

Is There Scientific Evidence Of A Soul?

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Is everything really explainable by science? Or does the human body show physical evidence of a Divine Origin?

The axiom a "whole is equal to the sum of its parts" holds true in physics and mathematics as well as biology. It seems so logical that one wonders why such an axiom even needs to be postulated. But is it really all that logical? There is a case in which the sum of an entity's parts do not seem to add up to its whole. No, I'm not talking about black holes, quantum particles, virus mutations or * infomercials. I'm talking about the human being. The biological components of the homosapien do not seem to add up to what we call the human being.

Strictly on a biological level, it all gives the impression of fitting together very nicely. For example, we all know that the heart pumps blood, and it is usually strain or the deprivation of oxygen to this natural pump that results in heart attacks. By the same token, it is the deprivation of oxygen to the brain which can lead to a stroke or even death. The components which come into play here become more obvious upon a more detailed analysis of the circulatory system.

The heart consists basically of four chambers -- the right and left atriums, and the right and left ventricles. The heart's function is to keep the blood oxygenated by pumping it past the lungs, which absorb oxygen and expel carbon dioxide. Although beating approximately 2.5 billion times in an average lifetime is quite an amazing feat, how the heart accomplishes its task is not at all that mysterious. The heart's components -- chambers, veins, arteries, etc. -- propel the circulatory system, a mechanical process which we quite readily understand.

Similarly, the liver, our largest organ, serves as the body's chemical factory. Some of the chemicals it produces are: albumin, which regulates the exchange of water between blood and tissues -- complement, proteins which help the immune system fight infection -- coagulation factors, which help the blood clot when blood vessels are damaged -- globin, a part of the pigment known as hemoglobin, which carries oxygen throughout the body. In addition, the liver produces cholesterol and special proteins that help carry fats around the body.

This is of course an oversimplified description of an extremely complex organ. In fact, the liver's complexities make a practical artificial liver a lot farther from reality than an artificial heart. Yet, in spite of its complexities, the liver's basic functions are not really great mysteries. That is, although precisely how the liver produces and regulates the body's chemistry may still be far from understood, the notion of producing chemicals or regulating circulating fluids are not exactly mystical concepts. Such chemical functions

are performed on a daily basis in laboratories and in many man-made devices.

To sum it up, what the above two organs have in common is that in their cases the "whole is equal to the sum of its parts" -- i.e their underlying mechanical principles work satisfactorily as a whole within the context of the living body as well as isolated components within a laboratory setting.

The brain, however, is a little different. The brain and spinal cord comprise the central nervous system, and control virtually every vital function of the body -- thought, speech, heart beat, breathing, body temperature, etc. It is believed that the cerebral cortex (the outer portion of the cerebrum) is where movement, sensation, memory and perception, among other things, are processed. Some of these functions are similar to those of other organs in the sense that, in spite of their awesome complexity, their mechanical processes have parallels in man-made objects or in the laboratory.

Computers are excellent examples of how huge amounts of data and images can be stored and transferred in man-made objects. Electrical impulses are utilized in both computers and the brain, although their processes may not necessarily be identical. So, with respect to the purely mechanical process of memory and the transmission of data or impulses, the brain and nervous system hold no great mysteries. As with the liver, the precise processes employed by the brain may be far from understood, but man understands many of the functions performed and has in some cases reproduced their effects.

But this is where the familiarity with the brain ends. After all the sophistication and miracles of modern medicine, biology and biogenetics, the concept of intellect remains a total mystery. There is no substance known to man, either within the human body or the lab, that will produce intellect. To scan the brain, as some scientists have done, with an imaging device and track down the parts of the brain that come into play under certain intellectual pursuits is not the same as isolating a substance that produces intellect. We may know that the brain is the seat of the intellect, but that says nothing about what intellect is or what substance, if any, produces it. A rough analogy might be, determining what part of an engine contains combustion says nothing about how fuel is produced or where it comes from.

Upon dissection of the human brain, aside from some jelly-type matter, nerve fibers and perhaps neurotransmitters, all of which come into play in our thought and motor functions, there emerges not a shred of evidence of a substance that produces a sense of humor, the appreciation of art, or the ability to differentiate between good and evil. Even if not the precise method, at least a clue as to how these human qualities are produced would, I think, have been in order at this advanced stage of the twenty-first century. But nothing! Zilch! This seems to fly in the face of the principle a "whole is equal to the sum of its parts:" whereas the human brain seems to be the seat of consciousness, its biological components do not seem to possess the potential of producing such a quality.

Is it possible that "consciousness" actually is a separate entity and has no physical roots? And can it's effect on humans be taken as proof that such an entity exists? "Black holes,"

despite the fact that they cannot be directly detected, are universally accepted as science.

A black hole in astronomy is a celestial object of such extremely intense gravity that it attracts everything near it and prevents even light from escaping. Because light and other forms of energy and matter are permanently trapped inside a black hole, it can never be observed directly. It can only be detected by the effect of its gravitational field on nearby objects. Yet, as undetectable as they are, black holes are considered as real and as scientific as planets and stars.

In the same way, consciousness can be "proven" to have its own existence by the effect it has on humans, giving them qualities such as reasoning abilities, appreciation of art, humor, etc. Unlike a black hole, however, since we cannot prove the existence of any physical substance or process that can produce such features, consciousness takes on a unique existence -- an effect without a physical origin. Call it what you will, but this precisely coincides with the age-old concept of a "soul."

I realize that a soul in itself may not be a scientific concept. But when you can prove its features and qualities as surely as you can prove a black hole's effect on its environment, you have effectively proven its existence. Unlike a black hole, it's origin does not appear to be physical, but, very much like a black hole, it definitely reveals itself within its environment.

Unscientific, at this point, would be to deny that an entity exists that gives human beings their unique intellectual features. There is no question that it exists. The only question is, what do you call it? If "soul" is too religious sounding for you, call it what you will, but there is definitely something at work here that is not of a physical nature.

If you don't believe a "soul" has been proven here, you may want to start questioning things like black holes. Nobody will prove them to you any better.