Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

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Online First Publication, August 10, 2023. https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/teo0000237

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

THEORETICAL & PHILOSOPHICAL PSYCHOLOGY

Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology

ISSN: 1068-8471

https://doi.org/10.1037/teo0000237

Contestation of the "Self" in Modern and Religious Psychologies

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We begin our article with commonly available insights from world religions into the notions of "human nature," "self," "soul," and "spirit." Then, we take brief notes of the more recent metamorphosis of the same notions into "subject," "ego," "personality," "consciousness," and the like up to modern times and beyond. In doing so, we explore a number of attempts at defining the human self and the many more ways they fail to achieve a satisfactory consensus on the conception of the human self. Parallel streams of both convergent and divergent tendencies are observed in philosophy and psychology, in scientific context as well as in popular culture. To understand these better, we end in juxtaposing between the religious and modern views on the self, and asking if the two can ever be reconciled.

Public Significance Statement

Our findings showed that the understanding of the "self" has historically evolved over time in medieval Europe, starting with a more traditional outlook where there existed an immaterial soul or "higher self" that governs the lower material "self," to one that is now devoid of anything beyond this lower "self." Modern science played a significant role in this process. Hence, the importance of knowing the history to understand the continuous contestations of the "self" between tradition and modern science.

Keywords: self, soul, religion, Islamic, modern science

We have three main aims in writing this article. First, we consider how the "self" is seen from two perspectives; the Islamic tradition as one example of the Traditionalist[1] school or *philosophia perennis* (Chittick, 2007; Upton, 2006) versus present-day understanding based on modern science from the lens of philosophy and psychology. The focus on "self" is fundamental to the understanding of human beings for in both the humanities and social sciences, humans are their own unit of analysis, being both the subject and the object of study. We bring our lived-in understanding of Islam to compare how the "self" is seen in this perspective due to the antagonism that usually exists between religion and the modern disciplines of philosophy and psychology. Second, we juxtapose these two perspectives on their takes on the "self," and third, we ask if this never-ending contestations on the "self" can ever be reconciled.

The Islamic tradition considers man[2] as being "created in the image of God"—both divine and human, implying that he has the potential to actualize the fullness of the human reality; that is, to be as a mirror reflecting the divine reality using the model of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon

The authors received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. The ideas presented in the article have not been disseminated elsewhere, though they have been discussed with a few colleagues.

Noraini M. Noor provided the general idea for the write-up. Elma Berisha wrote on the metamorphosis of the self, while the rest was mainly written by Noraini M. Noor. Both authors then reviewed and revised the article together.

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[1] Details of this approach are given in the section on The "Self" in Religion.

[2] See our explanation in Constraints, "p. xx".

him (Chittick, 2002, 2019a). He has a special placement at the peak of all existing things, for he is created in the most beautiful stature (*ahsan taqwin*, Q95:4), with an innate inclination for good, to actualize the divine image and become God's representative on earth (Nasr, 1972). Here, self can be seen as an unchanging phenomenon despite physically changing over time, attributing this to an immaterial soul that is man's real self that governs his outward physical behavior (Nasr, 1972). Yet, Islam allows for the "changing" factor of experience imprinted on the eternal soul by way of learning and transformation, acting upon one's beliefs, redeeming, and so forth (Chodkiewicz, 1993a; Dakake, 2004), for this is the purpose of human existence—to align one's will to that of God (Chittick, 2019a). The paradox is that, even though the soul is the unchanging element that anchors the self, the soul is also transformed through the life journey, either toward a higher spiritual fulfillment or a "loss of soul." In other words, there is an immaterial soul that is man's real self together with a material self that is co-constitutive and inseparable of one another. And, in this temporal world, man is to undergo a journey of becoming so as to return to his primordial nature (*fitra*); that is, by purifying, polishing, or shedding of the many states of "I" so that there is no more duality between subject and object.

To understand the modern-day understanding of the self, one has to go back several centuries to the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe. These were periods when the West was trying to redefine the "new" man—emphasizing on education and humanism. The Reformation sparked by Martin Luther in 1517 was in retaliation to the Roman Catholic Church, which had become politically and spiritually powerful. The original religion was seen to be manipulated, imbued, and shrouded with superstitions, irrationality, and "mysteries" for the personal gain and interests of its elites. Man became passive, docile, and subjected to the whims of the Church. Hence, it was during this time that Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564) inspired a new world religious movement and liberated the masses from the old religious bonds. At the same time, new philosophical insights advocated new ways of thinking that encouraged people to look for more rational and logical interpretations of the world, rejecting revelation as a source of knowledge, facilitating the scientific revolution, a move that was seen to provide man with a personal creative agency that is constructible, and cultivatable (Hall, 2004).

Soon, observation of the natural world replaced irrational religious doctrine as the source of understanding of the universe, and in doing so, it laid the foundations for modern science and a new theory of the physical world. By the 17th century, science became the dominant narrative, with the self relegated to the background. In this approach, natural objects were regarded as machines operating according to mathematical and deterministic laws of physics to be manipulated and controlled. Starting with the radical theoretical innovations of Kepler and Galileo, and ending with Newton, a new reality of the world was conceived. Modern science, as envisioned by Galileo, would focus on the tiny impenetrable atoms that are the basis of macroscopic objects, using the language of mathematics for a quantified knowledge of nature. In doing so, Galileo did away with the secondary qualities of natural objects due to their subjective nature and focused instead on their more objective primary qualities (Martin & Barresi, 2006).

Descartes (1596–1650) continued with this new vision of reality completing the total mechanization of nature by replicating within the human self through philosophy what Galileo did to the external physical world through science. Separating the mechanical world (*res extensa*) from the world of thought (*res cogitans*) resulted in the well-known Cartesian dualism, which has a strong bearing on how man is later conceived. Descartes viewed the human body and brain as a machine, though acknowledging that humans have an immaterial soul. As the latter is immaterial, the former is emphasized. To this Cartesian metaphysics, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) added another dimension—the methodology of scientific inquiry, which was basically reductionist (Smith, 2014). Thus, science was reduced to mere quantification—to counting, measuring, and quantifying. These two—Cartesian metaphysics and Baconian reductionism—complete the picture of what defines modern science.

To further break free from the Christian doctrine of original sin, John Locke (1632–1704) introduced the notion of the *tabula rasa*, the idea that at birth the human mind is simply a "blank slate" without rules for processing data. Both data and rules are formed solely by one's sensory experiences. In other words, the human

mind is thereby free to author its own contents. This idea culminated with Rousseau's (1903) romanticism that allowed others to free their own creative minds, characterized by individualism, a love of nature, and freedom. By the end of the Enlightenment era, modern science had effectively reduced man from spirit to mind, mind to brain, and brain to anatomical structures. Thinking, which is what now defined man, became merely "an epiphenomenon of the neuronal machinery of the brain" (Wilson, 1978).

Hence, after the Enlightenment, the idea of a universe that was governed by physical laws, rather than God became a reality. Without a transcendent God, science became the source for all morality, value, or order in the universe. In this worldview, all is flattened to only this material world, no more verticality. In flattening the universe, man too was reduced, where theories that once considered the understanding of the self or person based on the persistence of an immaterial substance were either marginalized or rejected, and replaced with views of the mind as a dynamic natural system subject to general laws of growth and development. God, too, was no longer seen to be transcendental but was reduced to the reality of the natural. Consequently, the physical world lost its spirituality and became a "machine" where everything moved along mindlessly by the motion of inanimate objects that passed on momentum, no longer by a Creator where everything has a purpose and is meaningful.

But, man needs the vertical dimension to be fully human. Verticality refers to an inward dimension, to something beyond man himself; that is, to metaphysics or first principles. In this understanding, there are other higher orders of reality besides the natural world that man currently lives in (see Nasr, 1978). It is the higher that governs the lower natural world. So, by replacing God, the transcendent Being with science, there is no longer vertical causation; only horizontal causation that operates "in time" by way of a temporal process, devoid of ontology and a higher purpose (Smith, 1995, 2019). That is why Nietzsche could famously claim, "God is dead and we have killed him (i.e., our idea of God)," which to him removed the basis for existential meaning.

Author Positionality

We first describe our own positionality before considering the two perspectives on the self. The first author, a Malaysian, is a late-career academic, having been wholly educated in modern psychology in the West, whereas the second is a Kosovar who studied in Malaysia and is a middle-career manager, currently pursuing her PhD. Both of us are Muslim women, though only of late our understanding of Islam is becoming clearer. For the first author, it is a process of becoming, of knowing, and moving inward to find God, *al-Haqq* (the truth/real, one of God's many Names and Attributes in the Quran) that holds us together. For the second author, it is a question of making a contribution to the mainstream discourse on alternative perspectives that may not be so well-known for readers at large, such as other Eastern notions of self-explorations, Islam included. It is based on this understanding that we write this article; while religions focus on the self—the core of man, the self is controversial in philosophy (e.g., Ganeri, 2012; Siderits et al., 2010), and its existence is mostly rejected in psychology though people commonly believe that it exists (Sparby et al., 2019). But its manifestations in terms of personality and behavior remain. We acknowledge that we may be biased in our write-up in favor of alternative points of view as opposed to the mainstream take.

The "Self" in Religion

The Traditionalist school, known also as *philosophia perennis*, focuses on "the religious, metaphysical, and esoteric traditions of the world, in light of the one truth from which they proceed and to which they provide formally distinct but essentially equivalent paths of return" (Upton, 2006, p. 4). The metaphysics that underlies the teachings of this school asserts that God is beyond all determination and limitation, giving "rise to a universe which is hierarchical, with many levels of existence and states of consciousness, from the Supreme Principle to earthly man and his terrestrial ambience" (Chittick, 2007, p. 21). It is within this hierarchical universe that man's life takes place and possesses meaning. Religion is central to the understanding of this universe in providing the means by which man is able to journey through the lower realms of existence to God's presence; this journey being nothing other than human life itself as it is understood traditionally. The doctrines, symbols, and rites of a religion possess meaning that connects them

with the higher realms. It is in this sense that traditionalists cannot reduce the existence of religion to only this earthly existence. "As above, so below," where what is found in the lower world corresponds to a reality in the above higher worlds, aptly described by Lings (2007),

> There is not the least thing in existence which is not such a shadow, nor is there anything which is any more than a shadow. Indeed, if a world did not cast down shadows from above, the worlds below it would at once vanish altogether, since each world in creation is no more that a tissue of shadows entirely dependent on the archetypes in the world above. Thus the foremost and truest fact about any form is that it is a symbol, so that when contemplating something in order to be reminded of its higher realities the traveler is considering that thing in its universal aspect which alone explains its existence. (p. 155)

The *philosophia perennis* sees a unity underlying the diversity of religious forms and practices, but this unity is not to be found at the level of external forms because all religions do not say the same thing. The unity is that of a transcendental unity above and beyond forms and external manifestations; that is, on the level of the Supreme Essence, for below that level, each religion possesses its own distinct qualities and characteristics (Chittick, 2007, pp. 25–26). Put in other words, tradition distinguishes between the external form and the essence which that form manifests. All the major world religions are believed to come ultimately from Heaven and as such should be treated with reverence, for each is sacred. They are founded upon common primordial and universal truths via revelation, reiterated by the saints and sages, and passed down through unbroken lines of transmission. Moreover, they combine to construct a common worldview that is centered on the divine and the divine–human relationship, clearly demarcating between the Creator and the created, the Absolute and the Relative, and so forth (Nasr, 1987, 1989).

In *Fuṣuṣ al-Hikam*, Ibn Arabi listed 27 prophets. This number, which is also the same as the number of the prophets' names mentioned in the Quran, can be seen as the number of the main prophetic types, "the sum of all the forms of *nubuwwa* (prophethood), and hence *walaya* (sainthood), manifested by each prophet individually out of the one hundred and twenty-four thousand" (Chodkiewicz, 1993b, p. 86). Each is sent forth to a particular respective community with a particular divine virtue/word, making the content tailored to the needs of the community. In this sense, each "prophet is 'shaped' by his particular historical, linguistic, and cultural circumstance" (Lawson, 2016; p. 59), each having a specific function to play and no one prophet is considered more important than another. All are God's saints, bringing with them His Word/revelation to every community that has ever existed—the same universal and atemporal truth, the testimony of faith, "There is no god, but God," but speaking in that community's language (Q14:4). It is in this sense that Ibn Arabi says all religions of the prophets from Adam to Muhammad are nothing but temporal manifestations, according to the requirements and needs of the human race at different times, of the one universal religion which he calls Islam.

In this sense, traditional religions see man as a ternary, constituting of the Spirit, psyche, and body (see Table 1). Psyche and body are often classified together as the "lesser/lower self" for two reasons: first, the body in itself has no directive force, needing some higher power or faculty like

Table 1
Constitution of Man in Traditional Outlooks

Human self	Greek	Christian	Muslim	Hindu	
Spirit	Pneuma	Spiritus	Ruh	Atman	Inner self
Psyche	psyche	anima	nafs	ego (Ahamkara) or mind (Citta)	Outer psycho-physical personality
Body	soma	corpus	jism	embodied existence (Prakriti)	

Note. The underlined text "Prakriti" is material consciousness, as opposed to spiritual consciousness or Purusha.

the psyche to direct it; and second, both psyche and body lack permanence for they are always in a constant state of flux or becoming, and hence, never stable (Coomaraswamy, 2002). The lesser self is exclusively individual or human, but the Spirit[3] is supraindividual or universal. Hence, the spirit is the "higher or inner self," that is, divine, the essence of man. Man is seen to have two selves; a higher self or a "sacred" core related to his very "being," and an outer psychophysical "personality," which, because of its constantly changing character, is often described as multiple. But it is this latter self that is the focus of psychological and philosophical endeavors.

These two selves often do not see eye-to-eye with each other, for being made up of different constituents—one natural, the other spiritual—they have different needs. In the traditional understanding, spiritual needs were reserved for the "higher self," while other human needs were attributed to the "lower self." According to Nasr, if modern psychology remains only at the level of the lower self with nothing higher than this individual self, then "there cannot but be the highest degree of conflict between limited egos which would claim for themselves absolute rights, usually in conflict with the claims of other egos' rights which belong to the Self alone" (Nasr, 1993, p. 20). The self would never know its true self but knows only the things that are its ephemeral baggage. Thus, tradition distinguishes between the higher and the lesser selves.

What is the relationship between these two selves? The higher/inner self and the lesser/outward self are seen as two sides of a single reality. They can never be detached from one another for each shapes and determines the other. As such, man has to keep an equitable balance between the needs of the two selves, rejecting both licentiousness and excessive asceticism. Because he has to live in this world, he cannot deny the reality of his human self; that is, its material and corporeal needs. But, at the same time, he needs his spiritual self so as not to fall into depravity; hence, the emphasis on the higher self in religion. This twofold aspect of human life necessitates a balance attitude toward the demands of "the spirit and the flesh."

In the following section, we consider the Islamic intellectual tradition and its understanding of man as an example of a traditional religious viewpoint.

The Islamic Intellectual Tradition

The Islamic intellectual tradition depicts a hierarchical worldview that starts with God from the realm of "the Unseen" (*al-ghayb*)—one that is beyond the reach of human perception or conception, consisting of everything that is hidden from man's physical senses and awareness, to this visible world of forms. From the *ghayb*, the universe unfolds and the Divine Names and Attributes manifest their traces. In this understanding, creation is the self-disclosure of God, the exteriorization of the Divine Principle, unfolding like a ladder through successive rungs. Each unfolding rung reflects a higher level, and bears the divine traces from which all things originate. Hence, the universe and all that exists consist of signs and traces of the Divine Names and Attributes (Chittick, 2019b). Thus, the things of this world are symbols of a higher order of reality or echoes of celestial ideas that, in themselves, are beyond forms and words. And, just as God is the First—who existentiates all that exists, He is also the last—the journey's end and the point of return.

In this cosmology, the phenomenal world is a theophany that manifests a higher order and is meaningful. There is a vertical dimension—that which has been taken out by modern science. But, it is precisely this dimension that provides value and meaning to life, which makes man fully human and is the prerequisite to existence itself. By taking this dimension out, it is not only the universe that is flattened but also the conceptualization of man himself. For in perceiving the universe as a closed system understood only in terms of natural causality, transcendence no longer has a place. The Islamic tradition, in contrast, is rooted in the metaphysical structure of reality that governs all things which are made known to man through revelation (Lakhani, 2015; Nasr, 2017). According to this tradition, just as the universe is a well-ordered whole, complete and sound, created with a purpose, so is man a unified whole.

[3] Intellect and spirit are two sides of the same coin; the former pertains to the theoretical side, while the latter to the practical aspect. In other words, they relate to the objective (discriminatory) and subjective (unitive) mode of knowing.

The Meaning and Paradox of Man in the Islamic Tradition

So, who is "man"? In this tradition, to know who man is, one has to start not with this world but a pretemporal world. The Quran[4], the living Word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) says:

> And when Thy Lord took from the Children of Adam, from their loins, their progeny and made them bear witness concerning themselves, "Am I not your Lord?" they said, "Yea, we near witness"—lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, "Truly of this we were heedless." (Q7:172)

This verse lays the foundation of Islamic sacred history for it sets the relationship between God and humanity at the moment of pretemporal creation. This event, known as the *Covenant of Alast* is a pretemporal covenant made by God with all of humanity prior to their earthly existence. Once each individual soul descends and becomes embodied in this world, it immerses itself, becomes distracted, and forgets its covenant, thus, becoming veiled from the unseen. Though the soul is still divine in origin and remembers its Lord because that transcendent realm is in a sense "concealed," a man needs to be reminded of his real nature; hence, the need for revelations.

The Covenant verse also emphasizes the primordial nature with which all human beings were originally endowed—the *fitra*, implied by the innate recognition of God's Oneness and innate goodness, which constitutes the essence of being human. According to Ibn Arabi, the "primordial human disposition" is the sum of the attributes of perfection possessed by the human spirit at its creation. God "ascribed to him all His Most Beautiful Names" (Chittick, 1989, p. 276).

Hence, the human being is considered to be a copy of the Real, made in His form. This is the reason for the exhortation to know oneself in order to know God (Al-Ghazzali, 2002), for there is a connection between self-knowledge and the knowledge of God, or one's soul and God (Nasr, 2007). Though the "similarity" between soul and God is emphasized here, "knowledge of God" means only knowledge of His activities and attributes, not His Essence. If not for this relationship, man would never know his Creator. Put differently, the soul recognizes God by virtue of this kinship; that is, "like being known only by like." And, just as the soul governs the body and controls it through its faculties, in the same way, God governs the affairs of the world by means of the divine attributes and acts.

But, man is also human, having been created from dust/clay. He consists of both the lower physical body and the higher self, the former to be governed by the latter. As a creature of this world and the higher spiritual world, man is a transcription of both realities—his body is a copy of the cosmic realities, but his spirit is the image of the Divine Names. Razi (1223/1982) elucidates on these two constitutions in the creation of Adam. When God completed Adam's bodily frame and it was time for the spirit to be joined to the frame, God breathed of His Spirit into him (Q15:29, Q38:72), giving rise to the *nafs* (soul), man's true nature, which lies in-between the body and spirit. In other words, God created man by bringing two opposing realms together giving rise to a third entity, the in-between *nafs.* That is why Ibn Arabi refers to the soul as an isthmus or "a *barzakh* between spirit and nature or body" (Chittick, 1998, p. 323).

It is this gift of the soul—the consciousness that enables man to break through the world of forms and enter the spiritual beyond—that makes him different from the rest of creation. As an isthmus, the soul acts as a bridge between that which can be grasped by the senses and that which lies beyond. As an in-between, the soul has a double, paradoxical nature; that is, everything that it perceives exists and does not exist at the same time, like an image in the mirror that is seen to be there and not there. Hence, the soul is never fixed; it is always moving, shifting, and fluid to be able to perceive the ever-changing self-disclosures of God. In this constant flux, the soul is always in a state of becoming being or image. That is why human experience is always soulish or imaginal, that is, simultaneously bodily and spiritual, due to its in-between reality. As such, it is able to reconcile or bring opposites together—*coincidentia oppositorum*; that is, the place where all complements are united and all opposites are

[4] God's Word precedes all forms of language and written scripture. The Quran descended onto the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the form of oracular verses or signs in Arabic, where multiple meanings are possible depending on the vowel sounds placed between the consonants. But, when a vowel sound is written down, it concretizes the infinite Word of God to only one interpretation, limiting the multiple meanings and layers of the recital or text, making it literal and restrictive. See Noor and Ahmad (2021).

reconciled. This is also Ibn Arabi's seeing with "two eyes"—the physical eye and the eye of the heart. With one eye, one sees God as utterly transcendent, remote, sublime, and dissimilar, the *mysterium tremendum*, beyond all utterance and description. With the other eye, he sees God as always present and intimate, the beloved of all lovers, the center toward which all things move. Seeing with two eyes is to strike a balance between opposites and extremes; that is, uniting while cherishing differences at the same time.

This is why Ibn Arabi identifies the perfect soul with the vicegerent of God on earth, the axis of existence, as exemplified by Muhammad (peace be upon him), the "perfect man." He is the "junction of the two seas" (Q18:60), in whom the realities of the higher and lower worlds are united. Indeed, man is the only creature who can consciously and through his own free will recognize God fully in respect of His One Self and His many Names and Attributes, and it is in this sense that he is the most perfect place of contemplation (Hakim, 2003). This is indeed the paradox of man; he is at once both a slave and a vicegerent (a bearer of trust), neither an animal nor an angel but is something forever suspended in between.[5] In other words, his nature is special because of its ability to reflect both realities.

In sum, within the Islamic tradition, there is a presupposed hierarchical reality within man and the universe that consists of differing ontological degrees from the invisible to the visible worlds, each mirroring the other. It is a reality that starts with God, with all that exists organically linked and structured upon the descending degrees of being. Hence, to know oneself is to realize one's primordial nature—of both nobility and sacredness, while at the same time of poverty and bondsmanship before God, to be in actuality what one is intended and created to be—the mirror of God. This is the meaning of the human state—that man stands at the crossing of the horizontal (*islam*) and vertical (*iman*) dimensions of existence, and from this awareness to move inwards—depth (*iḥsan*; Nasr, 1968).

Metamorphosis of the Self

Philosophers have struggled with the nature of the human self for a long time. Is there a single, unitary, autonomous, constant self? We "know" there is. If so, how to define it? Where to locate it? Some say that the human self is in the soul, in the heart, in the brain, somewhere in the body. Self is "inside." Others say it is "outside" of the body, in our deeds and in the physical and social environment that nurtures and molds us (Powell, 1984). Still, others keep insisting that self is in our name, in our memories, in our personality traits, in our character, in our personal story. Some say we can find the self in our experience, whereas, for others, experience itself is what the self is; that is, the self is nothing else but a "name" for that which we experienced. A few also say that the self is an illusion (Hume, 1739/1888; Metzinger, 2003; Olson, 1998), whereas others believe that not only is the human self real, it is immortal (Descartes in Stevenson et al., 2018; Kant in Beach, 2008; Husserl in Marosan, 2022, to name a few).

"Spirit" and human "soul" are words that abundantly appear in orally transmitted works, spoken works, and written works ranging from the ancient Epic of Gilgamesh to today's buzzing pop lyrics. We all seem to "understand" what they mean. As obvious as they sound, historically, not many see the need to define it, let alone question its existence. In Aristotle's (384–322 BC) view, every living thing has a *psyche*, or soul as a vital principle that brings it and sustains it to life. In his scheme of things, the soul in plants, animals, and humans was pictured by gradation, from the lowest to the highest enabling capacities. A soul enables a plant to grow and reproduce, an animal to move and perceive, and a human to do all of the above plus to "rationally think." In Plato's footsteps, Aristotle attributed immortality to the human soul (Dancy, 2003). Such an idea of the human soul survived for the millennia to come and resonated with what was painted of the human self elsewhere in the world stage, including in the Islamic civilization.

The Psychological Self

Descartes (1596–1650) was the first major thinker to start using the word "mind" (Latin,

[5] This paradox is recognized by Nietzsche in his Thus Spoke Zarathustra when he quotes: Man is a rope, stretched between beast and Übermensch. Similarly, Cassirer (1944) in his book *An Essay on Man*: *An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* also recognized this contradiction in man. To him, "Contradiction is the very element of human existence. Man has no 'nature'—no simple or homogeneous being. He is a strange mixture of being and nonbeing. His place is between these two opposite poles" (p. 28). The only approach to know his nature is via religion.

mens) to replace the word "soul" (*anima*; Gallagher, 2011). The idea of the unquestionable uniqueness of the human self echoed preceding milieus in Rousseau's (1903) Confessions: "I know my heart, and have studied mankind; I am not made like anyone I have been acquainted with, perhaps like no one in existence" (1712–1778, Book 1, p. 1). Today, the idea of the substantial spirit of the Cartesian self is a gone case. However, the denial of the substantial spirit is not the same problem as the denial of the uniqueness of the human self or the human self altogether (Gallagher, 2011). This is a newly generated problem that emerged gradually in the later stages of postmodern thinking, subsequent to the denial of the substantial spirit, and the complete discarding of other numerous versions of the "first-person frameworks." The first-person frameworks, which explore phenomenological realities such as the "what-it-is-like" of subjective experience, qualia, consciousness, and others, make it difficult to deny the existence of selves: "A first-person perspective is something only selves have; and absent a first-person perspective there is no self" (Vogeley & Gallagher, 2011, pp. 128–129).

It was Descartes' identification of the "thinker" with the "thoughts" that led to Hume's questioning on the existence of the self, given that empirically the thinker is nowhere to be found but only thoughts and other fleeting sensations. Hume (1739/1888) in his treatise of human nature concluded that the human self is just an illusion. Immanuel Kant (1781/1787) took it upon himself to address such grave concerns (Solomon, 1988). In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he rejected Descartes' claim that the self is a substantial thing, independent of the body, and therefore capable of surviving the death of the body, but nevertheless, he defended the belief in the immortality of the soul. Kant spoke not about transcendental egos in the plural but the transcendental ego in the singular, or "consciousness in general." A whole range of conceptual versions of this "transcendental self" appeared and disappeared later among his followers. For instance, Heidegger (1889–1976) rejected the centrality of human consciousness or ego. What one finds at first is not an "I think," nor even a "conscious being" but simply a kind of brute fact, the fact of "being there" or "Dasein." But his Dasein cannot be spoken of in terms of an individual self (Solomon, 1988).

Wiley (1994) in his *The Semiotic Self* offers an elaborate account of theories of the fragmentation of the self, enumerating all manner of self-reductionist tendencies. His merit is in highlighting the historical trends to undermine the complex reality of the human self from both the materialistic, or the "downwardly reductionist social Darwinisms" and the idealistic viewpoints or the "upwardly reductionist neo-Hegelianism," modern and postmodern alike:

> If the self is decentered externally, from its environment, as Copernicus did to our planet and Darwin to our biological species, the self becomes less important and its environment more so. If the self is decentered internally, as Freud did with the unconscious and Lacan with the imaginary, there is still a self, albeit more dispersed, after the decentering. (Wiley, 1994, p. 29)

Gradually, in the history of scientific thought, the notion of the human soul was replaced by the notion of a "unified" self. The idea of a "unified" human self was good enough of a substitute to all those old-day mysteriously elusive concepts such as soul or spirit. After Kant, the notion of the self as a real, unified entity that does some explanatory work continued to play a robust role primarily in philosophical, as opposed to scientific, theories (Martin & Barresi, 2006). Yet, Kant's vague notion of self remained highly problematic for all stripes of his followers and all philosophical thinkers to come (Wiley, 1994). In the words of Martin and Barresi, the notion of self as a unified phenomenon continued to become increasingly more questionable and hard to explain, "whereas what used to do the explanatory work was the perfect unity of an incomposite immaterial soul, what now does it is the imperfect unity of a composite material body" (2006, p. 4).

Thus, James (1890), for many considered a founder of modern scientific psychology, blamed John Stuart Mill, for admitting that there is something akin to the soul: "But whereas Hume was contended to say that there might after all be no 'real tie,' Mill, unwilling to admit this possibility, is driven, like any scholastic, to place it in a non-phenomenal world" (James, 1890, p. 787). Pursuing his purely empirical quest, James was adamant to generate new substitutes for what was seen as the reality of the human self. According to Leary (1990), "From the mid-1890s, James began to speculate more and more freely in his psychological seminars, playing with such notions as 'point of view' and 'field' as alternatives to 'self' and 'ego'" (p. 116). In due course, the

notion of "soul" was gradually substituted with more suitable terms in line with the modern discourse of human psychology. Later on, even Freud's terminology was seen as unacceptably loaded with terms such as "spirit" and "soul" more often than with terms drawn directly from empirical physiology (Solomon, 1988).

According to Putnam, logical behaviorism that emerged in the mid-1930s was an outcome of decades-long wrestling between Cartesian dualism and fully fledged materialism that defined the human self entirely in physicalist terms. The Vienna positivists followed Russell's model in defining mental events as logical constructions of actual and possible events (Putnam, 1968). Proponents of behaviorism like Watson and Skinner argued for a purely "objective" account of behavior and personality that rejected the use of any notion of consciousness or inner self-personality. Although the mainstream reign of extreme behaviorism dominated the contemporary paradigm of the psychology of the time, it was eventually challenged. Nevertheless, such a positivist line of thinking still predominates among contemporary empiricists of all stripes, one of whom is Thomas Metzinger (2003) who compellingly argues that the sense of self is just an illusion. According to him, a comprehensive empiricist examination of world reality offers no evidence that the human self exists:

> no such things as selves exist in the world. A biological organism, as such, is not a self. An Ego is not a self, either, but merely a form of representational content—namely, the content of a transparent self-model activated in the organism's brain. (p. 8)

Our brain's underlying structures and processes induce in us a "first-person perspective." For him, self as the "first-person point of view" seems to make perfect sense when accounted for in neurobiological terms. The discussion is far from being closed, though, as many,

> get awfully upset with statements such as "we are our brains"—as if this reduces or demeans the experience of life by making it material. Others point out that brains need bodies, and so the two are inextricably linked. Still, others point out that brains exist in bodies that exist in environments, and so it is illogical to reduce experience down to the brain. (Hood, 2012, p. 4)

The Philosophical Self

On the philosophical front, while German romanticism was seen as a reaction to the extreme rationalism entertained by the British philosophers, extreme scientific materialism made a comeback as a direct and obvious reaction against the excesses of idealism. Belief in the human self was seen as part and parcel of such excessive idealism; hence, it had to be dealt with. In the 1960s and 1970s, a number of different thinkers started to question the validity of the "human subject" (Heartfield, 2002). With the notion of the human soul long discarded, not only the notion of "self" but also the idea of the subject and subjectivity ultimately came to be questioned among leading philosophers. Thus, in the same vein as in psychology, we find a similar logical stalemate in philosophy when it comes to the human self. Human subject and subjectivity were mercilessly deconstructed in postmodern accounts, reinforced hand-in-hand from across the fence with modern, mainstream behavioral psychology. Paradoxically, in the beginning, postmodernists were first and foremost blamed for subjectivizing everything at the cost of aspired objectivity. Initially, it would have been unfathomable for postmodernists to question subjectivity the way it transpired later. However, Derrida (1997, cited in Heartfield, 2002) made it clear that his deconstruction of the claims of objectivity is inseparable from the deconstruction of subjectivity. In the process of postmodernist deconstructing all grand narratives, the deconstruction of "the grandest of all narratives," that of the human self, was not to be spared. Derrida insisted that difference precedes and rules over the human subject, rather than vice versa. Ultimately, the unified self is dismissed as the human subject "cannot be assumed to be a unitary whole without difference" (cited in Heartfield, 2002). Solomon (1988) goes to great length to elaborate the case of the upward reduction of the human self, first in continental romanticism, and later in postmodern theories of social constructionism and dialogical interactionism. Philosophers like Hegel, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and many others denied the notion of the individual self in favor of abstract concepts like "Spirit" or universal notions of the transcendental ego.

Indeed, if we confine our attention to historical discussions, it might seem as if there is a struggle to reconcile the mind-body problem, not so much as the intentional denial of the human mind or consciousness. In recent discussions of the self, above and beyond the consciousness problem, the focus is on how human self-cognizing occurs.

Hence, perspectives of self-denial are newly gaining ground on top of perspectives of soul dismissal. Logically, once the human soul is denied, the denial of the human self is the next inevitable logical stalemate. The denial remains discursive in nature only, as of course, phenomenally speaking, such a denial cannot occur. Hence, today's questions posed on the human self are extremely nuanced to the degree unthought of in earlier records: Does being conscious necessarily involve being self-conscious in some sense? And if it does, would this count as evidence for the existence of a self? In *Self, No Self?: Perspectives From Analytical, Phenomenological, and Indian Traditions*, Siderits et al. (2010) surveyed the diverse range of responses to such questions. The authors initially classify views about the self as falling into four broad types: substantialist, nonsubstantialist, nonself theories, and pure narrativity. All substantialist and nonsubstantialist self-theorists affirm the existence of the self but disagree about its nature. A substantialist view is one that takes the self to be a substantial entity, with consciousness being but one of its properties. Instead, the nonsubstantialist sees the self as just consciousness itself and discourages any search of some self "entity." Nonself theorists deny the existence of a self altogether. The pure narrativity view of the self attempts to advance the notion of the self as the "author and central character of a narrative" (p. 7).

For many, the problem of "self" has taken the name of the problem of "consciousness." Chalmers, one of the greatest authorities in the field, dubs that "consciousness is the biggest mystery" (1996, p. xii). To him, "nothing is more real to us" than consciousness (p. 3), yet, nothing is more elusive to define. Hence, he concludes, "when I talk about consciousness, I am talking only about the subjective quality of experience: what it is like to be a cognitive agent" (p. 6). Consciousness is the "hard problem," and according to him, present-day scientific theories hardly touch the really difficult questions about consciousness. "Sometimes this question is ignored entirely; sometimes it is put off until another day; and sometimes it is simply declared answered … The easiest way to develop a 'theory' of consciousness is to deny its existence," warns Chalmer (p. xii). One would think that the complaint of Chalmers is directed to the positivist and materialist take on the human self. Yet, interesting enough, the problem could easily be discerned from the opposite pole of the spectrum, too. Ironically, this seems like a converging point of the physicalist and mental accounts of the self, for if we resort to some of the mystic Eastern traditions, the human self does not exist. Numerous Buddhist schools concur that the sense of self is an illusion. In the same vein, Indian philosophical investigations of the self begin with the suspicion that the sense of self that everyone seems to have might be downright mistaken. Moreover, this mistake might be the cause of humans being bound to the wheel of samsara or beginningless rebirth and endless suffering (Ram-Prasad, 2011).

To tie this section, we can make a case for either one—that there is a personal self or there is no personal self in us, or even both, for as mentioned by Cassirer (1944), "Man has no 'nature'—no simple or homogeneous being. He is a strange mixture of being and nonbeing. His place is between these two opposite poles" (p. 28). In other words, the self can be perceived to be simultaneously "there" and "not there." So, in each case, we start with the phenomenal world, the given, and then make an active stand to find.

Juxtaposing the Self in the Two Views

The Cosmogony and Origin of Man/Self

In the traditional Islamic cosmology, God, the Supreme Being, descends through various degrees of the cosmic hierarchy to the physical world, while itself remains transcendent vis-à-vis its manifestations. The cosmology is hierarchical, originating with God, "the One who alone is the Source of all cosmic reality, the interrelation of all things and the profound nexus between the intelligible or spiritual, the psychic and the physical realms of existence" (Nasr, 2001, p. 403). In other words, this is a top-down approach akin to the Great Chain of Being of medieval Christianity; structured as descending rungs of a ladder with God at the pinnacle and all below—His creations, are modes of His being, including man, linked with one another (see also Lovejoy, 1960). A philosopher of the ancient world, Plotinus (204–270 CE) also viewed the world in a similar hierarchical manner, with "the One at the top of the hierarchy, humans in the middle, and physical objects at the bottom" (Martin & Barresi, 2006, p. 35). The outlook is that of a God-willed, cyclic recurrence

of birth, growth, decay, and death in all organic creation, as in the changing seasons. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century, there are Western progressive intellectuals who still held that humans were made in the image of God. However, by the end of the century—following the influence of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx—most started to entertain the notions of humans made in the image of biology and society (Martin & Barresi, 2006).

Modern science, the product of 16th–17th century Europe brought in a new vision of reality. Historically, the question of the self emerged as a result of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and Enlightenment (Seigal, 2005). Particularly, the 19th century saw an increase of individualism in the industrializing world, "as old solidarities weakened in the face of political and economic changes" (Seigal, 2005). With it came a new conception of the world, one in which a thing, a pure inert matter totally divorced from life, consciousness, and God is somehow mysteriously known by the subject or the mind.

These two approaches, the traditional religious and modern science, are diametrically opposed to one another. The former starts with God, the Supreme Being, and man in this respect is one of His creations, albeit a special creation, for God has honored the Children of Adam (Q17:70). The latter approach has reduced everything to matter and energy, where all is flattened to only this material world, and living things are assumed to evolve from simple to more complex cells and organisms. It has no vertical causation because God as the transcendent Being has been replaced by science (Smith, 2019).

Modern man lives in a world of modernism, opposing a normativity based on divine existence, with its ethos of materialism, secularization, and scientism (Al-Attas, 1995; Lakhani, 2006). With the immaterial and the transcendent out of the picture, and in view of the solidity of the material world, his worldview is completely exteriorized. Modern science has reduced man from spirit to mind, mind to brain, and brain to anatomical structures, and life itself to the activity of chemical agents, and these to the particles of physics. Life is seen as an accident and consciousness as a by-product of life. Hence, the human being and his much-cherished notion of the human self are an accident, too. The universe also is portrayed as "dead" and devoid of any life, meaning, soul, or consciousness (Nasr, 2006).

Self and Consciousness

Many define psychology as "the science of the conscious self" given that this underpins all other approaches and definitions, that is, both structural and functional psychology (Calkins, 1908). There has been much debate on consciousness and its relationship with the self in psychology and neuroscience. In traditional and religious understanding, however, God is also considered as Pure Consciousness, and creations as modes of His consciousness, but of course, the further away they are from the source, the less aware they become. In this Great Chain of Consciousness, everything that is a part of the chain is alive, aware, and conscious. In this sense, consciousness is the ground of being (Nasr, 2006). In the Islamic tradition, Ibn Arabi (in Chittick, 2012) makes this point very clear:

> The name Alive [*al-Hayy*] is an essential name of God—glory be to Him! Therefore, nothing can emerge from Him but living things. Hence, all of the cosmos is alive, for indeed the nonexistence of life, or the existence in the cosmos of an existent thing that is not alive, has no divine support, whereas every contingent thing must have a support. So, what you consider to be inanimate is in fact alive. (p. 262)

In this regard, consciousness is the basis of all things, and it permeates all of reality. Modern science, however, has reduced everything, even consciousness, to only the material, and thus it is unable to adequately account for the presence of any conscious agents in the universe (Rustom, 2017). But, a growing number of contemporary scientists and philosophers are arguing against this materialistic stand. Goff (2017), for example, argue for panpsychism or the pervasiveness of consciousness, as the one factor that can unite the seemingly disparate parts of reality because it extends consciousness beyond the organisms in the brain to all other seemingly "inert" forms of matter. Others like Kastrup (2019) and Iain McGilchrist believe that "consciousness is prior ontologically to matter" (McGilchrist, 2021, p. 1649); that is, consciousness is not an epiphenomenon of the brain or a property of the self. Quantum theory also offers several interpretations on the manner in which awareness and consciousness inform every entity that exists. But, these theories are still based on a physical conception of nature and reality; thus, they are unable to escape the materialist stance within which their entire outlook is implicated. Modern

science has severed the relationship between man and God, and without a transcendent God, the implication is that man is no longer a metaphysical being. The soul no longer has a place, for the vertical relationship between man as a creature and God as Creator has been forced out. What remains is only the one horizontal plane that he lives in.

Self: Whole Versus Parts

There are two main ways of knowing; sensory-based external analysis and inner knowing or ratio and *intellectus*. Sensory analysis or ratio is discursive reason and relates to everyday rational thought, the art of mental coordination and rational conclusion, whereas inner knowing or *intellectus* is contemplation and involves the activity of the soul that is able to envisage what it sees; hence, it transcends logic and reason. Ratio, then, is analytical whereas intellect is holistic. These two ways of knowing were originally complimentary. They were, however, severed during the Renaissance when philosophy and revelation were separated. Modern man's current knowing is exclusively by his sensory-based analysis, which is limited for it cannot go beyond its function of analyzing and dissecting. Science cannot know the principles of things or a thing's place in a bigger whole, for having atomistically dismantled the world, it is at a loss on how to put it together again. It sees a world of fragments rather than one in which the parts belong to a whole. So like the three blind men groping the elephant and each feeling a different part, each describes it based on the part that he has touched. Each description of the elephant is different and only the one who has seen the elephant knows that all are correct only to a certain extent. In other words, without a vision of a whole, parts do not make much sense. Hence, both forms of knowing are needed as man is both body and soul.

The traditional outlook, however, sees the enumerable nature of things or parts as secondary with respect to their essential qualities—that core of truth that is unaffected by temporal circumstances. In other words, as a human being, man is subjected to a life of meaning, a life that needs to have spiritual and moral significance—an ethical life, with God as the ultimate source of ethical and moral values, and hence, an unchanging criterion of good and evil. But, modern man, having rejected the transcendent together with the morality established through revelation, is unable to study ethics or human relationships because he has been conceived of only in an atomistic manner, for the actual reality of things is inconceivable without knowledge of God. Thus, there is a need to understand a part as a piece of a whole, and in doing so, to recognize that the part has purpose and meaning, that is, that it has an extrinsic teleology—serving or pointing to something bigger than itself.

Self: Higher and Lower

The Islamic tradition sees man to be both human and divine, comprising the material and immaterial or the outer psychophysical personality and higher/inner self. Because the latter is seen to be his true self, he must harmonize the former with the latter to be whole. As the nature of the two selves is different, with each vying for dominance over the other, man is asked to find his higher self or to know himself, and to remain conscious of his relation with his Creator.

Modern man, however, has cut off that vertical relationship with God; without that vertical dimension, he cannot be whole because it is only a higher principle that can integrate various elements on a lower level of reality or only the greater can know the lesser (Chittick, 2007, p. 73). Because man is constituted of body, soul, and spirit, the body cannot be integrated without the presence of the soul, and likewise the soul by the spirit. He remains fragmented into multiple selves, each competing for absolute rights over one another. Hence, he will never know himself. Indeed, his nature and situation vis-à-vis God have not changed despite or in spite of changes over time (Nasr, 2006). Yet, the modern predicament has put the man in a highly precarious and fragile psychological state, for he "has gained the mastery of the material world before knowing himself" (Carrel, 1939, p. 2).

Integration or Reconciliation?

So, can the modern "self" ever be integrated or reconciled with the traditional man? Because this self is devoid of a transcendent spirit that is concerned with wholeness and a unitary worldview, it would be difficult. Without the existence of the levels and hierarchy of being, in which the soul is one of several levels of reality interacting

both with what is above it (spirit) and below it (body), modern psychology's understanding of the "self" is limited only to this material world of natural phenomena or with the lesser self. However, to throw the baby out with the bath water is to lose the knowledge that has been obtained regarding this lesser self. Knowing the lesser self is also important, but that alone is insufficient because "to comprehend" something means "to encompass" it, and only the higher can know the lesser (Nasr, in Bendeck Sotillos, 2021, p. 194). Put differently, as long as modern psychology remains close to what is higher than the psyche or his lesser self, it can never be integrated or reconciled with traditional understanding. It needs the higher self to preside over the lesser fragmented selves. This is why modern psychology conflates the *Pneuma* and *psyche*, or the *Spiritus* and *anima* (see Table 1).

Man lives within several existential dimensions: physical, social, psychological, and spiritual/transcendent. The spiritual/transcendent dimension—that which lies beyond the self and is expressed in subjective qualities like intuition, convictions, values, love, and so forth—is what gives meaning to one's life and actions. Call it the "higher self," "soul," or "heart," it all refers to that deep recess within which is man's center that unites all the different parts of our many "selves." This is the immaterial, the subtle substance that is emphasized in many religious traditions. The Chinese sage, Mencius (372–289 BC) once said: "The way of learning is nothing other than to seek for the lost heart" (cited in Chittick, 2012, p. 313), where "heart" refers to a power of intuitive intelligence and spiritual awareness that transcends rational processes and unifies the knowing subject with the known object. It is the precious dimension of our own Being, that inner core, which we once had but have now lost. For Mencius, the lost heart is nothing other than this true human nature. In this sense, the goal of learning is to find what we have lost, to become truly human, which is not a given. We have to strive for it. That is why the Scriptures ask the man to purify himself, reminding him that indecencies infect and darken the human soul, and deprive the heart of its luminous and virtuous tendencies. This "cultivation of the personal life" or the quest to recover the lost heart must always be ongoing, or else we remain fragmented and incomplete, and unable to live in harmony with our own selfhoods. So, our task in this world is to find it again—to recover our original situation with God.

Hence, attempts to integrate psychology with religion and spirituality have not been quite successful because they lack what Arasteh (1965), a Sufi and a psychotherapist, called an *Unterbau*, a German word meaning "infrastructure" or "common denominator." In his book, *Final Integration in the Adult Personality*, he provides the integrative clinician with an "Unterbau" that incorporates into the therapeutic environment the need to transcend one's ubiquitous culture to attain a more fulfilling object of desire that provides one with lasting solace and security. By combining Western psychology with Sufism, he proposes a monolithic, whereas, at the same time, a diversified approach to the problems of man which has been lost after the Renaissance and Enlightenment. To him, the overemphasis on a purely rational endeavor has not helped man in overcoming his anxiety and uncertainties, and neither has it offered him much in substantial activities of life like love, intentionality, and so forth. To him, if life is to be filled with these substantial qualities, there must be an inner metamorphosis in order to shed the old culturally derived objects of desire that fail to satisfy. His psychocultural principles are meant to help his client resolve natural, cultural, and existential conflict. In doing so, the client will be free to pursue—and merge with—the true object of desire in order to expand horizontally in love, community, and faith in the transcultural state of divine unity. His work, however, has not caught on with the wider psychological community (Knabb & Welsh, 2009).

Despite this pessimism, however, there have been several recent works that have attempted to provide this "infrastructure" or "common denominator." For example, Rothman (2022) in his new book refined his earlier Islamic model of the soul (Rothman & Coyle, 2018) to include the stages of the soul in which the therapist can assist clients in the psychotherapy process. Similarly, Keshavarzi et al. (2021) in their edited book offered another Islamic approach to psychotherapy, known as Traditional Islamically Integrated Psychotherapy. Both aim to fill the gap between modern psychology and the traditional Islamic literature on human psychology, to be used by Muslim psychotherapists for Muslim clients. However, as noted by Rothman, due to the infinite nature of the soul and the convergence of Islamic

theology and contemporary psychology, the conceptualizations offered are always limited. These newer works need time to see if they will have an impact on the wider field of modern psychology.

Conclusion

So, what can we conclude? Philosophical musings on the abstract notion of "self" or defining "self" from a neurobiological perspective (self as brain) can never be spiritually and psychologically fulfilling. Much of it is not even commonsensical seen from the perspective of laymen. Neither do they add much in paving a way toward a healthy functioning of the human self. This point relates to constraints on the generality of our deliberations on the self. We have used the term "man" to refer to humanity as a whole. In this traditional usage, the term is gender-neutral. We both feel this term is more appropriate when reviewing traditional literature. Furthermore, we are considering the "self" at an individual level, while "human" has broader connotations of race, category of being, and without a sense of individuality. Hence, we have used the two terms accordingly depending on context.

The notion of the "self" may only be a scientifically useful construct. Most ordinary people, however, do not theorize the self in this manner. In practice, people understand themselves to be continuing entities with multiple abilities. Hence, there is a need to make a distinction between the philosophical and/or scientific notion of self with how ordinary people living in certain cultural contexts use self in their daily living. In addition, people intuitively know that there is a higher self as opposed to a lower self. That is why there are always differences between good and bad, honest and corrupt, and so forth.

Ordinary people too, know they have souls—that which keep them alive. Hence, the usage of terms like *ruh* (Arabic), *ruach* (Hebrew), *atman* (Hindu), and *anima* (Greek) is all associated with breath, implying wind or spirit. So, when one is alive, there is breath and behind that, an immaterial soul. Yet, at the same time, people cannot deny the existence of the self altogether, because they function normally on the basis of the sense of self, ranging from ill-health to happiness. Indeed, the fact that one is alive shows there is something there—call what you like.

The Islamic tradition is an embodied religion where the outward (lesser self) and the inward (higher self) are two sides of a single reality. Hence, body and soul cannot be detached from one another; the body shapes the soul, and the soul determines what the body does. In other words, man cannot be divided. But the nature of the two selves is different, so he lives simultaneously in two distinct "worlds." One is the world of matter and energy—measurable and scientifically explainable. The other is the subjective experience with consciousness as the foundation of existence, the ground of being. Hence, he must strive to harmonize the two to be whole. Religious traditions provide a way to do so as well as confer meaning to man's existence for their cosmologies explain and validate all the aspects necessary for him to live in this world and beyond—spiritual, psychological, motivational, social, cultural, and so forth. Simply put, they provide a narrative for man's purpose in this world. In contrast, science's empirical description of reality ends only with itself. And, modern science has to create a storyline for man's origin, or mapping the terrain but over time, the map has been taken to be the terrain.

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Received October 21, 2022
Revision received January 30, 2023
Accepted May 4, 2023 ■