelligent ways through an internal process called biological computing.<sup>7</sup> For example, microbes can:

- Communicate by talking to each other with chemicals
- Make decisions through “quorum sensing,” another chemical communication technique to determine a change in group behavior
- Accelerate the rate at which their genes mutate
- Navigate by finding the shortest route through a maze
- Learning and memory to choose direction and better prepare its behavior to take advantage of its environment.

### Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness

In an effort to explain how this seemingly intelligent behavior could occur in single-cell entities with no brains, some scientists have turned to the theories of quantum mechanics.<sup>8</sup> In one study to describe the evolution of consciousness from single cell organisms to complex multi-cell entities, J. Shashi Kiran Reddy and Contzen Pereira postulate a theory of the initial stages of the evolutionary process of consciousness as follows:<sup>9</sup>

“Microorganisms demonstrate conscious-like intelligent behaviour, and this form of consciousness may have emerged from a quantum mediated mechanism as observed in cytoskeletal structures like the microtubules present in nerve cells which apparently have

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<sup>7</sup> See, Michael Marshall, “Why microbes are smarter than you thought,” *New Scientist*, June 30, 2009, <https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn17390-why-microbes-are-smarter-than-you-thought/>.

<sup>8</sup> Quantum mechanics is a theory in physics that provides a description of the physical properties of nature at the scale of atoms and subatomic particles. Quantum mechanics and the theory of relativity are physics applied to the smallest and largest scales of existence where the normal laws of physics do not seem to explain what is observed.

<sup>9</sup> See, J. Shashi Kiran Reddy and Contzen Pereira, Abstract of “Understanding the emergence of microbial consciousness: From a perspective of the Subject-Object Model (SOM),” *Journal of Integrative Neuroscience*, 2017, as reported by National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information, *PubMed.gov*, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29254105/#:~:text=Abstract,the%20architecture%20to%20quantum%20compute>.

the architecture to quantum compute. This paper hypothesises the emergence of proto-consciousness in primitive cytoskeletal systems found in the microbial kingdoms of archaea, bacteria and eukarya. To explain this, we make use of the Subject-Object Model (SOM) of consciousness which evaluates the rise of the degree of consciousness to conscious behaviour in these systems supporting the hypothesis of emergence and propagation of conscious behaviour during the pre-Cambrian part of Earth's evolutionary history. Consciousness as proto-consciousness or sentience computed via primitive cytoskeletal structures substantiates as a driver for the intelligence observed in the microbial world during this period ranging from single-cellular to collective intelligence as a means to adapt and survive. The growth in complexity of intelligence, cytoskeletal system and adaptive behaviours are key to evolution, and thus supports the progression of the Lamarckian theory of evolution driven by quantum mediated proto-consciousness to consciousness as described in the SOM of consciousness.”

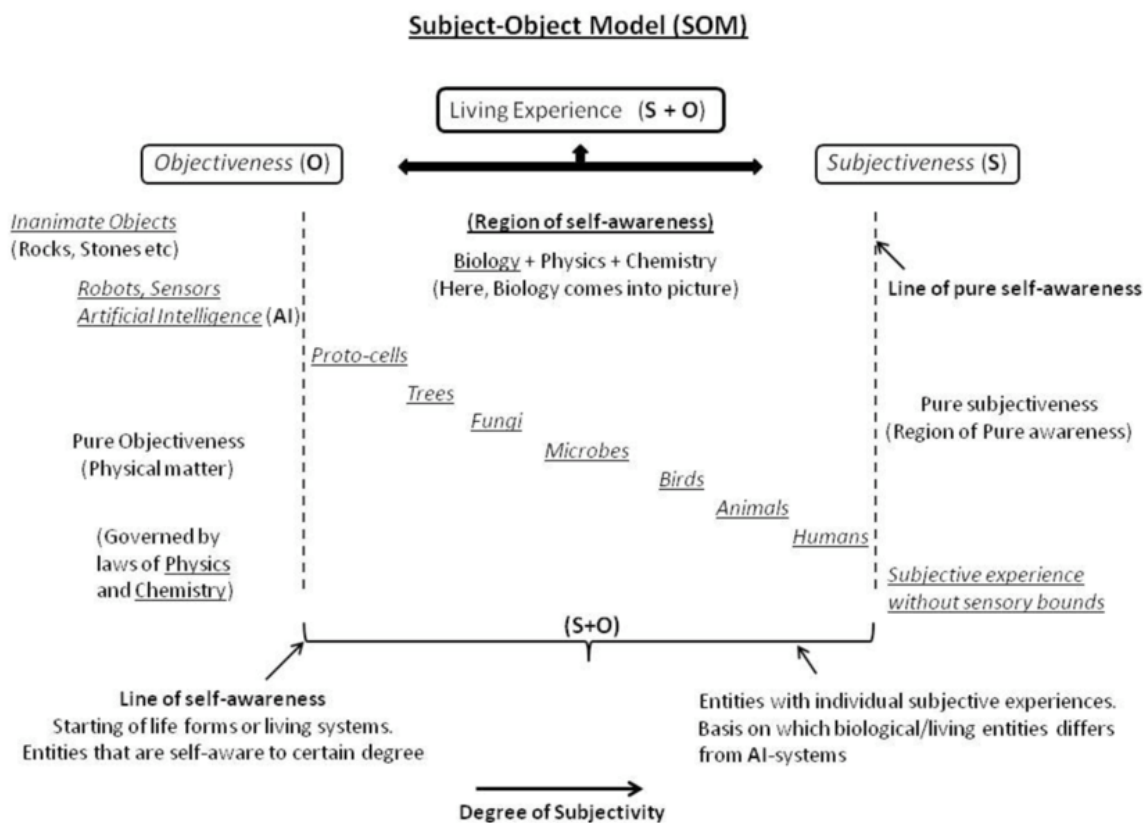
Elsewhere, the SOM model of consciousness was described by J. Shashi Kiran Reddy as a theory “based on the degree of subjectivity/subjectiveness a living species would naturally embrace. It propounds consciousness as a kind of evolutionary trait. [It conjectures that] the development of certain degree and level of complexity in a living system during the process of evolution calls for an emergence of a qualitative property (like consciousness) for better survival and optimal functioning. This provides a scale to estimate the level of consciousness and the extent of subjective experience of life across the wide living spectra.”<sup>10</sup> A diagram depicting the SOM model is shown below in Figure 1.

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<sup>10</sup> J. Shashi Kiran Reddy, Abstract of “A Novel Subject-Object Model of Consciousness,” *NeuroQuantology* 15(1), April 2017, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315660944\\_A\\_Novel\\_Subject-Object\\_Model\\_of\\_Consciousness](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315660944_A_Novel_Subject-Object_Model_of_Consciousness).

From my perspective, the SOM model of consciousness does have merit, because it helps to explain the different levels of consciousness-like behavior that appear throughout the evolutionary tree of life. However, the weakness of the SOM model is that it based too heavily on the physical platforms of consciousness and does not take into adequate consideration the spiritual dimensions of life and consciousness.

Figure 1: SOM Model of Consciousness



### Link between Physical Body and Consciousness

From my personal experience, I am convinced there is a physical linkage between the human body and consciousness. Two brief stories will illustrate this. In the first, I was working on some intellectually challenging work, while drinking a little Irish Cream. My wife walked into my office and told me that the light bulb had burned out in the bathroom. I said I would look at it in a moment. She persisted, however, so I got up irritably to fix the problem. In terms of

consciousness, I noticed that while the alcohol had not disrupted my intellectual work, it had reduced my resilience to the irritability of being disturbed. I deduced from this that the alcohol had released a chemical reaction in my body that reduced my resiliency but increased my irritability. The irritation disrupted my consciousness in a manner I did not intend. This, to me, was one demonstration of the connection between my physical body and the state of my consciousness.

The second example is more serious and sad. One of our neighbors has custody of their son's child, born out of wedlock and now about a year old. Through circumstances not entirely clear, the child suffered injuries to his brain while in the womb, during the delivery, or soon thereafter. The child cannot focus his eyes, cannot interact with my neighbor and his wife, and cannot yet at the age of one crawl, communicate, or do anything other than lay in bed, whimper, and be carried everywhere. This is an instance in which physical damage to the brain of a child caused him to be severely handicapped. From what I can observe, there is an extremely low level of consciousness being displayed by the child. This is a demoralizing demonstration that there is a close relationship between the physical body and consciousness.

#### [Link between Non-Physical Body and Consciousness](#)

There appears to be strong evidence of a close link between the physical planes of existence and human consciousness. However, evidence of there being linkage between human consciousness and non-physical dimensions of existence rely mostly on antidotal stories. One example of this antidotal evidence is out-of-body experiences in which many people claim to have traveled outside of their body or who have stood and observe themselves from afar, such as during an operation or near-death experience.<sup>11</sup> There are also many stories from mothers-to-be

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<sup>11</sup> For records of thousands of such personal experiences, see the website for the Out of Body Experience Research Foundation, <http://www.oberf.org/>.

about communicating with their infants, either during pregnancy or even before conceptualization.<sup>12</sup>

As a personal example of a spiritual presence of an incoming child in the aura of a mother-to-be, I can cite an occasion when a spiritual teacher looked at my wife and asked her if she was pregnant. She said no, and when the teacher insisted that this was so, she explained that she was having her period at the time and could not be pregnant. The teacher then said that a soul was strongly present in her aura and that she would soon give birth to this child. A few months later, my wife did become pregnant with our first daughter.

There is also evidence of the transference of the spirit or soul of a human being to the physical body of an animal, at least temporarily. Again, I can cite a personal experience. When my father was nearing death, I asked him to show me if life existed after death. He nodded. In a few days, he died at home in his bed during the early morning hours. A few moments later when I was grieving over his body, a neighborhood cat suddenly jumped upon the window screen outside his bedroom and started meowing very loudly. After a moment or two, the cat jumped down. I thought this very strange but gave it no further thought, until, shortly after sunrise, I went to the backdoor of the house to get some fresh air and in walked the cat. He immediately went over to my Dad's favorite chair and jumped upon its seat, sat up, and stared at me. I had the distinct impression my father's spirit had temporarily inhabited the cat's body to signal that his spirit continued to live after his body's death – just as I had asked him to do. This was a startling experience but also as clear a message as if my father had spoken to me directly. I gently lifted the cat from the chair, took him out the backyard gate and told my father's spirit that he had to

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<sup>12</sup> See, "Treasury of Resources," <http://www.light-hearts.com/treasury.htm>. For an example of mothers communicating with their incoming child before conception, see Elisabeth Hallett, "Pre-Birth Communication," The Natural Child Project, [https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/guest/elisabeth\\_hallett3.html](https://www.naturalchild.org/articles/guest/elisabeth_hallett3.html).

go on, that we loved him, and that we would be fine. I put the cat down on the ground and he just turned and walked away, never to be seen again.

### [Link between Spirituality and Consciousness](#)

In addition to these types of non-physical consciousness experiences, there are countless numbers of people who believe they have had spiritual experiences.<sup>13</sup> The prayers and meditations of the faithful worldwide attest to this belief. If true, then God, Jesus, Buddha, the saints and bodhisattvas, angels and other spiritual beings would have to have a consciousness in order to communicate with those in physical planes of existence. And these spiritual beings appear to be “alive” when encountered by human beings – albeit often in a dimension different from time and space.

Just as in interactions between people in everyday life, where there is a sense of a unique consciousness in each person, so in interactions between people and spiritual beings there is a sense of unique consciousness in every spiritual being. Jesus, for example, has a different personality and consciousness than Mother Mary or Gautama Buddha. What this implies is that lifestreams, whether they be human or heavenly, have a unique consciousness that makes them individuals. All share the characteristics of consciousness, but the expression of that consciousness is unique as is the form through which the consciousness is expressed.

What makes the difference in the expression of consciousness is the unique character of the spirit or soul of the being. All the characteristics of goodwill are contained in God’s consciousness, and the spirits and souls created by God possess one or more of these characteristics of goodness. Consciousness, like life, seems to exist in many environments and

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<sup>13</sup> A simple Google search of “communicating with spirits” comes up with more than 3 million hits. For example, a Pew Poll found in 2009 that “about half of the U.S. public (49%) says they have had a religious or mystical experience.” See, Russell Heimlich, “Mystical Experiences,” Pew Research Center, December 29, 2009, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2009/12/29/mystical-experiences/>.

dimensions, although the forms they take vary enormously. In a general sense, it appears that consciousness and life are nearly always connected if consciousness and life are defined broadly enough.

Evidence that a large percentage of people believe in a spiritual side of existence is reflected in Pew Research Center polls carried out over the years. For example, a 2012 study found: “Worldwide, more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group.”<sup>14</sup> A 2017 study found that in recent years there has been a trend in the United States towards more people considering themselves “spiritual but not religious”<sup>15</sup> This is an indication that people have a strong sense of spirituality even if they are not religious per se.<sup>16</sup>

Many examples of the widespread belief in individual life and consciousness in spiritual realms can be found. For example, the Catholic Church stipulates that, before an individual can be declared a saint, the person in the afterlife must perform one or more miracles, that is, intercede spiritually in the affairs of man.<sup>17</sup> Much of the New Age Movement in the United States and other countries is based on the belief that individual ascended masters in heaven can communicate with people on Earth,<sup>18</sup> while the Theosophical Society and other organizations

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<sup>14</sup> “The Global Religious Landscape,” Pew Research Center, December 18, 2012,

<https://www.pewforum.org/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/>.

<sup>15</sup> “About a quarter of U.S. adults (27%) now say they think of themselves as spiritual but not religious.” See, Michael Lipka and Claire Gecewicz, “More Americans now say they’re spiritual but not religious,” Pew Research Center, September 6, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/06/more-americans-now-say-theyre-spiritual-but-not-religious/>.

<sup>16</sup> As explained by the website *researchgate*: “Religiosity is the condition of being excessively religious, whereas spirituality relates to the condition of being concerned with matters of the human spirit (or soul) as opposed to the material. Religion or religiousness can be considered a form of spirituality but spirituality per se is a broader concept.”

[https://www.researchgate.net/post/what\\_is\\_the\\_difference\\_between\\_religiosity\\_and\\_spirituality#:~:text=Religiosity%20is%20the%20condition%20of,se%20is%20a%20broader%20concept](https://www.researchgate.net/post/what_is_the_difference_between_religiosity_and_spirituality#:~:text=Religiosity%20is%20the%20condition%20of,se%20is%20a%20broader%20concept).

<sup>17</sup> See, Fr. William Saunders, “The Process of Becoming a Saint,” Catholic Education Resource Center, <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-process-of-becoming-a-saint.html>.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, The Summit Lighthouse, <https://www.summitlighthouse.org/>.

have passed on the esoteric traditions of East and West dating back thousands of years.<sup>19</sup>

Mysticism, including communication with spiritual beings, continues in modern societies as it has in centuries past.<sup>20</sup>

Without trying to evaluate here the merits of all these experiences and traditions, they commonly point to the existence of a spiritual dimension that interacts with the normal consciousness of people and the four dimensional world in which we live our everyday lives. The sheer volume of the experiences suggests that people naturally have a sense of spirituality and that our minds have an innate ability to deal with spiritual dimensions.<sup>21</sup> Many scientists believe that human beings may be “hard wired” to believe in spirituality.<sup>22</sup>

From these studies and recorded experiences, I have concluded that human beings have both a physical and a spiritual side to their existence, and that any study of consciousness ought to view that subject from these two perspectives. The perspectives can be analyzed separately; however, there also should be consideration of how the two sides of human nature are seamlessly integrated in one’s consciousness.

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<sup>19</sup> Scholars in recent years have been quite interested in the development of esoteric traditions. For an introduction to the subject, with extensive references, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Some Remarks on the Study of Western Esotericism,” <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Hanegraaff.html>. On Theosophy specifically, see Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, eds., *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (Boston: Brill, 2013).

<sup>20</sup> See, Jess Hollenback, *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> A great deal of neuroscientific investigation has been devoted to the issue of how people handle spirituality in their lives. For an overview of some of the work by neuroscientist Andrew Newberg and others, see Lynne Blumberg, “What Happens to the Brain During Spiritual Experiences?” *The Atlantic*, June 5, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/what-happens-to-brains-during-spiritual-experiences/361882/>.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, a report on global research on this issue: “Humans ‘predisposed’ to believe in gods and the afterlife,” *Science Daily*, July 14, 2011, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/07/110714103828.htm>.



## Psychology and Consciousness

Author Kristian Marlow writes that psychological theories of consciousness tend to be based on a physicalism or a dualism perspective.<sup>23</sup>

*Physicalism* is the theory that consciousness is entirely physical. One group (the *identity theorists*) within this school argues that consciousness is nothing but an arrangement of atoms in the brain. Another group (the *functionalists*) hold that consciousness can be explained by the function it plays within the brain, with the brain being viewed as a biological computer.

*Dualism* is the theory that consciousness cannot be entirely explained by what occurs in the physical brain. One group (*Cartesian dualists*) believes that there are both physical and non-physical substances and that consciousness is a non-physical substance. Another group (*property dualists*) believes that neural activity has both physical and non-physical properties, and that non-physical properties include consciousness.

Within property dualism, there are several schools of thought on the source of consciousness. One school (*fundamentalism*) holds that consciousness is a basic property of the universe, like electromagnetism, which can interact with and influence physical matter but is itself not physical matter. Another school (*panpsychism*) believes that the universe has consciousness at its base and that, therefore, all aspects of the universe have some element of consciousness associated with it. *Emergent property dualism* considers consciousness to be a property that emerges from particular types of physical arrangements of matter but which acts in ways different from what could be predicted given the arrangements of the matter's physical properties. Another school, *neutral monist property dualism*, argues that physical and conscious

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<sup>23</sup> For an interesting discussion of how many modern psychologists view consciousness, see Kristian Marlow, "What is Consciousness? Philosophy behind the mind," *Psychology Today*, March 1, 2013, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201303/what-is-consciousness>. The definitions used in this discussion come from the Marlow article.

properties are both dependent on some more basic level of reality not yet defined or understood.

Marlow concludes:

“So which theory wins? Dualism or physicalism? It depends on who you ask. Many empirical researchers are hardcore physicalists, but not all are. The answer to this question will require more insight into the fundamental structure of our physical world. It might turn out that a really consistent theory of physics could lead us to understand exactly what consciousness is. But it might not. Consciousness might forever remain a mystery.”

We will return to this mystery a little later in the book. But right now let’s look at another mystery: the definition of life and whether life is always connected to consciousness.

## Chapter 3: Life and Consciousness

One of the intriguing mysteries of consciousness is how it is linked to life, the existence of which remains a puzzle to scientists because its horizons continuously expand as the instruments of science become more powerful and better able to explore the universe around us.

### Characteristics of Living Things

Although defined somewhat differently, there are certain characteristics of what comprises a living thing. Compiled from several sources, these characteristics include:<sup>24</sup> order, reproduction, growth and development, regulation, homeostasis, energy processing, complex chemistry, built of structures called cells, pass their traits onto their offspring through DNA, organized at different levels of organization, adapt and evolve in response to their environment, respond to stimuli, convert food into energy, respire, and move.

These are all physical traits and processes found in life on Earth; none seems to address consciousness as a characteristic of living things. Whether these physical traits and processes are true for life on other planets is unknown at this time. The approach often taken by scientists to narrow their search for life on other planets is to look “for a specific set of circumstances and chemicals to come together in the right place, at the right time.” According to London’s Natural History Museum, the components being searched for – none of which include consciousness – are:<sup>25</sup>

1. *Water*: an essential requirement for life on Earth because it functions as a solvent, capable of dissolving substances and enabling key chemical reactions in animal, plant, and microbial cells.

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<sup>24</sup> Taken from Google search for “characteristics of life,” which results in many similar lists.

<sup>25</sup> “Eight ingredients for life in space,” The Natural History Museum (London), <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/eight-ingredients-life-in-space.html>.

2. *Carbon*: the simple building block that organisms need to form organic compounds such as proteins, carbohydrates, and fats; a major part of all living organisms.
3. *Nitrogen*: complex proteins required for life are built up from smaller compounds called amino acids – simple organic compounds that contain nitrogen; also needed to make DNA and RNA, the carriers of the genetic code for life on Earth; bacteria can convert nitrogen from the atmosphere into a form that is used in living cells.
4. *Phosphorus*: a key component of adenosine triphosphate (ATP), which transports chemical energy around the body's cells, powering nearly every cellular process that requires energy; a vital element in cell membranes that controls the movement of substances in and out of the cells; necessary to create DNA and RNA; acts like glue in DNA, so the bodies of living organisms would not work without it.
5. *Sulphur*: part of most biochemical processes on Earth, and most enzymes cannot function without it; a component of many vitamins and hormones; in the absence of oxygen and light, it is possible to use sulphur as an energy source such as used by extremophiles.
6. *Luck*: enough of the right chemicals to support a vast abundance of life sufficient for survivors to flourish after major catastrophes have wiped out many species.
7. *Time*: development of complex life from single-celled organisms takes billions of years, and there is no known shortcut.
8. *Location*: just the right distance from the sun.

Scientists looking for life beyond Earth are not only focusing on the possibility of intelligent life but also extremophiles, which are organisms discovered on Earth that survive in environments once thought not to be able to sustain life. These extreme environments include

intense heat, highly acidic environments, extreme pressure, and extreme cold.<sup>26</sup> The existence of these simple lifeforms which are able to exist in extreme conditions on Earth would seem to imply that such lifeforms may also exist on other planets. Some of the specific signs astronomers are looking for include the presence of water, carbon, nitrogen, and sulphur. These components of life, and even complex molecules, have been found in meteorites.<sup>27</sup>

### Life beyond Earth

Given the size and age of the universe, there seems to be a good chance of life existing elsewhere than on Earth. There are an estimated 100 billion to 200 billion galaxies in the universe. Within our galaxy (the Milky Way), there are estimated 100 billion planets, with some 300 million of these possibly having the right ingredients for life.<sup>28</sup> However, given the unique evolutionary history of the planet Earth,<sup>29</sup> there is strong reason to doubt that life on other systems of worlds – especially humanlike creatures – will be duplicates of what we find here.

The age of the universe is also a factor to consider when calculating the possibility of life beyond Earth, whose age is estimated to be 4.54 billion years old, plus or minus about 50 million years.<sup>30</sup> The age of the universe has been calculated by NASA's Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) and the European Space Agency's Planck spacecraft. In 2012, the

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<sup>26</sup> For a description of extremophiles, see, "What Are Extremophiles?" Las Cumbres Observatory, <https://lco.global/spacebook/astrobiology/what-are-extremophiles/>.

<sup>27</sup> Examples of these recent discoveries can be found in Ashley Strickland, "Ingredients for life found in meteorites that crashed to Earth," *CNN*, January 11, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/11/world/meteorites-organic-matter-life/index.html>; and "First Detection of Sugars in Meteorites Gives Clues to Origin of Life," NASA, *Astrobiology*, November 18, 2019, <https://www.nasa.gov/press-release/goddard/2019/sugars-in-meteorites>.

<sup>28</sup> "Scientists Pinpoint How Many Planets in the Milky Way Could Host Life," *Inverse*, October 30, 2020, <https://www.inverse.com/science/how-many-planets-host-life>.

<sup>29</sup> There have been five mass extinction events on Earth, resulting in the extinction of the vast majority of species of life on the planet and giving rise to the opportunity for other species to thrive – e.g., the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction of 65 million years ago killed off 76% of all life, including the dinosaurs, allowing the evolution of mammals on Earth. See, "Timeline Of Mass Extinction Events On Earth," <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-timeline-of-the-mass-extinction-events-on-Earth.html>.

<sup>30</sup> "Age of the Earth," *National Geographic*, [https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-age-Earth/?q=&page=1&per\\_page=25](https://www.nationalgeographic.org/topics/resource-library-age-Earth/?q=&page=1&per_page=25).

WMAP estimated the age of the universe to be 13.772 billion years, with an uncertainty of 59 million years. In 2013, Planck measured the age of the universe at 13.82 billion years.<sup>31</sup> Time itself is said to have begun with the Big Bang's release of the cosmic microwave background radiation which our instruments use to determine the age of the universe. However, cosmologists have postulated, based on the string theory and similar theories, that the Big Bang may only be the latest in a series of expanding and collapsing universes. In other words, while the age of our current universe is estimated to be about 13.7—13.8 billion years, there is no scientific consensus as to how old the universe actually is.

### Evolution and Consciousness

Since life on any planet is related to the planet's age and circumstances, the role of evolution also is important to consider in discussions of consciousness and life. Evolution equals change, and change is observably one of the constants in the universe. The role of evolution in biology is a well-studied field, with hundreds of books and articles written about evolution.<sup>32</sup> Biological evolution occurs through such mechanisms as natural selection, random genetic drift, mutation, population mating structure, and culture.<sup>33</sup> However, the term “evolution” can apply to consciousness as well, since its characteristics and attributes change across species and within the members of species – especially humans, where degrees of consciousness are often

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<sup>31</sup> See, “How Old is the Universe?” *Space.com*, June 7, 2017, <https://www.space.com/24054-how-old-is-the-universe.html>.

<sup>32</sup> For a good overview of biological evolution, see the online course “Understanding Evolution,” offered by the University of California Museum of Paleontology, [https://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/evo\\_01](https://evolution.berkeley.edu/evolibrary/article/evo_01).

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of these mechanisms, see Gregory Carey, “Chapter 13: The Five Forces Behind Human Evolution,” *Human Genetics for the Social Sciences* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2002), [http://psych.colorado.edu/~carey/hgss/hgsschapters/HGSS\\_Chapter13.pdf](http://psych.colorado.edu/~carey/hgss/hgsschapters/HGSS_Chapter13.pdf).

measurable in such fields as health care.<sup>34</sup> Levels of consciousness within a spiritual context, which are more difficult to measure scientifically, will be discussed later in this book.

The process of biological evolution can be seen in comparisons between human beings and other species. The *Homo sapiens* species of modern human beings is only one of an estimated 8.7 million species (give or take 1.3 million) on the planet today. Approximately 99.9 percent of all species ever to live on the planet are now extinct. Modern humans have been around for approximately 300,000 years.<sup>35</sup> The earliest life forms we know of were microscopic organisms (microbes) which lived about 3.7 billion years ago.<sup>36</sup>

What makes man's physical or cognitive features unique among other species, such as animals? According to scientists and animal-behavior researchers, it is difficult to distinguish that difference.<sup>37</sup> Mankind and animals share, for example, the crafting and use of tools, imitation, a sense of culture, memory, navigation, a sense of self-awareness, language, a sense of altruism, and understanding that others have knowledge and beliefs different from one's own.

In many of these areas, mankind have a much greater degree of perception and mastery; however, some animals have abilities that exceed that of humans in a particular sense or behavior related mostly to survival in their environment. What perhaps makes mankind unique among

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of levels of consciousness within health care, see Suzie C. Tindall, "Chapter 57: Level of Consciousness," in *Clinical Methods: The History, Physical, and Laboratory Examinations*, 3rd edition, Butterworth Publishers, 1990, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK380/>.

<sup>35</sup> See, "How Many Species on Earth? 8.7 Million, Says New Study," *United Nations Environment Programme News Center*, August 24, 2011, <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2649&ArticleID=8838>; Smithsonian Institute, "Extinction," part of "Foundational Concepts" in *Paleobiology*, [http://paleobiology.si.edu/geotime/main/foundation\\_life4.html](http://paleobiology.si.edu/geotime/main/foundation_life4.html); and "300,000 year-old 'early Homo sapiens' sparks debate over evolution," *arstechnica*, June 11, 2017, <https://arstechnica.com/science/2017/06/300000-year-old-early-homo-sapiens-sparks-debate-over-evolution/>.

<sup>36</sup> Age determined from signals from microbes consisting of a type of carbon molecule that is produced by all living things. See, "Early Life on Earth – Animal Origins," Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, <https://naturalhistory.si.edu/education/teaching-resources/life-science/early-life-Earth-animal-origins>.

<sup>37</sup> See, Alexandra Horowitz, "Are humans unique?" *Psychology Today*, July 14, 2009, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/minds-animals/200907/are-humans-unique>.

animals is his power of integration, reason, analysis, creativity, scientific understanding, theoretical conceptualization, and profound sense and articulation of spirituality. These qualities, while present in embryonic form in other animals and thus seemingly part of the evolution of life in general, are in mankind highly developed and integrated in human consciousness.

The evolution of human life can be traced in part through DNA. According to the Smithsonian Institute: “Due to billions of years of evolution, humans share genes with all living organisms.”<sup>38</sup> For example, research conducted by the National Human Genome Research Institute found that “about 60 percent of genes are conserved between fruit flies and humans, meaning that the two organisms appear to share a core set of genes. Two-thirds of human genes known to be involved in cancer have counterparts in the fruit fly.”<sup>39</sup> Other research has determined that about 25 percent of human genes are shared with a grain of rice,<sup>40</sup> and bonobos and chimpanzees share 98.9 percent and 98.5 percent of their DNA with humans, respectively.<sup>41</sup>

What this research is showing is that all life on Earth – human to the most simple – share a considerable amount of DNA and other genetic material, as well as the elements and molecules mentioned earlier that comprise the essential components of life on this and perhaps other planets.

While the evolution of physical life can be traced with a relatively high degree of accuracy, the evolution of consciousness is more difficult to map out, even though, as we have seen, consciousness nearly always is found as an attribute of life. Thus far, one of the most

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<sup>38</sup> See, “Genetics,” in Human Evolution Evidence, <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/genetics>.

<sup>39</sup> See, “Comparative Genomics,” National Human Genome Research Institute, November 3, 2015, <https://www.genome.gov/11509542/comparative-genomics-fact-sheet/>.

<sup>40</sup> See, “Genes Are Us. And Them.” *National Geographic*, March 2017, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/07/125-explore/shared-genes>.

<sup>41</sup> See, “Most genetically similar animal to humans,” <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-genetically-similar-animal-to-humans/>.



promising models of describing the process of evolving consciousness can be found in the SOM model of consciousness developed by J. Shashi Kiran Reddy and others. As we might recall from earlier in this book, the SOM model is a theory “based on the degree of subjectivity/subjectiveness a living species would naturally embrace. It propounds consciousness as a kind of evolutionary trait. [It conjectures that] the development of certain degree and level of complexity in a living system during the process of evolution calls for an emergence of a qualitative property (like consciousness) for better survival and optimal functioning. This provides a scale to estimate the level of consciousness and the extent of subjective experience of life across the wide living spectra.”<sup>42</sup> In spite of the usefulness of the SOM model in describing the evolution of consciousness on Earth, it does not account for the multidimensional – including spiritual – aspects of consciousness, a subject to which we now turn.

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<sup>42</sup> J. Shashi Kiran Reddy, Abstract of “A Novel Subject-Object Model of Consciousness,” *NeuroQuantology* 15(1), April 2017, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315660944\\_A\\_Novel\\_Subject-Object\\_Model\\_of\\_Consciousness](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315660944_A_Novel_Subject-Object_Model_of_Consciousness).

## Chapter 4: Multidimensional Aspects of Consciousness

### Number of Dimensions

Dimensions are what we perceive to be reality. So, how many dimensions are there? The three spatial dimensions – length, width, and depth – define the objects we normally see in our universe. Time is considered to be the fourth dimension. Those who pursue quantum theories speculate that many more dimensions must exist to explain what happens at the sub-atomic level of existence. For example, Brane cosmology postulates that there are 26 dimensions of the universe.<sup>43</sup> Scientists who adhere to the Superstring Theory also postulate several dimensions beyond time and space.<sup>44</sup> Using Superstring Theory, one author describes ten dimensions of reality as being:<sup>45</sup>

- The three dimensions of length, width, and depth of all objects in our universe (the x, y, and z axes, respectively).
- The fourth dimension of time, which governs the properties of all known matter at any given point.
- The fifth dimension would enable us to see a world slightly different from our own that would give us a means of measuring the similarity and differences between our world and other possible ones.

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<sup>43</sup> A useful article attempting to explain the dimensions associated with the various quantum theories, string theories, and brane cosmology is Donovan Mason, “The Physics of Everything: Understanding Superstring Theory,” *Futurism*, September 10, 2015, <https://futurism.com/brane-science-complex-notions-of-superstring-theory/>. A more scientific explanation can be found in E. Papantonopoulos, “Brane Cosmology,” Lectures presented at the First Aegean Summer School on Cosmology, Samos, September 2001, <https://cds.cern.ch/record/537760/files/0202044.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> According to Wikipedia’s definition: “Superstring theory is an attempt to explain all of the particles and fundamental forces of nature in one theory by modeling them as vibrations of tiny supersymmetric strings.”

<sup>45</sup> See, Matt Williams, “A universe of 10 dimensions,” *Universe Today*, December 11, 2014, <https://phys.org/news/2014-12-universe-dimensions.html>.

- The sixth dimension would enable us to see a plane of possible worlds that start with the Big Bang. In Superstring Theory, if you could master the fifth and sixth dimension, you could travel back in time or go to different futures.
- The seventh dimension would give us access to possible worlds that start with different initial conditions than that of the Big Bang.
- The eighth dimension enables us to see a plane of these various possible universes, each of which begins with different initial conditions and which branch out infinitely.
- The ninth dimension enables us to compare all the possible universe histories, with all the different possible laws of physics and initial conditions.
- The tenth dimension enables us to comprehend everything possible and imaginable.

Interestingly, neuroscientists and research mathematicians have shown that the human brain can function in up to eleven dimensions. According to a June 2017 article in *Cosmos*:<sup>46</sup>

“The Blue Brain Project’s principal research tool is a detailed digital model of the neocortex, which was completed in 2015. The neocortex is responsible for the brain’s higher-level activities.

“The project team uses mathematical approaches to interrogate the ways neurons interact in the digital brain tissue – and then experiment on real tissue to test their findings.

“In the latest research mathematicians Kathryn Hess and Ran Levi used a complex approach known as algebraic topology to investigate how neocortical neurons operate when stimulated.

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew Masterson, “How your brain works in 11 dimensions,” *Cosmos*, June 13, 2017, <https://cosmosmagazine.com/mathematics/how-your-brain-works-in-11-dimensions>. The scientific paper explaining the mathematical model of this may be found here: Michael W. Reimann, et al., “Cliques of Neurons Bound into Cavities Provide a Missing Link between Structure and Function,” *frontiers in Computational Neuroscience*, June 12, 2017, <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fncom.2017.00048/full>.

“Algebraic topology is like a telescope and microscope at the same time. It can zoom into networks to find hidden structures – the trees in the forest – and see the empty spaces – the clearings – all at the same time,” explains Hess.

“The results were astounding. They revealed that while cells in every other organ in the body work in four dimensions – three spatial, and the fourth being time – the brain works routinely in seven and sometimes up to eleven.”

One point of interest here is that all of these dimensions are in some way associated with matter and energy. Exactly how many dimensions there are, and why there are contradictions between the physics of the macro world of the largest spatial things and micro world of the smallest are not yet fully understood.<sup>47</sup>

### Spiritual Dimensions

None of these dimensions include the spiritual aspects of man. Various spiritualists and religious thinkers speculate on there being at least thirteen spiritual dimensions.<sup>48</sup> Human beings in their practical interaction with reality mostly perceive the four dimensions of length, depth, width, and time. Yet many of us have experienced insightful dreams, déjà vu, the sense of being watched or hunted, a precognition of danger, intuition, and spiritual experiences of all sorts. It would appear that we have spiritual senses that are attuned to spiritual dimensions.

One of the reasons science has not embraced the factor of spirituality in human consciousness is that it is difficult to determine a cause and effect relationship in spiritual investigations. For centuries, the law of cause and effect was viewed as being the key to logical

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<sup>47</sup> Reconciling the differences between the very huge and the very tiny has been a key research question pursued by many. For an interesting article describing how this reconciliation might occur through theories of emergence and reductionism, see Robbert Dijkgraaf, “To Solve the Biggest Mystery in Physics, Join Two Kinds of Law,” *Quantamagazine*, September 7, 2017, <https://www.quantamagazine.org/to-solve-the-biggest-mystery-in-physics-join-two-kinds-of-law-20170907/>.

<sup>48</sup> As an example of attempts to explain the various spiritual dimensions, see “Understanding the Dimensions,” [http://www.patrickcrusade.org/UNDERSTANDING\\_DIMENSIONS.html](http://www.patrickcrusade.org/UNDERSTANDING_DIMENSIONS.html).

analysis and thus fundamental to the understanding of the order thought to be found throughout nature. The Hebrew, Babylonian, Greek, and European cultures all embraced the law of causality as being true, although certain Greek philosophers did introduce the concept of random or chance events. It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the introduction of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle that chance began to occupy mainstream scientific thought. The debate between chance and cause continues today, with no consensus yet emerging.<sup>49</sup>

### Order and Randomness in the Universe

From observation, it is clear that most people would prefer order to chaos in their lives. Mankind in general perceives events and then mentally orders these events into meaningful patterns. The human preference for an orderly universe is also reflected in the models of reality which underlie such things as mathematics, logic, and cause and effect sequences which enable mankind to function more efficiently in the world – perhaps as an enhanced tool of the survival instinct. Yet, when something occurs that is extraordinary and disruptive to human life, then the human species has shown a remarkable ability to adjust their paradigm of reality to accommodate the new perspective into a more complex – and usually rational – picture of the universe in which we live. In other words, the paradigm most people live by – that is, the view of reality which they hold in their minds and through which they order things in their lives – is only a temporary stage on which people live their lives as predictably as possible.

One controversial topic within the subject of causality is whether absolute randomness is possible.<sup>50</sup> This is relevant to consciousness, because the moral law of cause and effect implies

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<sup>49</sup> For a strong argument in favor of causality, see, David L. Bergman and Glen C. Collins, “The Law of Cause and Effect: Dominant Principle of Classical Physics,” [http://www.commonsscience.org/pdf/articles/law\\_of\\_cause\\_and\\_effect\\_fos\\_v7n3\\_causality.pdf](http://www.commonsscience.org/pdf/articles/law_of_cause_and_effect_fos_v7n3_causality.pdf). For an interesting discussion on causality versus chance, see the exchanges on “Can an event occur without a cause?” *Physics Forums*, <https://www.physicsforums.com/threads/can-an-event-occur-without-a-cause.333180/>.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example, a presentation of an experiment “proving” randomness and the long and intensely debated public comment on the procedures and results: “Do physicists really believe in true randomness?” *Ask a*

that individual decisions are the responsibility of the individual. In the normal course of events, people make decisions deliberately based on evidence, reason, and precedents, but they also make decisions based on influences unknown even to themselves – such as bias, instinct, or influence from another person. As we become more aware of ourselves and our environment, however, the relationships between our decisions and their determinants become clearer. Think of a lightning strike: what appears at first to be random is in reality determined by imbalance in electrical charges. Or, as another example, consider a multidimensional pool table. On a given plane, the sequence of balls striking each other and moving across the table is clear. However, if the movement of balls occur on tables in different dimensions and the balls are able to cross those dimensions, then what we might see on our table appears often to be random. Yet, from the perspective of the whole multidimensional game, it is all logical and based on cause and effect.

So it is with understanding the cause and effect of decisions and their moral consequences: the more we are aware of our consciousness, the greater our accountability for decisions, because we see larger causal relationships. A child is not normally judged by the same moral standards as an adult, because the adult is more aware of the consequences of his decision than is a child. As we expand our consciousness, then the range of what appears to be truly random can often decrease. The moral law of karma is explained by reincarnation, wherein the soul embodies over and over again, carrying the karmic returns from actions done in previous lifetimes into the present or the future. Events in a single lifetime can appear to be random, but may not be so.

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*Mathematician / Ask a Physicist*, <http://www.askamathematician.com/2009/12/q-do-physicists-really-believe-in-true-randomness/>.

## Levels of Consciousness

One example of how an understanding of consciousness expands is found in mental health fields such as psychiatry and psychology. Pioneers in the field such as Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung developed theories of levels of consciousness. Jung, for example, defined levels of consciousness as being:<sup>51</sup>

- Ego: conscious level; carries out daily activities; like Freud's Conscious
- Personal Unconscious: individual's thoughts, memories, wishes, impulses; like Freud's Preconscious + Unconscious
- Collective Unconscious: storehouse of memories inherited from the common ancestors of the whole human race; no counterpart in Freud's theory.

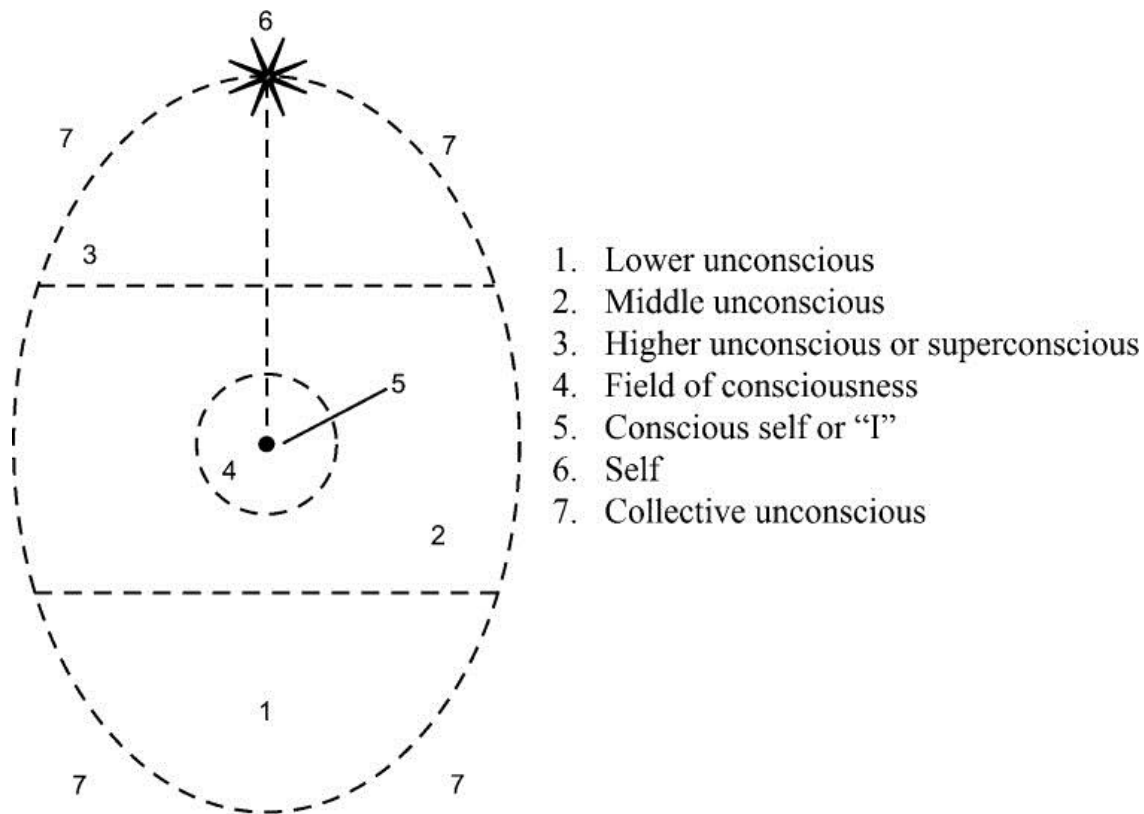
The concept of a superconsciousness emerged in the field of psychosynthesis psychology developed by Roberto Assagioli, a contemporary of Freud and Jung. He expanded upon the work of Freud and Jung to include other levels of human consciousness. Figure 2 is a replication of the Assagioli concept:<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> See, "The Jungian Model of the Psyche," *Journal Psyche*, <http://journalpsyche.org/jungian-model-psyche/>; and "Freud's Model of the Human Mind," *Journal Psyche*, <http://journalpsyche.org/understanding-the-human-mind/>.

<sup>52</sup> See, Catherine Ann Lombard, "Psychosynthesis: A Foundational Bridge Between Psychology and Spirituality," *Pastoral Psychology*, January 27, 2017, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5493721/>.

Figure 2: Assagioli's Levels of Human Consciousness



The existence of a superconscious (level 3) and a higher Self (level 6) has been extensively used by spiritual teachers, including Indian yogis and Western esoterics, to explain the human consciousness and to help unify the person into an integrated self capable of fulfilling his most noble potential and aspirations.<sup>53</sup> For example, the *Yogic Encyclopedia* says, “The superconscious mind rests above subconscious and conscious states. Whereas the subconscious induces dreams or sleep, superconsciousness does not involve the relaxation of energy downward in the body and mind. Rather, superconscious awareness uplifts the soul into a supremely peaceful and energetic state.”<sup>54</sup> The Summit Lighthouse is a good example of a

<sup>53</sup> For many examples, search Google for “superconsciousness”.

<sup>54</sup> *The Yogic Encyclopedia*, “Superconsciousness,” <https://www.ananda.org/yogapedia/superconsciousness/>.



Western esoteric tradition that integrates several elements of consciousness, with a focus on how an individual can discover and become the true self through the awakening of the superconsciousness. To achieve this goal, Summit teaching centers draw upon multiple spiritual paths and techniques developed by spiritual traditions found around the world.<sup>55</sup>

Yet another way to examine consciousness is from the perspective of the Divine Logos, the idea that behind all of creation is the Will of God made manifest through His Word. In this paradigm, God's consciousness is everywhere present and is indeed the underlying force that holds the universe together and from which all else proceeds. The Divine Logos paradigm is discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>55</sup> The gateway to the large volume of spiritual teachings available to the public through the Summit Lighthouse may be found here: <https://www.summitlighthouse.org/>. A link to the many consciousness-related publications offered by the Summit may be found at: <https://spiritualbooks.summitlighthouse.org/>. In the "Search" box, type "consciousness," and the publications will be listed.

## Chapter 4: Logos and Consciousness

Thus far, we have seen that consciousness is indeed a hard issue that cannot be completely explained from any of the perspectives examined: physical, psychological, multidimensional, or spiritual. The one theory we have not explored is the concept that consciousness is reality. Under this paradigm, it is consciousness that the mind uses to perceive and interpret reality. Reality in this sense is relative and always changing, as the mind and the self behind the mind changes its consciousness. In this paradigm, consciousness is shared by the chimpanzee and the human being – similar to sharing the elements of life on Earth and the electromagnetic forces enabling Earth to exist – albeit in different ways. Reality to the chimp and the human is different because their consciousness is different, that is, the part of consciousness used by the two species is different. So it would be with another species of life on a distant planet visited by a human being: the human being and the alien would both be using consciousness but using a different part of consciousness. In this paradigm, the origin of consciousness, the origin of reality, and the origin of cosmos itself, would be a Supreme Being, who willed the creation to begin its evolution through the words, “Let there be light,” an event scientists call the Big Bang. In this paradigm, God decided to use the word, or Logos, to create the cosmos as an expression of His consciousness of goodwill. It is the theoretical connection between God, free will, the Logos, and consciousness that we wish to explore in this chapter.

### Definitions and Short History of Logos

Logos has many definitions. The *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, for example, notes there are at least five philosophical definitions:<sup>56</sup>

- Rule or principle, especially in the sense of divine order

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<sup>56</sup> Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 518.

- Proposition, account, explanation, thesis, argument
- Reason, reasoning, the rational faculty, abstract theory, discursive reasoning
- Measure, relation, proportion, ratio
- Value, worth.

The common thread in these definitions is that logos implies a rational ordering of things. A large collection of references to logos from numerous philosophers from ancient times to the present can be found under the term “logos” in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. A few references and quotations from this selection include:

Heraclitus (Greek, around 500 BC): “Having harkened not to me but to the Word (Logos) it is wise to agree that all things are one.”<sup>57</sup>

Aristotle (Greek, 384-322 BC): “a definition is an account (logos) that signifies an essence.” In other words, logos is the essence of something, such as the essence of man or of a tiger.<sup>58</sup> Also, in Aristotle’s theories of rhetoric, logos is an intellectual argument in contradistinction to the character of the speaker (eros) or the emotional state of the listener (pathos).<sup>59</sup>

Plutarch (Greek, 45-120 AD): In Plutarch’s metaphysics, matter was originally in disorder but it was placed in order by God’s intellect and logos. For Plutarch, both the intellect and the logos are present in the world soul, which has a quality of goodness.<sup>60</sup>

Plotinus (204-269 AD): He postulated the existence of a self-thinking intellect of true being, totally unitary and simple, called the One. The reality of the One was followed by two lesser levels: Intelligence and Soul. Intelligence (logos) was non-temporal and held within itself

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<sup>57</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/heraclitus/>.

<sup>58</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-metaphysics/>.

<sup>59</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-rhetoric/>.

<sup>60</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plutarch/>.

the ideal forms of all things. The Soul was temporal and received the ideal forms from Intelligence as principles of reason. Man was said to reside in a three-dimensional world of matter as a receptacle for the unfolding of the Soul. Plotinus described a direct linkage between God and man. That linkage was individual virtue.<sup>61</sup>

Numenius (Greek living in Syria, 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD): Believed that all nations could share in knowledge of God's first principles of being through logos – i.e., God is identified with being and being can be understood through logos.<sup>62</sup>

Stoics (Greek school of philosophical thought begun in 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD and also followed in the Roman Empire): For the Stoics, Reason or logos (the essence of the world) underlies all things.<sup>63</sup>

John Scottus Eriugena (Irish, est. 800-877): Understood God's mind as being the logos, which contains in one undivided Form all the reasons for every individual thing. These reasons, in turn, produce the things of which they are the reasons. Infinite in number, none has priority over the other, like Being is not prior to Goodness, or vice-versa. These Causes flow out from themselves, bringing about their Effects. This outflowing process creates the whole universe.<sup>64</sup>

Tsongkhapa (Tibetan Buddhist, 1357-1419): Used the word *bodhicitta* to mean a universal, altruistic principle (like logos) to explain why a person with perfect intellect and powers of expression, such as the Buddha, would make statements that seem to contain contradictions.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See, "Neoplatonism," in Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 604-605.

<sup>62</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/numenius/>.

<sup>63</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pantheism/>. Stoicism was founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, and later practiced by the likes of Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius. See, <https://dailystoic.com/what-is-stoicism-a-definition-3-stoic-exercises-to-get-you-started/>.

<sup>64</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scottus-eriugena/>.

<sup>65</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/tsongkhapa/>.

Paul Natorp (German, 1854-1924): The “logos” of science means “objectivity.” Here, logos means the essence of something.<sup>66</sup>

Martin Heidegger (German, 1889-1976): Argued that logos gathers up Being and makes it accessible to us.<sup>67</sup>

Paul Ricoeur (French, 1913-2005): Believed human beings were able to communicate with each other through our use of the logos, which seeks to transcend our localized points of view.<sup>68</sup>

A short history of the term “logos” is also useful in defining the essence of its meaning. According to the editors of *Encyclopædia Britannica*,<sup>69</sup>

“...in Greek philosophy and theology, [logos, plural logoi is] the divine reason implicit in the cosmos, ordering it and giving it form and meaning. Though the concept defined by the term logos is found in Greek, Indian, Egyptian, and Persian philosophical and theological systems, it became particularly significant in Christian writings and doctrines to describe or define the role of Jesus Christ as the principle of God active in the creation and the continuous structuring of the cosmos and in revealing the divine plan of salvation to man. It thus underlies the basic Christian doctrine of the preexistence of Jesus.”

The *Encyclopædia Britannica* article goes on to explain that the idea of the logos in Greek thought originated mostly likely with the philosopher Heracleitus (6<sup>th</sup> century BC), who discerned in cosmos a process of logos similar to the reasoning power in man. Stoic philosophers of the Zeno of Citium (4<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) school of thought, further defined logos as the active

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<sup>66</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natorp/>.

<sup>67</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/levinas/>.

<sup>68</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ricoeur/>.

<sup>69</sup> “Logos: Philosophy and Theology,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/logos>.

rational and spiritual principle permeating all of reality. They called the logos providence, nature, god, and the soul of the universe. Philo of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> century AD) taught that the logos was the intermediary between God and the cosmos, being “both the agent of creation and the agent through which the human mind can apprehend and comprehend God.” Many of the Platonist philosophers considered the logos to be both operating in the world and at the same time being the transcendent divine mind.

In the Gospel according to John, Jesus Christ is identified as “the Word” (logos) made flesh. In the New International Version (NIV) of the *Bible*, John 1:1-5 records:

“1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
2. He was with God in the beginning. 3. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

The term “Word” in Greek is logos. Hence, in Christianity, the Word (identified as being Jesus Christ) is with God and is God, since the Intellect is the mediating principle between the One and the Many. The early Christian Fathers stated that Christ as the preexistent logos reveals the Father to mankind, is the divine reason which the whole human race shares, and is the divine will and word by which the worlds were framed. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a so-called “long version” of the *Theology of Aristotle*, an Arabic version of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, postulated a logos or “word” that mediates between God and the first intellect.<sup>70</sup>

### Logos and Conceptualizations of God

From these and other reflections on logos, it is apparent that logos has often been associated with conceptions of God, especially in the sense of identifying God’s rationality as

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<sup>70</sup> See, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/theology-aristotle/>.

being one of the underlying principles of creation. In most cases, logos is not God per se, rather an attribute of God that creates all things, links all things, and sustains all things. The logos, then, can be inferred as the Mind of God in action, the means by which all of creation is ordered. It is believed that man, being a creation of God and possessed with soul and free will, can use reason to bring order to his own affairs and be a creator in the domains under his authority, such as on Earth. The logos is also presented to be a path for man back to God, as he aligns his free will with the Will of the Creator.

If logos is the logic or reasoning power God uses in initiating the creation, there is another part of God, the illogical and unbridled energy and unformatted particles of matter, that God draws together to form the universe in its varied dimensions. This is like the Alpha and Omega sides of God, matter and anti-matter, energy and dark energy – parts of the polarity of the singularity that is the integrated essence of God. There is, in other words, both an orderliness and a randomness within the consciousness of God which together allow the universe not only to follow certain laws of nature but also to transcend and bypass those laws in ways that contribute to diversification and evolution outside normal channels.<sup>71</sup>

This understanding of God's polarity is reflected in the first chapter of the *Tao Te Ching* of Lao Tzu (Chinese philosopher from 6<sup>th</sup> century BC). It says in one translation:

“Tao (The Way) that can be spoken of is not the Constant Tao.

The name that can be named is not a Constant Name.

Nameless, is the origin of Heaven and Earth;

The named is the Mother of all things.

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<sup>71</sup> Some of this non-expected activity has been seen in quantum mechanics and some in the processes of evolution itself. For examples of the latter, see John Tyler Bonner, *Randomness in Evolution* (Princeton University Press, 2013).

Thus, the constant void enables one to observe the true essence.

The constant being enables one to see the outward manifestations.

These two come paired from the same origin.

But when the essence is manifested,

It has a different name.

This same origin is called ‘The Profound Mystery.’

As profound the mystery as It can be,

It is the Gate to the essence of all life.”<sup>72</sup>

This concept of the duality of God in Chinese Taoist philosophy is almost identical to the understanding of some Neoplatonist philosophers and some Buddhist sects. What they all share in common is the role of logos in the differentiation from the Oneness of God to the myriad aspects of the universe which is the reality in which we all live and function. In Hinduism, there are the traditions of Advaita-Vedanta, wherein man is believed to be one with God and can realize that unity through meditation and other exercises, and Dvaita-Vedanta, where the soul of man is separate from God but can be united with God at the time of the ending of one’s reincarnations.<sup>73</sup> Christianity is somewhat similar to Dvaita-Vedanta, with the added element of the logos (or Word of God personified in Jesus) which enables man by grace to enter into a state of oneness with God.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> See, [http://www.with.org/tao\\_te\\_ching\\_en.pdf](http://www.with.org/tao_te_ching_en.pdf).

<sup>73</sup> Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* states, “Others, engaging in the yajna of cultivating knowledge, worship me by many methods. Some see me as undifferentiated oneness that is non-different from them, while others see me as separate from them. Still others worship me in the infinite manifestations of my cosmic form.” (Chapter 9, verse 15). See, <http://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/chapter/9/verse/15>. *Yajna* is a Vedic term meaning sacrifice or karma to achieve a certain blessing or state of awareness – e.g., a specific path (yoga) followed to achieve enlightenment in the Hindu tradition.

<sup>74</sup> For an interesting discussion of the Hindu and Christian traditions, see “What does it mean to be ‘one with God’?” at <http://www.thetruelight.net/booksections/articles/bookarticle14.htm>.



It might be useful at this point to consider how God is understood in the doctrines of the world's major religions, which include Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism.<sup>75</sup> Note that all of these religions have a mystical tradition as well, that is less concerned with doctrine than with having personal spiritual experiences, often with the aim of merging one's consciousness with the consciousness of the Creator.

- In Christianity, God is typically conceived of as a trinity with three personas: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, each of which is distinct yet all of which share the same essence.
- In Islam, God is frequently perceived in a monotheistic way, that is, as being the only God, incomprehensible to man and the creator of all things.
- In Judaism, God is generally understood as the absolute one, indivisible, and incomparable being who is the ultimate cause of all existence.
- In Hinduism, God is conceived of in many ways, according to the various schools of thought; generally, God is a universal spirit found in all people but which culminates in a Supreme Being who assumes various personas worshipped by the different schools of Hinduism.
- In Buddhism, an individualized God is often viewed as an illusion. The purpose of Buddhism is to free oneself from all conceptions of selfhood and to enter into a perpetual nirvana, or “transcendent state in which there is neither suffering, desire, nor sense of self, and the subject is released from the effects of karma and the cycle of death and rebirth.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> The summaries of these varying conceptions of God found in the major religions of the world is taken from “Conceptions of God,” in *Wikipedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptions\\_of\\_God](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conceptions_of_God).

<sup>76</sup> From *Oxford Languages*, as found in Google definitions in search for “what is nirvana.”

The world's major religions with their millions of followers have quite different perceptions of God and man's relationship to God. These range from God being personally involved in mankind's affairs, to being impersonal and unknowable to human beings, to being nonexistent as an individual Being. Similarly, the spiritual expectations of mankind differ, from seeking permanent perfection as an individual to deconstructing the sense of self completely.

One important point in considering these different interpretations of God is that most religious conceptions are based on ancient traditions. However, many of these traditional perceptions have been changed over the last thousand years as we have invented new technologies and methods of analysis to help us understand how the universe actually functions. This suggests to me that we ought to expand our conceptions of God to take into account these modern discoveries, which include insights into the size and composition of the universe, the quantum world of subatomic particles, the complexities of our bodies and psychology, and the probability of there being multiple dimensions of existence. If we expand our conceptions of God to include these modern insights, we might have a more accurate sense of the relationship between God, the universe, and humanity.

### Logos and Human Rationality

There is a certain order in the universe, in nature, in man, and presumably in God which can be discerned and used by human beings in their search for understanding. This fundamental orderliness is logos. The human mind uses logos in the form of rationality. However, rationality as a tool has its limitations because the mind tends to explain things rationally within a framework that the person accepts as reality. For example, in the Middle Ages it was common to use rationality to explain how the world functioned on a flat plane. In more modern times, rationality has been used to explain why it is impossible for life to exist on other planets. However, as mankind has found that the world is round, that it is not the center of the universe,

and that life is much more complex and adaptable than we had originally thought, our boundaries of rationality have expanded to include new theories such as relativity, quantum mechanics, and astrobiology.

Since logos encompasses order in the universe, its scale is much broader than human rationality. However, as new insights into the universe occur over time, the human mind can use the principles of logos to expand the horizons of human rationality, thereby opening up new subjects of inquiry and methods of analysis. There may always be certain aspects of the universe that defy human rational understanding; however, if we consciously try to expand the scope of our experiences and use our higher mind to employ the power of logos, we can steadily increase our comprehension of things ever further. There is almost no end to this process of expanding the boundaries of our understanding of reality – which in turn expands the scope of conscious awareness within our consciousness.

### Role of the Higher Mind

The higher mind plays an important role in this process of expanding man's perceptions of reality and his use of consciousness. The higher mind is a mental capability (some might call it part of the superconsciousness) that everyone possesses which enables them to integrate the various perceptions of reality within which each individual uniquely functions. The ability to use the higher mind increases as the individual gains experience in life. These changes occur all the time, as shown in the differences between the reality of a child and the reality of an adult. In truth, perceptions of reality change almost limitlessly as a person goes through this lifetime and perhaps others if reincarnation is true. These changes are natural and are part of the evolution of the soul as it gains in maturity over time.

The higher mind functions as an integrative faculty, absorbing knowledge from study, insights gleaned from intuition, inspiration received in prayer and meditation, observations using

one’s senses and instruments, and life’s experiences that accumulate along the way. The higher mind is able to take all of this information and process it through various levels of consciousness so that both understanding and a path forward can become clearer in outer awareness. This kind of integrative and even multidimensional processing of information is a natural capability of the human brain.

The cultivation of one’s higher mind and practice using it are important for individuals if they wish to realize more fully their potential as human beings. If someone wants to better align their will with the Will of God (as they understand it), then the steps in that process are fairly straightforward, as reflected in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Aligning Man and God’s Will through Creativity

<b>Stages of Creation</b>	<b>Steps in Creative Process</b>
1. Higher mind activity: self-centering to identify your best quality.	1. Get comfortable and think about your inner quality, the character of your soul, or your highest virtue.
2. Engaging the heart and best intentions: desiring to express that quality and determining what to do.	2. Having that virtue in mind, think about how its application might help to improve conditions of life for some person or group of people. Decide what you would like to do.
3. Use reason to create roadmap: planning how to actually create and deliver your goal.	3. Consider and select the best means by which to create and make this project a reality.
4. Preparation to begin: collecting what is needed to begin constructing your project.	5. Begin to assemble the parts and tools necessary to physically create or to implement the idea.
5. Create the object: physically or otherwise building your creation.	6. Carefully start the actual building, making adjustments and improving the quality of the construction along the way.
6. Deliver the final product: delivering your creation to its intended audience.	7. When the project is complete, deliver the product to its audience through the best means available.

This particular model of creativity aligns the will of God (to increase goodwill throughout His creation), the will of the soul (to express its character in the world), and the will

of the individual (to become his or her true self). The alignment between the will of God and the will of man centers on the common desire to increase goodness and goodwill through the free will choices of mankind. Individuals can use consciousness, logos, and the higher mind to link all of these components together in a way that is practical in time and space while also furthering the higher interests of mankind and advancing the will of God as the individual perceives it to be.

### Relationship between God and Man

One way to better understand the relationship between God and man is to view God as the Originator of Logos and to view mankind as one of the expressions of Logos, or individual logoi. As a logoi, mankind has some of the creative powers as God, powers that he can harness and use in free will decisions and creative expressions. The harmony and utility of man's creative expressions are at their finest when individuals use the character of their soul (or inner quality) as the inspirational model for their creative expression. In this way, every man's creations are reflective of his or her best character.

This concept is somewhat analogous to the Big Bang theory, in which everything in the universe originated from an explosion of energy that crystalized into different dimensions, matter, and types of energy and forces as the explosion flew out in all directions over time. Our bodies, it is said, is made up of the substance of stars.<sup>77</sup> Although I am not sure we can say that God's spirit "exploded" like the Big Bang, we can speculate that our spirits or souls are made up of the substance of God's spirit. Over billions of years, the chemicals, matter, and kinds of energy necessary to sustain life in form gradually appeared on planets like Earth.

Once life takes hold on a planet, then – if it can survive the various cataclysms that occur in geologic time – its forms can evolve in all kinds of directions, species after species, each of

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<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth Howell, "Humans Really Are Made of Stardust, and a New Study Proves It," *Space.com*, January 10, 2017, <https://www.space.com/35276-humans-made-of-stardust-galaxy-life-elements.html>.

which has its own type of consciousness. On Earth, we humans have evolved bodily and consciously to the point where we can use the power of rationality inherent in consciousness and logos to understand our origins and to create all kinds of marvelous things. There appears to be few limits on our creative opportunities as we learn how to use our higher mind. However, we ought never to forget our origins in God and to keep in mind that our best creations are those reflecting the character of our soul.

## Chapter 5: Summary and Concluding Remarks

This book has explored the role of consciousness in the interaction between God, man, and other parts of life. In one sense, if we agree that God exists and that God has consciousness, then consciousness is a basic property of the universe. From this perspective, it is likely to be impossible for a human being to understand consciousness in its entirety. However, if we focus on consciousness as it functions within man, then consciousness becomes more comprehensible if still incomplete. Even within this more limited scope of inquiry, the exploration of consciousness yields rich and amazing findings of relevance to mankind.

### Summary of Findings

As reflected in the research cited earlier, many insights into human consciousness can be found in theories from science, philosophy, and spiritual teachings. A few theories that I found especially interesting – if not always being completely true – were the following:

- The human brain is the origin of human consciousness; however, the brain is incapable of understanding itself so consciousness can never be understood.
- The Subject-Object Model (SOM) of consciousness proposes consciousness to be an evolutionary trait in which the development of certain degrees and levels of complexity in living systems during the processes of evolution calls for an emergence of consciousness for better survival and optimal functioning.
- There are spiritual aspects to consciousness, evidenced by out-of-body experiences, communications between mothers-to-be and their unconceived children, consciousness being transferred between species such as in mediumship, and large numbers of spiritual encounters recorded throughout history.
- Many theories about consciousness can be found in the science of psychology. Psychological theories of physicalism are based on the concept that consciousness is

entirely physical, with one school believing that consciousness is an arrangement of atoms in the brain and another school believing that consciousness can be explained by the function it plays within the brain, making it into something like a biological computer.

- Psychological theories of dualism are based on the concept that consciousness cannot be entirely explained by what occurs in the physical brain. One school of thought in dualism believes that there are both physical and non-physical substances and that consciousness is a non-physical substance. Another school believes that neural activity has both physical and non-physical properties, and that non-physical properties include consciousness.
- Several psychological theories are based on a non-physical explanation of consciousness. One school believes that consciousness is a basic property of the universe, like electromagnetism, which can interact with and influence physical matter but is itself not physical matter. Another school believes that all aspects of the universe have some element of consciousness associated with it. Yet another school believes that consciousness emerges from particular types of physical arrangements of matter. And another school of thought believes that physical and conscious properties are both dependent on some more basic level of reality not yet defined or understood.
- Since life and consciousness are closely related, there are several theories of the characteristics of life and the necessary components and conditions for life that are relevant to consciousness. Interestingly, almost all of these life theories are based on physical attributes of life with no mention of consciousness. While the evolution of physical life can be traced with a relatively high degree of accuracy on Earth, the



evolution of consciousness is much more opaque, even though consciousness of some sort nearly always is found as an attribute of life.

- Quantum theories have opened up the possibility of multiple dimensions, revealing new avenues of exploration into consciousness. Brane cosmology, for example, postulates a multidimensional universe with up to 26 different dimensions. If true, this implies that consciousness not only is associated with life in the four dimensions of length, width, depth, and time but also with many other dimensions as well. Theories of the processing power of the human brain in up to eleven dimensions lend credibility to the possibility that humans can function in a reality comprised of far more than the physical universe with which we normally interact with our senses of touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste.
- Theories about spiritual dimensions abound, although these theories often are ignored by scientists because spiritual matters are difficult to measure and duplicate in experimentation. Nonetheless, some spiritual thinkers have postulated up to 26 spiritual dimensions, and anecdotal evidence of there being a spiritual component of the universe is as ancient as mankind itself. For example, theories about universal, causal moral justice systems, such as karma and the accountability of man to God commonly found in religions, are based on a belief that consciousness accompanies the soul in and out of embodiment and thus transcends a purely physical explanation for consciousness.
- Many theories of consciousness exist in the science of psychiatry. Pioneers in the field such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and Roberto Assagioli developed various theories of levels of consciousness. Assagioli's model of consciousness includes levels such as superconscious and higher Self, which yogis and other spiritual teachers use to explain their non-physical concepts of consciousness.

- Theories explaining the relationship between God, the universe, and man often use the concept of Logos, or Divine Will, which assumes consciousness on a cosmic scale. Under these theories, consciousness is an attribute of God which – like matter expanding as a result of the cosmological Big Bang – is everywhere present as part of the fabric of the universe. God uses consciousness to communicate and implement His will. In this paradigm, where there is life there is consciousness. However, the range of consciousness varies depending upon the kind of species, and the various species use consciousness differently – for example, human beings use consciousness to implement their free will choices. Also, consciousness – since it is an attribute of God – pre-exists physical life and is found in all dimensions of existence. Consciousness, from this perspective, is a gateway that ties all of life and all dimensions together and which directly links God to His creation, including humanity.
- Finally, there is the theory that God is consciousness. One school of thought is that there is only God’s consciousness, and that is the sole reality of the universe. What we sense as separation between our consciousness and God’s consciousness is only an illusion. There is no such thing as free will, only different expressions of God’s consciousness. In other words, God is the Sole Doer in the universe. God uses consciousness to experience His creation, some say almost like a child. Another school of thought is that, while God uses consciousness to experience His creation, He does so through the free will He gives to souls and other forms of life. In this paradigm, God is the Supreme Observer in the universe. Within this paradigm, there are two ways of viewing God and His creation. One way is that God allows nature’s evolution and life’s free will choices to determine their own course of action in their separate domains. God may have a Plan for His creation, but

the degree to which that Plan is carried out depends on forces of evolution and free will. In this view, God observes but is rather impersonal. The other way is for God to be personally involved in assisting evolution and free will beings to fulfill God's Will and His Plan. God's Plan has goodness and goodwill at its heart, and He assists mankind in learning to make proper decisions by giving each soul a quality of God's own character to help guide its free will choices. God also institutes karma as a moral law universally applicable to mankind so that lessons from mistakes will be learned.

From these theories, I have selected a few which seem to resonate well with my own view of consciousness. These theoretical concepts include:

- The SOM model that proposes consciousness to be an evolutionary trait in which the development of complexity in living systems during evolution results in various types of consciousness emerging for the purpose of better survival and optimal functioning.
- There are both physical and spiritual aspects to consciousness. This theory is based on scientific evidence, advanced forms of mathematics on the potential role of the brain in the multidimensional functioning of consciousness, and the many spiritual experiences of individuals as reported over the centuries.
- Psychological theories based on the concept that consciousness cannot be entirely explained by what occurs in the physical brain, with different schools of thought postulating that consciousness is a basic property of the universe, that all aspects of the universe have some element of consciousness associated with it, and that physical and consciousness properties are both dependent on some more basic level of reality not yet understood by mankind.

- Quantum theories suggesting the existence of a multidimensional universe, with up to 26 dimensions based on Brane cosmology that open the possibility that consciousness not only is associated with life in time and space but also with other dimensions. Lending credibility to these theories are findings that the human brain can process data in up to eleven different dimensions, far more than the physical universe with which we normally interact with our senses.
- Theories of consciousness from psychiatry which build upon the concept of levels of consciousness, including a superconsciousness and higher Self, which spiritual teachers often use to explain consciousness as experienced in meditation and other spiritual exercises.
- Theories of consciousness explaining the relationship between God, the universe, and man based on the concept that consciousness, like matter and energy resulting from the Big Bang, is everywhere present as part of the fabric of the universe. In this paradigm, consciousness exists in different degrees where there is life; however, consciousness pre-exists the evolution of physical life and is found in all dimensions of existence, material and spiritual. Consciousness ties all of life and all dimensions together and directly links God to His creation, including mankind.
- Theories that view consciousness as a functional mechanism through which intelligent beings learn the lessons of life so as to improve not only their understanding but also their character, individually and at the level of the species. In this theoretical framework, mankind has a range of consciousness that can be used by our minds and free will to make decisions that advance our evolution materially and spiritually.

There are scores of insightful theories about consciousness, dating back to the very earliest expositions of philosophy in which thinkers tried to understand who and what man is and the role he plays in the great scheme of things. No theory has been universally accepted as fully explaining consciousness. Accepting the fact that consciousness can be subjectively defined, my conclusions about consciousness are summarized below.

### Concluding Remarks

My first observation is that consciousness ought to be seen from a cosmological perspective. If God exists and if God is the Great Initiator of all things in the universe, then God's consciousness must exist nearly everywhere in the universe, particularly where there is life. God created the soul of man and gave him life, consciousness, and a portion of His character of goodwill to serve as a guide for man's creative use of free will. The commonalities of life, consciousness, and goodwill establish a connection between God and every person on Earth. This connection can be experienced by man if he aligns his consciousness with the goodwill character of his soul. In this sense, consciousness becomes a link between the spiritual and material sides of mankind.

My second observation is that the connection between God and man through a shared consciousness of goodwill can be duplicated by people seeking to connect with other parts of life. The shared sense of goodwill held in the consciousness of man and other beings – whether people or angels or saints – generates a feeling of brotherhood and common purpose based on the expression and expansion of God's goodness. The sense of brotherhood and common purpose creates a bond that can be strengthened and made more tangible between individuals in material and spiritual dimensions. Concentrating on the name and character of a spiritual master with whom a person may wish to commune is one way to establish and maintain such a bond.

Consciousness in this sense is a means and facilitator of communications between like-minded lifeforms in whatever dimension they may reside.

My third observation is that consciousness is an integrator of the various aspects of man. If we wish to explain mankind's consciousness, we need a model which – if not perfect – points us in the right direction towards greater understanding. As I conceive of it, this model of a human being involves several interrelated components integrated through various levels of consciousness:<sup>78</sup>

*Spirit* – This is the individualization of life as a human being. It is a creation of God which has as its essence a characteristic of God's goodness and the free will, creative ability to expand that seed of God's goodness in whatever planes of existence the spirit may inhabit. The level of consciousness here is individualized God-consciousness. Consciousness beyond this point involves the merger of the individual with God.

*Soul* – This is the aspect of human existence that evolves through various lifetimes in order for the human being to learn how to express God's goodness on Earth and possibly other abodes. The level of consciousness here is soul-consciousness, which is attainable for a human being in embodiment. The soul is the true self of man in embodiment, and the character of the soul is man's highest virtue. When we peer deeply into our eyes in the mirror, we often see the spark of life within, which is likely our soul.

*Body* – This is the physical, emotional, mental, and etheric vehicles the soul inhabits while embodied on Earth. The body changes lifetime after lifetime, usually reflecting the positive or negative deeds done by the person as its soul learns the proper use of free will. The

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<sup>78</sup> There are many models of the components of a human being. For example, see "The Chart of the Presence," as depicted in the teachings of Mark and Elizabeth Prophet of the Summit Lighthouse, <https://www.summitlighthouse.org/i-am-presence/>.

proper use of free will includes activities aligned with the character of the soul. Various levels of consciousness are associated with the four vehicles of the body, with sub-consciousness, awakened consciousness, and super-consciousness within each level. The lowest level of consciousness is generally the sub-consciousness of the physical vehicle (the survival mode) and the highest level is the super-consciousness of the etheric body (the transcendent mode which is very close to soul-consciousness).

*Brain* – This is an organ of the human physical body in which all activity is coordinated as in a powerful computer. It is capable of processing information in many dimensions. The information or data it receives is from sensory organs, such as those associated with touch, hearing, seeing, tasting, and smell, as well as chakras such as the third-eye or crown chakras. Both the mind and consciousness interact closely with the brain while the soul is in embodiment, providing the brain with data as well as utilizing the brain's processing abilities. Neither the mind nor consciousness, however, are dependent on the physical brain, as illustrated by the existence of spiritual beings.

*Mind* – The mind is mostly a mental activity that integrates information from all sources available to it to provide the soul (in or out of embodiment) with orderly interpretations of reality so the soul can make decisions or take some kind of action. Both the mind and consciousness are capabilities found at all levels of life, although the degree of capabilities within these levels varies tremendously. The human mind uses the brain and consciousness in almost infinite ways, ranging from survival instincts, to science's rationality, to the higher mind's ability to integrate the material and spiritual sides of man's existence.

*Consciousness* – This is an attribute of all life which serves a wide range of purposes, depending upon the lifeform it accompanies. Human consciousness can gather information about

the environment; it can facilitate communication between different lifeforms; it can be molded deliberately by the mind to change functionality; it can transfer awareness from point to point, object to object, and dimension to dimension; it can focus intensely or be diffused. The point to be remembered is that a person is comprised of many components and that different levels of consciousness are associated with those components. Consciousness, working with the mind, largely defines reality as interpreted by an individual in whatever level of selfhood he or she is identifying with and using.

My final observation is that controlling one's consciousness is possible to a degree. Learning to control consciousness is much like learning a habit or skill such as operating a computer or playing second baseman in baseball. It is the desire to learn the skill, as well as continuous practice to improve one's performance, which gradually programs the consciousness, mind, body, and brain to act in certain coordinated ways under a given circumstance. The training for specialized skills occurs all the time, and many of the steps in that process can be applied to learn how gradually to master one's consciousness. One technique I have tried successfully is repeating a simple mantra: "Take what God has given you, and do something good with it." The mantra is said or thought about several times a day, with an attempt to incorporate its meaning into daily activities. The exercise helps to concentrate the mind and consciousness on finding ways to improve the quality of life through one's best character or highest virtue.

This brief study of consciousness just skims the surface of available research and thought on the subject. One of the best ways to start one's own study of consciousness is to Google the word "consciousness," which returns more than 400 million results. Enjoy your journey!