

Are we more than just corporeal beings?

by Mark Pavilons

We are a mixture of variations of light and shadow, held together by our glue-like imperfections.

Love is not perfect either, but it makes our light flicker and glow, so we throw smaller shadows.

We are like rock-solid snowflakes, each with his/her own unique set of DNA, direction, goals and yes, purpose.

But are we meant to function individually, or be part of the greater pool of humanity? We all lead rather small lives in the big picture, and get caught up in the tiny details of life. But we're part of something greater, aren't we?

Are we missing the point?

?An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity,? said Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are many fine examples of this train of thought all around us, if we care to look.

Service clubs, such as the Lions, Rotary and Kinsmen, all abide by the mantra ?service above self.? It's embedded in everything they do.

Shouldn't that be everyone's raison d'etre?

Desmond Tutu once observed that we can only be human ?together.?

A Japanese saying notes there's an invisible red thread that connects us to those we are destined to meet, regardless of time, place or circumstances. This thread may tangle and twist but it will never break.

So, my friends, we are ordained to encounter our circle of friendships. Wow.

Doesn't that give us even more power to combine our strengths and talents for the common good?

Our predetermined fate aside, we are still separate, physical beings. We go about our daily routine independently, without much thought, like putting on our socks each morning. We live inside our own heads and that's where it all happens, good or bad, magical or sinister.

Our brains are the centrepiece of what we are ??he computer, controller, pleasure centre, knowledge data bank and garden of emotions.

Is our essence ??ur soul, if you will ??idden in some compartment of our brain? Or is it something totally different, an energy that defies all known rules of science?

Consciousness is inherently individualized, varying greatly from person to person.

It's seen as a seamless flow without distinct breaks. It's in constant motion, too, as our thoughts and perceptions change continuously.

Serious scientific study of consciousness only began in earnest roughly 35 years ago. In the 1990s, studying consciousness regained a legitimacy and momentum as the primary feature of our mental lives. Today, the science of consciousness encompasses a rich, interdisciplinary mixture drawing together philosophical, theoretical, computational, experimental, and clinical perspectives.

The main focus has been on how the brain processes, analyzes and stores information. But we are not simply data storage devices ? we are thinking, feeling, irrational and spontaneous creatures. We are more than computations, electrical impulses, neurons and cells.

So, while scientists measure energy fields, brain chemicals and neurons, perhaps we should reintegrate the intangible in our research. We are on an adventure in our lives, and much of what we do, see, hear and feel can't be filed neatly on a form. We live outside of well, the skull that binds our minds.

I think our consciousness is everlasting, far-reaching and part of something much, much bigger.

Defining ?consciousness? has been a challenge to say the least. While traditionally viewed as a property of neural activity, some researchers propose that consciousness might be a more fundamental aspect of the universe, like space and time.

Wow. An eternal, cosmic force perhaps? ?The Force??heard talked about in movies?

One prominent theory is Integrated Information Theory (IIT), which suggests that consciousness arises from systems capable of integrating information. Another, the Orchestrated Objective Reduction (Orch-OR) theory, says that quantum processes in the brain play a critical role in generating conscious experience. If consciousness is tied to quantum states, it could theoretically exist independently of the body in some form of quantum energy or information.

Independently of the body??Like outside of all that we know?

Physicist John Wheeler's concept of the Participatory Universe further suggests that consciousness actively shapes reality. If consciousness interacts with the universe at a fundamental level, its existence might not end with physical death but continue in ways we don't yet fully understand.

I've read about near-death experiences, and watch every ?documentary? I can on the subject.

These experiences provide fascinating ?evidence? supporting the persistence of consciousness.

It's typically reported as a sense of leaving the body, seeing deceased loved ones, or encountering a ?light? that could indicate a transition to a higher-dimensional existence. While these accounts are often dismissed as neurological phenomena, their consistency across cultures and historical periods suggests they warrant deeper investigation.

I?agree. Too similar to be coincidence. Or is it just wishful thinking?

Quantum physics theories indicate things can exist in various states and remain interconnected across vast distances, even through billions of miles in outer space!

When we look at the stars at night, perhaps we are looking at Heaven itself!

Some believe our consciousness ??ur very self ? can shift dimensions and exist somewhere after physical death.

Again, another nice thought.

Modern science is looking at some more down to earth applications, like one day digitally reproducing aspects of our consciousness,

so we can live forever inside a computer, machine or robot.

Digital immortality!

While we wait patiently for all that comes, these perspectives encourage us to view life, not as a fleeting moment in a single dimension, but as part of a vast, interconnected reality that transcends physical limits.

Amen.